

ARTSSCI 4VC3: Visual Culture Inquiry
Winter (Term 2) 2021/22
Thursdays, 11:30-2:20, in person, KTH/B107

Instructor: Dr. Kristin Patterson

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Office Hours: Mondays, 1:00-2:00 pm, or by appointment

Office: via Zoom

Course Description:

This course focuses on socially engaged artistic and activist practices. We will consider the strategies and uses of artistic aesthetics taken up by individuals and collectives for the purpose of social interaction, intervention, or political change. We will explore the materials, methods, and theoretical approaches taken by artist activists through readings, case studies, and student projects. We will consider existing scholarship on socially engaged art, as well as closely analyze specific practices on a local, national, and global scale. Together we will investigate and assess the value of these hybrid practices as aesthetic, social, and political activities.

Course Objectives:

- Students will gain exposure to a wide range of activist and socially engaged artistic practices.
- Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of how various political groups, past and present, utilize creative forms of media to advance their interests and/or effect social change.
- Students will engage with theoretical concepts and scholarly debates on artistic and creative activism and art as a means for social change.
- Students will discuss and engage with issues of social relevance i.e., refugee crisis, gender and racial injustices, Indigenous social justice.
- Students will gain knowledge of art activism on local, national, and global scale.
- Students will be encouraged to analyze and critique the political potential of art.
- Students will make critical use of articles and primary sources in assignments and discussions.
- Students will refine research, writing, and critical thinking skills through course assignments.

Required Texts and Materials:

Students will be responsible for reading articles, watching interviews/videos and visiting websites provided on Avenue to Learn under weekly headings.

Course Assignments:

Zine or Timeline, due Feb 6th, 15%

Project Proposal and Annotated Bibliography, due March 6th, 15%

Project Progress Presentation, due March 31st or April 7th, as assigned, 15%

Final Project or Paper, due 5 days after presentation (April 5th or April 12th), 20%

Student Led Discussion, as assigned, weeks 2-10, 10%

Participation & Discussion, weekly, 15%

Post a Quote, weekly, 10%

***Details of all course assignments will be posted on Avenue to Learn>Content>Assignments.*

Lecture Topics: *Schedule may be subject to changes*

Week 1: January 13: Introduction; Dada Disruptions

Readings:

- ◆ Marcel Duchamp, "Apropos of Readymades," talk at Museum of Modern Art, New York, October 19, 1961. http://courses.ischool.utexas.edu/kimsmith/2009/fall/INF385H/Duchamp_Readymades.pdf
- ◆ "Dada and the Power of Nonsense," BBC Arts & Ideas Podcast, July 22, 2020. (Link on Avenue).

Websites:

★Dada: The Art Story: <http://www.theartstory.org/movement-dada.htm>

Week 2: January 20: Spectacle, Situationists and Détournement

Readings:

- ◆ Asger Jorn, "Detoured Painting," (May 1959) <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/painting.html>
- ◆ Guy Debord, "The Situationists and the New Forms of Action in Art and Politics," (1963). <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/newforms.html>
- ◆ Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, (1967). Read whole book or minimum Chapters: 1-4 & 8-12. <http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/16>
- ◆ "Détournement as Negation and Prelude," *Internationale Situationniste* 3 (1959), available online at <http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/315>

Week 3: January 27: Civil Rights Activism, Feminist and Post-Colonial Art

Readings:

- ◆ Leslie Hill, "Suffragettes Invented Performance Art," in Lizbeth Goodman and Jane de Gay, eds. *The Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance*. New York and London: Routledge, 2000, pp. 150-156. ebook: <http://www.tandfebooks.com.libaccess.lib.mcmaster.ca/doi/view/10.4324/9780203141571>
- ◆ Adrian Piper, "Notes on Funk I-IV" (1983-85); "My Calling (Cards) #1 and #2" (1990)
- ◆ Coco Fusco, "The Other History of Intercultural Performance," *The Drama Review* 38(1) (Spring 1994): 143-167.
- ◆ Iftikhar Dadi, "Shirin Neshat's Photographs as Postcolonial Allegories," *Signs* (Autumn 2008): 125-150.

At Home Screening:

❖ Couple in the Cage: <https://vimeo.com/79363320>

Week 4: February 3: Posters, Propaganda, and Activism

Readings:

- ◆ Richard Meyer, "This is to Enrage You: Gran Fury and the Graphics of AIDS Activism" in *But Is It Art?* (1995)
- ◆ Alison Green, "Citizen Artists: Group Material" (2011): <http://www.afterall.org/journal/issue.26/citizen-artists-group-material>
- ◆ Suzanne Lacy, "Introduction," *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (1995), pp. 19-47.

Websites:

★Group Material: <http://www.franklinfurnace.org/research/projects/flow/gpmat/gpmattf.html>

★Act Up: <http://www.actupny.org/documents/capsule-home.html>

★Keith Haring Foundation: <http://www.haring.com>

Week 5: February 10: Art and Protest: War and Memory

Readings:

- ◆ Laura Cottingham, "The War is Always Home," <http://www.martharosler.net/reviews/cottingham.html>
- ◆ Roland Bleiker, "Art After 9/11" *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* Vol. 31, No. 1, Art and Politics (Jan.-Mar. 2006), pp. 77-99.
- ◆ Robert Bailey, "Unknown Knowns: Jenny Holzer's Redaction Paintings and the History of the War on Terror," *October* (Fall 2012): pp. 144-161.

Week 6: February 17: Culture Jamming and Art Pranks

Readings:

- ◆ Mark Dery, *Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing and Sniping in the Empire of Signs*, 1993
http://markdery.com/?page_id=154
- ◆ Julie Perini, "Art as Intervention," in *Uses of a Whirlwind* (2010)
- ◆ Jacques Ranciere, "Problems and Transformations of Critical Art" (2004)

Websites:

★Beautiful Trouble: A Toolbox for Revolution: <http://beautifultrouble.org>

Read the following from the "toolbox":

TACTIC: Hoax, Identity Correction, Infiltration

PRINCIPLE: Play to the Audience that Isn't There, Everyone has Balls/Ovaries of Steel, Making the invisible visible

CASE STUDY: Dow Chemical Apologizes for Bhopal

At Home Screening:

- ◆ Yes Men Save the World (2009)

Reading Week: February 21-27

Week 7: March 3: Participatory Art and Relational Aesthetics

Readings:

- ◆ Nicolas Bourriaud, Excerpts from "Relational Aesthetics" (1998)
- ◆ Hal Foster, "Arty Party," *London Review of Books* (2004)
- ◆ Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics" (2004)

Week 8: March 10: Field Trip to Art Gallery of Hamilton

Readings: TBC

Week 9: March 17: Migrant and Refugee Art and Politics

Readings:

- ◆ T.J. Demos, "Charting a Course," in *The Migrant Image* (2013)
- ◆ Jean Fisher, "Diaspora, Trauma and the Poetics of Remembrance," in *Exiles, Diasporas and Strangers* (2008)

Week 10: March 24: Indigenous Art and Activism

Readings:

- ◆ Taunton, Carla. "Indigenous (re)memory and resistance: video works by Dana Claxton." *Post Script*, vol. 29, no. 3, Summer 2010, p. 44+
- ◆ Jasmeen Siddiqui, "Necessary Affairs: Exploring the Relationship Between Indigenous Art and Activism," *Scholarship at Western*, Western University (2017)
- ◆ Zuzana Pick, Storytelling and Resistance The Documentary Practice of Alanis Obomsawin, in *Gendering the Nation*, 1999, pp. 76-93.

At Home Screening:

- ❖ Alanis Obomsawin, *My Name Is Kahentiiosta* 29 min. (1995):
https://www.nfb.ca/film/my_name_is_kahentiiosta/

Week 11: March 31: Student Presentations

Week 12: April 7: Student Presentations

Policy on Late Submissions of Coursework

The penalty for late assignments is 5% of the grade per day following the deadline to a maximum of five days after which the assignment will no longer be accepted. Students are expected to contact the Arts & Science Program Office immediately if special consideration for medical or compassionate reasons is required. Late submissions for the Post-a-Quote assignment are not accepted.

Sustainable Written Work Submission Guidelines

The written work submission guidelines have been chosen to support the more sustainable use of paper, energy, and toner, and meet the **Platinum** standard of the Office of Sustainability; <http://www.mcmaster.ca/sustainability/>. All written work should be submitted in the following format: online submissions via Avenue to Learn. For any handouts or paper submissions students are asked to please exclude title page, to use single line spacing and sans-serif font.

Note to Students

We will be viewing and discussing controversial material. Many activist and socially engaged practices focus on a politics of difference and raise issues around racial and gender identities, oppression and resistance. Graphic violence, alternate life styles, and explicit sexuality are among the themes pursued by contemporary artists. Some contemporary pieces are made expressly with the intent of provoking new ways of seeing or thinking about art or the world around us. I urge each student to express their views in a respectful manner in class and if for any reason you find the material difficult to view or discuss with please come and see me.

SENATE-APPROVED ADVISORY STATEMENTS

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.** Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the

university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the *Academic Integrity Policy*, located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guide-lines/>.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

AUTHENTICITY / PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software. **All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., online search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

COURSES WITH AN ONLINE ELEMENT

Some courses may use online elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses online elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

ONLINE PROCTORING

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities.

These expectations are described in the *Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities* (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS\)](#) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

REQUESTS FOR RELIEF FOR MISSED ACADEMIC TERM WORK

In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the [Policy on Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work](#).

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGENOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

COPYRIGHT AND RECORDING

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors. The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done either by the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

NOTES FOR ALL ARTS & SCIENCE COURSES

1. Some of the statements above refer to a "Faculty Office"; please note that the Arts & Science Program Office serves in this capacity.
2. It is the responsibility of students to check their McMaster email regularly. Announcements will be made in class, via A2L, and/or via the course email distribution list.
3. For additional information regarding requests for accommodation, relief for missed term work (e.g. MSAF), deferred examinations, etc., students should read carefully the [Requests](#) and [Resources](#) pages on the Arts & Science Program website.