

Department of Visual Arts 2009/10
COURSE OUTLINE
VISA 3F96: Interdisciplinary Workshop
Also offered as DART 3F96, IASC 3F96

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| Instructor: Donna Szoke | Office Hours: Wednesday 4 pm – 5 pm | |
| Office: GLN 116 | Email: dszoke@brocku.ca | |
| Phone: 905-688-5550 x 4756 | | Blog: http://iw3p96.blogspot.com/ |
| Course: Wednesday 5 pm – 10 pm, TH269G; Lab PL310: Wednesday 5 pm – 10 pm | | |

Course description:

This class aims to introduce students to modes of mixing, integrating and juxtaposing contemporary art disciplines that include, but are not limited to: video, installation art, performance art, audio, conceptual art, interventions and other time-based, experimental or interstitial/ephemeral art practices. An interdisciplinary practice, unlike working in mixed media, involves the conflation and questioning of pre-existing models by which to make art. We will explore the interstitial spaces between understanding, defining and forming art through seemingly disparate and/or similar means.

Projects involve collaboration and investigation of alternatives in public dissemination of artworks. Projects will include in-class studio assignments, self-directed take-home assignments as well as creative and analytic writing. Critiques, discussions and slide/video/web presentations will complement studio activity on a weekly basis.

Course objectives:

Course objectives include:

1. Developing technical/experiential knowledge by working with audio, video, installation art and performance art
2. Gaining theoretical and critical insight into the history of artists working in an interdisciplinary fashion
3. Developing research skills around current (and recent) practices within the field.

Paramount to the success of this course is each student's completion of projects by the given due dates, and an active presence in classes, including critiques. Students are expected to come to each class, contribute to a creative environment and complete assignments on time. All work will be kept in good condition and order for mid-term and final review.

Throughout the course, each student is expected to engage with the course material and actively participate in course related critiques and discussion (this not only counts towards participation marks, but also towards personal development). It is also expected students will demonstrate a positive attitude and willingness to learn the skills and processes being covered in the class.

All assignments are due on the announced dates. Late or incomplete assignments will result in the loss of 5% per day without proper written excuses. Work 5 days past the deadline will not be accepted.

It is expected students will come to the studio prepared with the materials and tools required to work on that day's assignment. Students will be notified in advance of required materials.

Required text:

There is no one definitive text for this course. Instead, you will be given weekly reading assignments to complement course work.

Recommended texts:

Recommended texts will be posted on a blog, passed out as handouts or made available through the library. See the schedule breakdown for more information on texts. The following is a list of texts that you should be become familiar with throughout the semester. Additional texts to complement this list will be added as the semester unfolds.

Term One Texts include:

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| Mark Rosenthal's <i>Understanding Installation Art</i> Gregory Battcock's <i>Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology</i> Adrian Piper's <i>Out of Order, Out of Sight</i> Tracey Warr and Amelia Jones <i>The Artist's Body</i> Linda Montano's <i>Performance Artists Talking in the 80's</i> Yoko Ono's <i>Grapefruit</i> Patricia Norvell's <i>Recording Conceptual Art</i> |
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(More texts will be presented during class)

Term Two Texts include:

Flood, Richard, Laura Hoptman, Massimiliano Gioni, and Trevor Smith. Unmonumental. New York: New Museum / Phaidon Press Inc. 2007. ISBN-13: 978-0714848297
Randolph, Jeanne. The Ethics of Luxury. Toronto: YYZ Books, 2007.
Trash. Edited by John Knechtel; Toronto /Cambridge; Alphabet City Media /MIT Press, 2007.
"Waste". Esse Magazine 64 (2008). (All articles inclusive.)

Podcasts

MoMa, NY http://moma.org/visit_moma/audio.html - se
Here is Every. Sept 21, 2008 – Jan 5 2009; Looking at Music, Aug 13, 2008 – Jan 5 2008
SFMoMa <http://www.sfmoma.org/pages/audios>
Tate, UK <http://www.tate.org.uk/intermediaart/programmes/p02.shtm>

(More texts will be presented during class)

Attendance:

Punctual attendance at all session is required. Although a student will not be assessed a numerical grade loss for failure to attend classes, it has been agreed that a student who misses two or more classes shall not be re-admitted to the course in question, thus resulting in the student's failure of the course.

Students are not permitted more than one unexcused absence. The faculty understands that exceptional circumstances can arise and upon notification by the student, will of course consider the circumstances.

Students arriving late or leaving early may be counted as absent. Also late students may be locked out of the studio for that particular class.

Materials / Media:

DVD-Rs, CD-rs, DV tapes and various media will be needed throughout the course for video production as well; it will be made clear what kinds of media students are to purchase for each assignment on in-class handouts. We will talk about access to media and materials in class time.

Advice:

Due to the intensive amount of work you are expected to devote to this class, it is advised to stay on top of in-class and take-home assignments. Students who miss classes should not contact the instructor with hopes of getting caught up. Instead, it is advised to contact a colleague in the class, compare notes, and catch up with course work. Students may contact the instructor by email in cases of emergency or instances where a class is missed.

Furthermore, it is expected that students develop a relatively independent work ethic in this class. Students are expected to devote roughly 2-5 hours a week working outside of class time to complete assignments. For this semester, the mac lab found in PL310 will be available Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. The smaller lab in GLN 162a is available when permission is given by instructors in GLN162. The video editing suite is available on a first-come-first serve basis. Students must contact Monica Lederich in GLN 121 between 9am and 4:30 pm (she is not available during lunch) to gain access to the GLN editing suite. Please use this space as much as possible this semester.

TERM ONE SCHEDULE:

Week 1 – Introduction to Interdisciplinary Workshop

Wednesday, September 16th, 5 pm-10 pm (TH 269G)

- Class introduction and breakdown of course outline
1. Discussion of course structure
 2. Overview of portable gear, lab and media facilities
 3. Instructor's artists' talk
 4. Installation art lecture

Readings: *Understanding Installation Art*, Mark Rosenthal

Week 2 – Installation art practices

September 23rd

1. Walk and talk
2. Discussion of reading (1 hour)

3. Installation practices lecture
4. Discussions regarding assignment due next week

Readings: 1. Michael Fried, *Art and Objecthood*
2. Robert Morris, *Notes on Sculpture*

Week 3 – September 30th Assignment 1 Due

1. Discussion / critique of assignment one.
2. Collaborative practices, my practice, your practice

Readings: 1. *Understanding Installation Art (part 2)*, Mark Rosenthal (see blog)
2. Fluxus Performance Handbook:
(http://www.performance-research.net/documents/fluxus_workbook_print.pdf)

Week 4 – October 7st

1. Studio work period
2. Artist presentations are due next week for Group 1; Group 2 presents the following week.

Week 5 – Assignment 2 Due: Artist presentations + proposals (Group 1) October 14th

1. Artist presentations and proposals (Group 1)
2. Discussion of reading

Week 6 – Artist presentations + proposals (Group 2) October 21th

1. Artist presentations and proposals (Group 2)
2. Discussion of reading

Week 7 – October 28th

1. Performance lecture
2. Studio time for work on Assignment #3

Week 8 – Assignment #3 Due: Space is the Place November 4th (GL 162)

1. Critique of installation works

Reading: 1. Yoko Ono's *Grapefruit*
2. The Artist's Body

Week 9 – November 11th

1. Discussions regarding performance assignment #4.
2. Students begin work on assignment.
- 3 Discussion and lecture on performance art.

Reading: 1. Adrian Piper's *Out of Order*
2. Fluxus Workshop handbook

Week 10 – November 18th

1. Discuss reading.
2. In-class time to work on performance term assignment.

Reading: *Recording Conceptual Art*

Week 11 – Critique Assignment 4 Due November 25th

Critique and review Performance is Living Assignment #4 (Group 1)
All students are required to attend this class

Week 12 – Critique December 2th (GL 162)

Critique and review Performance is Living Assignment #4 (Group 2)

All students are required to attend this class

Term One Assignment descriptions:

Assignment #1: Re-invention

Re-invent a pre-existing artwork of yours. For this assignment you are meant to look at a recent artwork and consider how it could be created in another medium or manner. Consider carefully the materials (or non-materials) you are choosing. Do they complement the artwork or do they negate its received-meaning?

Stipulations: The new work cannot be made from any of the same materials as the first one. For example, if your pre-existing work was done in video, then you can use anything other than video to re-create it.

Drawing, performance, installation, assemblage, new media, video, audio, textual writing, etc... are all valid means of approaching this assignment. However, keep in mind that your recreation could also take the form of an event, an intervention or an ephemeral non-thing. If you choose one of these latter forms, please find a way to document it.

(Some class time will be devoted to this assignment.)

Due: September 30th

Value: 15%

Assignment #2: Artist presentations

For this assignment, students will research the practices of contemporary interdisciplinary artists, present their findings to the class and relate this research to their proposal for two new works – one an installation, the second, a series of performances.

Please see the handout for details on this assignment.

Due: Group 1 - October 14th
Group 2 – October 21th

Value: 20%

Assignment #3: Space is the place (Installation Art)

Students are to create an installation artwork that deals with all of the following considerations:

1. allows the audience to participate
2. is an environment, not an object
3. responds to its site's history
4. is made entirely from found materials
5. is environmentally-friendly
6. does not pose a safety threat to its viewers

These works are to be made in pairs. If we have an odd number of students working on this assignment, one group will be made up of 3 students.

Working in a collaborative fashion can be a complex and intimidating process for students. However, it is necessary that you develop skills in this area to truly allow for interdisciplinary exchange to occur within your current and future practice.

On November 4th, we will critique your installation works in two possible fashions:

1. Discuss photo, video, audio and/or textual documentation of the works in TH269 (the classroom). Please remember that you will be graded on both the **presentation** of your art as well the **quality** of work. Consider what is the best means of presenting your documentation; how does it complement your artwork?
OR
2. Discuss the work, in its physical manifestation, presented on-campus at Brock University. If students wish to present their work on-campus, permission must be gained from facilities management or those responsible for the location (ie. Library staff, IT, Communications, etc...) Students who choose this ambitious (yet bureaucratically complex) means of presenting their art will need to devote a substantial amount of time to contacting the aforementioned people for permission to present their artworks on campus. Be prepared to present a detailed

proposal of what it is exactly you will be showing on-campus (the content) and how it will be presented (the form[s]); both the host of your work and myself will need these documents.

If we run out of time and cannot critique all artworks on November 4th, students should be prepared to finish up critiques on November 5th. Our goal, however, will be to critique all works on November 11th (if humanly possible)

PROCESS:

During the critique, a few critical questions will be posed over and over. What processes (or methodologies) did you use to arrive at this installation artwork? How did you collaborate with your partner(s)? What was successful about the project? What was not?

Students who need help outside of class time to work on this proposal may contact me and set up an appointment during my office hours.

Due: November 4th
Value: 20%

Assignment #4: Performance is Living

For this final assignment of the semester students must sketch up, propose and execute between 5 and 10 performances. These performances must be documented by at least 3 of the following means:

1. video
2. photography
3. textual writing
4. drawing
5. audio

The documentation of these performances must be treated with a similar level of thoughtfulness as the performances themselves.

Due: Group 1 - November 25th
Group 2 – December 2th

Value: 20%

Note: The works will be presented over the course of two weeks. Some studio time will be made available to work on this assignment. All students must attend these presentations/critiques.

TERM ONE EVALUATION:

Students will be evaluated for projects based on the requirements laid out in each project description. The successful completion of this course requires a degree of self-direction, inventiveness and ambition in pursuing the projects. Students are rewarded for challenging themselves in every possible way: developing technical skills in new areas, designing and following through with challenging assignments. Simply said, students are rewarded for creating ambitious work. A student's personal growth, work ethic, and effort are as important as the actual finished assignments themselves.

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| Four studio assignments outlined above | 75% |
| Discussion and participation | 25% |

Term Two Schedule:

Week 1 – Introduction to Second Term Interdisciplinary Workshop

Wednesday, January 13, 5pm-10 pm (TH269G)

1. Discussion of Project One: Mapping the Invisible
2. Lecture: Rebecca Belmore, Tacita Dean, sound art, sound walks, deep listening, place as mnemonic device

Week 2 – Artist's Talks

Wednesday, January 20, 5pm-10 pm (TH269G)

1. Students give artists' talk, present work from term 1 3F96, 5 – 10 minutes per student.
2. Lecture: Trash, refuse and detritus in contemporary art
3. Demo: Audacity
4. Studio work on project 1

Week 3 – Video as Interdisciplinary Medium
Wednesday, January 27, 5pm-10 pm (TH269G)

1. Students give artists' talk, present work from term 1 3F96, 5 – 10 minutes per student.
2. Lecture: Video Art
3. Reading Discussion
4. Studio work on project 1

Week 4 – Critique Project 1 & The Transience of Life: Art as Gift
Wednesday, February 3, 5pm-10 pm (TH269G)

1. Critique of Project 1
2. Lecture: Felix Gonzales Torres and artists of the gift economy, Rirkrit Tiravanijja

Week 5 – Situationists, relational art
Wednesday, February 10, 5pm-10 pm (TH269G)

1. Reading Discussion
2. Lecture:
3. Studio work

Week 6 – Midterm Reviews
Wednesday, February 17, 5pm-10 pm (TH269G)

1. **Midterm Reviews: 15-minute meetings with instructor**
2. Studio work on project 2.

Week 7 – Spring Break No Classes
Wednesday, February 24, 5pm-10 pm (TH269G)

Week 8 – Critique of Project 2 & The Cinematic Moment
Wednesday, March 3, 5pm-10 pm (TH269G)

1. Critiques of project 2.
 2. Discussion of project 3
 3. Lecture: The Cinematic Moment in Contemporary Art
 4. Reading Discussion
- Studio work

Week 9 – New non-sculpture: art and trash
Wednesday, March 10, 5pm-10 pm (TH269G)

1. Reading Discussion
2. Lecture:
3. Studio work

Week 10 – Periphery and Process
Wednesday, March 17, 5pm-10 pm (TH269G)

1. Reading Discussion
2. Lecture: Andy Goldsworthy, Gabriel Orozco, Simon Starling, ,
3. Studio work

Week 11 – The Encounter in Interactive Art
Wednesday, March 24, 5pm-10 pm (TH269G)

1. Reading Discussion: Interactivity

- 2. Lecture:
- 3. Studio work

Week 12 – Final Critiques
Wednesday, March 31, 5pm-10 pm (TH269G)

- 1. Critique of project 3: Group One
- 2. Reading Discussion

Week 13 – Final Critiques
Wednesday, April 7, 5pm-10 pm (TH269G)

- 1. Critique of project 3: Group Two
- 2. Reading Discussion

Term Two Assignment Descriptions:
Assignment 5: Mapping the invisible

Find a way to document, map or otherwise make manifest an event or reality. It could be an event that has been undocumented such as a traumatic event like cultural genocide, internment, etc. It may also be a joyous event, or it could be an aspect of lived reality transposed into a map form, such as an audio map. Mapping can be a way to cultivate an experience of a place, such as the sound walk. Strategize on ways to represent the event: what was the spirit of the event? It does not have to be a documentary-style representation, but may be a poetic treatment.

A one page written statement must accompany this work, and is worth 25% of the project's overall mark. See handout for a full description.

Due: Feb 3,
Value: 20%

Assignment 6: Collaboration, Due March 3, 25%

A one page written statement must accompany this work, and is worth 25% of the project's overall mark. See handout for a full description.

Due: March 3,
Value: 25%

Assignment 7: Open Project, Due March 31 & April 7, 30%

A one page written statement must accompany this work, and is worth 25% of the project's overall mark. See handout for a full description.

Due: March 31 and April 7
Value: 30%

Term Two Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated for projects based on the requirements laid out in each project description. The successful completion of this course requires a degree of self-direction, inventiveness and ambition in pursuing the projects. Students are rewarded for challenging themselves in every possible way: developing technical skills in new areas, designing and following through with challenging assignments. Simply said, students are rewarded for creating ambitious work. A student's personal growth, work ethic, and effort are as important as the actual finished assignments themselves.

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| Four studio assignments outlined above | 75% |
| Discussion and participation | 25% |

Equipment:

The Department has several digital video cameras, a digital still camera, 13 imacs, a small editing suite, tripods, an array of microphones, mini dv tapes, dvd-rs and cd-rs. Booking for the video equipment can be done through Arnie McBay in the East Academic building. If students would like to work in private, they may book time and space in the GLN 114 editing suite with the help of Monica Lederich during regular business hours. Purchasing tapes and recordable media can

be done with the help of Arnie in the art store. For in-class video assignments, equipment will be distributed during class-time.

Communication Services (Phil Nardangeli, ext. 3588) can provide VCR's and monitors for class presentations, tape recorders, a Mac computer with software and other equipment such as sound systems and a video projector if you should need this in-class. This equipment must be booked one week in advance in order for it to be delivered on time for the next class. In our studio space we will have access to an LCD projector and several Emac computers for screenings and viewing work in-progress.

Furthermore, students will have access to PL310, also known as the MAC LAB. In it, students can work on new imacs, saving projects to their external hard drives. The MAC LAB will be available each Monday for class work until 7pm. As well, students will be able to work in this lab outside of class time to develop and complete studio projects. To view the schedule for the MAC LAB please visit PL310 and see the schedule posted on its entrance.

**** Two important bits of technology will be needed for the completion of this course: headphones for audio editing (ear buds or studio headphones with a mini jack) and a digital still camera of any quality. It is recommended that students bring these items to each class.**

Attendance:

The Department of Visual Arts policy on attendance in the Studio Courses:
Although a student will not be assessed a numerical grade loss for failure to attend classes, a student who misses in excess of four classes in an "F" course or 2 classes in a "P" course is understood to have failed the course. This policy also recognizes that exceptional circumstances can arise. Exemptions from this policy will be considered by the instructor upon notification by the student with accompanying documentation that gives reasonable justification for missed classes.

* Students who miss class must confer with other students to find what they have missed in class. It is the student's responsibility to stay on-task and not get behind in university classes.

Disclaimer about sensitive material:

Due to the nature of the themes of this course, there will occasionally be an inclusion of sensitive material presented in lectures, videos, films, readings, and discussion (i.e.: themes surrounding issues of sexuality, gender, politics, race, religion, etc...). By remaining in the course, a student is understood to have given their informed consent to exposure to such materials. Furthermore, it is paramount that students familiarize themselves with legal matters around copyright laws. Information on copyright laws can be found at: <http://www.cb-cda.gc.ca/info/act-e.pdf>. Importantly, students wishing to submit works to any festival, exhibition or cultural event will need all rights to audio, video, photography or any parts that make up an artwork.

Students are encouraged to explore and research these sensitive topics in a serious and respectful manner. Students must understand, however, that any acts of hate crime will not be tolerated in this class. Discussions on this subject will take place during class time to help define various forms of "hate-crimes". Anyone who chooses to ignore this warning will be expelled from this class.

Academic Honesty:

Academic honesty is expected in this course, and students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with what constitutes appropriate behaviour in this respect. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. You must cite all work and ideas which are not your own. The expectation of academic honesty also exists for exam situations -- only students who are registered for the course may write exams; students may not use "study guides" during the exam; and collaboration or cooperation on exams is strictly forbidden. See Student Calendar for policies and further guidelines.

Grading:

You will be given a grade for each project. Any students with concerns regarding their standing can check with me at any time for a sense of where they stand. Group critiques are intended to give you a sense of how others interpret and value your work. It is important you establish a strong work ethic and a willingness to participate in discussions and group-generated activities. There will be a review of each student's progress, contribution to the class halfway through the semester, at mid-term. This will take the form of individual meetings.

Brock University uses a 0, 2, 5, 8 marking scheme. What this means is that your final grade must end in one of these four numbers (i.e.: 70%, 72%, 75% or 78%). Marks are rounded up or down at the instructor's discretion (i.e.: not necessarily rounded to the closest number ending in 0, 2, 5 or 8). See the University Calendar (Academic Regulations and University Policies, Section VI) for more information.

*Below is an excerpt from the Brock University Undergraduate Calendar that outlines how grades are assigned in undergraduate courses.

"The following grades are awarded for undergraduate courses:

A - 90, 92, 95, 98, 100

Reserved for students where work is of outstanding quality that provides clear evidence of a rare talent for the subject and of an original and/or incisive mind.

A - 80, 82, 85, 88

Awarded for excellent, accurate work in which evidence of a certain flair for and comprehension of the subject is clearly perceptible.

B - 70, 72, 75, 78

Indicates competent work that shows a sound grasp of the course goals without being distinguished.

C - 60, 62, 65, 68

Represents work of adequate quality that suffers from incompleteness or inaccuracy.

D - 50, 52, 55, 58

Given where the minimum requirements of a course are barely satisfied.

F - 45 or lower

Means that minimum requirements have not been met and no credit has been given for the course.”

See the University Calendar (Academic Regulations and University Policies, Section VI) for more information on Grading and Student Evaluation at Brock University

MARKS BREAKDOWN and METHOD OF EVALUATION:

Projects will be marked on visual, conceptual and technical merit; relevance to the project challenge; and critique. Visual merit refers to the look for the work – the way in which the formal elements (line, shape, colour, tone, form) are deployed to engage the eye and the mind. Conceptual merit refers to the linkage between form, content and discourses. Technical merit refers specifically to the skill and craft in the use of the medium as evidenced in the work itself.

Students will be marked in their projects on their own progression and development rather than on how their work compares to the work of others. Marks will take into account the degree of difficulty associated with the student’s choice of content and/or media. Projects, assignments and other work should demonstrate increasing sophistication and dedication to challenging use of the medium and engagement in ideas. 25% of each mark will be based on the relative degree to which the student has pushed their ideas, artwork and technical capacity.

COLLECTIVE CRITIQUE FORM

VISA 3F96 Interdisciplinary Workshop

FINAL CRITIQUE

Student's name _____ Critiqued by: _____

| Title: | Very little | Somewhat | Pretty good | Very good | Excellent |
|---|-------------|----------|-------------|-----------|-----------|
| Does the artwork communicate the intention(s) of the student? | | | | | |
| Is there is a strong relationship between form and content? | | | | | |
| Coherence – does the art work well as a whole? | | | | | |
| Is there a strong mix of concept and technical proficiency? | | | | | |

General comments on strengths...

General comments on weaknesses...