Expressive Cultures: Contemporary art in Britain  CORE-UA 9

Semester: SPRING 2016
Class code: CORE-UA 9720-001
Instructor Details: Dr. Jane Beckett
jb3103@nyu.edu

Class Details: Contemporary Art in Britain
Spring 2016
Tuesday 10.00 – 1.00
Bedford Square G03
Location to be confirmed.

Prerequisites: A concern with the role that art plays in contemporary culture on a local and global level plus enthusiasm and an ability to look, analyze and debate

Class Description: Contemporary art raises vigorous debate and criticism. But what is contemporary about contemporary art? This course introduces you to some of the key issues in dealing critically with contemporary art with a focus on work on display in exhibitions in London, both major national collections and private galleries. The course explores art produced since the late 1950s through case studies of the work of individual artists and through themes which include photography; representations of the body; gallery display; video practice and installation art. Among other things we consider how contemporary art came to look as it does [with a focus on British art]; the different forms of material and presentation artists have employed; why and how diverse audiences are addressed; how markets, national prizes and private collections shape the kinds of art produced and inform public taste. We also look at the collection and display of contemporary art, on a private and a public scale; dealer galleries and issues of curation. Critical and historical writings by artists and theorists will be considered.

Lectures, video interviews with artists, critical texts and active student participation. Opportunity to visit London’s galleries and museums which will form the basis for class discussions and presentations

Desired Outcomes: Familiarity with issues in Contemporary art and visual culture, an historical focus and critical framework for consideration of the themes and propositions presented in different works of art; a concern with the economics of art today; an ability to analyse and explore the context in which art is made and a critical appraisal of contemporary accounts of art making and display

Assessment Components: 10%: Short paper (1,000 - 1500 words): Due session 3
10%: Contribution to class discussion and analysis arising from gallery visits and class discussion. A number of students will be selected each week to lead certain aspects from the visit or class
40%. Academic Logbook - consideration of visits and set texts: each entry 750-800 words Due
session 9.
40%. Final Paper: Due sessions 15

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

**Assessment Expectations**

**Grade A:** Demonstration of detailed familiarity with the visual and critical material under discussion; evidence of ability to engage critically with the main and secondary texts, pertinent, imaginative visual examples perceptively analysed and discussed; Fluent and articulate expression combined with ability to organise material and establish argument and main ideas. Positive participation in the classroom and on visits.

**Grade B:** Demonstration of familiarity with the visual and critical material under discussion evidence of ability to engage with critical secondary material and visual analysis. Positive participation in classroom and on gallery visits.

**Grade C:** Limited reference to the primary and secondary visual and critical material and lacking the ability to organise material coherently.

**Grade D:** Little or no reference to the visual and critical course material. May be descriptive with uncritical accounts and unfocused account of the subject of the paper; summaries of the main issues rather than argument; Inadequate or no bibliography.

**Grade F:** Little or no understanding of the subject and little evidence of visual analysis or reading. Poorly organised and confused argument; clearly failed to understand the material under discussion. Inadequate or no referencing of source material.

**Required Text(s)**


**Supplemental Texts(s) (not required to purchase as copies are in NYU-L Library)**


*Brilliant: New Art from London*, catalogue Walker Art Center, Minn. 1995


Roger Hallas and Frances Guerin, *The Image and the Witness: Trauma, Memory and Visual Culture*
The potential value of the internet for the study of contemporary art is enormous and exciting; there are very many useful websites available which provide much valuable information—visual, factual and critical—but they need to be used with discretion as the material immediately available is often very limited. Remember anyone can put material on the Web and that most that is there is not subject to critical review. However there are useful links via many gallery and museum sites and via Google to academic and professional articles and reviews. Addresses for museums and galleries pages and other sites of interest are listed where appropriate.

You should use the Web to complement your reading and not replace it. Like books and articles websites should be acknowledged with appropriate references. All sources for your own research for papers and presentations should be academic or related institutional literature and web sites.

A camera & notebook are useful for gallery and museum visits.

**NB**. Recommended reading for each session is given below and as announced in class sessions.

**[2-02-16]**

Introductory session - Contemporary art – What is it? How is it made and exhibited?


First paper given due 16th Feb.

**Session 2**

Art /Display/Economy: Institutions 1

Field Trip Tate Britain– meet at entrance facing the river

**[09-02-16]**

Reading Terry Smith, What is Contemporary art, Part 1: Chap. 4. Contemporizing the Tate Modern, 56-61; 63-68; Stallabrass High Art Lite: The market and the state, 78-183
Session 3
Contemporary Art Exhibiting Art:
Field Trip: Serpentine Gallery Michael Craig Martin Exhibition
Meet at the entrance to the Gallery

[16-02-16] Hand in First assignment

Session 4
Consumption and Celebrity: Pop Art USA & UK
Class assignment

Session 5
Economies of art II: Collectors and Exhibitions
Visit Saatchi Gallery for Champagne Life Exhibition.
Meet at Sloane Square tube station street level exit.

[01-03-16] Class assignment Read reviews of the exhibit on line

Session 6
Economies of art III: Collectors and Exhibitions
Lecture and class discussion
Charles Saatchi as collector and The 1997 Sensation exhibition
Class Assignment: Stallabrass High Art Lite. Saatchi and Sensation 204-233
and Don Thompson 93 – 102;

Session 7
Exhibiting Art:
Visit Tate Britain for Art and Empire exhibition
Meet at the entrance to Tate Britain
Class assignment: Look up reviews of exhibition either on line or in daily newspapers and magazines

Session 8
Discussion of Art and Empire exhibition
Class assignment: Olu Oguibe In the “Heart of Darkness”, in Kocur and Leong, Theory in Contemporary Art, 226-232; Robert Young, Post Colonialism, a Very short Introduction.

Session 9
Photography/Exhibitions
Visit Barbican art Gallery for Strange and Familiar: Britain as Revealed by International Photographers

[5-04-16] Class assignment: tba

Session 10
Art / Economy/Branding: Institutions
Field Trip Tate Modern– meet at entrance facing the river

[12-04-16]
Meet at the Gallery- main entrance facing the river.

**Class assignment:** Julian Stallabrass, The Branding of the Museum, *Art History*, no 37, 2014, 148-165 and NYU Classes

| Session 11 | Contemporary Themes Representations of the Body - Art practices and mediums  
Discussion of Louise Bourgeois, Francis Bacon, Tracey Emin, Chapman Brothers, Jenny Saville; Lubaina Himid, Sarah Lucas |

| Session 12 | Gallery Visit |
| [26-04-16] | |

| Session 13 | Contemporary Themes: Home, Houses and Huts - Art practices and mediums  
Discussion of Rachel Whiteread, Louise Bourgeois, Michael Landy, Donald Rodney, Lubaina Himid, Tracey Emin, Cornelia Parker; Mona Hatoum *Present Tense* |
Digby Warde-Adlam, *Ghost House*, Apollo Magazine Oct 2013-  

| Session 14 | Visit Tate Modern for Mona Hatoum: Exhibition |
| [10-05-16] | |

| Session 15 | Concluding Contemporary Art  
Exam: Hand in Final paper |
| [17-05-16] | |

**Classroom Etiquette**

Remember no eating is permitted in NYU class rooms.  
Please turn off mobile phones

**Required Co-curricular Activities**

Gallery visits as listed in syllabus
Estimated Travel Costs
Estimated cost for travel for the whole course £40.00— with travel card.

Suggested Co-curricular Activities
It’s worth making the most of your time in London where there are many excellent galleries to view contemporary art and culture— see listings in Time Out magazine— free every Tuesday; The ICA, in The Mall has a range of exhibitions, film, theatre and contemporary performance and seminars discussions. Both Tate Galleries have continuous exhibitions and screenings of films and live music, and numerous events on Friday- Sunday evenings. The National Portrait Gallery (Charing X Road) has “Late Shift” every Thursday and Friday evenings 18.00-21.00 with live music, films, talks etc. There is a vast range of dealer galleries to visit

Your Instructor
Jane Beckett has curated numerous exhibitions of modernist and contemporary art; taught at the universities of East Anglia, London and Cambridge. She has published widely on Dutch modernism, dada; diaspora and contemporary art. Main areas of Research/Interest: ruins, mud; walking, mapping, urban space and structure; gender and space; modern and contemporary art, curatorial practices

NYU LONDON ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic Integrity
At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others.

At NYU London, students will submit electronic copies of their written work to Turnitin via their NYU Classes course site. Instructions will be provided to you separately.

Late Submission of Work
Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor. Late work should be submitted in person to a member of NYU London staff in the Academic Office (Room 308, 6 Bedford Square) during office hours (Mon – Fri, 10:00 – 17:00). Please also send an electronic copy to academics@nyu.ac.uk for submission to Turnitin.

Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of
10 points on the 100 point scale.

Written work submitted more than 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

Please note end of semester essays must be submitted on time.

Study abroad at Global Academic Centres is an academically intensive and immersive experience. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. As classes typically meet once a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course.

To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance is mandatory and unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

How to report an absence
Absences from class must be reported to NYU London administrative staff using the online Absence Form: [http://tinyurl.com/nyulabsence](http://tinyurl.com/nyulabsence)

Absences can ONLY be excused if they are reported using this form. Students should NOT approach their class instructor for an excused absence. However, students should contact their class instructor to catch up on missed work.

Medical absences
If you are unable to attend a class due to ill-health, you must provide details of your illness and class(es) missed to NYUL staff using the online Absence Form WITHIN SEVEN DAYS of your return to class.

Please do not use the form to report a medical emergency or to request urgent assistance. In a medical emergency call 999 and ask for an ambulance. NYU London staff are available to offer support, whatever time of day. If you would like to speak to a member of staff urgently to request support with a medical problem, please call 0800 316 0469, selecting option 2.

Non-medical absences
If you have to miss class for an unavoidable, non-medical reason you must provide details to NYUL staff using the online Absence Form at least SEVEN DAYS PRIOR to the date(s) in question. Examples of valid non-medical reasons are as follows: religious holiday; family wedding; scholarship competition; family emergency. If in doubt please speak to a member of Academics staff or email academics@nyu.ac.uk. Failure to provide requested documentation for these types of absences will result in the absence remaining unexcused.

Further information regarding absences
NYU London staff carefully monitor student attendance and absence records. In most cases full completion of the online Absence Form will be sufficient to excuse your absence. However, in certain circumstances, you will be asked to provide additional information/verification before it can be excused. If we notice that you have multiple absences you will be contacted to arrange a meeting with a member of staff.

Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam. Students may not take an exam before or after other students in the class, and may not leave the programme before all course work has been submitted.

Please refer to the NYU Wikis Page for the full absence policy: [https://wikis.nyu.edu/x/awRgAw](https://wikis.nyu.edu/x/awRgAw)

Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their professor and the Office of Academic Support in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.
**Academic Accommodations**

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, see [Study Away and Disability](#).

---

**Grade Conversion**

NYU in London uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

- A=94-100
- A-=90-93
- B+=87-89
- B=84-86
- B-=80-83
- C+=77-79
- C=74-76
- C-=70-73
- D+=67-69
- D=65-66
- F=below 65

Where no specific numerical equivalent is assigned to a letter grade by the class teacher, the midpoint of the range will be used in calculating the final class grade (except in the A range, where 95.5 will be used).

---

**Grading Policy**

NYU in London aims to have grading standards and results in all its courses similar to those that prevail at Washington Square.

NYU requires all instructors to submit midterm grades for their students. Midterm grading is considered an educational best practice, and plays an important role in schools’ early intervention programs, which enable advisers to identify and to respond to students in crisis.