AVT 103: Introduction to the Artist's Studio

Spring 2019
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Art and Design Building 003

About the course:
On the one hand, this course will be an investigation of the varying manifestations of the contemporary art world through a historical, philosophical, and anthropological lens. On the other hand, students will engage in a studio practice, exploring established art making techniques and coming up with their own projects and techniques. Students are encouraged to explore both traditional and new media.

Some assignments will require oral presentations or written responses while others will ask for artistic creations.

In-class discussion and critique will be essential to sharing and assessing student artworks.

This class fulfills a Mason Core requirement for Arts. Arts goal: Courses aim to achieve a majority of the following learning outcomes: students will be able to identify and analyze the formal elements of a particular art form using vocabulary appropriate to that form; demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic technique and the expression of a work’s underlying concept; analyze cultural productions using standards appropriate to the form and cultural context; analyze and interpret material or performance culture in its social, historical, and personal contexts; and engage in the artistic process, including conception, creation, and ongoing critical analysis.

Note: Experimentation is encouraged! Making good art takes time, thought, planning and the allowance of some extra time for mistakes. Though we will be working on projects in class, it is expected that you will spend some time outside of class to complete projects.

Critiques: Class critiques are very important and will be held at the beginning of class on the due date of each project. Be prepared to talk about your work during the critique. If your work is not complete for the critique your grade on that assignment will be lowered by one full letter grade for each day it is late. You are
still required to participate in the class critique, even if your work is not being critiqued.

**Bibliography:**

Excerpts from *Akademie X* (PDF will be provided)

*Plato’s Cave* from Susan Sontag's *On Photography* (PDF will be provided)

*The Accidental Audience* by Brad Troemel (PDF will be provided)

**Materials:**

In addition to a Sketchbook for in-class exercises, students will be responsible for buying supplies throughout the semester as their projects require.

**Projects:**

There will be at least 5 assignments, of which students are required to choose and complete at least 4. Additional there will be a series of technical exercises throughout the semester. There will also be short writings. 20% of each major project grade will come from any preliminary sketches and models. Each assignment will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria.

1. Fulfillment of the project objectives
2. Craftsmanship
3. Conceptual and material inventiveness
4. Physical investment: the sweat factor
5. Overall aesthetic and conceptual quality of the work

The overall breakdown of the final grade: Projects-50%
Class participation/ discussion-30%
Writings/postings-20%

**Grading:**

A Work is characterized by outstanding achievement and understanding of critical analysis as reflected in solutions to assignments, technical competence
and the critique process. Student must display preparedness and efficient
dedication to scheduled studio time. Adherence to attendance policy.

**B** Work is characterized by excellent competence and understanding of critical
analysis as reflected in solutions to assignments, technical competence and the
critique process. Student must display preparedness and dedication to scheduled
studio time. Adherence to attendance policy.

**C** Work is characterized by basic competence and understanding of critical
analysis as reflected in solutions to assignments, technical competence and the
critique process. Student must display adequate preparedness and dedication to
scheduled studio time. Adherence to attendance policy.

**D** Work is characterized by minimal effort and success. Lowest passing grade.

**Studio Policies**

1. **Attendance Policy**
   
   Attendance is mandatory.
   
   3 unexcused absences = final grade reduced by 1 letter (A becomes a B),
   
   4 unexcused absences = 2 letters
   
   6 unexcused absences = failure no matter your grade
   
   8 absences (excused or unexcused) will result in failure

**Tardiness**

If a student is more than 15 minutes late to class, this will count as a 1/2 absence
(unexcused). If a student leaves class 15 minutes or more early, this will result in
a 1/2 absence (excused or unexcused).

2. **Do not miss a critique:** these are your exam dates and require total
   participation. Show up with your work and be prepared to think, ask/answer
   questions, and offer analytical criticism. Again, late work will not be critiqued and
   results in a lower grade.

3. While I try to keep costs to a minimum, you are responsible for purchasing any
   materials you need for the class beyond the provided tools and machinery.
Please be responsible and adhere to rules and safety demos concerning the studio.

4. The gathering of materials will be done outside of scheduled studio time. There is no substitute for time spent in the studio with peers and the instructor.

5. **Do not remove any tools** or other materials belonging to the studio. This is an Honor Code Violation. See Academic Integrity heading in syllabus.

6. The course is demanding and moves quickly to cover the basics of sculpture. If you utilize your time efficiently, you may not have to expend large amounts of time outside of class. The key is good work habits.

7. Remove all work after grading.

8. Maintain your work area in a clean manner. Do not leave a mess for other classes. Violators are subject to losing studio privileges.

9. General cleanups require all students to participate. Failure to do so will negatively affect the final grade.

10. You will be instructed on the proper and safe way to operate tools. Safety is a must, seek assistance when in doubt.

11. No cell phones.

12. No food.


14. Do not spray paint in the studio. See me.

**Safety:** be aware that there are potential hazards regarding the work in this course. While I conduct thorough demonstrations, it is ultimately up to each student to be prudent and diligent. It is my desire to keep the studio open after scheduled course usage so that work can be completed in a timely manner. This can only happen if students exercise the most careful adherence to studio policies. Students working in studio outside of scheduled courses take full responsibility.
Model Privacy Policy:
Any photographic recordation of models in class by any media is prohibited. Failure to observe this rule will result in expulsion from the class, a failing grade and disciplinary action at university level.

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).

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.