

Seeing and Perceiving in the Modern Museum Winter 2009

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Office Hours: Tuesday 9:00 – 11:00am; 1:30 – 3:30pm; or by appointment

Course Description

The modern art museum is not just a repository of the past, but an institution with the ability to shape and create meaning. This course explores the role of the museum in the 20th and 21st centuries, considering a diverse range of issues associated with the modern art museum, from the museum's evolution from the private interior to the public space; to the politics of exhibiting and viewing; to the shaping of personal, national, and global identities through the museum site.

Requirements:

- o **Weekly reading assignment and leading class discussion: 50%**
 - o 2-3 page reflection on readings due in class on Mondays (except for Weeks One and Three). Reflections should touch on each of the readings for the week. (15%)
 - o Together with a partner, lead class discussion twice during the quarter (10% + 10%)
 - o Be an active contributor to class discussion. (15%)

- o **Research Project: 50%**
 - o Part 1: Arrange to meet with me sometime before the start of week three to discuss research paper topic.
 - o Part 2: Write 1-2 page proposal due at the end of week three. Proposals will be distributed and discussed in class during week four. (10%)
 - o Part 3: 20-minute presentation of your research during week ten. (10%)
 - o Part 4: 15-page final paper due March 19th by 5:00pm (30%)

Books you may want to purchase:

Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*, New York: Routledge, 1995.

Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1986.

Erin Hogan, *Spiral Jetta: A Road Trip Through the Land Art of the American West*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008

Syllabus:

Week One: Introduction

- o For Wednesday: Steven Conn, "From South Kensington to the Louvre: Art Museums and the Creation of Fine Art," *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Week Two: The Art Museum as Ritual

- o Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*, New York: Routledge, 1995.

Week Three: (no classes)

PROPOSALS DUE VIA EMAIL (CHAHN@KZOO.EDU) BY 5:00PM ON JANUARY 21ST.

There is no class on Monday due to the MLK, Jr. Holiday and no class on Wednesday. Our field trip to the Art Institute of Chicago will serve as the makeup class (date to be determined).

Week Four: The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) as "a torpedo moving through time": Alfred Barr, Beaumont Newhall, and the early exhibitions

- o Eric J. Sandeen, *Picturing an Exhibition: The Family of Man and 1950s America*, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995.
- o Christopher Phillips, "The Judgment Seat of Photography," *October*, Vol. 22, (Autumn, 1982), pp. 27-63.
- o Christine Y. Hahn, "Exhibition as Archive: Beaumont Newhall, *Photography 1839-1937*, and the Museum of Modern Art," *Journal of Visual Resources*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 145-152.

Week Five: The Museum as White Cube

- o Discussion of proposals
- o Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1986.

Week Six: Confronting the empty white cube: Minimalism and Site-Specific Art

- o Miwon Kwon, "One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity," *October*, vol. 80 (Spring 1997), pp. 85-110.
- o Rebecca Deroo, "Introduction" and "Annette Messager: Exhibiting the Everyday Life of Women," *Private Objects, Public Institutions: French Art and the Reinvention of the Museum 1968-1978*, doctoral dissertation, Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000.

Week Seven: Diffusing the boundaries of the museum site: Richard Serra, Andrea Fraser, Richard Long, the Guerilla Girls, Hans Haacke, Andrea Fraser, and the politics of preserving, viewing, and exhibiting art

- o Howard Singerman, "Sherrie Levine's Art History," *October*, Vol. 101, (Summer, 2002), pp. 96-121.
- o Erin Hogan, *Spiral Jetta: A Road Trip Through the Land Art of the American West*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008

Week Eight: Problematics of Collecting and Display

- o "The Problematics of Collecting and Display, Part 1" *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (Mar., 1995), pp. 6-24
- o "The Problematics of Collecting and Display, Part 2" *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 77, No. 2 (Jun., 1995), pp. 166-185

Week Nine: Mining the Museum: Fred Wilson, Ann Hamilton, Kim Sooja, and artistic interventions into the museum space

- o Darby English, "Fantasias of the Museum," *How to See a Work of Art in Total Darkness*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007.

Week Ten: The Postmodern Museum: Where have we been, and where are we going?

- o Andreas Huyssen, "Introduction" and "Escape from Amnesia: The Museum as Mass Medium," *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*, New York: Routledge, 1995.
- o Research presentations