

## ARHA-92, Section 04: Survey of Contemporary Art Since 1945

Spring Semester 2011  
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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This course will survey the Visual Arts since the Second World War, primarily in the United States and Europe, but with some consideration of developments in the larger international arena. The textbooks that will be widely used during the course and are recommended for purchase are:

JONATHAN FINEBERG, *Art Since 1940: Strategies of Being*

ELLEN H. JOHNSON, ed., *American Artists on Art: From 1940 to 1980*

Additional sources are on 4-Hr. Reserve at the Frost Library, or are available as E-Reserves on the Course Website, which you can find here: <https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/art>.

The following journals in Frost cover contemporary art: *Art in America*, *Art International*, *ArtForum*, *Artnews*, *Arts Magazine*, *Flash Art*. Perusing printed publications is a different experience than looking at online versions, and I encourage you to do both.

Images from each class will be available for study online through the digital image database ARTstor ([www.artstor.org](http://www.artstor.org)). The class folder is **ARHA-92: Survey of Contemporary Art Since 1945**. The images from each class will be organized by date within this folder by IMAGE GROUPS (ex., "Class 1 – 1/25/2011"). **Each student must register for an account with ARTstor** the first time you use the website, after which you will simply log on for each session. **\*\*The PASSWORD to access the class folder is: ART1945**

Study of actual examples of contemporary art is indispensable, as digital reproductions and printed illustrations make poor substitutes. Most museums in the United States have collections in the field, but the following are nearby and/or especially notable: Mass MOCA (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art) in North Adams; ICA (Institute of Contemporary Art) in Boston; Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the New Museum of Contemporary Art, the Metropolitan, Guggenheim, Whitney, and Jewish museums in New York City; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; the National Gallery of Art and Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, DC; The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art.

Your progress in the course will be helped by the following guidelines:

- (a) Regular class attendance. Non-attendance and merely studying the material in the course texts is insufficient. It is also advisable to do substantial ongoing study of the course material, rather than postponing your study for the few days before the midterm and final.
- (b) Meticulous reading and study of the assigned course material and study of visual examples. The Frost Library and other libraries at the Five Colleges are amply stocked with books and journals in this area, and I would be happy to make recommendations. The Internet also offers access to a seemingly limitless number of reproductions and, at time, actual works of art. The images seen and discussed in class will be available for study on the course website.
- (c) Participation in class-discussion, for which you should expect to be called by name. Occasionally, groups of two or three students will be assigned to lead a class-discussion of about 20 minutes on an assigned topic. If you would like to contribute to a topic of particular interest to you, please let me know; likewise if you wish to organize a group discussion.
- (d) One-on-one or small group appointments with me to discuss your work in the course, or any special interest you may have in the area of Contemporary Art: simply put your name down on the appointment-schedule on my office door. **My office hours are THURSDAYS, 11:30 – 1:30.**

The following are obligatory course requirements:

- (1) A midterm, comprised of [a] three short questions on a pair of slides studied in class; [b] five questions on individual slides, two of which will not have been seen in class; and [c] an essay-question.
- (2) A written project based on an idea for a hypothetical contemporary art exhibition. More on this forthcoming.
- (3) The final, organized like the midterm, but timed to two and a half hours.

Your grade in the course will be computed on the following basis: (a) midterm = 30%; (b) final = 40%; (c) papers and project = 20%; (d) class participation = 10%.

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### COURSE OUTLINE

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<b>Jan</b>	25 [1]	Introduction, I: Discussion of 'Contemporary Art' and Course Overview	
	27 [2]	The New York School, I: Foundation and Origins	
<b>Feb</b>	1 [3]	The New York School, II: Totem	
	3 [4]	The New York School, III: The Sublime	
	8 [5]	Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, and Claes Oldenburg	
	10 [6]	In-class writing assignment (CAA Annual Conference)	
	15 [7]	Postwar European Art: Art Informel	
	17 [8]	Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, and the Origins of Pop Art	
	22 [9] 24 [10]	Contemporary Art at the Mead Art Museum, I: An Exploration of Pop Border Zones: Issues in Postwar Art Across Disciplines	
<b>Mar</b>	1 [11] 3 [12]	Minimalism and the Later 1960s Process and Concept in Art	
	8 [13] 10 [14]	Midterm Preparation MIDTERM	
	<i>Spring Vacation</i>		
	22 [15] 24 [16]	Performance and Documentation Art in the Age of Information	
29 [17] 31 [18]	<i>Guest Lecturer:</i> Michael Kasper, The Artist's Book in Art Since the 1960s Earthworks and Ecology		
<b>Apr</b>	5 [19] 7 [20]	Feminism, Essentialism, and Decoration in Art Mass MOCA: Contemporary Art in Exhibition, A Case Study	
	9 [Field Trip]	Mass MOCA (Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art), North Adams	
	12 [21] 14 [22]	The Persistence of Painting: Plural Approaches Neo-Expressionism and Figuration	
	19 [23] 21 [24]	Installation and New Spatialities The Problem of Public Art	
	26 [25] 28 [26]	Contemporary Art at the Mead Art Museum, II Institutional Critique and Simulation in Recent Art	
	<b>May</b>	3 [27] 5 [28]	Art and Globalization Final Preparation
		9-13: <i>Final Examination Period</i>	