EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION
ART HISTORY
School of the Arts, Media, Performance and Design
Department of Visual Art Art History
FA / ARTH 4640C.0 SECTION A
CONTEMPORARY ART AND SURREALISM
FALL 2020 / WINTER 2021

Last Modified Date: 08/05/2020

COURSE CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

Focuses on the art of the 1990s. In exploring this period, major emphasis is placed on the resurgence of Surrealist strategies in recent practice. A central theme involves the complex interplay between theory and practice within contemporary art of the last 10 years. In this vein, theories such as Kristeva's concept of the abject, Bataille's notion of the formless, Freud's categories of the uncanny and the death drive, and Lacan's problematic of the real receive close attention. Revisionist interpretations of Surrealism itself by contemporary critics such as Yve-Alain Bois, Whitney Chadwick, Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss and others are extensively discussed. Rachel Whiteread, Jimmie Durham, Mona Hatoum, Gary Hill and Sarah Luca are among the contemporary artists whose work is considered. Prerequisites: 3rd- or 4th-year standing.

INSTRUCTOR(S)

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<th>Name</th>
<th>Section / Format / Term</th>
<th>Contact Email</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grosskurth, Brian J B</td>
<td>Sec. A / SEMR / F</td>
<td><a href="mailto:bgrossk@yorku.ca">bgrossk@yorku.ca</a></td>
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SPECIAL FEATURES

Time and Location: Thursday. 11.30 -- Moodle

This online course will focus this year on the rise of Surrealism in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s in the wake of the First World War and the 1918 pandemic. Particular focus will be given to the multiple ways in which the question of death haunted the movement. In this context, we shall be reading Hal Foster’s seminal study of 1993, Compulsive Beauty, the text that first called attention to this dimension of Surrealism. This year I shall also be taking Joan Miró as both a representative and unique figure in the historical emergence of Surrealism. For your own work and research, however, you will be free to focus on any other Surrealist artists or issues in relation to a wide range of questions. Alternatively, you will also have the choice of focusing on works of contemporary art that you may analyse in relation to concepts raised in the course and assigned readings.

The course will be given online through Moodle. The equivalent of 12 weeks of lectures will be cumulatively posted on the Moodle page. In addition, I shall be posting essay advice and additional commentary from week to week. I shall also be communicating with the class, on a regular basis, through email. You may contact me at bgrossk@yorku.ca with any questions that you may have about the course. If public health conditions permit, we may possibly consider having one or two optional field trips downtown, outdoors, with masks, and social distancing.
TOPICS AND CONCEPTS

Course Texts:
Suggested:
Hal Foster, Bad New Days, London, 2015
I am also adding as a suggested reading Achille Mbembe, Necropolitics, Durham, 2019 for its discussion of some of the concepts that I shall be using in the course. The original article on which the 2019 book is based can be readily found online as a pdf - Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics”, 2003.
Course Schedule (please note that the following outline is provisional in character and may be subject to change:
Week One: Introduction
Week Two: Surrealism and the Paris Avant-Garde
Week Three: The Fracturing of Signs
Week Four: Murdering Painting
Week Five: Psyche
Week Six: Death Drive
Week Seven: Uncanny
Week Eight: Carnivalizing Cubism
Week Nine: Popular Fronts
Week Ten: Signs of the Sacred
Week Eleven: Visions of Purity
Week Twelve: Politics of Friendship

Important Dates:
Week Seven: Essay Outline Due, 14 October, 2020
Week Ten: First Essay Due, 5 November 2020
Week Twelve: Final Essay Due, 3 December 2020

Selected Bibliography
Sigmund Freud, Dreams and Delusions in Jensens "Gradiva", in The Standard Edition of the Psychoanalytic
Brian Grosskurth, "Inside Out: Rebecca Horn and the Extreme Monument", Sculpture and Psychoanalysis,
Charles Palermo, Fixed Ecstasy: Joan Miró in the 1920s, Penn, 2008.
Brandon Taylor, Avant-Garde and After, New York, 1996.
LIST OF LEARNING OUTCOMES AND EXAMPLES OF

1) The course will assist students in examining key historical issues within a challenging theoretical framework.

GRADED ASSESSMENT

EVALUATION: Two 8-Page Essays (30% each, due dates: 6 November and 4 December, 2020), Essay Outline (15%, due date: 15 October 2020) Class Presentation (20%), Participation (5%).

Essays: The 2 short essays must be a minimum of 7-8 pages and focus on one or two works of art from the Surrealist period in any visual media from any perspective. You may also write on a contemporary work of art as long as you do so in relation to a concept or question that relates to Surrealism and to at least one of the concepts discussed by Hal Foster or, alternatively, by Achille Mbembe. Students may also have the option of writing 1 long paper instead of 2 short essays. In order to qualify, however, this paper must have a minimum of 12 pages of text, excluding endnotes and bibliography. Anything less will not be accepted as a long paper and will be counted as a short essay in the final grading scheme.

Essay Outline: The essay outline should be a minimum of 2 pages and include bibliography. It should a clear and concise presentation of the central arguments that you propose to use in your upcoming papers.

Presentations: Presentations should be approximately the equivalent of 8 double-spaced pages and they should focus, in a preliminary way, on your essay research. The format for this is flexible – power point, pdf document etc. As I am very concerned about safeguarding your online privacy, I have decided that it’s best to email this material directly to me at bgrossk@yorku.ca at a date to be determined later. If you wish to share your presentation with the rest of the class, you may do choose to do so through the class email that I will also be using. However, this would be an entirely optional decision on your part.

Assignment Submission: All work, except for presentation material, must be submitted through Moodle. 4 Essay Deadlines: 5 November 2020 and 3 December 2020

Essay Outline Deadline: 14 October 2020
Lateness Penalties: Essays turned in after the due date are penalized by 5% per day. Lateness due to medical or other reasons must be fully documented.

GRADING: The grading scheme for this course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g. A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, etc.). Assignments and tests will bear either a letter grade designation or a corresponding number grade (or both): (e.g. A+ = 90-100; A = 80-89; B+ = 75-79; etc.). For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

IMPORTANT COURSE INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS
All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information, available on the Senate Committee on Curriculum & Academic Standards webpage (see Reports, Initiatives, Documents) http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate_cte_main_pages/ccas.htm

• 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

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 (http://www.yorku.ca/univsec/policies/document.php?document=69). There is also an academic integrity website with complete information about academic honesty. Students are expected to review the materials on the Academic Integrity website (http://www.yorku.ca/academicintegrity). 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, 416-736-5350
• 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

Glendon students - Counselling & Disability Services, Glendon Site: Glendon Hall E103, 416-487-6709

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 for an in-class test or examination
pose such a conflict for you, contact the Course Director within the first three weeks of class. Similarly, should an assignment to be completed in a lab, practicum placement, workshop, etc., scheduled later in the term pose such a conflict, contact the Course Director immediately. Please note that to arrange an alternative date or time for an examination scheduled in the formal examination periods (December and April/May), students must complete an Examination Accommodation Form, which can be obtained from Student Client Services, Bennett Student Services Centre or online at http://www.registrar.yorku.ca/pdf/exam_accommodation.pdf

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. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the instructor to maintain an appropriate academic atmosphere in the classroom, and the responsibility of the student to cooperate in that endeavour. Further, the instructor is the best person to decide, in the first instance, whether such an atmosphere is present in the class. 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
Please note that this information is subject to periodic update. For the most current information, please go to the CCAS webpage (see Reports, Initiatives, Documents): http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate_cte_main_pages/ccas.htm

Many courses utilize Moodle, York University’s course website system. If your course is using Moodle, click here to access it.
Moodle @ York University