

Las Positas College  
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**Course Outline for HUMN 7**  
**CONTEMPORARY HUMANITIES**  
**Effective: Fall 2017**

**I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

HUMN 7 — CONTEMPORARY HUMANITIES — 3.00 units

Visual, literary, and musical works of art that reflect the issues and concepts of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. A perspective through exploration of chosen works.

3.00 Units Lecture

**Grading Methods:**

Letter or P/NP

**Discipline:**

	<b>MIN</b>
<b>Lecture Hours:</b>	54.00
<b>Total Hours:</b>	54.00

**II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1**

**III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:**

**IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:**

**Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:**

- A. demonstrate knowledge of current trends in twentieth and twenty-first century artistic expression through assignments, discussion, essays and tests;
- B. analyze and apply information gained to their perception of twentieth and twenty-first century art forms;
- C. describe and explain twentieth and twenty-first century art forms and expression in modern and post-modern contexts;
- D. identify significant theories and theorists of modern and post-modern thought and their relationship to the arts;
- E. recall significant terms of modern and post-modern theory;
- F. explain the relationship between technology and the arts in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries;
- G. discuss their own worldview in light of twentieth and twenty-first century artistic thought and expression.

**V. CONTENT:**

The specific topics to be studied will be drawn from the visual arts in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, with examples drawn from painting, sculpture, assemblage, performance arts, architecture, earth art, body art, film, television, video, art on the internet, video games, music of all types and genres. These will be discussed in the context of modern and post-modern theories.

**A. Theories and theorists**

1. Baudrillard (simulacra, the hyperreal)
2. Lyotard (skepticism toward metanarrative)
3. Barthes (intertextuality)
4. Benjamin (technology, art, mass reproduction)
5. Lacan (structuralism)
6. Kristeva, Irigaray, Dworkin: (postfeminism)
7. Jameson (post-Marxism and capitalist critique)
8. Spring (cyborgs and post-gender world)
9. Jencks (post-modern architecture)

**B. Visual Arts**

1. Painting: Cezanne, Picasso, Hopper, Pollock, Lichtenstein, Rosenquist, Warhol, Estes
2. Mixed-media and assemblage: Schnabel, Cornell, Chicago
3. Sculpture: Oldenburg, Segal, Koons, Messenger, Serra
4. Photography: Adams, Abbott, Walker, Lange, Clark, Sherman, Morimura
5. Earth art: Christo, Smithson, De Maria
6. Visual arts existing only in cyberspace
7. Body art such as tattoos and the use of the body as text
8. Comics and graphic novels
9. Architecture: Gropius, Wright, Graves, Disneyland, Las Vegas

**C. Music**

1. Classical compositions by Stravinsky, Cage, Adams
2. Variations on classical compositions performed by artists such as Klazz Brothers and Cuba Percussion and recordings such as the concert with Led Zeppelin and the San Francisco Symphony

3. Popular music: Elvis, The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Tupac Shakur, Bruce Springsteen, Mos Def, The Clash, Madonna
- D. Film/Video/Television
  1. Films: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Children of Men*, *Blade Runner*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Terminator*
  2. Music videos
  3. Video games
  4. Television programs: *The Simpsons*, *The Dave Chappelle Show*, *South Park*, *Deadwood*
- E. Poetry and Prose
  1. Poetry by William Carlos Williams, Maya Angelou, Billy Collins
  2. Prose by James Joyce, Toni Morrison, Philip K. Dick, William Gibson

#### VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Lecture** -
- B. Instructor guided discussion
- C. Small-group discussion and presentation
- D. **Field Trips** -
- E. Student-generated content: In class, students show examples of work by connecting to the internet and then discussing these examples as texts.
- F. Guest artists and lecturers
- G. Film, video, and television program presentation and discussion

#### VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

A. Read pages 1-31 of *Introducing Postmodernism*. In your folders, summarize the key aspects of modernism. Then choose any one of the following artists: Picasso, Cezanne, Braque, or Mondrian. Research their work, and bring to class a one-page written analysis of that work. Be prepared to present this in class. B. After viewing *Pulp Fiction* in class, write a two-page analysis of the film, keeping in mind Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality. We will discuss these in class, and it will go into your folder. C. In small groups, students use the internet to research examples of performance art that exists only in cyberspace.

#### VIII. EVALUATION:

##### A. **Methods**

##### B. **Frequency**

1. Folders will be collected three times during the term.
2. Short in-class writing assignments and/or homework will be given weekly.
3. Students will meet in small groups at least once a week.
4. Longer analytical essays of 700-800 words will be assigned twice during the term.
5. A capstone project will be required at the end of the term.

#### IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Fiero, Gloria. *The Humanistic Tradition, Book 6: Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Global Perspective*. 7th ed., McGraw Hill, 2015.
2. Foster, Hal. *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*. 3rd ed., Thames & Hudson, 2016.
3. Meyer, Richard. *What was Contemporary Art?*. 1st ed., MIT Press, 2016.

#### X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: