Warning: If you are looking for a conventional painting class, this may not be the course for you. This course will ask you to use materials other than paint, to go off the wall into the room, and to think in new ways about painting and art making in general.

“There is only one valuable thing in art: the thing you cannot explain. ”

-Georges Braque

AVT 336 Experimental Painting (4:2:4): Prerequisites: AVT 232 or equivalent, or permission of instructor.

Experimental Painting:
Using contemporary painting practices as a starting place, students explore a variety of experimental and conceptual approaches to painting. Through a series of structured and free problems, students will investigate non-traditional materials, scale, formats, surfaces, and methods of paint application, as well as content and concept-driven approaches to painting. In the context of expanding and defining themselves, students will be engaged with questions as basic as: what should a painting look like? What should a painting do? What can a painting be?

Course Objectives:
Whether representational or nonrepresentational, good painting requires good process, knowledge of self, knowledge of formal techniques, an educated eye, and a personal vision. A sequence of topics and related approaches to painting will be explored in an attempt to balance theoretical and conceptual issues with formal painting strategies and methodologies. This will be complemented by a series of open assignments geared to disciplined self-exploration and experimentation with materials. The hope is that by semester’s end, you will have woven these fundamentals into your intuitive process and emerge with a theoretical context for the practice of painting, a knowledge of form, and an openness for experimentation--each of which is necessary to good painting.

This course assumes the student already has a fundamental understanding of aesthetic principles along with some drawing and painting experience. Each student will begin to build a body of work derived both from specific experimental projects and from formal and substantial issues that are relevant to his or her own process and personal vocabulary.

Expectations and Class Attendance:
Students are expected to arrive on time and prepared to work. Since most learning and course work are done during class time, attendance and class engagement are mandatory. There is no substitute for good attendance. More than two unexcused absences will lower your grade by a point, and so on. Painters are expected to work openly, constantly and in an independent and rigorous manner.
Critiques:
Critiques are a forum for linking our studio practices to our ideas, our products to our intentions. The critique is also a place where we can link ourselves to the larger discourse around us. What happens when our private studio work becomes public and joins the larger conversation of art works being made in the world? We will experiment with various critique formats as they relate to specific projects and trajectories in our thinking. Students are expected to participate fully in class critiques both by offering constructive commentary to peers and by later considering and applying it to your own work. You are encouraged to bring back work from the last crit that you’ve changed (hopefully improved) for more feedback.

Supplementary Learning:
There will be supplementary lectures and readings. You are emphatically encouraged to familiarize yourselves with the treasury of art housed in the nearby Washington museums, and attend gallery openings, talks, lectures, etc. as they come up. You are also encouraged to read literature and poetry and think interesting thoughts. The serious artist is intellectually curious and hungry for experience.

Requirements:
- Strict class attendance
- Completion (by deadline) of all projects
- Consistent documentation of ideas and process in sketchbook
- Active participation in critques, this includes notes and an active response to ideas and suggestions discernable in work
- Completion of all assigned reading and ability and willingness to engage new ideas

Grading criteria:
Grades will be 70% based on artistic excellence as evidenced by the quality and ambition of work produced, the rigor of your process, and your demonstrated commitment. 30% is class participation, which means successful and timely completion of all course requirements, good attendance, active participation in crits and discussions, self-discipline, improvement, willingness to respond earnestly to instruction and critques, creativity and general commitment. Students should keep a running sketchbook, which documents thoughts, processes for creating work, and critique notes and responses.

Course Outline:
The focus of this course is directed inward--self-discovery and the building of self as a source for artistic expression. (Just like on a plane when you’re instructed to put your own oxygen mask on first before you can help someone else. You, the artist, must know and build yourself, your world view and work habits to know what you have to say to the rest of us.)

1. **Self:** First explore self. Find out who is generating this work. What is in you as a source for art? What do you know? What do you care about? What do you have to say? (Weeks 1-2)

2. **Actions:** The transfer from the self (artist) onto the canvas. The body’s agency. Impermanence, evidence of something that happened; an event (Weeks 2-5)

3. **Context:** Supports, formats, how does the work operate in the space of the room? In the world outside? Is the work itself the place of meaning? How might it change its environment? (Weeks 6-9)

4. **Materials:** How do materials create and/or embody meaning? (Weeks 10-12)

5. **Final** project (Weeks 13-15)
Critique Schedule:

Mon 1/25 Discussion/Sharing: Project1/ Self-Knowledge Survey
Wed 1/27 Discussion/Sharing: Project 2/ Painting Action idea-sketches
MW 2/15 & 17 Critique Project 2/ Painting Actions (3 finished works)
MW 3/14 & 16 Critique Project 3/ Contexts, formats, the work in the world
MW 4/4 & 6 Critique Project 4/ High/Low-Profile Materials Project
Mon 4/25 Critique: Final Projects; Final Reviews
Wed 4/27 Critique: Final Projects; Final Reviews

Studio Schedule:

Week 1 Self
Wed 1/20
Orientation to course: description and expectations; syllabus review. Self-knowledge Survey (handout).
Course content: much that is NOT painting
Assignment:
Project 1: The Artist as Medium: Know Thyself (Bring completed survey next Monday 1/26)
Read: Rosenberg, American Action Painters

Topic: Who are we? What is reality?
The question of reality (internal/external, subjective/objective, micro/macro worlds)
• Painting as transparent communicator or poetic space: The trajectory of painting from representation to
abstracting to abstraction (turn of the century practices to the present
• Content without narrative

Week 2 Self - Action
Mon 1/25
Project 1 — in-class research colloquy from self-knowledge surveys:
Topics: The self as artist. The artist as self. Who am I? What is this? What am I saying? To whom am I
saying it? Why am I saying it? What language do I use? How should it be made? What might it look like?
PPT: past student work; artists' works
Wed 1/27
Project 2: Painting Actions idea-sketches due (discussion/sharing); Begin working

Week 3 Action
Mon 2/1
Work on: Painting Actions: 3 large works from idea-sketches

Wed 2/3
Work on Painting Actions

Week 4 Action
Mon 2/8- Wed 2/10
Work on Painting Actions both days

Week 5 Action
Mon 2/15:
CRITIQUE: PAINTING ACTIONS—3 LARGE WORKS

1 Schedule may change as art is subjective and sometimes unpredictable
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Events</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed 2/17</td>
<td><strong>CRITIQUE: PAINTING ACTIONS—3 LARGE WORKS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
<td><strong>Context (formats, and the work in the world)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 2/22</td>
<td>Introduce/begin Project 3/ Contexts, formats, the work in the world</td>
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<td>Wed 2/24</td>
<td>Work on Project 3/ Contexts, formats..</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Painting beyond the surface</td>
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<td>• Recognition of Paintings as objects: attention to shape, sides</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Formats as form and content</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Non-traditional presentations</td>
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<td>• Support structure as art</td>
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<td>• Paintings that alter their space</td>
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<td><strong>Week 7</strong></td>
<td>Context (formats, and the work in the world)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 2/29-Wed 3/2</td>
<td>Both days: Work: Project 3/ Contexts, formats..</td>
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<td><strong>Week 8</strong></td>
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<td>Mon 3/7-Wed 3/9</td>
<td>Spring Break –Have fun!</td>
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<td><strong>Week 9</strong></td>
<td><strong>Context (formats, and the work in the world)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 3/14</td>
<td><strong>CRITIQUE: PROJECT 3/ CONTEXTS, FORMATS..</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 3/16</td>
<td><strong>CRITIQUE: PROJECT 3/ CONTEXTS, FORMATS..</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Week 10</strong></td>
<td><strong>Materials</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 3/21</td>
<td>Introduce/begin Project 4: High and low-profile materials project</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 3/23</td>
<td>Work: Project 4: High and low-profile materials project</td>
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<td><strong>Week 11</strong></td>
<td><strong>Materials</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 3/28- Wed 3/30</td>
<td>Both days Work: Project 4/ High and low-profile materials project</td>
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<td><strong>Week 12</strong></td>
<td><strong>Materials</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 4/4</td>
<td><strong>CRITIQUE: PROJECT 4: HIGH AND LOW-PROFILE MATERIALS PROJECT</strong></td>
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<td>Wed 4/6</td>
<td><strong>CRITIQUE: PROJECT 4: HIGH AND LOW-PROFILE MATERIALS PROJECT</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Week 13</strong></td>
<td><strong>Final</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 4/11 – Wed 4/13</td>
<td>Begin Final Projects (Discuss your ideas with me before starting)</td>
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<td>Wed 4/13</td>
<td>Work on Final Projects</td>
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<td><strong>Week 14</strong></td>
<td><strong>Final</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 4/18- Wed 4/20</td>
<td>Both days: Work on Final Projects and any projects that need critique response work or finishing</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Final</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 4/25</td>
<td>Final Critiques (all work from semester)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 4/27</td>
<td>Final Critiques (all work from semester)</td>
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**Supplies**

Supplies will vary according to how you approach the projects. You should have the basic painter’s tools, i.e., brushes, paint (oil or acrylic), odorless turpenoid (if you use oil), palette knives, palette or palette paper, gesso, etc. You may opt to use more experimental or cheap paint, like house paint for some projects (especially if you are working very large). Projects will often extend outside of painting and into constructions or even sculpture.

In general, use what you have and buy according to your needs for a particular vision. No excuses though for the ill prepared student!

**University and School of Art Policies**

In accordance with George Mason University policy, turn off all beepers, cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class. The instructor of the class will keep his/her cell phone active to assure receipt of any Mason Alerts in a timely fashion; or in the event that the instructor does not have a cell phone, he/she will designate one student to keep a cell phone active to receive such alerts.

**Commitment to Diversity**

This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran’s status, or physical ability.

**Statement on Ethics in Teaching and Practicing Art and Design**

As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the School of Art adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

**Open Studio Hours**

SOA teaching studios are open to students for extended periods of time mornings, evenings and weekends whenever classes are not in progress. Policies, procedures and schedules for studio use are established by the SOA studio faculty and are posted in the studios.

**ArtsBus - Dates for Spring 2016**

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<th>February 20</th>
<th>March 19</th>
<th>April 9</th>
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**ArtsBus Credit**

* Each student must have up to 5 AVT 300/Artsbus credits before graduation. For credit to appear on your transcript you must enroll in AVT 300. This also applies to anyone who intends to travel to New York independently, or do the DC Alternate Assignment.
* If you plan/need to go on multiple ArtsBus trips during a semester and need them towards your total requirement, you must enroll in multiple sections of AVT 300. Please go to the ArtsBus website: http://artsbus.gmu.edu "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding ArtsBus policy.
* Non-AVT majors taking art classes do not need Artsbus credit BUT may need to go on the Artsbus for a class assignment. You can either sign up for AVT 300 or buy a ticket for the bus trip at the Center of the Arts. Alternate trips must be approved by the instructor of the course that is requiring an ArtsBus trip.

**Visual Voices Lecture Series Spring 2016**

Visual Voices is a year-long series of lectures by artists, art historians and others about contemporary art and art practice. Visual Voices lectures are held on Thursday evenings from 7:20- 9:00 p.m. in Harris Theater: [http://soa.gmu.edu/visualvoices](http://soa.gmu.edu/visualvoices)

**Important Deadlines:**
Once the add and drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Requests for late adds (up until the last day of classes) must be made by the student in the SOA office (or the office of the department offering the course), and generally are only approved in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid being processed). LATE ADD fee will apply. Requests for non-selective withdrawals and retroactive adds (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the academic dean of the college in which the student’s major is located. For AVT majors, that is the CVPA Office of Academic Affairs, Performing Arts Building A407.

Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences
If you have a diagnosed disability or learning difference and you need academic accommodations, please inform me at the beginning of the semester and contact the Disabilities Resource Center (SUB I room 234, 703-993-2474). You must provide me with a faculty contact sheet from that office outlining the accommodations needed for your disability or learning difference. All academic accommodations must be arranged in advance through the DRC.

Official Communications via GMU E-Mail
Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

Attendance Policies
Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

Honor Code
Students in this class are bound by the Honor Code, as stated in the George Mason University Catalog. The honor code requires that the work you do as an individual be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas. (This does not prohibit collaborative work when it is approved by your instructor.) As a faculty member, I have an obligation to refer the names of students who may have violated the Honor Code to the Student Honor Council, which treats such cases very seriously. No grade is important enough to justify cheating, for which there are serious consequences that will follow you for the rest of your life. If you feel unusual pressure about your grade in this or any other course, please talk to me or to a member of the GMU Counseling Center staff.

Using someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is plagiarism, a very serious Honor Code offense. It is very important to understand how to prevent committing plagiarism when using material from a source. If you wish to quote verbatim, you must use the exact words and punctuation just as the passage appears in the original and must use quotation marks and page numbers in your citation. If you want to paraphrase or summarize ideas from a
source, you must put the ideas into your own words, and you must cite the source, using the APA or MLA format. (For assistance with documentation, I recommend Diana Hacker, A Writer’s Reference.) The exception to this rule is information termed general knowledge—information that is widely known and stated in a number of sources. Determining what is general knowledge can be complicated, so the wise course is, “When in doubt, cite.”

Be especially careful when using the Internet for research. Not all Internet sources are equally reliable; some are just plain wrong. Also, since you can download text, it becomes very easy to inadvertently plagiarize. If you use an Internet source, you must cite the exact URL in your paper and include with it the last date that you successfully accessed the site.

Writing Center
Students who are in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). The services of the Writing Center are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis.

The Collaborative Learning Hub Located in Johnson Center 311 (703-993-3141), the lab offers in-person one-on-one support for the Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, Blackboard, and a variety of other software. Dual monitor PCs make the lab ideal for collaborating on group projects. Macs are also available; as well as a digital recording space, collaborative tables, and a SMART Board. Free workshops are also available (Adobe and Microsoft) through Training and Certification; visit ittraining.gmu.edu to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.