
STRATEGIES

Wednesdays 4:00-7:00pm (GC1)



Jordana Moore Saggese, PhD

(not pictured above)

Office: 80 Carolina Bldg. Room 256

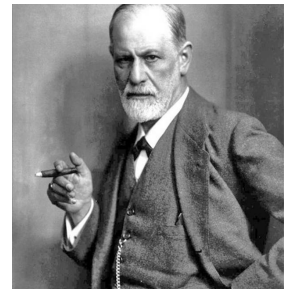
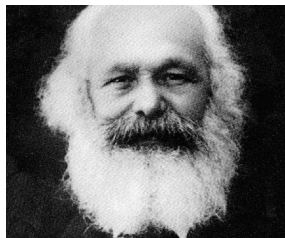
Email: jsaggese@cca.edu

Office Hours by appointment

This syllabus is your “contract” for this class. Please read it thoroughly and contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.

This course is a survey of the key texts, thinkers, concepts, and theoretical approaches that influence the study of visual culture and the production of criticism. It is an opportunity for students to engage with the ideas that are deployed in these conversations, while gaining the ability to use these resources in their own work. The course is by design interdisciplinary, drawing upon the theoretical advances made in fields as diverse as philosophy, linguistics, art history, psychoanalysis, and literary studies. We also attend to how these discourses are creatively transformed by those working within feminist and/or queer theoretical frameworks. The guiding thesis of this course is that the visual is situated within larger fields of cultural production, which require carefully defined strategies to make explicit their ontological, epistemological, historical, and political assumptions.

I will make every effort to ensure that your experience of critical theory is meaningful and pertinent. In return, please take the time to read this syllabus carefully and contact me right away if you have any questions or concerns. Regular communication is important to your success in this class and is a shared responsibility of both the instructor and the student. Email is the quickest way to reach me. I will generally respond to your inquiries within 24 hours Mon-Fri. If I do not reply in this time frame, please assume I did not receive your email and contact me again.

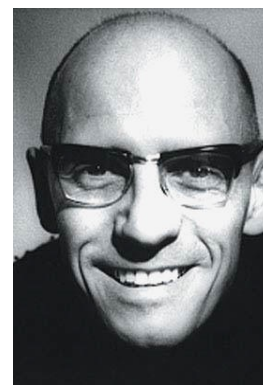


“Bottom line. Artists don’t make art. They make conversation.”

**-WILLIAM POPE, L.,
ARTIST, 2002**

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Historiography:** Students will develop knowledge and understanding of the history of the study of visual culture and the foundational debates in the field.
- **Critical Reading:** Students will engage primary, secondary, and theoretical texts, including the recognition of forms of evidence and the wider implications/applications of the argument.
- **Critical Analysis:** Students will practice the application of theoretical and methodological frameworks to objects of visual culture.
- **Presentation Skills:** Students will develop communication skills through short in-class presentations that effectively integrate visual materials as well as their audience.
- **Critical Writing Skills:** Students will strengthen their abilities in argumentation, composition, style, and mechanics.

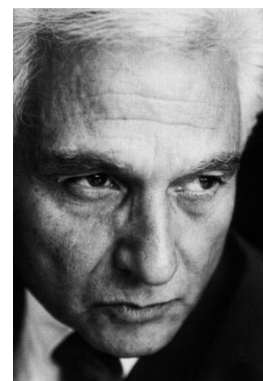


Your Responsibilities

Enrolling in this course is a commitment, and it is important to realize at the outset that it will require the consistent investment of your time and energy.

By enrolling in this class:

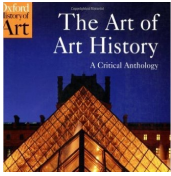
- You agree to uphold the standards of academic integrity described in the college's Student Handbook.
- You agree to spend an *average* of 6 hours each week on assignments outside of class.
- You agree to complete all readings and related assignments on time.
- You agree to be available for the event dates listed. There are no make-up events unless a legitimate emergency occurs and I am notified immediately.
- You agree to adhere to the expectations for respectful class behavior outlined in this syllabus (see page 3), as well as the college-wide attendance policy.
- You agree to contact the instructor at any point if you have a question or need



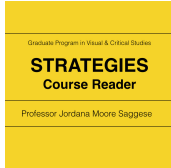
“Context...is a text itself, and it thus consists of signs that require interpretation. What we take to be positive knowledge is the product of interpretative choices.”

-Mieke Bal & Norman Bryson

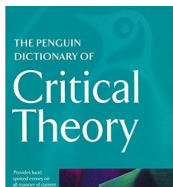
Course Materials & Resources



Required Textbook: Donald Preziosi, editor, *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, Second edition (London: Oxford University Press, 2009). ISBN: 0199229848. \$16.21 (new) or \$11.31 (used). Purchase on Amazon [here](#).



Course Reader: Additional weekly readings are available in the **Strategies Course Reader** on sale at Green Copy (5267 Broadway, Oakland CA 94618). \$36.99 + tax



Recommended Text: David Macey, editor, *Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory* (2002) ISBN: 0140513698. \$13.13 (new) or \$4.69 (used). Purchase on Amazon [here](#).



Google Classroom. We will use Google Classroom to manage course assignments, handouts, and announcements. To enroll in Google Classroom you will need to use the enrollment code: **3ee7yy** You can find [instructions for accessing Google Classroom](#) on the ETS Webpage.

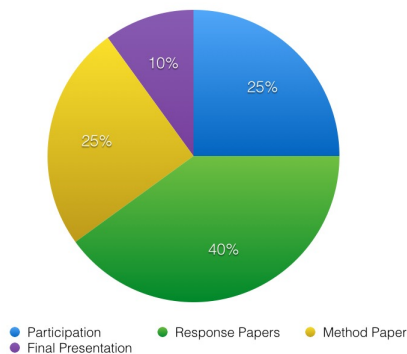
Statement of Civility

I would like to welcome all students into an environment that creates a sense of community, pride, courtesy and respect; we are all here to work cooperatively and to learn together. A few simple norms of courtesy should be sufficient to have our class run in the best interests of all of us. In order to create a harmonious learning community, please:

- **Participate in discussions**, and if called upon, try to respond.
- Always **listen carefully**, with an open mind, to the contributions of others.
- **Demonstrate respect** for ideas, beliefs and people.
- Make every attempt to **come to all class sessions on time**, and to stay until the end of the meeting unless you have informed me that you need to leave early.
- **Cell phones must be turned off** during class, unless exceptional circumstances require use of a cell phone. Consult with the instructor for approval. Laptop computers can be used during the course only during specified times and for specified activities. Students engaging in non-course related cellphone or computer activities during the course (i.e., texting or “surfing the net”) may be required to shut off their devices, may be told to leave, and may be marked absent for the class session.
- We will have a short break (20 minutes) every class session, but please **refrain from eating** in the classroom at other times.
- Please **take care of all personal needs before class** begins. Do not come in and out of the classroom while class is in session, unless it is an emergency.

Course Grading & Requirements

Student performance will be measured in the following categories. Please note that student work will be evaluated according to the VCS Learning Outcomes: Historiography, Critical Reading, Critical Analysis, Presentation Skills, and Critical Writing Skills. Please consult the [VCS Learning Outcomes Rubric](#) for more information.



A Note on Attendance....

Students are expected to attend the full length of all classes and to participate fully in discussions and collaborative activities. Three unexcused absences will result in the automatic failure of the class. Three tardy arrivals (10 minutes late) will count as one unexcused absence. If more than one class is missed due to illness the student must submit written verification from a physician and notify the professor via e-mail immediately. Medical documents must be submitted within two weeks of an absence.

Participation

Students are required to attend the full length of all classes and to participate fully. Details on how participation is evaluated can be found here. Please note that all VCS Students are also **REQUIRED** to attend the VCS Forums as part of their degree program. Dates are posted in our course schedule, beginning on page 6. Your participation grade also includes presentation of a “case study” in class. Details are provided below.

Case Studies

Each week one student will choose an image, object, or other visual phenomenon and lead a brief discussion that connects the methodological approach exemplified in the week’s readings to that visual object. Please submit the case study example –jpeg and text— to the instructor by email <jsaggese@cca.edu> by 12:00PM on Tuesday before class, for posting online. All students should review the example before coming to class. Grades for the Case Studies will factor into the final Participation Grade.

Response Papers

Students will complete a weekly 1-2 page, double-spaced, typed response paper for every class session **beginning September 16**. These papers should address the ideas presented by the theorists that week. More than just writing down a series of question or observations about the week’s readings, the goal of these assignments is to learn how to articulate what you understand and unpack aspects of the readings that you don’t understand. In other words, this exercise is designed to help you teach yourself how to read (and use) theory.

Critical Method Paper

Students will write a short paper (3-5 pages) in which they will apply a theory or method of analysis to an object (a text, performance, or event). We will choose the objects collectively. Students will receive feedback from peer review and the instructor prior to the final submission of the paper. All deadlines are listed in the course schedule.

Final Presentation

Each student will give a final presentation on the last day of class that reflects upon the theories and methodologies encountered in this class, and evaluates their usefulness for each individual’s critical interests and creative pursuits.



Policy on Late Work

In general, late work is not accepted unless a legitimate unforeseen situation arises. To receive an extension, students are responsible for notifying me of their situation prior to a due date and receiving an email from me with an agreed upon extension.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact Access & Wellness Services to discuss specific needs. Please contact Suzanne Raffeld, Director of Access & Wellness Services at 510-594-3775, via email at sraffeld@cca.edu, or stop by the office (Irwin Student Center) to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Academic Integrity

CCA students are expected to maintain standards of academic integrity, which is defined in detail [here](#). The Academic Integrity Code is to be upheld and enforced by all CCA students and faculty members. Depending on the nature and severity of the incident, violations of this code may result in academic or disciplinary sanctions, or both, up to and including failure of the course and dismissal from the college. If you have questions, **please** ask – ignorance is not an excuse for violating the Code of Academic Integrity.

Warning! You may get uncomfortable.

The visual culture we will be covering in this course may include some works that are sexually explicit, that depict graphic violence, or that are politically provocative. Some may find these works disturbing or even offensive. Such works are included because they represent significant aspects of visual culture. They present important challenges to artistic conventions, social norms, standards of beauty, and definitions of culture. Students will not be asked to subscribe to any particular definition of visual culture, nor will they be required to like all the works shown. However, if you choose to take this course, you will be expected to understand the issues involved and why they are important. If you have any concerns, please discuss them with the professor.



COURSE SCHEDULE

The following is an outline of weekly topics and readings. Related assignments are listed on Google Classroom. This schedule is subject to change.

Week 1: Course Introduction

Sept. 2 Introduction to each other, course concepts, and course mechanics

Week 2: Art History/ Visual Culture

Sept. 9 Mieke Bal, Yve-Alain Bois, Irving Lanvin, Griselda Pollock and Christopher S. Wood, "Art History and Its Theories," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 78, no. 1 (March 1996): 6-25.

Douglas Crimp, "Getting the Warhol We Deserve," *Social Text* 59, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Summer 1999): 49-66.

AAH: Marquard Smith, "Visual Culture Studies: Questions of History, Theory, and Practice"

Week 3: Form & Style

Sept. 16 **AAH:** Heinrich Wölfflin, "Principles of Art History"

AAH: Ernst Gombrich, "Style"

Karen Lang, "Introduction: Theory Begins with Looking" in *Chaos and Cosmos: On the Image in Aesthetics and Art History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006): 1-11, 215-216.

Week 4: Aesthetics & The Philosophy of Art

Sept. 23 **AAH:** Immanuel Kant, "The Critique of Judgment"

AAH: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, "Philosophy of Fine Art"

Rob Marks, "The Sublime and the Beautiful in Richard Serra's A Matter of Time," in *Sightlines* (San Francisco: VCS Program at California College of the Arts 2011), 152-182.

VCS Forum: Duane Deterville, 10AM-12PM (San Francisco Boardroom)

Week 5: Marxism

Sept. 30 Karl Marx, excerpts from *The German Ideology* and “The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof” from *Capital*, vol. One in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd edition, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 148-175, 319-329.

Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), 85-126.

VCS Forum: Cherise Smith, 10AM-12PM (San Francisco Boardroom)

Week 6: Marxist Theory & Materialist Histories of Visual Culture

Oct. 7 **AAH:** Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility”

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 2002), 94-136, 269-272.

Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313.

Week 7: Psychoanalysis

Oct. 14 Sigmund Freud “Fetishism” in *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, ed. Philip Reiff (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 204-209.

Jacques Lacan, “The Mirror Stage,” in *Écrits*, trans. Ann Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton, 1977), 75-81.

Jacques Lacan, “The Line and Light” and “What is a Picture?” from *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller and trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1981), 91-119.

Midterm Progress Reports

Week 8: Feminist Theory

Oct. 21 Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” in *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 4. (Dec., 1988): 519-531.

Oct. 21
(continued) Catherine Clément, "The Birth of Identity and the Syncope of the Imago," in *Syncope: The Philosophy of Rapture*, trans. Sally O. Driscoll and Deirdre M. Mahoney (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 118-130.

Kaja Silverman, "Fassbinder and Lacan: A Reconsideration of Gaze, Look, and Image," in *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 125-156.

VCS Forum: Derek Conrad Murray, 10AM-12PM (San Francisco Boardroom)

Week 9: Semiotics/ Structuralism

Oct. 28 Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Noonday Press, 1977), 32-51.

Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, "Semiotics and Art History: A Discussion of Context and Senders," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (Jun., 1991), pp. 174-208.

VCS Forum: Christopher Reed, 10AM-12PM (San Francisco Boardroom)

Week 10: Post-structuralism

Nov. 4 **AAH:** Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art"

AAH: Meyer Schapiro, "The Still Life as a Personal Object: A Note on Heidegger and Van Gogh"

AAH: Jacques Derrida, "Restitutions of the Truth in Pointing [Pointure]"

VCS Forum: Natalie Jeremijenko, 10AM-12PM (San Francisco Boardroom)

Week 11: Discourses of Power

Nov. 11 Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," in Hubert L. Dreyfuss and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 208-226.

Martin Jay, "Scopic Regimes of Modernity," in *Vision and Visuality*, ed. Hal Foster (New York: New Press, 1999), 2-23.

Shawn Michelle Smith, "Afterimages: White Womanhood, Lynching, and the War in Iraq," in *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*, No. 20 (Fall 2006): 72-85.

Due: Draft of Methods Paper (bring two paper copies to class)

VCS Forum: Indira Allegra, 10AM-12PM (San Francisco Boardroom)

Week 12: Discourses of Difference

Nov. 18 **AAH:** Craig Owens, "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism"

AAH: Jennifer Doyle, "Queer Wallpaper"

Samuel Delany, "On the Unspeakable," *Shorter Views, Queer Thoughts & The Politics of the Paraliterary* (Wesleyan University Press, 2011), 58-66.

VCS Forum: Nicole Archer, 10AM-12PM (San Francisco Boardroom)

Week 13: Individual Meetings

Nov. 25 Students sign up for individual meetings (30 minutes) w/ instructor.

Week 14: The Question of Visual Culture

Dec. 2 W.J.T. Mitchell, "Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture," *Journal of Visual Culture*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (August 2002): 165-181.

Mieke Bal, "Visual Essentialism and the Object of Visual Culture," *Journal of Visual Culture*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (April 2003): 5-32.

Janet Wolff, "After Cultural Theory: The Power of Images, the Lure of Immediacy," *Journal of Visual Culture*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2012): 3-19.

VCS Forum: David Spalding, 10AM-12PM (San Francisco Boardroom)

Week 15: Final Presentations, Thoughts, and Reflections

Dec. 9 Student presentations in-class.

Due: Final Draft of Methods Paper