

Professor: Dr. Maria Elena Buszek
Office: 304 Baty House (816/802.3378), e-mail: mbuszek@kcai.edu
Office Hours: M/W 11:00am-12:30pm, or by appointment

Helpsite: <http://www.mariabuszek.com/kcai>
(go to "High Art and Popular Culture" to enter our class' primary site)

Course description and objectives: The processed version of contemporary reality manifested in the popular arts has long been used as a resource for the academically separated "high arts." This course will explore the relationship between popular art forms and gallery arts—and the ideologies and issues that motivated it—from the late 19th century to the present, focusing upon visual culture, scholarship, and criticism that have challenged distinctions between what influential critic Clement Greenberg identified as "avant-garde and kitsch." We will explore, and students will be evaluated on their understanding of these eras' shifting labels of "high" versus "low," "mainstream" versus "marginal," and "commercial" versus "fine," which will be considered/critiqued as interdependent opposites.

Evaluation and grading: Your grade will be based on one exam (20%), one short research paper (20%), one extensive research paper/presentation (40%), and weekly class participation (20%), and evaluated based on the above objectives and specific tenets to be articulated in the assignments/examinations to come. Because the exam will be slide intensive, resulting in the impossibility of giving examinations anywhere outside of our class period/classroom, **there can be no make-ups of our midterm examination.** Because you will have plenty of lead-time to research and compose your papers, **late papers will not be accepted under any circumstances.**

Attendance and absence policy: Attendance in class is mandatory, because much of the lecture material will not necessarily be directly or extensively addressed in your textbook readings. Information from lectures will be used to make up the exams, so one's success in the course will be entirely dependent upon one's presence and participation in the classroom each day.

Each student will be allowed TWO unexcused absences from class over the course of the semester. Absences will only be excused when accompanied by official documentation from the Academic Resource Center confirming one's illness or extreme/unusual personal crisis, which must be presented to the professor within a reasonable amount of time. **In any case, unless I am presented with the proper and timely documentation for a student's absence/s, upon the third unexcused absence, the student will automatically receive a failing grade ("F") in the class.** Remember that it is *the student's* responsibility to contact me and deal with absences as soon as possible! Please keep this attendance policy in mind when mulling over your use of the "free" absences—I can assure you that you will regret those days you skipped the day a flat tire/broken alarm/change in your work schedule occurs after you've used up your freebies.

A note on class readings: Your textbooks for this class are: **Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, *Art In Theory: 1900-2000***, and **Rayford Guins and Omayra Zaragoza Cruz, *Popular Culture: A Reader***. You will also be assigned "reserve" readings that will be linked to our website as they come up on our schedule. The required readings are listed in our course schedule with specific chapters/pages/authors following each day's lecture theme. I expect students to read ahead for each day's lecture, as our readings will be directly addressed in that day's class discussion, and students' participation grade will largely be based on their ability to address/ask questions about that day's readings.

Class participation and conduct: Active participation on the part of each student is essential to the success of this class. Indeed, dialogue will be a crucial part of the way this class addresses the information at hand, and students will be graded on their participation in our class discussions. Contrary to popular belief, some teachers do *not* necessarily enjoy talking to themselves, and *really* want to hear your thoughts and insights into the material being discussed. (By the way...I am one of those teachers!) **Dialogue drives my classes, and allows me to shape each one to your interests! So, don't be afraid to speak up! Or freak out!**

That said: while I try to foster a classroom situation in which discourse and debate may flourish, students are also expected to conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to a professional and educational setting and demonstrate collegial support of their peers. Students are required to observe the code of conduct articulated in the KCAI Student Handbook, which includes an anti-discrimination statement and no harassment policy.

Disabilities: Students who have documented disabilities and are eligible for accommodations must provide documentation of the disability to Kathy Keller, Disabilities Coordinator [kkeller@kcai.edu] in the Academic Resource Center before accommodations can be provided. Students can get further information through the ARC at (phone) 816/802.3371 or (e-mail) arc@kcai.edu. Please find a way to let me know as soon as possible if you have a disability that may hinder your performance in this class, so that accommodations may be made to satisfy course requirements. Trust me: you will find that I am willing to be extremely accommodating when it comes to student success, and would like to assure just about any student with any disability that they can not only take but do well in my classes when I work in tandem with the ARC.

Cheating and plagiarism: Students are expected to be honest in both their test taking and paper writing assignments, and cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated. The KCAI Student Handbook clearly defines academic dishonesty as follows:

- A) The copying of another student's work or the use of unauthorized notes and materials during examinations,
- B) Plagiarism, or the presentation of either the written or visual work of others (including that of other students), as one's own
- C) Plagiarism is a serious offense in the academy, as well as illegal in the context of our nation's copyright law. As such, it is important to know what plagiarism is in both one's studio- and liberal arts work. According to the Modern Language Association, plagiarism is "the wrongful act of taking the product of another person's mind, and presenting it as one's own." In other words, plagiarism is the use of not just words but ideas borrowed from someone else without crediting the source. *Students are required to learn the arts-standard, Chicago Manual of Style guidelines for citing sources referenced in their own work, and must follow them carefully in their research and writing projects.*

Any dishonest student caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an automatic "zero" on the exam/project at hand and be penalized to the fullest extent of KCAI's Academic Dishonesty policy:

All academic dishonesty is taken as an offense against the Institute and may result in penalties assessed by the faculty member teaching the course in which the offense has occurred and the Judicial Board, up to and including expulsion.

When a faculty member has reason to believe that an act of academic dishonesty has occurred, s/he will inform the student/s involved, the head of the department (or director/dean, if applicable) in which the course is offered, and the head of the department (or director/dean, if applicable) in which the student is majoring. The faculty member will forward a report in writing to the Dean of Student Life for presentation before the KCAI Judicial Board. The Judicial Board will interview and/or receive written statements from the student accused of academic dishonesty prior to making any determination.

Once a determination has been made that an offense did occur, faculty members maintain the right to assign a failing grade to the student. [...] Additional penalties, up to and including expulsion, will be determined by the Judicial Board working in tandem with the faculty member who reported the offense.

Questions? Problems? Frustrations? These, my friends, are what your professors are here to help you deal with! I place a priority upon making myself accessible to students, and do my best to be extremely flexible when it comes to meeting and talking with students who would like help. My crucial numbers (phone, e-mail, office) are located above, and I am always willing to answer questions, discuss problems, and ease anxiety.

CLASS SCHEDULE: FALL 2008

AUGUST:

26: **Introduction: Industrial Revolution and the invention of "popular culture"**

SEPTEMBER:

2: **The "Total Work of Art:" Art and pop culture at the start of the 20th century**

Readings: Richard Wagner, "The Art-Work of the Future" (website)
Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof" (*Popular Culture*, 89-95)
F.T. Marinetti, "The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism" (*Art in Theory*, 146-149)
Marcel Duchamp, "The Richard Mutt Case" (*AiT*, 252)
Osip Brik, "From Picture to Calico-Print" (*AiT*, 348-352)

9: **Theorizing the power and problems of the popular between the World Wars**

Readings: Bertolt Brecht, "Popularity and Realism" (*AiT*, pp. 499-502)
Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Reproduction" (*AiT*, pp.520-527)
Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" (website)
Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" (*AiT*, 539-549)

16: **The Post-WWII "culture industry:" Reconsiderations and revisions**

Readings: Dwight Macdonald, "A Theory of Mass Culture," (*PC*, 39-46)
Guy Debord, "The Commodity as Spectacle" (*PC*, 109-114)
Guy Debord, *Writings from the Situationist International* (*AiT*, 701-707)
Asger Jorn, "Detourned Painting" (*AiT*, 707-710)

23: **Embracing the "spectacle" in the '60s and '70s**

Readings: Marshall McLuhan, Excerpts from *Understanding Media* (*AiT*, 754-757)
Lawrence Alloway, "The Arts and Mass Media" (*AiT*, 715-717)
Roland Barthes, "From Work to Text" (*AiT*, 965-970)
Claes Oldenberg, *Documents from The Store* ("I Am for an Art...") (*AiT*, 743-747)
Andy Warhol, "Interview with Gene Swenson" (*AiT*, 747-749)

Short research papers due today at the start of class!

30: **New criticism of popular viewing and viewers in the '70s and '80s**

Readings: Laura Mulvey, excerpts from "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (*AiT*, 982-989)
Jean Baudrillard, "The Hyper-realism of simulation," (*AiT*, 1018-1020)
Victor Burgin, excerpts from "Socialist Formalism" (*AiT*, 938-942)
Stuart Hall, "Notes on Deconstructing the Popular," (*PC*, 64-71)
Andreas Huyssen, "Mass Culture as Woman: Modernism's Other," (website)

OCTOBER:

7: **Final project proposals due this week: Sign up for meetings**

14: **"From Criticism to Complicity?" Art and pop culture since the '80s**

Readings: Artist interviews, "From Criticism to Complicity" (*AiT*, 1051-1054)
Julia Kristeva, Interview with Catherine Francblin (*AiT*, 1054-1055)
Michel de Certeau, "Walking in the City," (*PC*, 449-461)
Frederick Jameson, "The Deconstruction of Expression" (*AiT*, 1046-1051)

21: Criticism or complicity? Case studies I

Readings: Dick Hebdige, Excerpts from *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (PC, 355-371)
Caroline Evans and Lorraine Gamman, excerpts from "The Gaze Revisited..." (website)
Maria Elena Buszek, excerpts from *Pin-Up Grrrls* (website)
Cynthia Fuchs, "If I had a Dick: Queers, Punks, and Alternative Acts" (PC, 416-428)

28: Criticism or complicity? Case studies II

Readings: Stuart Hall, "What is this 'Black' in Black Popular Culture?" (PC, 285-293)
Tricia Rose, "A Style Nobody Can Deal With," (PC, 401-416)
Victor Hugo Viesca, "Straight Out the Barrio," (PC, 479-494)
Richard Fung, "Looking for my Penis" (PC, 338-348)

November:

4: Midterm exam!
11: Presentations (Speakers TBA)
18: Presentations (Speakers TBA)
25: Presentations (Speakers TBA)

December:

2: Presentations (Speakers TBA)

FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS DUE/DISCUSSED IN CLASS: Tuesday, December 9th