EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION
ART HISTORY
School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design
Department of Visual Art Art History
FA / ARTH 3611 3.0 SECTION A
CURATORIAL STUDIES: PRACTICES OF DISPLAY
FALL 2018 / WINTER 2019

Last Modified Date: 08/07/2018

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Examines the medium of exhibition, particularly how the placement of artifacts creates specific aesthetic, semiotic and ideological contexts. Topics explore the display practices of curators, artists, interpreters, designers, collectors, and dealers. Consideration is given to how the arrangement of exhibitions determines the conceptual and ontological experience of art. Analysis includes a wide range of display forms including museums, galleries, artist-run centres, virtual exhibitions, as well as site specific installations by artists and curators. Readings drawn from the burgeoning interdisciplinary literature centred on exhibitions. Participants are invited to undertake research on particular exhibition sites and present their findings to the class. The objectives of this course is to give a comprehensive overview of how exhibitions are formulated and presented, to develop a critical understanding of the specificities of exhibition discourse, and to introduce a range of methodologies used in developing exhibitions.

INSTRUCTOR(S)

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SPECIAL FEATURES

This seminar examines how the medium of exhibition generates specific aesthetic, semiotic and ideological contexts. Topics will explore the role of curatorial agency in determining aesthetic and conceptual experience. In particular, participants will research the methodologies, approaches, and motives of contemporary curators. These practices will pertain to a wide range of exhibition types including monographic exhibitions, thematic exhibitions, archival exhibitions, interventional exhibitions, biennials, art fairs, blockbuster exhibitions as well as collection-based shows.

Participants will be invited to undertake research on the practice of a contemporary curator working internationally, nationally or locally, with reference to a particular exhibition that illustrates their practice. Findings will be presented to the class.

Learning Objectives:
To develop a multifaceted understanding of contemporary curatorial practice.
To understand recent approaches to exhibition display.
To gain knowledge of the work of a range of curators active in the contemporary art world.
To provide a comprehensive overview of debates and issues relating to curatorial practice.
To introduce a range of theoretical approaches that pertain to staging exhibitions.

Course Readings are drawn from the burgeoning interdisciplinary literature centered on exhibitions. The course pack will be available from the York University Bookstore in York Lanes.

TOPICS AND CONCEPTS
1. September 10 Introduction

Sign up for Workshops I, II, III or IV.

We will meet in our classroom for an introduction to the class. Be sure to sign up for one of the workshop components of the course, Workshops I, II, III or IV.

Please immediately “subscribe” to, or “join,” the following listserves:
http://www.e-flux.com

Please bookmark:
Art History Movies Everybody Needs to Watch
https://www.widewalls.ch/art-history-movies/2. September 17 Curating & Collecting


Workshop I: What is a “collection mandate?” Working in groups of 2 or 3 present an artifact or object from a collection and talk about its value: How does it comprise part of a collection? What significance does it hold for the collection? How is the object displayed? What interest does this collection hold for you? You can source collections in person from family members or friends, on-line museums or in gallery scenes depicted on film or TV. Note: the object can be an art object, artifact or any other kind of object. What is most important is that you articulate how it functions within the collection, how it is displayed or stored, and why it is interesting.

3. September 24 The Exhibition as Medium

List of curators for final presentations will be handed out at the beginning of class.


Workshop II: How does context determine the understanding of the artwork? Working as a group, first brainstorm this question using concepts from Newhouse’s text as a guide. Then break into teams to locate 3-5 artworks situated in particularly evocative contexts. Artworks can be found on campus as part of the AGYU’s self-directed tour of sculptures, through the “virtual tours” of museums on Google Art & Culture, or Second Life. Prepare imagery – in the form of a video clip or image -- to illustrate how the context of the artwork or artifact impacts on its significance.

Please view:
AGYU self-directed tour to sculptures on campus:
http://www.yorku.ca/agyu/exhibitions/sculpture.html
Google Art & Culture Project:
https://artsandculture.google.com/project/streetviews
http://www.youtube.com/user/GoogleArtProject
http://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/asset-viewer/tate-britain/0QGuXwBoan0jSg?projectId=art-project
Exhibitions on Second Life (examples, you are encouraged to find more):
http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1A50FBA96BF6D22B
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbSbCPlkXMg http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWAEAdaq4Y.g.

October 1 Curatorial Rhetorics


Workshop III: Working as a group, decide which 3-5 curatorial blogs or curator’s Instagram accounts you find most compelling. Breaking into groups use the questions from Ferguson’s essay to present them to the
class. These presentations should launch discussion for the group. Please note that for this week it will be paramount to involve the whole class in a discussion. Beyond those signed up to for workshop presentations, other members of the class should be prepared to share their findings in class so that collectively the most interesting and/or unusual curatorial blogs and tweets will be presented. Please hand your written assignment in at the end of the class.

**CURATORIAL BLOG/INSTAGRAM ASSIGNMENT IS DUE Class #4**

**October 8  Thanksgiving and Fall Reading Week  October 15 Biennial Culture**


*Please research and view:* “Liverpool Biennial 2018 on Vimeo” (e.g., https://vimeo.com/237729448). Select one you would like to view and discuss in class. Come to class prepared to share the title and URL at the beginning of class.

**6. October 22 Structuring Engagement**

*Sign Up for Research Presentations.*


**WORKSHOP IV:** This week’s group will research and present 5 examples of forms of display outside the art world that you find aesthetically interesting. It is essential that members of the group have experienced these spaces first-hand. Prepare a short video or power-point to show how mood operates at these sites. Drawing from Baudrillard’s text, analyze how the “structure of atmosphere” operates in the exhibition sites. Examples of display sites might include retail displays, zoos, carnivals, civic festivals, theme parks, fashion shows, interior design, populist museums (such as at Niagara Falls), living history museums (such as Black Creek Pioneer Village next to campus), religious displays, gardens, medical museums, science museums, trade fairs, film and television sets, concert staging, and so on. The group should prepare to lead a class discussion about the kinds of atmosphere or mood that characterize engagement with each display.

**ABSTRACT FOR FINAL PAPER AND PRESENTATION IS DUE Class #67. October 29 Exhibition Case Studies**


**EXHIBITION ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT IS DUE Class #78. November 4 Class Presentations**

9. **November 12 Class Presentations**

10. **November 19 Class Presentations**

11. **November 26 Class Presentations**

12. **December 3 Class Presentations**

**FINAL PAPER IS DUE Class #12**

**GRADED ASSESSMENT**

**GRADING AND EVALUATION:** Participation 10%

Journal of Reading Notes 15%

Workshop and Panel Discussion, sign up class #1 10%

Curatorial Blog/Instagram Analysis (700 words), due class #4 15%

Abstract for Research Essay (300 words) due class #6 15%
Oral Presentation of Research + Notes, sign up by week #6 15%
Research Essay of 1500 words due week #12 20%
The last day to drop this course without receiving a grade is November 9.

Participation (10%)
Participation is mandatory, and since this participation requires your presence in the classroom, attendance is mandatory as well. You will be asked to take part in the class in a variety of ways. We may break into groups to discuss particular readings, debate an issue, or brainstorm particular ideas. In order to receive full marks for participation you must be present, on time and well prepared with notes from the assigned readings at every class. You must contribute to the discussion in ways that are both thoughtful and respectful of other students. Coming to class late, leaving early, not being prepared and not participating in class discussions all make the class less enjoyable for everyone and will impact your grade. Please note that if you are late or absent you are responsible for finding out what happened in class by contacting one of your classmates.

Journal of Readings & Colleagues’ Oral Presentations (Due Class #12) (15%)
All participants will keep a journal of handwritten notes you have taken while studying the assigned texts (these are written to prepare for the class rather than simply submitting class notes!). Be sure to use complete headings for each article – highlight or bold the author’s name and the title of the essay or presenter’s full name. These point-form notes should range from 250-700 words per article, depending on its complexity. Keeping a journal of reading notes will help you consolidate and track key ideas and arguments that pertain to curatorial studies and ensure that class discussions are informed and focused. Your journal should also detail the topics and analyses of your colleagues' presentations during the latter weeks of the course. Be prepared to submit your journal upon request throughout the semester. The complete journal (pages won’t be accepted) will be submitted to the instructor along with your Final Paper.

Assignments:
In evaluating your written assignments, I will consider the clarity of the thesis statement, the cogency of the argument, the effectiveness of the writing style, the relevance of the analysis to the objectives of the course, the appropriate use of sources, and the ability to stay within the word limit. Your referencing of authors must accurately use footnotes. Your text should be double-spaced, and formatted in 12 point type with indented paragraphs and a ragged right margin. Please note that emailed assignments will not be accepted.

(1) Comparative Analysis of Curatorial Blog/Curator’s Instagram Account (700 words, Due Class #4) (15%)
The first written assignment will consist of a comparative analysis of either (1) two curatorial blogs; or (2) two curator’s Instagram accounts. Analyze and compare each as forms of communication media after the essay by Bruce Ferguson in the course pack: “Who is speaking to and for whom?” What are the identities of the curatorial agents?

Is it clear or ambiguous? How is the curatorial role understood? What kind of attitude is discernable through the nature of the discourse, design, tone and mode of address? Equally, how is the audience “assumed?”

What is the “target group” the blogger/curator is addressing? Do you get the sense that the blogger/curator is speaking to people like him or her? Or someone outside their cultural and social location?

“Under which conditions?” What is the situation out of which the blog/Instagram account is produced? Which concepts of “exhibition” and “display” related? What do you perceive are the benefits and challenges of using the Web to present curatorial points of view, discussions and debates?

“Where and when?” Where does the blog or Instagram account originate? Are they operating independently or on behalf of an exhibiting institution? How often do they post? For how long have the posts been active? What is the significance of the blog or Instagram platform to the discipline of art history? What do blogs or Instagram do differently than traditional art historical writing?
The above questions are to inspire your response. Simply try to answer each of the questions and be as specific in your perceptions as you can. Be sure to print out the home page of the blog/Instagram accounts and include URLs with your assignment.

**CURATORIAL AND ART BLOGS**

- My Art Guides  [http://www.myartguides.com](http://www.myartguides.com)
- The Skinny  [http://www.theskinnycoukco.uk](http://www.theskinnycoukco.uk)/
- Fluorodigital  [http://fluorodigital.com](http://fluorodigital.com/)
- Nasher Museum, Duke University  [http://nasher.duke.edu](http://nasher.duke.edu)
- Blouin Artinfo  [http://ca.blouinartinfo.com](http://ca.blouinartinfo.com/)
- Bad at Sports: Contemporary Art Talk  [http://badatsports.com](http://badatsports.com)
- Curating.info  [http://curating.info](http://curating.info)
- CuratingLAB  [http://curating-lab.blogspot.ca](http://curating-lab.blogspot.ca/)
- Gallerist NY  [http://galleristny.com](http://galleristny.com)
- New Art  [http://new-art.blogspot.com](http://new-art.blogspot.com) or-bits-com  [http://or-bits.com](http://or-bits.com/)
- The Only Magic Left Is Art  [http://www.theonlymagicleftisart.com](http://www.theonlymagicleftisart.com/)
- The Jealous Curator  [http://www.thejealouscurator.com](http://www.thejealouscurator.com)
- Wooster Collective (street art)  [http://woostercollective.com](http://woostercollective.com)
- Art Threat  [http://artthreat.net](http://artthreat.net)
- Exhibitricks  [http://blog.orselli.net](http://blog.orselli.net/)
- VVORK  [http://www.vwork.com](http://www.vwork.com/)

**CURATORS ON INSTAGRAM (examples)**

- _aisle4
- andrew.renton annepasternak bjorgsveinbjorndottir canadianartkatz candicebeforebronwyn critical.distance
- crystalmowry curator99
- emmagerman eunice.bee thelmagolden hansulrighobrist hmolesworth jenniferhiggie johnhampton jssaughn
- kate.fowle kiendla
- klausbiesbenbach larryspringmuseum lgfournier
- nespector papapapararo share_what_you_know snowcooley sonyafilman theastergates zaluckycontemporary

(2) **Weekly Workshops and Panel Discussion (sign up) (10% graded collectively)**

On workshop weeks, your group of students will configure as a panel discussion. The purpose of the panel discussion is to work as a group in order to summarize the readings with reference to that week’s topic. Please be sure to designate members of the group to present distinct points that pertain to that week’s readings. There should be no overlap. During the discussion, panelists are encouraged to raise questions from the texts (and answer them), and make links between the readings and in relation to the workshop topic and art world as a whole. Panelists will be expected to direct discussion and answer questions from the class. Please hand a copy of the notes (one page, point form) you have prepared for the workshop to the instructor at the end of the class.

(3) **Abstract (300 words, Due Class #6) (15%)**

Participants will prepare a one-page abstract for the final research paper which provides a short biography of your chosen curator, articulates why you find their practice compelling, and provides a bibliography including articles in books, anthologies, journal articles, reviews, and web based research pertaining to your
curator.

(4) Oral Presentation (sign up) (15%): During the final weeks of the course, students will give a formal presentation (15 minutes or less) outlining of the research for their Research Essay. Your presentation should elucidate who the curator is, what the nature of their approach to exhibition is, where they originate from and where they exhibit, the historical context they are working in and the dates of the exhibition you will focus on, why you find their work important or interesting, and finally how they structure their exhibitions discursively and atmospherically. Your presentation should substantively reference at least three key concepts from the readings that help to illuminate your study of your chosen curator. Prepare one page of key points to support your presentation that you will submit to the instructor at the end of class on the day of your presentation.

(5) Research Essay (1500 words, Due Class #12) (20%)
The Final Research Paper will research and analyze the practice of a curator. The curator can either be drawn from a list that will be handed out in class, or be of your choice. (The latter option will require the permission of the instructor.) Your research and argument should dialogue with approaches from the class readings and discussions. You should make explicit at least 5 relevant concepts drawn from the readings. Be sure to ground these in relation to your research on the curator, and to weave them into your discussion, pinpointing key exhibitions, their method of working, the issues addressed in their exhibitions, and give a sense of the institutions they have exhibited in (or detail interventional projects). Your argument should offer a clear trajectory of research, including both description and analysis. Because the goal of the class is to introduce the widest possible range of curatorial approaches, each participant will write and present on a different curator. It is, therefore, to your advantage to sign up early if you have a preferred curator. You will need to conduct research in journals, magazines, periodicals and on-line to access reviews of your curator’s exhibitions and coverage of their practice. York Libraries provides excellent support in this regard. Please see York Libraries Online Help with Research
http://www.library.yorku.ca/ccm/Home/ResearchAndInstructin/index.htm

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Late Assignments: Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Assignments should be handed in to the instructor at the beginning of class on the day of the deadline. Extensions will be granted for medical emergencies or other extreme circumstances if the instructor is notified before the assignment is due. Without an approved extension, you mark will decrease by 5% for each day the assignment is late.

Special Needs: If you have special needs as a student that require some modifications to the course schedule or requirements (religious, work, travel, childcare, learning disability, etc.) please see me during office hours at the beginning of the term to make accommodations.

Grading: The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 to 100, A = 80 to 90, B+ = 75 to 79, etc.). For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar:
http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/pdfs/ug2004cal/calug04_5_acadinfo.pdf

IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS
All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:
https://www.library.yorku.ca/web/research-learn/academic-integrity/
• York’s Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures/Academic Integrity Website
• Ethics Review Process for research involving human participants
• Course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities
• Student Conduct Standards
• Religious Observance Accommodation

Writing Resources: Please consult the following general resources on theoretical writing and visual analysis keeping in mind the specific focus of the assignment:
Spark Student Paper and Academic Research Tool Kit
https://spark.library.yorku.ca/

Citation Style Guides and Writers' Manuals
http://www.library.yorku.ca/ccm/Home/ResearchAndInstruction/StyleManuals/ ESL Open Learning Centre
http://www.yorku.ca/eslolc/

York Libraries Online Help with Research
http://www.library.yorku.ca/ccm/Home/ResearchAndInstruction/index.htm

Academic Honesty and Integrity
York students are required to maintain high standards of academic integrity and are subject to the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty Codes of Academic Honesty are taken very seriously and violations are treated severely, including failing the course, being suspended from the university or withholding a degree, diploma or certificate. It is expected that all your work be produced by you, that you are not resubmitting work from other classes, and that you acknowledge sources that informed your thinking appropriately.

Access/Disability
York provides services for students with disabilities (including physical, medical, learning and psychiatric disabilities) needing accommodation related to teaching and evaluation methods/materials. These services are made available to students in all Faculties and programs at York University. Students in need of these services are asked to register with disability services as early as possible to ensure that appropriate academic accommodation can be provided with advance notice. You are encouraged to schedule a time early in the term to meet with each professor to discuss your accommodation needs. Please note that registering with disabilities services and discussing your needs with your professors is necessary to avoid any impediment to receiving the necessary academic accommodations to meet your needs.

Additional information is available through Counselling & Disability Services at www.yorku.ca/cds or from disability service providers:
- Personal Counselling and Learning Skills Services: N110 BCSS, 416-736-5297
- Mental Health Disability Services: N110 BCSS, 416-736-5297
- Learning Disability Services: W128 BCSS, 416-736-5383
- Physical, Sensory and Medical Disability Services: N108 Ross, 416-736-5140, TTY: 416-736-5263

Deaf and Hard of Hearing students can also contact dhh@yorku.ca

Ethics Review Process
York students are subject to the York University Policy for the Ethics Review Process for Research Involving Human Participants. In particular, students proposing to undertake research involving human participants (e.g., interviewing the director of a company or government agency, having students complete a questionnaire, etc.) are required to submit an Application for Ethical Approval of Research Involving Human Participants at least one month before you plan to begin the research. If you are in doubt as to whether this requirement applies to you, contact your Course Director immediately.

Religious Observance Accommodation
York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community, and making accommodations for observances of special significance to adherents. Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus pose such a conflict for you, contact the Course Director within the first three weeks of class. Similarly, should an assignment scheduled later in the term pose such a conflict, contact the course director immediately.

Student Conduct
Students and instructors are expected to maintain a professional relationship characterized by courtesy and mutual respect and to refrain from actions disruptive to such a relationship. Just as it is the responsibility of the instructor to maintain an appropriate academic atmosphere in the classroom, so, too, it the responsibility of students to cooperate in that endeavour. A statement of the policy and procedures involving disruptive and/or harassing behaviour by students in academic situations is available on the York website http://www.yorku.ca/univsec/policies/document.php?document=82 .
Many courses utilize Moodle, York University's course website system. If your course is using Moodle, click here to access it.

Moodle @ York University