ARTH 3395: Topics in Contemporary Art
Art After 1990
University of Texas at El Paso
Fall 2022

CRN: 19678
Class Meeting Times: Tuesdays/Thursdays, 10:30-11:50 a.m.
Classroom: Fox Fine Arts A458 (4th floor, Art wing)
Professor: Dr. Melissa Warak (she/her/ella; please call me Dr. W or Professor Warak)
Email: mcwarak@utep.edu
Office: Fox Fine Arts A454
Office Phone: (915) 747-7849 (during office hours)
Student/office hours (online): Tuesdays, 3:00-5:00 pm, via Zoom. Sign up for fifteen-minute meetings using this link: https://calendly.com/warakofficehours/15min.

COURSE MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY
All materials for the course, including Powerpoints and course texts, will be uploaded to the course Blackboard page. Students will need a strong internet connection and a computer (either a laptop or a desktop) in order to study the images on a larger screen. Google Chrome is the recommended browser for Blackboard. UTEP students may check out laptops and wifi hot spots from the UTEP library. See this link for more information: https://www.utep.edu/technologysupport/TSCenter/tsc_eqcheckout.html

ABOUT YOUR PROFESSOR Dr. Warak specializes in the relationship of music and sound to art of the twentieth century. Dr. Warak is a proud Texan and a native of Houston. She earned a B.A. in English literature and art history from Vanderbilt University, and her M.A. and Ph.D. in art history from the University of Texas at Austin. Her current research focuses on the ways that visual artists from the mid-fifties to late sixties employed musical models in their work and she is writing a book about contemporary sound art. Other research interests include the history of abstraction, spirituality in modern and contemporary art, science and technology in modern and contemporary art, and disability representation in art. Her research has been supported by grants and fellowships from the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, the Getty Research Institute, the Royal Music Association of the United Kingdom, The Menil Collection in Houston, the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the Yale University Art Galleries, the Tate Modern, the Grand Palais in Paris, the Kress Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, and the National Science Foundation, among others.

COURSE DESCRIPTION This course is an upper-division (3000-level) history of global art from 1990 to the present, concentrating on specific themes and trends in contemporary art. This course utilizes a
primary methodology of cultural and social history, but will also consider technique, style, biography/psychology, and other factors that contribute to understanding the way that a given work of art looks. This course is infused with a politics of feminism, disability studies, gender and queer studies, and critical race studies as part of art historical study of contemporary art. As a content advisory, please note that this course covers art that is sometimes shocking, offensive, controversial, or otherwise difficult for many viewers. It is not expected that you should enjoy – in a conventional sense – or agree with the ideological premises of all of the art explored in this course. Some of the images we will discuss in class deal frankly with racism, sexism, global politics, violence, war, religion, the AIDS epidemic, and sexual trauma, among other difficult themes. They are not shown in class for shock value. These works are intended to challenge the comfort level of the viewer and discussion about them is important. Speaking to how such images make you feel is vital, as this deepens our understanding of their power. If you have concerns about certain content, email Dr. Warak so she can let you know when this might be shown in class.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES** During this course, students will develop their understanding contemporary art and acquire skills essential to the study of art history. These include the following:
1. Developing writing, visual analysis, and oral presentation skills needed by professional art historians.
2. Learning to find and use resources for answering research questions and problems.
3. Analyzing and critically evaluating ideas and arguments.
4. Gaining knowledge of the terminology, trends, and methodologies used to study contemporary art, including the study of various mediums.
5. Gaining cultural literacy.

**COURSE STRUCTURE**
This is a face-to-face course. Go through the schedule and update your calendars or planners with all due dates at the beginning of the semester; this will help keep you organized and on track.

1) **LECTURES.** We will meet twice a week for regular lecture. Students should take thorough notes during class.

2) **QUIZZES.** We will have ten reading quizzes throughout the semester, with a maximum of one per week. See the quiz policy below for details.

3) **EXAMS.** This course will have two exams. See the exams policy below for details.

4) **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS.** Students are asked to complete an introductory questionnaire and a visual analysis worksheet early in the course. Students will write one research project of about 8+ pages in length, which will include a prospectus (proposal) and peer review of work in progress. The paper assignment and other materials related to the project are compiled in a Blackboard tab labeled “Research Project.”

5) **ARTIST PRESENTATIONS.** Each student will be responsible for teaching/presenting on an artist on a given class day; these guidelines are posted to Blackboard.

6) **CLASS PARTICIPATION.** Students will be graded on discussion participation in class. Discussion points will be assigned for both the first and second halves of the semester. Participation may mean different things for different students; see Dr. Warak if traditional in-class participation causes you anxiety. Otherwise, a good rule of thumb is to try to contribute at least once per class (via ideas, questions, or responses to other students).

7) **EMAIL.** Dr. Warak will email the class regularly using the UTEP email addresses on file and try to respond to student emails within twenty-four hours. Please remember to treat emails as professional
correspondence. Any course announcements on Blackboard will also be emailed to students.

8) GRADEBOOK. All course grades will be updated on the Gradebook on Blackboard. Students should keep track of their progress through the semester.

9) STUDENT HOURS. Student hours (also called office hours) are a time for students to get to know their professor, talk about the course content in further depth, discuss concerns or grades, or to learn more about their field of study or graduate study. Office hours are for you, so take advantage whenever you need these kinds of interactions. Dr. Warak will hold office hours virtually from 3:00-5:00 pm on Tuesdays via Zoom video conferencing. To make an appointment for office hours, go here: https://calendly.com/warakofficehours/15min. Sign up for as many 15-minute time slots as you need. This will send an email to both of us to confirm, as well as a Zoom meeting link. However, email me if you would like to create an appointment or speak on the telephone outside of my office hours.

GRADING POLICY
This course will be graded on a scale of 500 points.
Reading Quizzes (10)  90 points
Participation I     10 points
Participation II    13 points
Rubin Center Worksheet 10 points
Artist Presentation 35 points
Visual Analysis Worksheet 12 points
Exam 1        100 points
Exam 2        100 points
Research Project 130 points (10 + 20 + 100)

There may be extra credit opportunities available during the semester.

Note: You will see that the Blackboard page allows for 510 points, but this accounts for the free quiz grade. You are graded only out of 500 points. Thus, this is the point breakdown for grades:
448 – 500 points: A
397 – 447 points: B
347 – 396 points: C
297 – 346 points: D
000 – 296 points: F

TEXTS/RESOURCES There is no textbook to purchase for this course. Selected articles and book chapters will be posted to the course’s related Blackboard page as downloadable PDFs and as web links where possible (see schedule). Students are responsible for downloading these from Blackboard. All readings need to be completed before the class period for the day. Some of the readings are theoretical and will take longer to read, but many of them are shorter exhibition reviews.

TAKING NOTES IN CLASS Exam material will come from ideas discussed in class; the readings supplement lectures and discussions. Completing the readings will not take the place of attendance and participation in class. It is critical that students take notes in class. I recommend bringing a notebook designated just for this course if you hand-write your notes, but you may use a laptop to type them if you wish. Taking notes by hand is still the recommended format; many studies show that the act of writing by hand helps one retain information and ideas. However, this is your choice. It is
important that students focus their attention on the lectures and projected images without distractions and that they take careful and detailed notes. Using bullet points will help you write down more information. Vocabulary and important terms will be written on the PowerPoint presentation slides and you should pay special attention to these terms and the works of art where they may be applicable. Basic identifying information for each work will also be provided on the PowerPoints (artist name, title, date); these will be uploaded to Blackboard for your use. It is a good idea to date your notes so you know what we covered each day. It is also a good idea to take notes on the class readings for use during the exams.

Students are responsible for acquiring notes and announcements made during missed classes, so make a friend and exchange contact information. Dr. Warak will not provide any class notes to students.

EXAM POLICY AND STRUCTURE Exams will consist of a single essay question (you will have a choice among three or four topics) and will be taken online during a twenty-four-hour period. Think of the exam as a way to show off what you have learned in the class. Students will have two hours to write the exam. We will not have specific image lists for each exam. Instead, students will decide on appropriate examples from class for their essay exams (choose examples that you feel confident that you understand). Exams are OPEN NOTE, so make sure to take notes extensively. Students may use any course material during the exams. The exams are not cumulative. See me during office hours for help improving your note-taking skills. Exams made by made up only in extreme circumstances documented with the Dean of Students and approved by Dr. Warak. Plan your semester accordingly.

READING QUIZZES Students will take the ten-minute reading quizzes at the beginning of class. They are valued at ten points each. Be sure to arrive to class on time. There are no makeup quizzes, but every student will get one free/“dropped” quiz grade (no points removed). Like the exams, the quizzes are open note. The quizzes may be on one or all of the readings assigned for a given day and will likely be short answer, fill-in-the-blank, and true/false questions. To prepare for these, you should make sure to read the texts carefully and take notes on them in your notebook (this will also help with the exams). You may find it useful to skim the readings once for the larger issues at stake and then take notes during a second and more careful reading. Be sure that you can identify the author’s arguments and the primary evidence used to support them. As you read, think critically about what might be useful about the texts for our course topic.

LATE WORK POLICY Every assignment explains the corresponding late work policy.

***COURSE POLICIES***

ATTENDANCE POLICY (MANDATORY ATTENDANCE)
Policy in short:
DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE SICK.
Allowed absences without penalty (no documentation needed) = 3 absences
Tardies = ½ absence
Automatic drop = 6 absences or 2 absences before the course census date
Attendance bonus = 10 points
Absences due to COVID-19 illness will be excused, but will require documentation.
Policy in detail:
Class attendance is a requirement and use of the full class period is expected unless otherwise stated. An attendance sheet will be passed around at the beginning of each lecture; make sure you (and only you) sign it every day. Students should not sign the attendance sheet for anyone else or ask anyone to sign for them.

You are allowed three absences for any reason without grading consequences. It is up to your discretion how you use these, including for non-COVID illness; you do not need to show documentation (except in the case of COVID-19 absences) and you do not need to notify Dr. Warak in advance except in the case of a religious holy day (see below). More than three absences from class will result in a lowering of your overall grade by fifteen points per absence (remember that this class is graded on a scale of 500 points). In the case of an illness or emergency that causes you to miss more than three consecutive class days, email Dr. Warak ASAP. Students who are more than ten minutes late without permission will be given half credit for attendance. Tardies/half credits will figure into the absence count. Dr. Warak will keep a running tally of absences in a column on the Gradebook section of Blackboard. You will be able to access the attendance record on Blackboard to see which days you have missed or were late/early.

COURSE DROP POLICY
Six absences will result in an automatic drop from the course; this includes tardies. Students with two or more absences by the census date (September 7) will be dropped.

COPYRIGHT OF THIS COURSE
All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated or shared with other students or websites.

FERPA AND EMAIL POLICY
This course adheres to Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations (https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html_). All course correspondence from Dr. Warak will take place via Blackboard's email function. I will never post identifiable information about students, and I will not discuss specifics of your student performance with anyone without your permission as documented by FERPA standards. Please note that, due to FERPA regulations, I cannot email with students about grade numbers specifically. This is because email is considered an insecure medium and may be hacked. If you have a question or concern about letter grades or numbers, please make an office hours appointment. However, you may email more generally about improving in the course.

LAPTOPS, TABLETS, AND PHONES Students may use computers and tablets to take notes during class, but please keep phones out of sight. Taking notes by hand is still the recommended format; many studies show that the act of writing by hand helps one retain information and ideas. However, this is your choice. It is important that students focus their attention on the lectures and projected images without distractions and that they take careful and detailed notes. Please use electronics professionally. If you need to use your phone during class (even to text), please step out of the classroom briefly. There are power outlets all along the walls. Lectures may not be recorded without permission from Dr. Warak.
CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE Please be respectful of other students in the classroom. The classroom door will be open for five minutes after class begins; after ten minutes, tardies will be given. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom may result in a directive to leave class or being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with UTEP policy. You may bring food and drinks, but the drinks must have a sealable lid. A note on bags: please make sure your bag is small enough to fit fully under your chair. If not, you will be asked to put it to the side of the classroom or on the classroom shelves.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM Academic dishonesty or cheating will result in failure in this course and referral to the Office of Student Conduct. Don’t even waste your time trying it; expend your energy on doing the work instead. Any student who must cheat in order to pass a class does not deserve a degree from UTEP because they haven’t earned it honestly. All students are expected to engage in their academic pursuits in a professional manner and to maintain honesty and integrity. Sometimes, students commit academic dishonesty without knowing it, but ignorance is not an excuse. All students are responsible for knowing the requirements of academic honesty set forth by UTEP. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty. See the UTEP policy on academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty: https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html.

POLICY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES Accommodations will be made for students with limitations due to disabilities provided that they are registered with the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) and procure the proper documentation: http://sa.utep.edu/cass (telephone: 915-747-5148). Students with documented disabilities should make sure that the professor receives the appropriate paperwork from CASS within the first week of class. Please note that CASS is available to help students with any disabilities, documented illness (including anxiety, depression, and PTSD), and in the case of short-term disability (broken bones, etc.). Please note that I use the Atkinson Hyperlegible or Calibri fonts on course documents because these are the most accessible for students with learning and vision disabilities.

POLICY FOR STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911(a)(2) defines a religious holy day as “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20 ...”. See your professor at least a week in advance if you intend to miss class in observance of a religious holy day.

COVID-19 PRECAUTION STATEMENT Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing.
The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org.