

Art Activism Community Project

(SP18-46-2505-01, J-Session 2018)

Monday-Friday, 10:00-3:30

Class Room: 421, 33. E. Congress

Instructor: Ryan Trauman

Mobile: 502-759-4083 (texts only, please)

Email: rtrauman@colum.edu

Office Hours

Monday: 3:30-5:30; Wednesday: 3:30-5:30;

other times by appointment.

Office: 317C, 33 E. Congress

Office Phone: (312) 369-8254

Course description: This course presents students with an opportunity for hands-on civic engagement, working with two larger guiding questions:

- Can art change/save lives?
- It might be activism, but is it art?

Art Activism Community Project will expose students to a wide range of art activism projects, to socially engaged practice in many different forms. We'll begin the course by reading theory and examining specific examples of artistic activism, in the larger context of the social and political issues that would help inform the artistic action. In the second week, the course will shift into execution of a specific and newly imagined project where students will work with the instructor and community members to execute their own plan for artistic action. The third week will focus on production and documentation of the students' newly conceived group projects. Every student will be responsible to attend all sessions, come prepared to class, write response essays on time, participate actively in the artistic action, and create a collaborative multimodal composition that illustrates some aspect of the group community project.

Goals and Objectives: Designed with interdisciplinary intentions, this course intends to connect art and design students with cultural studies students in order to make clear the relationship between theory and practice. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Consider theoretical ideas and perspectives regarding the relationship between art and activism in the larger context of civic engagement
- Understand art as a complex communication and cultural reflection of political, public and personal paradigms
- Use the theoretical ideas regarding art and activism to inform the design and implementation of an artistic project, one that can be understood as activist
- Interact with community members in an artistic action that has local and global implications

Course Rationale: This course is a response to both the mission statement of Columbia College Chicago regarding a duty to help students "communicate creatively and shape the public's perceptions of issues and events," and the critique that students at Columbia may "know their art," but they have a difficult time iterating their ideas. Anyone who studies art knows that all art need not be political, that art need not be specifically activist. This course focuses on art that will "shape public perception," by providing students with a project that requires civic engagement on local and global levels. Ideally, the project would coordinate and connect with a larger center or project on campus such as Critical Encounters or the Center for Community Arts Partnerships.

In addition to providing this activist opportunity, the course focuses on making clear connections between theoretical ideas and the practice of “making art” in order to provide students with the vocabulary and scaffolding necessary to speak intelligibly about their work. By joining cultural studies students, (those focusing on the investigation and iteration of culture and meaning,) with art and design students, (those focusing on the design and production of art,) this course not only reflects purposeful interdisciplinary pedagogy, but also allows students from different majors to provide expertise to the class as a whole. Bringing these students together allows the faculty the ability to illustrate what theory has to do with practice in a concrete manner. Overall, the intention here is to make clear to all students the power of collaboration and reciprocal relationship in art-making.

Meeting Times: This course meets from 10:00am to 3:30pm for the duration of J-Session 2018. The dates for this year are: January 2nd - January 5th and January 8th - January 12th And January 15th – January 19th. We will set aside 30 minutes each day for lunch.

Assignments: In addition to attendance and basic completion of reading assignments, students are required to, and will be assessed based upon completion of the following assignments:

- **Response Essays:** 1-2 page daily writing assignments that ask students to make connections between and among theoretical ideas and practical concerns. Students may be asked to reflect upon readings, or course discussion, to examine their own beliefs or cultural values. The intention will be to ask students to practice iteration of their artistic vision and ideals.
- **Personal Digital Story and Reflection:** Students will create a 1-3 image digital story using an interface that we introduce in class. The stories will be created and presented in class. The assignment also includes an alphabetic text reflection.
- **Final Reflection:** Students will write a 1000 word reflection on their course experience and be evaluated on their ability to speak specifically and tangibly about the ways that the course impacted their understandings of collaboration, activism, and or/the power of art. Students ought to include an evaluation of the challenges they faced, and the strategies they developed to meet the challenges to complete the group collaborative multimodal composition.
- **Group Multimodal Composition/Documentation:** In groups of three, four, or five, students will collect materials, write, and create a digital story that works to present an issue or organization of the group’s choosing OR the group may choose to create a piece that answers the question: Is digital storytelling art activism? We will go over the requirements of the piece in depth in the class. Pieces will be completed and then screened on January 19, 2018, the final day of the course.
- **In-class Preparation and Participation:** Students will be evaluated based upon their physical and energetic participation and engagement with in-class discussions and activities. Being present, on time and prepared by having submitted writing assignments PRIOR to attending class are essential for successful participation in and completion of the course. Students who are absent for any part of a class may lose as many as 50 points. If you miss two class meetings you will likely fail the course.

Readings

- Speretta, T. (2014). *Rebels rebel: AIDS, art, and activism in New York, 1979-1989*. Ghent: MER. Paper Kunsthalle. [264 pgs.]
- Lorde, A. (1984). The transformation of silence into language and action. *Sister outsider : essays and speeches*. (pp. 40-44). Trumansburg, NY:Crossing Press. [5 pgs.]
- Lorde, A. (1997). The Uses of Anger. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 25(1/2), 278-285. [8 pgs.]
- Lorde, A. (1984). Use of the erotic: the erotic as power. *Sister outsider : essays and speeches*. (pp. 53-59). Trumansburg, NY:Crossing Press. [7 pgs.]
- Williams, T. T. (2010). Commencement [online article]. Retrieved from <https://orionmagazine.org/article/commencement/> [5 pgs.]
- Williams, T. T. (2003). The open space of democracy [online article]. Retrieved from https://archive.unews.utah.edu/news_releases/university-of-utah-2003-commencement-address-by-terry-tempest-williams/ [5 pgs.]
- Lambert, J. (2013). The seven stages of a story. *Seven stages: story and the human experience*. (pp. 131-151). Berkeley, CA: Digital Diner Press. [21 pgs.]
- Lambert, J. (2013). Seven steps of digital storytelling. *Digital storytelling: capturing lives, creating community*, 4th ed. (pp. 53-69). Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. [17 pgs.]
- Vivienne, S. (2011). Transdigital storytelling: everyday activism, mutable identity and the problem of visibility. *Gay & Lesbian Issues & Psychology Review*, 7(1), 43-54. [12 pgs.]
- Vivienne, S. (2011). Mediating identity narratives: a case study in queer digital storytelling as everyday activism. In S. Fragoso (Ed.), *AOIR Selected Papers of Internet Research (IR 12.0) : Performance and Participation, Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR)*, Seattle, Wash., (pp. 1-19.) [19 pgs.]

NOTE: All readings other than *Rebels Rebel* are provided on our course Moodle space.

Attendance Policy

Absences must be avoided at all cost. If you must miss class, you are still responsible for completing and submitting any assignments by their original due date. You must also speak to me or a classmate about what you missed in class. If you are absent for one or more class periods, your final grade will be lowered significantly. If you are absent for two or more class periods, you will likely not pass the course. Tardiness (coming in after I take attendance) is seriously frowned upon. If you are late two or more times, it will affect your course grade significantly. The English Department does not make a distinction between valid and invalid excuses when it comes to absences and tardiness. Any absence, whether due a college activity, personal commitment, family emergency, illness, or any other reason will each count as an absence.

Additionally, students are required to attend class regularly. If your professor reports that you failed to attend and participate in class during the add/drop period, a grade of NS (no-show) will be entered on your record for the course. Please note, you will still be charged tuition and fees for any course for which you receive a NS grade. For more information on non-attendance please visit the Student Financial Services website: [Student Financial Services](#)

Late Work Policy

Each assignment for the course must meet the minimum requirements and respective deadline in order to earn full credit. Late work will be accepted for significantly reduced credit—usually no more than half-credit—unless related to your group project. Late work related to your group project will not be accepted for any credit at all. In-class assignments can only be completed in class on the day they are due. You must be present to complete the assignment. Missed in-class assignments cannot be made up at a later time.

Plagiarism and other Violations of Academic Integrity: It is your responsibility to read and understand Columbia College Chicago's Academic Integrity Policy. You can find the full description of the policy in the course catalog here:

<http://catalog.colum.edu/content.php?catoid=5&navoid=1053>) If you have any questions about the specific instances or the policy in general, please don't hesitate to contact me with your question.

Students with disabilities: Students with disabilities are requested to present their Columbia accommodation letters to their instructor at the beginning of the semester so that accommodations can be arranged in a timely manner by the College, the department, or the faculty member, as appropriate. Students with disabilities who do not have accommodation letters should visit the office of Services for Students with Disabilities. It is incumbent upon the student to know their responsibilities in this regard. <http://students.colum.edu/ssd/>

Statement of Nondiscrimination: In accordance with civil rights legislation and its commitment to a non-discrimination policy, Columbia College Chicago does not discriminate in its admissions, employment, housing, services, or in the educational courses or programs that it operates based on age, gender, race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation. It is also a Columbia College Chicago policy to ensure that no qualified student with a disability is denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination in any College program or activity.

Counseling Services: Services are designed to help students address concerns and increase self-awareness, while empowering to manage challenging areas in their lives. All counseling staff follows professional standards of confidentiality. Information discussed within a counseling relationship will not be disclosed without written permission of the individual. Counseling Services are provided free of charge. Services include individual, couple, and group therapy for students. All currently enrolled students are eligible to receive services. Counseling Service provides students with 10 free individual counseling sessions per academic year. 731 S. Plymouth Court, suite 112, 312.369.8700 counselingservices@colum.edu.

College Advising: The College Advising Center provides undergraduate students with information, guidance, and support to create and implement an integrated educational and professional plan in the arts and media fields. College advisors assist students with all transitional issues to help them navigate the entire college experience. The Advising Center helps students clarify and take responsibility for their academic and career goals. First-year students are expected to meet with their college advisor at least once a semester during their first year. 623 S Wabash, suite 300, 312.369.7645 collegeadvising@colum.edu.

The Learning Studio: The Learning Studio is an excellent resource for academic progress and success for all students at any level. The Learning Studio provides tutoring in a number of disciplines including Accounting, the Science and Math Learning Center, the Foreign Languages Lab

and the Writing Center. Students are encouraged to go to the Learning Studio and work with the tutors. Students can make an appointment through Oasis (using the “Make Appointments” tab) or call the Learning Studio. 618 S. Michigan, first floor, 312.369.8130 www.colum.edu/learningstudio