

**RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
ACADEMIC COURSE OUTLINE**

ARTH 210- Introduction to Contemporary Art

I. Basic Course Information

- A. Course Number and Title: ARTH 210 Introduction to Contemporary Art
- B. New or Modified Course: Modified
- C. Date of Proposal: Semester: Fall Year:2013
- D. Sponsoring Department: Visual and Performing Arts
- E. Semester Credit Hours: 3
- F. Weekly Contact Hours: Lecture: 3
 Laboratory: 0
- G. Prerequisites/Corequisites: ARTH 110 Art from Prehistory to the Gothic Period
- H. Laboratory Fees: None
- I. Name and Telephone Number or E-Mail Address of Department Chair: VAPA Chair: Ann Tsubota, (908) 526-1200 x8373, atsubota@raritanval.edu

II. Catalog Description

Prerequisite: ARTH 110 Art from Prehistory to the Gothic Period This course presents an introduction to contemporary art and media. Students will critically examine images and our relationship to their truthfulness through contemporary media images and related works by modern and contemporary artists. Art is about looking, and then about thinking critically about what we see. Readings, film viewings, artworks, research and discussion on the nature of reality and truth in images will give students specific skills in making and viewing art, and will also make them more discriminating participants and consumers concerning journalism, media and culture. Students will read and discuss widely-read articles on images and culture from 20th century critical theorists.

III. Statement of Course Need

A. The course addresses an absence of a stand-alone contemporary art course in the curriculum and reflects the rise in critical theory courses and programs in commonly transferred four-year Art, Art History and Visual Studies programs.

B. The course's approach to examining images in recent art history and popular culture addresses a need in the Visual Arts curriculum to address students' understanding of the sources, truthfulness and meaning of images in culture and media, and how to use them effectively in their own artworks. It addresses the need for readings of critical theory and its relationship to contemporary art history not addressed in other courses. This course will also be of interest to students of Communication Studies, Multimedia Communications and Digital Media and Film Studies.

C. Course transferability: This course will likely transfer to most colleges as an Art Appreciation course, an Arts elective for Studio Art and Art History programs, or as a Free elective. (Similar courses are found in schools with which VAPA has transfer agreements: the School of Visual Arts, NY Visual and Critical Studies and Fine Arts programs; School of the Art Institute of Chicago Visual and Critical Studies, Art History, Film, Video, New Media and Animation, and Fine Arts programs).

IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

A. Free Elective

B. This course satisfies the Art History elective requirement in the A.F.A. Visual Arts and A.F.A Graphic Design Degrees.

C. Course transferability; For New Jersey schools, this course has not yet been evaluated by www.njtransfer.org. For all other colleges and universities, go to the individual websites.

V. Outline of Course Content

A. Looking critically at images

1. Susan Sontag's "On Photography"
2. Marshall McLuhan's "Understanding Media"
3. John Berger's "Ways of Seeing"
4. Walter Benjamin "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"
5. Photographic Reality, the impact of the images of Abu Ghraib

B. Critical Theory approaches and their use in interpreting art

1. The purpose and application of critical perspectives
2. Postmodernism and Poststructuralism
3. Feminist and Queer Theory

4. New Historicism

C. Identity in Contemporary Art

1. Structuralism, Post-Structuralism and Semiotics
2. Expansion of representation in the art world
3. Effect of popular culture on identity
4. Guy Debord and the “Society of the Spectacle”

D. Time in Contemporary Art

1. Performance Art and Happenings: Situationists, 1960’s performance art, Fluxus & Happenings
2. Surrealist and Dadaist Art Movements
3. Time-based media: Maya Deren, Chris Marker and experimental film
4. Kinetic Sculpture: Jean Tinguely and SRL
5. New Art platforms: interactive and web-based art

D. Memory in Contemporary Art

1. Approaches to communal memory and the indexical document
2. War images and Memorials

E. Place in Contemporary Art

1. Public Space, Video and Surveillance: Benjamin Buchloh on Dan Graham, Nam Jun Paik
2. Land Art and Installation Art
3. Surveillance and the Panopticon: Surveillance Camera Players, Google Street view, Appropriation

F. Conclusions and Predictions

1. The meaning and ramifications of the proliferation of Reality TV and Surveillance
2. Recent artistic responses to Reality TV and Media

VI. General Education and Course Learning Outcomes

A. General Education Learning Outcomes:

Students will:

1. Research and critically evaluate movements and influences in Contemporary Art History. (GE-NJ 1, 6, IL, *)
2. Critique readings and images, both historical and contemporary, from applicable genres in journalism, media and art. (GE-NJ 1, 7, *)
3. Analyze and interpret works from Contemporary Art of Western and non-Western artists from various critical perspectives (GE-NJ 1, 8, *)

4. Critically examine and research pop cultural imagery and discuss the determinants of its truthfulness (GE-NJ 1, IL, *)
5. Evaluate the effect of social media and reality television on our social and ethical consciousness and how Contemporary artists have expressed these ideas (GE-NJ 1, ER, *)

B. Course Learning Outcomes:

Students will be able to:
See above

*embedded critical thinking

VII. Modes of Teaching and Learning

- A. Lecture/Discussion
- B. Student presentations
- C. Written assignments
- D. In class viewings of slides and video clips of art and media

VIII. Papers, Examinations, and other Assessment Instruments

- A. Student papers and presentations
- B. Exams
- C. Participation
- D. Identification of art and media examples

IX. Grade Determinants

- A. Student papers and presentations
- B. Exams
- C. Attendance/Participation
- D. Identification of art and media examples

X. Texts and Materials

- A. Suggested textbook: Robertson and McDaniel Themes of Contemporary Art
- B. Suggested Texts: Guy Debord “Society of the Spectacle”, Susan Sontag On Photography
- C. Suggested: Graff and Birkenstein, “They Say I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing”

(Please Note: The course outline is intended only as a guide to course content and resources. Do not purchase textbooks based on this outline. The RVCC Bookstore is the sole resource for the most up-to-date information about textbooks.)

XI. Resources

- A. Classroom equipped with sound system and video/DVD viewing capability.
- B. Classroom equipped with Internet access to YouTube and Netflix clips and videos.
- C. Subscription to Netflix
- D. Marker board