

ARTS595 - Grad Seminar: Methods and Criticism

Assistant Professor Kevin Hamilton / kham@uiuc.edu / Office Hours by appointment

Fall 2007 - Mondays, 7-10pm

Art and Design room 319

[Website TBA]

Description:

The aim of the course is to introduce new graduate students to the task of relating theory to practice in art. Students will be expected to read, comprehend and respond to selected texts from contemporary art discourses. Writing and discussion are emphasized, as preparation for each student's eventual completion of a Master's Thesis.

It is assumed that the relationship of theory to practice will vary for each artist. However, in a pluralistic art economy it is essential to be intentional about one's choices and informed about those made by others. Our readings and discussions will address a broad range of approaches to the task of contextualizing one's practice in 2007.

Structure:

Each week you will be expected to have read one or more assigned articles, provided by me - sometimes you will be asked to prepare a short response to, or application of, these articles with a partner in the class. We will discuss these readings in class, and in relation to examples from practice that I bring in.

You will complete two projects for this course: an annotated bibliography at mid-semester, and a less textually-based archive of methods and strategies for the end of class.

We will also set aside some time for presentation and discussion about aspects of your tenure as a graduate student here at UIUC - funding and research opportunities, institutional structure, etc. These occasions will be primarily informational.

I'll be visiting your studios at least a couple of times over the semester to see your work and help advise on the final project.

I'll be organizing a film series for Wednesday evenings, largely of influential video-work that is difficult to see (and sometimes to watch). These will be open to the public, and you will be expected to attend at least some of them.

Expectations:

As a group, we come from a variety of backgrounds, and none of us (I presume) are primarily historians or theorists. When reading theory, I will assume that we are all in part strangers to our subjects, and that we should assume nothing about prior knowledge outside our own discussions. Still, as readers we are responsible for comprehending our texts, and can't give up on the authors without acknowledging our limits and seeking outside information. This necessitates the following:

- 1 - We need to share what we learn. I'll suggest and demonstrate some ways to do this using online tools, but you might also use email, or even bring things to class.
- 2 - We need to ask about what we don't know that others seem to know.
- 3 - We need to respect one another by contextualizing specialized language or narratives.

Students will be graded at the end of the semester based on the two projects, demonstrated comprehension of content, and participation in discussions.

Attendance is required.

SCHEDULE (some details to be filled in later)

- 8/22 Intro
READINGS: Primer: the future of art school
- 8/27 Modernity + Modernism
READINGS: Berman
- 9/3 no class, LABOR DAY
- 9/10 Postmodernism, Neoliberalism, Globalization
READINGS: Castells, Massey, Harvey
- 9/17 Discourse and Discipline
READINGS: Foucault, Bourdieu
- 9/24 Power and Subjecthood
READINGS: Foucault, Adrian Piper
- 10/1 Value, Capital, Class
READINGS: Jameson, Benjamin
- 10/8 Sensation, Perception, Knowledge
READINGS: Ranciere, Merleau-Ponty
- 10/15 TBA (I'm likely to be away) - Annotated Bibliographies due
- 10/22 Language: Structuralism, Poststructuralism, Semiotics
READINGS: TBA
- 10/29 Community, Publics, Institutions
READINGS: Jean Luc-Nancy, Rosalyn Deutsche, Habermas
- 11/5 Spectacle, Popular Culture
READINGS: Adorno + Horkheimer, Debord, Critical Art Ensemble
- 11/12 Art and Aesthetics
READINGS: TBA
- 11/19 THANKSGIVING BREAK
- 11//26 student presentations pt 1
- 12/03 student presentations pt 2