

## **Art Seminar 371, Fall 2012**

Monday 1:15 PM-3:45 pm in Photo Lab (1<sup>st</sup> Floor), or in individual student studios

Instructor: Aron Johnston

Office Hours: M/W 4-5:30pm or by appointment

Contact: aronjohnston@moravian.edu

### **Course Description:**

This course serves as an introduction to visual concepts & theories as they apply to the development and creation of a visual experience. Students will explore a variety weekly and bi-weekly goal oriented challenges or conceptual cues meant to expand their understanding & notions of visual expression. These projects are meant challenge formal visual elements, notions of craft, presentation, and compositional issues in order to evolve a disciplined studio practice. This course is an advanced level seminar; therefore, we will focus largely on defining how Interest and Intent relate to concept and practice. In addition to required reading and research, students will be expected to express their questions and responses as fully realized art-works. They will learn to address contemporary issues and methods in their work. The intent of this seminar is to instill confidence through work, research and understanding in an effort to prepare a student for the art world beyond academic concerns in the hopes that they will be assertively prepared to define their own work in the highly competitive field of art.

### **COURSE GOALS:**

- To relate the nature of interest and intention in art.
- To realize the conceptual through the visual.
- To promote visual thinking, seeing, and doing.
- To introduce a critical framework for thinking about, looking at & developing art.
- To develop a knowledge of art beyond formal and material elements.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- Students are required to work a minimum of **6** hours per week outside of class.
- Students are required to actively use their sketchbooks to develop their skills.
- Students are required to be on time for all classes.
- Students are required to be engaged in class discussions and critiques.
- Students are required to ask questions of themselves, the medium, and their peers.
- Students are required to pursue a personal self-disciplined practice.

### **Grading:**

Due to the volume of material to be covered in a short period, it is essential that you be in class every day, that you complete sketchbook and homework assignments, and that you are prepared to be fully engaged in class discussion and to work in class. This is a secure space where every idea, comment or question will be addressed with respect.

You will be graded on participation, definable intentions, creativity, technique, and development over the course of the semester. Projects that are truly exceptional and move beyond expectations will be graded as an A. Work that is engaging yet only meets average criteria will receive a B. Work that exhibits thought but is incomplete, poorly crafted/presented, or shows little development will be graded as average to below average and awarded a C or less.

It is the responsibility of the professor to assist the student with the development of each and every segment of the class. The professor should give opinions in a helpful and collaborative manner. It is, however, the responsibility of the student to ask for help when he or she is confused, when a misunderstanding exists, or when there is simply a question that may hinder the student's development if not addressed. This is a safe environment where learning is the primary goal of both parties. Yet, if the student does not ask questions when help is needed, the professor has no choice but to assign a grade accordingly. Please feel free to meet with me at any moment throughout the course.

I have posted office hours. I am also available by appointment or before class starts. I do require that you email me to schedule and confirm a meeting time.

Individual meetings will be scheduled at midterm and one week before the final class day to assess your strengths and weaknesses. This will allow you ample time to address any issues before a final grade is submitted.

Grades are a simple way to evaluate submitted work. Your "grade" is not a reflection of your personal worth or promise as an artist. Grades should never be taken personally. Please feel free to schedule an appointment for an individual critique during my office hours or up to 30 min prior to class if you need further clarification concerning your grade or my evaluation. I prefer not to discuss grades during class, since they are a private matter between you and I. Keep in mind that all graded assignments other than the final one may be resubmitted for re-evaluation up to one week from that project's critique date.

**CRITERIA FOR GRADES ARE DETERMINED AS FOLLOWS:**

A= Superior: 94-100, A- 90-93

Scholarship: strong, exceeding requirements of instructor, full conceptual understanding of terms and usage, able to relate abstract concepts relevant to projects or creative development

Initiative: contributions exceeding the assignment, showing independence and resourcefulness

Attitude: positive, beneficial to class

Individual Improvement: continually developing

B= Good - Above average: B+ 87-89, B 84-86, B- 80-83

Scholarship: accurate and complete, meeting all requirements of instructor, fully uses vocabulary and concepts relevant to projects or creative development

Initiative: good, meeting requirements of assignments

Attitude: proper, beneficial to class

Individual Improvement: shows signs of progress, responds positively to criticism

C= Average: C+ 77-79, C 74-76, C- 70-73

Scholarship: barely meeting requirements of instructor, seldom uses vocabulary, little understanding of concepts relevant to projects or creative development

Initiative: uncertain, apparent only at times

Attitude: generally neutral, but not objectionable

Individual Improvement: not showing signs of progress, not responding to criticism

D= Below average, yet passing: D+ 67-69, D 64-66, D- 60-63

Scholarship: not meeting requirements of instructor, does not understand or use terms and vocabulary relevant to projects or creative development

Initiative: not meeting requirements of assignments, not completing assignments

Attitude: indifferent, possibly objectionable

Individual improvement: not noticeable

F= Completely unsatisfactory: 60 and below

Studio Practice 20% (Evaluative score based on studio practice, developing ideas and finished work)

Sketchbook 20% (Evaluative grade of sketchbook research and development)

Critiques 20% (Accumulated averaged grade, scored at every crit/ # of crits evaluations)

PROJECTS AND PROPOSALS 20% (Accumulated averaged grade, scored at every crit/ # of projects evaluations)

Final project 20% (final project score= 1-10. Averaged total of: Final Crit evaluation, Planning & prep, project execution & presentation, Interest-intent)

Skill development, material usage, craft and presentation are major considerations in the assessment and grading of each completed assignment.

Critiques are held at the beginning of class to look at your homework and class work from the previous week(s). In addition to reading assignments and outside studio work, you are expected to be regularly involved in critiques, and to document your work in digital format due at the final critique. Critique may or may not last the duration of the class. Missing a critique is equivalent to missing a test or project, and it will negatively affect your grade. If you are late for class and miss a critique, you will receive a "0" for the critique.

A group critique is held every two weeks and an individual critique at mid-term & final (see Syllabus for crit. schedule) to review and discuss the work of the previous week. Critiques are a useful way for students to give thoughtful opinions about developing ideas on fully realized work from the previous week. It is the time when peers can give useful conceptual or technical information that might improve the work. The nature of a critique is to add useful developmental input to a student's work. In an academic setting, critiques play a secondary role. They are not unlike a quiz or test. It is the one time that I as your instructor get to see that you have a full understanding of the concepts & terms.

- Each critique is graded "1-10"
- Example: Miss a critique you are awarded a "0"
- Show up but have no work to discuss & say nothing during crit "3"
- Show up but say nothing or have no art work to discuss "5"
- Saying very little other than regurgitating terms and vocab or unrealized work "6"
- Talkative using terms applicable to the work in question "7"
- Adding alternative input using relevant terms and vocabulary "8"
- Adding viable alternative technical solutions or conceptual suggestions in a positive "9"
- Having achieved all of the above and in addition a student is able to reference outside sources such as artists, artworks, terms or concepts not yet discussed in class in a manner that is useful & relevant vis-a-vis his or her work and peer development "10"

It is the responsibility of me the instructor and your peers to challenge your skills and understanding through constructive input and creative suggestions. But, it is the responsibility of you the student to be a willing participant to your own success. The more you bring to a critique the more you will get from it. Finally, it is my personal goal to guide you and prepare you for the art world beyond academia; I cannot help you if you do not have anything to say or add.

**Homework:** Almost all of the assignments for this seminar are outside assignments generally due on the following critique date. Due to the sequential nature of the course, all assignments **MUST** be completed on time with no exceptions. This will absolutely affect your grade. You are expected to work a **minimum** of 6 hours per week outside of the scheduled meeting time. Studio practice & homework often go hand in hand. It is your responsibility to manage your time and communicate with the professor. Keep in mind that each project assignment is tailored to each student based on studio discipline, interest and intent. The expectations for each assignment are predetermined by the student and confirmed by peers & the professor at critiques or individual meetings. Discovery and development of your conceptual goal is extremely important. Altering the outcome based on discovery is based on communication with the professor & in the sketchbook. Discovery does not excuse work; it defines it. Be able to show evidence of the course of your development at each critique.

**Sketchbook:** Due to the nature of the course material, you will be given weekly sketchbook assignments to experiment, plan, and record your thoughts and varied creative intent. Use it each day and be sure to date each entry. Sometimes you may find that a sketch takes you several hours, sometimes just minutes. The point is to take what you learn in class, personalize it, and experiment with it in your sketchbook. Take it with you everywhere you go. Find a book that suits your personality; something you want to have on you at all times. Be fetishistic about it. It should become your best friend: a place to develop ideas, record thoughts . . . it should become a visual diary, something that you will be able to return to again and again for inspiration or previously thought, but never carried out, projects. Your sketchbook will be

graded only three times during the semester. You must have it with you in class every day. If it is missing, it will be marked against you.

**Attendance Policy:**

Attendance is mandatory. Each class meeting is considered a session. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each session. Students arriving 5-20 minutes late for any class session are considered tardy. Three tardies equal one un-excused absence.

- Arriving more than 20 minutes late or missing an entire class session is considered an absence.
- Students who do not return to class after break or who leave early will be considered absent.
- Showing up without your supplies is also considered an absence.
- Two unexcused absence may result in your grade being decreased one whole letter.
- Four un-excused absences is an automatic failure.
- An absence may be excused if there is a medical reason, family emergency or extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control. The determination of whether an absence will be excused is left to the discretion of the instructor.
- It is the responsibility of the student to ask his or her colleagues what information was missed during an absence and to make-up the missed work.
- Students, not the professor, are responsible for assignments given on a day when they are not in class. All missed work must be made up within one week of the due date, unless another date is arranged and agreed upon with the instructor.

**Disability-** Any student with documented disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All discussions will remain confidential. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

**Academics Honesty (issues of plagiarism)**

Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses that erode the academic environment. Moravian College and the Department of Visual Arts will condone NO form of plagiarism- Defined as the use of another's words, ideas, visual or verbal material as one's own without proper permission or citation. Each student has the responsibility to make sure they have a clear understanding of this important issue and how it applies to a studio class and their imagery. Any and all image appropriation needs to be discussed with the professor prior to usage. This includes material found on the Internet.

Students who violate the standards of academic honesty face serious disciplinary consequences, including referral before the honor council and/or immediate course failure.

**Cell Phones-** During critique and discussions cell phones and must be turned to the silent position.

**Studio Cleanliness & Respect-** Studios are a place where you should be free to work and explore your ideas. Please feel free to work as loose or tight as you like. Keep in mind that you are sharing this studio space; therefore it is good to communicate with each other as to usage. Be respectful of your studio-mates working space. Be sure to observe all relevant safety guidelines. Follow appropriate actions for disposal and storage of flammable and hazardous materials. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions pertaining to issues of safety or material handling. Finally, it is the job of every student to leave the studio **better** than the way they found it. Disrespecting your environment and those around you implies poor participation and may affect your grade.

**Class Discussion=CD:** Class discussion, slide/video presentations, group critique, demos or any event/ activity requiring class participation is evaluated as participation. It is graded as part of a student's participation score and missed CD's will be graded as "0" make up CD "7" showing up= "7" actively taking part = "8" positive input= "9" Adding to the class discourse through scholarly or personal research= "10"

**Class Assignment=CA:** Work done in class is often done in multiples: sketchbook is required to collect information and develop ideas or sketches for each assignment. You might execute several assignments during a class period, at least one example from ea. assignment must be submitted digitally for grade. Finished class assignments ARE NOT to be finalized in a sketchbook.

**Sketchbook=SK:** Sketchbook assignments are used to develop skills and introduce you to concepts and ideas we will be discussing in the coming weeks. The LEAST (#) are suggested as average minimum requirements (see grade criteria.) Your sketchbook is an evaluated grade not an average. Each sketchbook grade is based on development and usage. *(All Sketchbook work should be dated & labeled)*

**Homework=HW:** Non SK assignments used to generate discourse and develop a broad knowledge base & practical application related to the class. This work is done separate from your sketchbook. *(This is **not** a sketchbook assignment and is graded separately. All Homework must be labeled with assignment # for credit)* Note: Homework does include any and all research projects and contemporary propositions. Done outside of class. This work will be a will be up for critique and must be ready for critique through out the semester.

**Read:** Along with the work done in and out of class, reading will be the foundation for discussions and work throughout the semester. I will adjust the reading list if required according to skill advancement & group development. Each student is responsible to keep up with the required reading, which must be read before the start of every class. Pop quizzes are NOT given; rather, we use critiquing as a method to evaluate & determine understanding of terms and usage. So, in turn, be prepared to refer to your reading material & appropriate vocabulary during class and critiques. Each critique is given a grade that in part reflects your understanding of what you read.

## August:

Mon 27<sup>th</sup>

First day of class. Review Syllabus.

Select Studios for the semester.

HW: Select one example of the best work you have done in school thus far. Write a 4 page descriptive essay (1.5 spacing 12pt. font) that defines in conceptual terms the work that you have selected as your best work. (4<sup>th</sup> page is a high quality full page print of that work) What art movement does your example closely resemble? Who is the artist or art groups you are emulating? How do you expect this work to develop over time? What about the work is more than obsessive to you and why?

SK: Collect all the sketchbooks that you have used so far for school and bring them to the next class also bring one physical example of the best work you have done at Moravian thus far.

Read: "Work" Handout & Art Theory for Beginners pp. 1-9, pp.59-63, & 96-147

Handout: Art movements then-now

## September:

Mon 3<sup>rd</sup>

Labor Day; no classes – offices closed

Tues 4<sup>th</sup> 4:30 HUB reception for Doug Zucco "Choice Cuts" show

Mon 10<sup>th</sup>

CD: Review sketchbooks & discuss "best work" examples.

Defining Intent and Interest.

CA: Create a visual response to the concepts related to your reading on work, work ethic and labor.

SK: Related sketches and research as clippings, web searches/pic thumbnail sketches, list and writing relating to homework and classwork (note this is to be done for every project and proposal through out the semester)

Read: pp. 153-157, pp. 171-185 & selected handouts from reading list

Thurs 13<sup>th</sup>

*Colloquium on Sustainability (college-wide)*

Mon 17<sup>th</sup>

CD: Review Reading, Studio work & Sketchbook. Critical discussion

CA: Identity/conformity

SK: Select 5 artists who you feel you relate to (style, medium or movement) Define what in their work or practice you see or would like to see in your own development.

Mon 24<sup>th</sup> CD: Review Studio work and homework. Sketchbook discussion  
CA: Identity/conformity  
Read: pp.121-128, pp. 141-143. & selected handouts from reading list

Friday 28<sup>th</sup> Studio visit: *Flaux Space w/ Artist Tim Eads*

**October:**

Mon 1<sup>st</sup> Mid-Term Individual Critique & Grade evaluation

October 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> Fall Break

Mon 8<sup>th</sup> Fall Break No class

Mon 15<sup>th</sup> CD: Group studio Crits: Review Reading, Studio work & Sketchbook. Critical discussion  
CA: Systems and sequences  
SK: Who are 5 artists from recent history (1900-1980) you are familiar with? What question(s) would you ask of their practice or work?

Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> CD: group studio crits  
CA: Systems and Sequences  
Read: pp. 62-63 pp.78-81, pp. 103-105, pp. 109-110, pp. 124-136  
& selected handouts from reading list

Mon 29<sup>th</sup> CD: Group Studio Critique  
CA: Utopia and Dystopia

**November:**

Mon 5<sup>th</sup> CD: Group studio Crits  
CA: Utopia and Dystopia  
SK: Who are 10 living artists who you would like to learn from? What would you expect to gain from the encounter?  
Read: pp.55-77, p. 98-110, pp.157- 171 p. 175, & select handouts from reading list

Tues 6<sup>th</sup> 4:30 HUB reception, followed by artist talks 5 to 6 Alumni Photo Show, Ed Leskin and Jane S. Noel

Fri 9<sup>th</sup> NY Trip: Studio visit / Chelsea. (TBD)

Mon 12<sup>th</sup> CD: Group studio Crits, Beauty/Object  
Final Projects: Developing Individual Concerns  
SK: If you were an artist selected to be in an Art 21 segment: what would we learn about your work? What segment or sequence heading would it fall under (humor, systems, place, identity, gender, political etc.... )?

Mon 19<sup>th</sup> Individual Critique  
Final Projects Developing Individual Concerns

Wed 21<sup>st</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> Thanksgiving Break

Mon 26<sup>th</sup> Final Projects Developing Individual Concerns

**December**

Mon 3<sup>rd</sup> Final projects due Final group critique.

**\* Note: this is a working syllabus subject to change.**