

Contemporary Art (1945-present)
ART 210
Spring 2009
Monday/Wednesday 230-345pm
Casey McDonough

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Required Text:

Jonathan Fineberg, Art Since 1940: Strategies of Being. Second Edition,
New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2000.

Course Objectives and Description:

This course is intended to provide students with a sense of familiarity and understanding concerning important developments in contemporary art occurring since 1945. Classes will center around lectures and classroom discussions, with further material inquest occurring through oral presentations, field trips, and written assignments.

Students should finish the semester with a strong understanding of the nature of contemporary art, including the impetus for major movements as well as the mechanisms through which one movement in art can lead to another.

Requirements:

1. Reaction Papers – students will write 3 reaction papers during the semester. Each paper will be in response to one of these topics:
 - Contemporary gallery exhibition review
 - Painters painting video
 - Response to an article from an art magazine/journal from 2007 until present. (Art in America, Art News, etc.)

These papers are intended to inform and direct the ongoing discussions during class time. Papers should address your own perspective; be clear and concise when providing your responses, using ideas and terminology discussed in class. Think about this as an opportunity to provide true critical analysis of what you read and/or see (instead of just a summary). Each paper should be at least two full pages long (12pt, double-spaced).

2. Individual Presentations – students will provide a 10 minute presentation on a chosen topic or artist. Topics must be selected by midterm, and must receive my approval. Each presentation should include biographical information, images of important or interesting work, and background information concerning content and concepts behind the work. Each presentation should include a written summary of at least 4 pages (12pt, double-spaced).

3. Final Paper – students will hand in a research paper based on their understanding of the ideas, movements, and artists discussed in class. Avoid a simple summarization of the semester’s discussions, but rather provide insight into what you found interesting and how you see contemporary art fitting in as an essential component of contemporary cultural development (or how you don’t see it as such). Papers should be 6 pages (12pt, double-spaced).

Grading:

This course centers around an open classroom dialogue, and as such your participation is essential. Everyone in the class should be willing to share her perspective at any time. Grades will be determined based upon the following percentages:

Reaction papers (3)	25%
Individual presentation	25%
Class participation	25%
Final paper	25%

Attendance Policy:

Attendance is mandatory; I intend to be inflexible on this subject, as each week will be as important as the rest. While I appreciate when you call or email ahead to tell me that you will not be in attendance, this will still count towards your overall tally of absences. I am unwilling to repeat lectures, so you will have to rely on your peers for help in catching up. I am willing to be reasonable in certain circumstances (death, serious illness, etc.), in which case come find me and we will talk. My attendance policy is as follows:

- 4 absences and you will lose one letter from your overall grade
- 6 absences and you will receive a failing grade for the course

Honor Code and Classroom Conduct:

We who accept the honor of the membership in the Cedar Crest College community recognize our obligation to act and encourage others to act with honor. The Honor Philosophy exists to promote an atmosphere in which the individual makes her own decisions, develops a regard for the system under which she lives and achieves a sense of integrity and judgment in all aspects of her life. It is with faith in such a system that I have accepted membership into this community. Representative of such, I hereby pledge to uphold the spirit and the letter of the Honor Philosophy.

Appropriate classroom behavior is implicit in the Cedar Crest College Honor Code. Such behavior is defined and guided by complete protection for the rights of all students and faculty to a courteous, respectful classroom environment. That environment is free from distractions such as late arrivals, early departures, inappropriate conversations and any other behaviors that might disrupt instruction and/or compromise students’ access to their CCC education.

Tentative Schedule:

January 19 & 21

Introduction
Video (“Artists at Work”)
Assignment – Chapter 1 and handouts

January 26 & 28

Lecture – What happened to cause this to happen?
Assignment – Chapter 2, NY in the Forties

February 2 & 4

Lecture – The Abstract Expressionists
Assignment – Chapter 3, A Dialogue with Europe
Chapter 4, Existentialism Comes to the Fore

February 9 & 11

Lecture – Pollock, Krasner and Friends
Video (Pollock)
Assignment – Chapter 5, The New European Masters

February 16 & 18

Lecture – Giacometti
Art Brut, Outsider Art
Video (“Painters painting”)
Assignment – Chapter 7, The Beat Generation: The Fifties in America

February 23 & 25

Lecture – Greenberg, Formalist Painting
Rauschenberg, Oldenburg, Johns
Assignment – chapters 8 and 9, pg. 231 – 267

March 2 & 4

Reaction Paper: Painters painting video
Lecture – Joseph Bueys
British Pop
Assignment – Chapter 9 (the rest of it)

Individual Presentation Topics due

March 9 & 11

Spring Break, NO CLASS

March 16 & 18

Lecture – Pop Art, Warhol, Lichtenstein, West Coast Pop/Funk
Assignment – Chapter 10, In the Nature of Materials: the Later Sixties

March 23 & 25

Reaction Paper: review of article in journal/magazine
Lecture – Minimalism, Process Art, Earthworks
Eva Hesse

Individual Presentations

Assignment – Readings from Chapters 11, 12, and 13

March 30 & April 1

Lecture – Postmodernism, Conceptual Art, Performance Art

Individual Presentations

Assignment – Assigned readings on Feminism

April 6 & 8

I am at a conference, NO CLASS!

April 13 & 15

Reaction Paper: gallery review

Lecture – Feminism

Individual Presentations

Assignment – Chapter 14, the Eighties

Chapter 15, New Tendencies in the Nineties

April 20 & 22

Lecture – American Neo Expressionism, Graffiti Art

Basquiat

Individual Presentations

April 27 & 29

Lecture – conclusions

Individual Presentations

May 4

Individual Presentations

Please hand in your Final Papers by May 11th. I will not accept papers after this date.