Prof. Jill Holaday Office address: McWethy 116

Email Address: [jholaday@cornellcollege.edu](mailto:jholaday@cornellcollege.edu) Phone: 4814

**Art 275 - Contemporary Art and Controversy**

McWethy Hall Room 222

This course examines controversies in the contemporary art world. Subject, Style, and Context make a difference in how works are received from confederate monuments to Maya Lin’s Vietnam War Memorial and Sam Durant’s Scaffold that was dismantled and burned in 2017. These topics will be supplemented by discussions of appropriation with Damien Hirst’s Golden Heads (Female), 2017 and Ai Weiwei’s charged Good Fences Make Good Neighbors, 2017. The list continues with examinations of the cancellation of the video showing Sun Yuan and Peng Yu’s Dogs that Cannot Touch Each Other of 2003 as well as Kara Walker’s racialist commentary, A Subtlety, or the Marvelous Sugar Baby of 2014. Let the conversation begin.

 This course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphases on knowledge, communication, and intercultural literacy. *By the end of the course, my goals are that you will have strengthened your skills in critical thinking, writing, and quantitative reasoning. You will be able to acknowledge and confront dehumanizing biases such as racism, sexism, prejudice and discrimination and understand the impact these biases can have upon interpersonal relations.*

**Meeting times**:

Even one attendance can greatly affect your learning process in this course. If you have to miss a class, please communicate with me and let me why you will be/were absent.

Classes will meet in the mornings, 9:00 AM until 11:00 AM, and 1-3:00 PM in McWethy 222.

Office Hours: I am in my office from 3:30 -4:00 and 12:00 – 1:00 PM or by appointment. I encourage each of you to take time to ask me questions or express your concerns. Every block course is difficult and I am eager to help you succeed.

**Texts**:

Ossian Ward, *Ways of Looking: How to Experience Contemporary Art*, London: Laurence King, 2016

All other texts will be available on Moodle

**Academic Honesty**: Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College’s requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Catalogue, under the heading “Academic Honesty."

**Course Accommodations**: Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities.  Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format.  For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml>.

**Course Structure and requirements**:

Read assigned pages for the following day.

**Exams:**

Exams are take-home exams and will be time-consuming. You will receive the questions the evening before the exam and you must turn it in online by 3:00 pm of the exam day. There will be a folder in Moodle for the midterm, and for the final.

**Final Project:** ***This is 30% of your grade!***

Your final project is an exhibition or event your design using artists, readings, and class discussions as your basis. Your exhibition/event must include artwork or performances from at least four different themes of the course. Explain your choice of artists/artworks/performances. Explain how the exhibit space/event would be designed. Are there walls? Is there wall text? Are their any multi-media installations? Is it indoor, outdoor, or a combination? What do you intend your viewers to experience? What happens on opening night? Your project should be presented as if your audience has no prior knowledge of your art/artists. You can draw out the spaces, or simply describe them verbally. Think of scale, size, sound, etc. Create a name for your exhibition/event. You will turn in your project online, or if it other than verbal information, in-class. Mock-ups/Models are welcome but not required.

A part of your grade is how you present your exhibition/event to the class during week 4. Your presentation should include images of the chosen works/performances, sample wall text, and your organizing theme. This is a formal presentation. You should practice it until you can express yourself clearly. You may also hand out materials such as a press release, a summary of the exhibition, or anything else relevant, but this is not a required component.

Your presentation should be 15 -17 minutes in length (another good reason to practice your presentation!). You will lose points if your presentation is too short and I will cut you off it goes too long.

**Grade Breakdown**:

Classwork:

--Midterm Exam: 25%

--Final Exam: 25%

--Final Project: 30%

--Attendance and Participation: 15%

\*\*\*Also, please note that the syllabus is subject to change as needed.

**WEEK 1**

**Day 1: Introduction to the Course**

**Day 2 - 3: Art and Humor**

**Readings (It may take more than one day to finish all readings for this segment):**

Ossian Ward, Chapter 1 and p 108-124

BACKFLIP: “Feminism and Humour in Contemporary Art” – This corresponds with an exhibition and many of the pages are images. You may want to look at it online before you print, if you don’t want to print all the pages that have images.

Clovis Blackwell, “Sincerity and Irony as Examined in Jeff Koons Work,” *Visual Inquiry: Learning & Teaching Art* 1, no. 1, 2012

Paul McCartney, [**https://news.artnet.com/market/paul-mccarthy-beaten-up-over-butt-plug-sculpture-136129**](https://news.artnet.com/market/paul-mccarthy-beaten-up-over-butt-plug-sculpture-136129)

**Other artists include:** David Shrigley, John Bock, Rodney Graham, Chapman Brothers, Damien Hirst, Elmgreen & Dragset

**Day 4: (I am out of town for a conference Day 4-5)**

**Watch “The Square” Available on Amazon streaming. We can possible meeting places for you to watch as a group**

[**https://www.amazon.com/Square-Claes-Bang/dp/B076TDHJM8/ref=sr\_1\_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1549851468&sr=8-1&keywords=the+square**](https://www.amazon.com/Square-Claes-Bang/dp/B076TDHJM8/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1549851468&sr=8-1&keywords=the+square)

\*This movie straddles comedy, drama, and suspense. It is unclear at times, what is happening or what it is all supposed to mean. It will not make complete sense, just hang in there.

**Day 4 Assignment**: Write one to two pages answering the following questions about the movie: What experiences should museums and gallery offer? Was “The Square” artwork in the move successful? How did the movie portray the patrons of the museum? The curators? The journalist (Elizabeth Moss)? Were there any moments that were funny to you? What was the most disturbing scene in the movie**?**

**Day 5: Watch segment on art and humor from Art21 with link below:**

[**https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s2/humor/**](https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s2/humor/)

**Assignment:** Write a one-page summary of the video.

Complete your readings for Week 2, Day 1-2

**Week 2**

**Day 1: Art and Religion**

**We will recap the material you viewed on Day 4-5 and then begin our discussion on Art and Religion**

Jerry D. Meyer, Profane and Sacred: Religious Imagery and Prophetic Expression in Postmodern Art, *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (Spring, 1997), 19-46

Nicholas Denysenko, An Appeal to Mary: An Analysis of Pussy Riot's Punk Performance in Moscow,

*Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (December 2013), 1061-1092

**Day 2: Art and Religion**

**Day 3-4: Art and Politics**

**Reading:** Yazid Anan, “And My Shrine Is My Mother’s Salon: On Ahlam Shibli’s Death”

**Reading:** William A. Callahan, “Citizen Ai: Warrior, Jester, and Middleman,” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 73, No. 4 (NOVEMBER 2014), 899-920.

**Artists include**: Ai Weiwei, Yazid Anan, Banksy, Danish collective Superflex, and many more!

**Day 5: Art and Racism**

Readings:

David Wall, “Transgression, Excess, and the Violence of Looking in the Art of Kara Walker,” *Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (2010), 279-299**.**

Ellen Lubell, “Gone! Right Before Our Eyes: Kara Walker’s Sensation,” *Sculpture Review*,

Ossian Ward, 104-105

Brett Bailey:

[**https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/24/exhibit-b-challenging-work-never-sought-alienate-offend-brett-bailey**](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/24/exhibit-b-challenging-work-never-sought-alienate-offend-brett-bailey)

Thinking it over: Damien Hirst’s Golden Heads (Female), 2017

[**http://brunoclaessens.com/2017/06/controversy-around-damien-hirsts-golden-ife-head-on-view-in-venice/#.XGDMqVxKiM8**](http://brunoclaessens.com/2017/06/controversy-around-damien-hirsts-golden-ife-head-on-view-in-venice/#.XGDMqVxKiM8)

Artitsts include: Glenn Lingon, Kerry Marshall, Kehinde Wiley, Kara Walker, and more

**Week 3:**

**Day 1: Midterm due on Moodle by 3:00 pm. You must use a Word file!**

**Day 2: Art and Memorials**

Readings on Moodle:

Sam Durant: Protesting Art is Different than Destroying It

Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial – 2011

Monuments Are Seen Every Day

Jeff Koons, Maya Lin, Confederate soldiers, Lei Yikin, Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial (2011), Washington DC, Sam Durant’s Scaffold, The Memory wound, Utøya, Norway, 9. Pan-European Memorial for the Victims of Totalitarianism in Brussels, EU

**Day 4-5 Art and Gender and Sexuality**

Readings:

Broadening the Circle (Mattress Performance)

Queer Art/Queer Failure

Artists include: Tracey Emin, Macon Reed, Matthew Barney, and Nan Goldin

***Due: Exhibition Proposal – turn in on Moodle by midnight on Sunday the 7th***

**Week 4:**

**Day 1 -2** Final Project Presentations

**Day 3: Final Exam**

**Due 3:00 pm on Moodle. Word documents only!**