

## **Contemporary Issues: Art 404 and 504**

**Josephine Durkin**  
**Associate Professor of Art**

**Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6 – 7:15 p.m**  
**Art 111**

**Office Location:** A116 in the main Art Building

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 – 10:30 a.m. by appointment.

**Please Note:** I am happy to meet with you to discuss your project ideas and/or class progress during my office hours. If you would like to meet with me, please email me in advance to make an appointment during my office hours. You are more than welcome to stop by my office, but I suggest making an appointment because I may be assisting students with video equipment, sculpture equipment or doing graduate studio visits during these hours.

**Email Address:** [Josephine.Durkin@tamuc.edu](mailto:Josephine.Durkin@tamuc.edu)

### **Required Books:**

*Art On the Edge and Over, Searching for Art's Meaning in Contemporary Society 1970's – 1990s*  
By Linda Weintraub

*Artspeak: A Guide to Contemporary Ideas, Movements and Buzzwords, 1945 to the Present*  
By Robert Atkins

### **Required Materials:**

Binder, paper, pens, pencils and any materials that are required for your presentation

### **Course Description:**

Welcome to Contemporary Issues! This is a seminar course that is dependent on your weekly class reading and your ability to think critically and articulate relevant and thought provoking questions. Your continued proactive approach in trying to answer questions through lively discussions and debate in addition to regular enthusiasm and commitment to the class discussions, team projects and individual research will contribute greatly to a successful seminar experience.

### **Assignments:**

This class is organized into two different types of days: A Days and B Days. A Days are group presentation-based discussion days and B Days are video-based discussion days.

Please remember that on A-Days, each of you is required to have read the chapters in *Art on the Edge and Over* that correspond with the artists who will be discussed during the presentation. You must come into class with one typed, thoughtful question that is relevant to the assigned reading. It should be a question that fosters interesting discussion and debate. *Artspeak* will serve as a resource for all readings.

Below are the schedules for both A Days and B Days:

**A Days:**

- 6:00 Students come into class with their typed question and sit down with their teams at their designated team tables. I will take attendance.
- 6:05 Each team goes over all of the team questions and decides which one is the most interesting and thought-provoking and would contribute most to an active class discussion. Team members start to answer this question so that they are prepared to elaborate and lead the discussion if necessary.
- 6:15 Each team writes their selected question on the dry erase board.
- 6:20 The scheduled team (see Class Schedule) does a presentation on the scheduled topics.
- 6:50 A lively and active class discussion takes place that is guided by each team's posted questions.
- 7:10 Wrap-up, announcements.

**B Days:**

- 6:00 Students come into class and sit with their teams. I will take attendance.
- 6:05 Video of the Day where each member thinks of a question(s) during the viewing about the video, artist and/or events taking place and writes it down.
- 6:45 Each Team selects what they feel is the best question and writes it on the dry erase board.
- 6:50 A lively and active class discussion takes place that is guided by each team's posted questions.
- 7:10 Wrap-up, announcements.

**Please Note:**

In the event that a class is canceled (due to snow, etc.), we will continue with the class schedule as planned. A and B Days function independently of each other. If a class is canceled, the activities planned for that date will be moved to the Final Exam Date.

**Class Schedule:**

**Note:** The Class Schedule is a guide and may be adjusted depending on the number of students enrolled in the class or if other videos become available.

Class #	Type	Date	Video or Team
1.	Intro:	Tuesday, August 28 <sup>th</sup>	Review Syllabus and Discuss Teams

2.	Intro:	Thursday, August 30 <sup>th</sup>	Images of Contemporary Works
3.	B	Tuesday, September 4 <sup>th</sup>	Confirm Teams; Art 21
4.	*	Thursday, September 6 <sup>th</sup>	Presentation Information / team workshop
5.	A	Tuesday, September 11 <sup>th</sup>	Team 1a: <b>Simmons, Laib, Chin</b>
6.	B	Thursday, September 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Arthur Ganson</b>
7.	A	Tuesday, September 18 <sup>st</sup>	Team 1b: <b>Kawara, Abramovic, Calle</b>
8.	B	Thursday, September 20 <sup>nd</sup>	Art 21
9.	A	Tuesday, September 25 <sup>th</sup>	Team 2a: <b>Gilbert and George, Orlan, Hammons</b>
10.	B	Thursday, September 27 <sup>th</sup>	Art 21
11.	A	Tuesday, October 2 <sup>th</sup>	Team 2b: <b>Mesa-Bains, Luna, Arai</b>
12.	B	Thursday, October 4 <sup>th</sup>	Art 21
13.	*	Tuesday, October 9 <sup>th</sup>	Fort Worth Modern <a href="http://www.themodern.org">www.themodern.org</a> Meet at 1:00 p.m. in the lobby.
14.	A	Thursday, October 11 <sup>th</sup>	Team 3a: <b>Gonzalez-Torres, Salle Antoni</b>
15.	A	Tuesday, October 16 <sup>th</sup>	Team 3b: <b>Sultan, Steinbach, Trockel</b>
16.	*	Thursday, October 18 <sup>th</sup>	Competition Quiz
17.	A	Tuesday, October 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Team 4a: <b>Close, Boltanski, Serrano</b>
18.	B	Thursday, October 25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Andy Goldsworthy</b>
19.	A	Tuesday, October 30 <sup>th</sup>	Team 4b: <b>Schneemann, Dove, Beuys</b>
20.	B	Thursday, November 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>Matthew Barney</b>
21.	A	Tuesday, November 6 <sup>th</sup>	Team 5a: <b>Zittel, Kruger, Koons</b>
22.	B	Thursday, November 8 <sup>th</sup>	Art 21
23.	A	Tuesday, November 13 <sup>th</sup>	Team 5b: <b>Vaisman, Ericson and Ziegler, Acconci</b>
24.	A	Thursday, November 15 <sup>th</sup>	Team 6a: <b>Kelley, Thek, Gerlovina and Gerlovin, Richter</b>

25. A Tuesday, November 20<sup>th</sup> Team 6b: **Levine, \*McCollum, \*Prince and \* Ruscha (\* Not in *Art on the Edge...*)**

Happy Thanksgiving!! There will be NO CLASS on Thursday, November 24<sup>th</sup>

26. \* Tuesday, November 27<sup>th</sup> Competition Quiz

27. \* Thursday, November 29<sup>th</sup> Exhibition Review: Draft due at the the beginning of class, peer editing

28. \* Tuesday, December 4<sup>th</sup> Note: Last Day of Class, Exhibition Review is due (see below) Art Vocabulary and Name that Artist! Test / Final Exam

29. Final Exam Date: The date scheduled for our final exam will be used as a Make-Up Date in the event that a class is canceled (due to snow, instructor illness, etc.)

**Exhibition Review:** Each of you is required to go to a contemporary exhibit at either a gallery or art museum. You must write a 300-word review of the exhibit and attach any type of show paraphernalia (cards, brochures, tickets, etc.) to the essay. The essay must address the artwork, how it was installed and how you feel it fits into the world of contemporary art. I encourage and expect you to exercise your ability to use the art language that you have developed. The purpose of this review is to challenge you. How are you able to articulate your thoughts about the work?

#### **Galleries and Museums that you may go to for this assignment:**

Dunn and Brown Contemporary	(Dallas)	
Dallas Contemporary	(Dallas)	
Conduit Gallery	(Dallas)	
Holly Johnson Gallery	(Dallas)	
Marty Walker Gallery	(Dallas)	
Barry Whistler Gallery	(Dallas)	
Dallas Museum of Art	(Dallas)	*Must discuss contemporary art and artists only!
Fort Worth Modern Museum of Art	(Fort Worth)	

**Art Vocabulary and Name that Artist! Final Exam:** You will be tested on your recollection and understanding of a variety of art vocabulary words and phrases. Additionally, descriptions of artists will be given, and you will have to write the name of the artist that I am referring to. This vocabulary can be found in your text. Specific details about this test will be given in late October.

#### **Grading:**

Your grade is based on a point system.

Typed Questions that each student submits on A-Days: 2 points each, 18 points total.

Note: One point is given for the completion of the typed question and another point is given for the quality of the question.

Class Discussion Participation: 22 points

**Note:** To ensure that you get full credit for the participation in class discussion, you must actively contribute to the class discussion during EVERY class by asking and responding to questions with thoughtful comments. I also encourage you to “THINK OUT LOUD”. If you are having difficulty articulating what you are trying to communicate, please TRY to talk about it. Talking about art can be difficult and we are here to help each other. If you only contribute to the class discussion every other day and/or are unenthusiastic or disinterested in the subject matters, your grade will suffer.

Presentation (with handouts): 25 points (see note on Presentation)

Exhibition Review: 15 points (see note of Exhibition Review)

Art Vocabulary and Name that Artist! Test: 20 points (see note on Art Vocabulary Test)

Presentation Requirements:

The Class will be divided into teams. Each team is responsible for giving an exciting and informative 25 minute presentation about the assigned artists and corresponding art terms used to describe the artists' work. These terms can be found in both ArtSpeak and Art on the Edge and Over. In addition to using these texts as resources, please do additional research using scholarly books, articles and journals. Make sure to list source information on your handouts. Be wary of unscholarly material that may be available through the Internet. Each team is responsible for making an image and text-based handout for each of the artists and terms being covered in their presentation. For example, if a team is discussing three artists, three handouts need to be made, one for each artist and set of terms. If you feel it is necessary to have additional pages in your handout, please feel free to do so. Each team is responsible for making enough copies of their handout packets for each class member. Color copies are appreciated but are not necessary. If you would like to use A/V equipment, it is your responsibility to make arrangements and set up equipment properly. I recommend doing a test-run at least two days before your presentation.

Note on Presentation Grading:

I am fully aware that it is sometimes difficult to have group-based assignments. Ideally, each member in a group does their homework and pulls their weight in order to bring an outstanding presentation to fruition. I hope that each and every one of you is that type of team member: a creative, intelligent and thoughtful individual who follows through with his or her team commitments and plans and communicates well with his or her other teammates. If you have not been that type of team member in past classes, there is no reason why you can't turn things around and be that type of team member in this class.

In the event that a team member does not follow through with his or her commitments and does not do an excellent job with his or her part of the presentation, the entire group's grade will not suffer. Even though you are presenting this information as a group, you will be graded individually. So that I am in the loop as to who is presenting on which topics, each team is required to submit a Presentation Information Paper to me before they begin their presentation.

**Example of a Presentation Information Paper:**

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Presentation Information Paper

Team: 6a

Team Members: Sally K., Joe Q., and Lester M.

Artists being covered: Vito Acconci, Mike Kelley and Paul Thek

Art terms being addressed: Body Art, Documentation, Performance Art, Pathetic Art and Ephemerality

Division of Labor:

Sally K. researched, made the handout for and presented on:  
Vito Acconci, Body Art, Documentation and Performance Art

Joe Q. researched, made the handout for and presented on:  
Mike Kelley and Pathetic Art

Lester M. researched, made the handout for and presented on:  
Paul Thek and Ephemerality

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Each Team Member will be graded on the following:

\*Quality, professionalism and helpfulness of their handout: 10 points (Spelling and grammatical errors will count against you. Please proofread your handout multiple times to make sure that this is not an issue. Please know that the campus Writing Center is available to help you and your team if you need assistance with your writing.

\*Ability to thoroughly communicate his or her portion of the group presentation in an informative, accurate, interesting and engaging way: 15 points.

Attendance and Grading: Each student is expected to arrive on time and stay for the entire class. Each student may not miss more than three classes. This includes absences related to health problems, transportation or car difficulties, family issues and doctor's appointments. If a student misses more than three classes, they will automatically receive a failing grade and be dropped from the course.

\*Do not miss your Presentation Day. If there is a possibility that you will have to miss your presentation, make sure to email your materials to me ahead of time. You will be expected to distribute your handouts at the beginning of the next class period. You will also need to email me to set up an appointment during my office hours so that we can review your research materials. Missing your presentation due to unforeseen emergency-related circumstances (ER visit, hospitalization, etc.) must be documented. If it is not documented, you will not receive credit for your presentation.

I recommend and expect all students to be attentive and take notes during class presentations and discussions. Please keep all handouts and class notes in a three-ring binder or other organized system.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. It is your responsibility to quote sources appropriately. Here is the University statement regarding plagiarism:

**University Specific Procedures:**

Texas A&M University – Commerce does not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. “Academic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one’s own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource materials. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course.

*ADA Statement*

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact: 903.886.5150 Office of Student Disability Resources and Services, Texas A&M University-Commerce  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu) , Gee Library, Room 132

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).