HUM 201: EXPLORATIONS IN THE ARTS

Fall Semester 2025
Tuesdays: 4:00 to 6:50 p.m.
Classroom: Baker Theatre Building (BTB) 240

Prof. Chad Kaydo
Instructor Office: Baker Theatre Building 307
Office hours by appointment
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SYLLABUS

Course Description
This course focuses on experiencing and understanding temporal and spatial arts, namely music, theater, dance, and visual art. Our aim is to cultivate aesthetic appreciation and enjoyment of various art forms and, moving beyond subjective responses, to use diverse analytical methodologies as a means to form critical opinions about each work, verbally and in writing. Outings to museums and theaters and class sessions will explore and develop ways of describing, engaging, evaluating, and questioning these varied cultural experiences.

Course Methodology
Readings and discussions will emphasize the social context of art in order to bring to the fore the ways in which the art and performances we experience together reflect issues pertinent to questions of identity and concern for today's artists and audience members. Our aim is to extend and deepen the insights, pleasures, and understandings the arts may have to offer.

Expected Learning Outcomes
Students will:
· **Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view**. Students are required to attend various performances and art exhibitions. After reading primary source texts and critical essays relevant to a particular work, students write reflections in which they demonstrate their understanding of what they have seen/experienced on several analytic levels.
· **Evaluate evidence and arguments analytically.** Students are asked in their writing assignments and oral presentations to critically engage with the assigned readings and works of art. Throughout the semester, students must demonstrate their ability to analyze different kinds of artistic production in individual written assignments and class discussions.
· **Articulate how meaning is created in the arts or communications and how experience is interpreted and conveyed.** Students are required to identify the key characteristics of particular forms that constitute the varied artistic forms that are examined by the class throughout the semester. Throughout the course, students are asked to analyze the creative process on several different levels, as it is experienced subjectively and also—with the help of reading assignments, lectures, and class discussions—on aesthetic, historical, social, and political levels.

Course Objectives and Requirements
Some of class time and some evenings will be spent out of the classroom experiencing artworks in and around the city—both as a class and individually. This course requires students' continuous engagement in diverse activities including creative expression, critical thinking, and analytical writing. Students need

to be prepared to share their views and ideas in both oral and written form about assigned readings, discussions of issues raised by performances, art exhibitions, or public spaces visited.

ATTENDANCE
Attendance is mandatory. Because this course combines experiential learning, research, and discussion, attendance is a critical factor. Attendance is expected at every class session and at all events scheduled outside the classroom. Absence directly affects students' grades.

If a student must miss a class or outing, they must notify the Professor **in advance** by email. If a class outing is missed, the student will make up attendance on their own time and perhaps at their own expense.

Attendance/Tardiness
· If you are 15 minutes late to class or an outing, you are marked LATE.
· Two lateness marks equal one absence.
· Participation grade is partially determined by attendance.
· Three (3) unexcused absences and students **fail** the course.

No cell phone use, emailing, and/or texting during class. There will be breaks during class.

GRADING
· Participation: 20%
· In-Class Presentations (3 x 5%): 15%
· Written Reflections (2 x 20%): 40%
· Final Paper: 25%

Participation
For every class, you are expected to have completed the reading and to be prepared to discuss what you have read in relation to the art and artists we are discussing. I recommend you take notes on every reading and art experience, and come to class prepared with two to three points to discuss: an interesting idea or detail you noticed, a connection you made between artists or writers, something you didn't understand, a question you'd like to ask your fellow students. (Note that a good question about something you're grappling with or don't understand can be as helpful to your fellow students as a powerful insight.) You are expected to contribute to the conversation during every class over the course of the semester.

Assignments Overview
All assignments are due before class begins on the dates listed in the Course Schedule. No late papers or assignments will be accepted without prior permission from the instructor.

In-Class Presentations
You will do three short presentations (2-3 minutes) in class.

Reflections
You will submit two short essays (500 to 750 words) reflecting on some of the works you experience throughout the semester. You will choose two out of three assignments related to visual art, dance, and theater. In these Reflections you will be asked to respond to the prompts given to elucidate your

understanding of specific artists' work, and/or artistic genres, and can include your reflections on your own discoveries about the art you have encountered when appropriate to the assignment.

Final Paper
You will write a longer paper (1,000 to 1,200 words) synthesizing multiple artworks, themes, and experiences from the semester.

READINGS
We will read widely about the art forms and artists we encounter, including the following readings, plus additional readings to be added throughout the semester. PDFs can be found in the Readings section of the course Google Drive.

· Baldwin, James. "The Creative Process." *Creative America*: Ridge Press, 1962.
· Barnet, Sylan. *A Short Guide To Writing About Art* (selections). Pearson, 2005.
· Byrne, David. *How Music Works* (selections). Crown, 2017.
· Ellfeldt, Lois. *A Primer for Choreographers* (excerpts), 1988.
· Fuchs, Elinor. "EF's Visit to a Small Planet: Questions to Ask a Play." *Theater*: May 1, 2004.
· Smith, Zadie, *Feel Free* (selections). Penguin Books, 2018.
· Songtag, Susan. "Against Interpretation." *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*: Ferrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966.
· Williams, Gilda. *How to Write about Contemporary Art* (selections). NY: Thames and Hudson.

HUNTER COLLEGE POLICIES

ADA Statement
In compliance with the ADA and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Hunter College is committed to ensuring educational access and accommodations for all its registered students. Hunter College's students with disabilities and medical conditions are encouraged to register with the Office of AccessABILITY for assistance and accommodation. For information and appointment contact the Office of AccessABILITY located in Room E1214 or call (212) 772-4857 /or VRS (646) 755-3129.

Hunter College Policy on Academic Integrity
Hunter College regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. Hunter College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the Hunter College Academic Integrity Procedures.

Hunter College Policy on Sexual Misconduct
In compliance with the CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Hunter College reaffirms the prohibition of any sexual misconduct, which includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment retaliation against students, employees, or visitors, as well as certain intimate relationships. Students who have experienced any form of sexual violence on or off campus (including CUNY-sponsored trips and events) are entitled to the rights outlined in the Bill of Rights for Hunter College.
a. Sexual Violence: Students are strongly encouraged to immediately report the incident by calling 911, contacting NYPD Special Victims Division Hotline (646-610-7272) or their local police precinct, or contacting the College's Public Safety Office (212-772-4444).
b. All Other Forms of Sexual Misconduct: Students are also encouraged to contact the College's Title IX

Campus Coordinator, Dean John Rose (jtrose@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-650-3262) or Colleen Barry (colleen.barry@hunter.cuny.edu or 212-772-4534) and seek complimentary services through the Counseling and Wellness Services Office, Hunter East 1123.
CUNY Policy on Sexual Misconduct Link:
http://www.cuny.edu/about/administration/offices/la/Policy-on-Sexual-Misconduct-12-1-14-with-links.pdf

COURSE SCHEDULE

Classes and outings are subject to change.

*** ALL CLASS TRIPS AND EVENING OUTINGS ARE MANDATORY ***

August 26 **Introduction to the Course and Each Other**

Share Syllabus and Course Schedule
First Day Survey

We will read in class:
James Baldwin, "The Creative Process"
Zadie Smith, "Forward," *Feel Free*

September 2 **"Against Interpretation" + Rashid Johnson**

Discuss "Against Interpretation" by Susan Sontag
Preview Rashid Johnson at the Guggenheim Museum
Discuss Presentation #1/Rashid Johnson assignment

Readings due:
Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation" (Come to class with at least one takeaway, reaction, or question prepared to share in our class discussion)

Assignment due:
First Week Survey

September 9 **CLASS TRIP: Meet at 4:00 pm the Guggenheim Museum**
1071 Fifth Avenue, between East 88th and 89th Streets, Manhattan
Please meet inside the museum in the main lobby.
The museum closes at 5:30 pm.

We will view:
"Rashid Johnson: A Poem for Deep Thinkers"
Note: Please review the Presentation #1/Rashid Johnson assignment

Readings due:
Rashid Johnson readings

September 16 **Rashid Johnson Discussion + Dance Introduction**

Discuss Rashid Johnson
Presentation #1/Rashid Johnson presentations
Dance vocabulary and examples
Discuss Dance/Fall for Dance Reflection assignment

Readings due:
Dance intro

Assignments due:
Presentation #1/Rashid Johnson
Note: Please review the Dance/Fall for Dance Reflection assignment before the evening outing.

We will end class by 6 pm so you have time to have dinner and travel to our evening outing.

EVENING OUTING: Fall for Dance
Meet at 7 pm at New York City Center
131 West 55th Street (between Sixth and Seventh Avenues), Manhattan
I will meet you to the right/east of the main entrance.
Show starts at 7:30 pm.

September 23 **NO CLASS**

September 30 **Fall for Dance / John Wilson**

Discuss Fall for Dance
Preview "Witnessing Humanity: The Art of John Wilson"
Discuss Art/John Wilson Reflection assignment
Preview "The Maenads" by Stephen Foglia

Assignments due:
Dance/Fall for Dance Reflection (if you choose to do this assignment—you must do two out of the three Reflection assignments)

October 7 **CLASS TRIP: Meet at 3:30 pm the Metropolitan Museum of Art**
1000 Fifth Avenue, between East 80th and 84th Streets, Manhattan
Please meet inside the museum in the main lobby, near the Colossal Seated Statue of Pharaoh.
The museum closes at 5:00 pm.
If you are unable to meet at 3:30, let me know.

We will view:
"Witnessing Humanity: The Art of John Wilson"

Readings due:
John Wilson readings

How to write about art

Assignments due:
Note: Please review the Art/John Wilson Reflection assignment before the outing.

Wednesday, October 8

"The Maenads" by Stephen Foglia
Meet at 6:30 pm at The Tank
312 West 36th Street, between Eighth and Ninth Avenues
Show starts at 7:00 pm.

October 14 **NO CLASS**
Hunter follows the Monday schedule

Wednesday, October 15

EVENING OUTING:
New York Philharmonic
Meet at 7 pm at David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center
Columbus Avenue at West 65th Street, Manhattan
Show starts at 7:30 pm.

October 21 **John Wilson + Music Theater**

Discuss John Wilson
Discuss "How Music Works" reading
Discuss New York Philharmonic
Discuss Presentation #2/Arts institution research

Readings due:
"How Music Works" excerpt

Assignment due:
Art/John Wilson Reflection (if you choose to do this assignment—you must do two out of the three Reflection assignments)

October 28 **"Queens"**

Discuss Elinor Fuchs reading
Preview "Queens" by Martyna Majok
Discuss Presentation #2/Arts institution research (due November 4)
Discuss Theater/"Queens" Reflection assignment (due November 11)

Readings due:
Elinor Fuchs, "EF's Visit to a Small Planet: Questions to Ask a Play"

Assignments due:

Note: Please review the Theater/"Queens" Reflection assignment before the evening outing.

We will end class by 5:30 pm so you have time to have dinner and travel to our evening outing.

EVENING OUTING: "Queens" by Martyna Majok
Meet at 6:30 pm at New York City Center
131 West 55th Street, Manhattan
Show starts at 7:00 pm.

November 4 **Election Day / Arts + Civic Engagement**

Discuss "Queens" by Martyna Majok
Discuss civic engagement readings
Presentation #2/Arts institution research

Readings due:
Art + civic engagement readings

Assignment due:
Presentation #2/Arts institution research

November 11 **Oratorio + Ruth Asawa**

Preview "Oratorio for Living Things" by Heather Christian
Preview "Ruth Asawa: A Retrospective"
Discuss Presentation #3/Ruth Asawa assignment

Readings due:
"Oratorio for Living Things" readings

Assignment due:
Theater/"Queens" Reflection (if you choose to do this assignment—you must do two out of the three Reflection assignments)

We will end class by 5:30 pm so you have time to have dinner and travel to our evening outing.

EVENING OUTING: "Oratorio for Living Things" by Heather Christian
Meet at 6:30 pm in the upstairs lobby at Signature Theatre
480 West 42nd Street, Manhattan
Show starts at 7 pm.

November 18 **CLASS TRIP: Meet at 4 pm at MoMA**
11 West 53rd Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, Manhattan
Meet at Groups and Tours check-in at the Membership Desk.

Note: Outside food and drink are prohibited. All bags will be inspected upon arrival, they recommend leaving larger bags and backpacks at home to avoid a wait in the checkroom.

MoMA closes at 5:30 pm.

We will view together:
"Ruth Asawa: A Retrospective"

Readings due:
Ruth Asawa readings

Assignment due:
Note: Please review the Presentation #3/Ruth Asawa assignment (due November 25)

November 25 Oratorio + Ruth Asawa

Discuss "Oratorio for Living Things" by Heather Christian
Discuss "Ruth Asawa: A Retrospective"
Presentation #3/Ruth Asawa

Assignment due:
Presentation #3/Ruth Asawa

December 2 Reviewing the Reviewers

Discuss reviews and criticism
Discuss Final Papers
Makeup presentations

Readings due:
Reviews

December 9 Last Class: Why Art?

Review themes and highlights of the semester
Check in on Final Paper
Wrap up

Assignments due:
Any makeup work and/or extra credit assignments

Readings due:
Zadie Smith, "Some Notes on Atonement"
James Baldwin, "The Creative Process" (re-read)

December 16 Final Papers due by 5 p.m.

MAKEUP/EXTRA CREDIT OUTINGS

If you are unable to attend one of our scheduled class outings, you must make up for it, either by going to the same outing yourself (and getting your own ticket), or doing one of these outings instead, and then writing a short (200-word) reflection about it. Any makeup work is due before our last class, December 9.

These are some suggested makeup outings:

"The Meanads" at The Tank, 312 West 36th Street
A play written by Hunter professor Stephen Foglia and directed by Hunter professor Phillip Christian Smith
September 18 to October 12
Use code STUDENTS20 to access $20 tickets

Metropolitan Opera Dress Rehearsals (free)
You can sign up for tickets here—tickets are not guaranteed.
"La Sonnambula": Friday, October 3
"La Fille du Régiment": Tuesday, October 14
"La Bohème": Friday, October 17
"Carmen": Friday, October 24
For all: Meet at 10:00 am, show starts at 10:30 am

"Fifth Planet & Other Plays" by David Auburn at Hunter (free)
A Hunter Theatre Department student production.
October 29 to November 2, Loewe Theater
You can get free tickets with your student ID.

"Trouble in Mind" by Alice Childress at Hunter (free)
A Hunter Theatre Department student production.
November 19 to 23, Loewe Theater
You can get free tickets with your student ID.

You can also find shows at **The Brick** in Williamsburg, bricktheater.com
Use code BRICKSTUDENT for $10 off tickets (which are usually around $25)

"Hiraki Sawa: Journeys in Place"
The Asia Society, 725 Park Avenue (between East 70th and 71st Streets)
You can get free admission with your Hunter ID.