

Honors Seminar Syllabus AVT 394 Fall, 2017

Instructor

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Arts & Design Building Room L001

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Primary Course Resources

[Provisions Library](#) is an arts and social change research center within GMU's School of Art. Please familiarize yourself with Provisions' website, "Like" on [Facebook](#), follow on [Twitter](#), Instagrams, etc. Review Provisions' research Meridians, 33 social change topics that broadly define areas for creative interactions with society. The key component of this seminar is a trip that we take together to a city or locale within a 5-hour drive of GMU. Please read details below.

Course Information

Honors Seminar - 71526 - AVT 394 - 001

Credit: 1 credit - Note: Applicable as ArtBus credit by prior arrangement

Thursday, 7:20-10pm

Art and Design Building, L001 (Provisions Library)

Prerequisites: By application

Required: Always bring a laptop to class or arrange for computer use.

Special note: Honors Seminar will not meet when it conflicts with Visual Voices.

Description

This seminar offers opportunities for inquiry into theories, methodologies and practices of creative research investigating how research can be used in nontraditional and experimental ways in art-making and how the research process may itself be an art form. Particular attention is paid to how and where contemporary artists are choosing to practice their work.

Through group readings, discussions, guest speakers, field experiences and art-making, participants will learn about the nature of research using innovative parameters, as-yet-obscure connections and transformational paradigms. The seminar charts development of new thinking, perspectives, and values which incorporate contents and contexts that invigorate contemporary and future creative practices and social progress.

By the end of the seminar, successful students will have gained, through varieties of research, field experiences and documentation, a broader view of art content, context and practices available to contemporary artists. Participants are encouraged to use this seminar to create

synergy with their other coursework and related creative projects.

Weekend Field Trip

The most important component of this seminar is a weekend trip that we will all take as a group. In the past we have gone to [Elsewhere in Greensboro, NC](#), Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Lynchburg, and Baltimore.

In Fall, 2017 we will likely be traveling to the Asheville NC area, visiting artists and art spaces including the studio compound of internationally acclaimed artist Mel Chin and Tom Ashcraft, former head of our Sculpture program who now runs the Graduate Program at Western Carolina University.

This year's trip will likely be November 10-12, 2017. Because it is a 7-hour drive, it would be great to return Monday afternoon so that we have two full days down there--but we will discuss this in the first class. We leave from the rear of the Art and Design Building at 9am Friday returning Sunday (or Monday), around 7pm. The university will cover travel and lodging (bring sleeping bags), but not food and admission tickets. Attendance on this trip is extremely important, but if you cannot attend, an alternative project of similar scope will need to be arranged. Honors trips count towards ArtsBus credit if you are registered for ArtsBus.

Special Note

Because Honors Seminar is in scheduling conflict with Visual Voices, Honors will NOT meet on those evenings (see schedule below). Our first meeting will be January 21 at 7:20.

Project Topics, Methodologies and Displays

Participants' choice of research project topics and methodologies is unlimited and participants will regularly share development of their projects with the group.

Scholarly Inquiry Course

This class is identified as a Students-as-Scholars Scholarly Inquiry course, where students learn about the recursive process of scholarly inquiry either through studying previous scholarship or as preparation for participating in an original scholarly project. This course views the creative processes as being driven by research, with art as the outcome. In this Scholarly Inquiry course, students will: articulate a scholarly question; engage in the key elements of the scholarly process; and situate the concepts, practices, or results of scholarship within a broader context.

Grading Weight & Criteria

- **70%** Extent of personal engagement in the field trip experience, based on instructor observations and project sharing through artworks and/or relevant writings
- **15%** Participation in discussions on assigned readings, research theory and methodology, based on project sharing through artworks and/or relevant writings
- **15%** Quality of artworks produced

Assignment and Project Planning

- Readings (10 hours/semester)
- Artwork based research using self-defined theories, methods and topics (6 hours/week)
- Field work: Collaborative field project, approximately (20 hours/semester),
- Other field work in Metro DC (10 hours/semester)
- Completed works of art relating to seminar experiences (20 hours/semester)

Communications

Staying in connection with other participants is essential and will require use of google-docs, Google hangout, texting, Skype, posting on facebook and twitter. Please be sure your computer and phone are updated to the latest versions of any relevant programs, web accounts, etc. and that you know how to utilize all necessary features. If you have a video camera, keep it handy.

Finally, a word about gender identity and pronoun use. Please let me know of your gender pronoun (s) and how best to address you in class and via email. I use male pronouns for myself and you may address me as Don in email and verbally.

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

February 20

March 19

April 9

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/>

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.

