

FINE ARTS: 281 FAR with Kit Voorhees

The exploration of the fine and performing arts is in great part an experiential exploration. We will attend a classical music concert, and spend class time exploring exactly how artists create art and why. Appropriate dress for class sessions is comfortable and 'sit-on-the-floor-able' — the same kind of clothing you might wear in a gym or a jazzercise class.

Participation in all class sessions and events off campus is mandatory.

CLASS AND PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

Class times: Thursday evenings 6pm – 10:30pm

- 1/15/09** Overview of course expectations & requirements.
Begin exploration of visual & performing arts disciplines
- 1/22/09** Exploration of Musical Theater/Rock Opera/Oratorio Form
- 1/24/09** **MATINEE PERFORMANCE: LIED CENTER --2:00 P.M. , JESUS CHRIST, SUPERSTAR**
- 1/29/09** Recap Superstar:
- 2/5/09** Possible visit to Ross Film Theater (this is an approximate week for this field trip)
- 2/12/09:** Exploration of visual arts and possible visit to gallery or in-class performance
- 2/19/09:** Sociological & cultural implications found in the arts
- 2/26/09** Night set aside for making posters
- 3/5/09:** Presentation of Posters & new aesthetic perceptions
Wrap-up
- ** *The course is based on first hand encounters with art and the intent is to attend at least 2 or 3 performances in addition to the trip to and art gallery and/or the Ross Film Theater. Some events are not yet publicized as this syllabus is forwarded to you on 11/11/08.***

PERFORMANCE AND ARTS EVENTS:

Unfortunately, performances are rarely publicized at the time this syllabus is due to be available to students. We will always take a field trip to view three-dimensional art At the Sheldon Sculpture Gardens and the two and three-dimensional works of art inside Sheldon Gallery or at other local art galleries. If the Ross Film Theater is screening a film that is relevant to this class we will also visit the Ross Film Theater at 13th Street (between Q & R Sts.) Every attempt is made to include an event being presented at the Lied Center, as long as it is pertinent to our course content. When no dance, theater or music live performance is available I will show DVDs that are relevant as well as an occasional video during class time.

Your class fee is paid in lieu of a textbook, since we use live and actual art as our text. You are encouraged to bring a family member or friend along to any or all of the arts events that we attend. You will have to pay for your guest's tickets. Your own tickets are covered by the fee assessed for the seminar.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

portfolio: You are expected to keep a portfolio of *all classroom activities, lectures, discussions, artifacts, and reflections* on all performance events viewed.

The portfolio must include a final essay on any aesthetic growth or new perceptions that you have developed during this course.

Your portfolio will count for 33% of your grade.

essay: You are expected to write one formal essay on one of the following:

- 1) an essay on one of the live performances attended or
- 2) An essay on two and three dimensional works of art that you will encounter during our field trip

poster: You are expected to create one poster addressing a social, cultural or societal issue addressed in the movie we see at the Ross Film Theater.

Your essay and poster will count for 33% of your grade.

Attendance & participation: You are expected to attend all class meetings and performance events and participate actively in all class activities and discussions. Because of the nature of the class, which is interactive and participatory, it is extremely

difficult to make up any missed class.

Attendance & active class participation will count for 33% of your grade.

Your portfolio should include separate sections for each of the following:

- new vocabulary acquired;
- open ended statements or questions generated by the works of art encountered;
- informal essays including entry expectations and final aesthetic reflection;
- descriptions and reflections on all class activities and reflection sessions;
- personal commentaries that reflect informal thoughts about encounters with works of art;
- reflections on making the poster and how your concept was developed & realized;

- artifacts that contains relevant articles & illustrations, poems, classroom artifacts, etc;

- other sections of your own choosing

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals:

I. Students will develop an understanding of several arts disciplines and how artists arrive at ideas as they create a new work of art. This will be accomplished through an exploration of those influences and energies that are included in the works of art used as texts for this course. Students will learn how choreographers & dancers, actors, playwrights, filmmakers and artists work collaboratively as they create new works of art.

II. Students will develop an understanding of those elements that have evolved during the 20th century that had a marked effect on the creative forces of specific art forms. They will further explore how the United States became a world force in the arts as an outcome of the cataclysmic events of the 20th century -- and what art forms specifically reflect the unique culture of the United States.

Objectives:

1) Students will experience how & why artists create their works.

Students will develop, through an exploration of the various arts disciplines, knowledge of the influences that drive artists to make art and the challenges that all artists face in our society today. Some discussion will center on the evolution of cultural influences in works of art.

2) Students will view variety of performing arts and visit a gallery to view visual art.

Students will experience video performances that will include different styles of musical theater and a visit to at least one art gallery. If possible there will be a documentary film viewed during one class period.

3) Students will develop the ability to reflect on art and comment knowledgably on content.

Students will develop a series of open-ended statements that will serve to assess the relevance of their exploration of the elements of each arts area to the works under study. They will pose a series of questions that will serve as a catalyst to explore the connections between the works studied and their own personal world or the greater world of which we are all part.

ASSESSMENTS:

Students will develop, collaboratively in small groups, some works-in-progress that will reflect a definitive understanding of at least two of the arts disciplines listed above. This product may take the form of an artistic presentation, and may include a single art form or may combine several forms.

Students will create a portfolio that reflects all classroom and excursion activities experienced during the seminar. The first and last 15 minutes class time will be allocated to this task. You will have to spend some time at home working on your portfolio as well.

The portfolio will reflect those new perceptions of the various arts disciplines under study and will serve as an illustration of the each student's personal reactions to these new ideas and understandings. Portfolios, *which are much more than journals*, can include writing, diagrams, vocabulary lists, visual art, poetry, and any other artifacts pertinent to the development of a

personal aesthetic. The portfolio is due on the last night of class will not be accepted after that date.

Portfolios are due the last day of class and will not be accepted later than that day.

Students will develop a poster that addresses a social, cultural or societal issue that was addressed in one or more of the in-class videos. The poster can include but not be limited to the use of symbols, the power of the arts, where art and sociology intersect, political issues, etc. The posters are to illustrate the aesthetic concepts discovered during this course. Posters may not utilize collage form. Since this is a visual art project please limit the use of words to three (3) or less. ***Remember, one picture is worth a thousand words.***

Posters will be presented during our final class period.

Students will write a formal, essay on one of two possible topics: 1) an essay on a live or 2) an essay on particular works of two and three dimensional works of art that you have encountered during our field trip.

The essay will be due on the final day of class or via email to me at kitvoorhees@cox.net no later four days after the last class meeting. This will still permit me to get your grades in on time. Please be sure to give me one copy and keep a second copy for yourself.

Your essay is to be typed, double spaced, and no less than 4 full pages in length. Please use one inch margins on all four sides. Please utilize any new arts vocabulary that you have learned during the course of your class experiences in your essay.

The performance essay should reflect social and/or cultural perceptions gained during the performance. Guidelines for the essay will be discussed during the first class meeting.

For the visual art essay please select at least one two- and one three-dimensional work of art and write of your personal connection (or lack of) to the works selected. Identify the works you have chosen by title and name of artist and explain what it is that led you to select them. Discuss how these works made you feel and what you believe the artist had as her/his goal in creating the work, and finally how you perceive the work as a reflection of the culture of the artist and of the culture of the United States in the 20th century.

Students will submit an entry commentary on their expectations of personal growth from this course, which will be written prior to the first evening of class and handed to the instructor that first evening. A more formal personal assessment on your own aesthetic development (or expanded artistic awareness), due on the final day of class, is to be included in your portfolio. **This should not be less than 2 pages.** It is not to be a review of what we did in class but rather how you reacted to and learned from both class activities and performance and visual art experiences.

FAR 281 Philosophy & Methodology

Development of a Personal Aesthetic:

Instructor, Kit Voorhees

Description and Introduction: This course is about understanding the centrality of the performing and visual arts to our lives and our culture. Primary emphasis is on the elements that are used to create a work of art and the study of how artists utilize these elements as they create. Secondary emphasis is on how the work under study reflects a specific culture or subculture and its relevance to other cultures/subcultures.

The term aesthetic supposes that a system of inquiry which is sensory, holistic, and cognitive -- and incorporates life experiences of the learner -- offers the learner a greater connectedness and continuity with the subject under study and everyday events, efforts and challenges in their world. The term development supposes a connection between traditional learning and the multifaceted and lifelong processes of personal and professional growth. As such, aesthetic development does not intrude upon individual disciplines, but instead provides a context for levels of perception, analysis, reflection, and synthesis that speak directly to new and non-linear paradigms of knowledge and communication.

The traditional system of teaching and learning has been based on the exposition/retention of known facts, the single intelligence Dr. Howard Gardner identifies as logical-mathematical. Historically, the measure of success of this system is based in quantitative assessment. Educational initiatives developed over the past ten years give emphasis to the importance of qualitative assessment that reflects learnings that evolve through discovery and process rather than exposition/retention.

Exploration of carefully selected works of art follows the notion that cultural literacy, a more informed awareness, and a more discriminating appreciation of works of art are central to learning about ourselves and about our world. In order to achieve these learnings we will utilize diverse methods and will place particular emphasis on the multiple intelligences defined by Howard Gardner.

Method of Course: Toward the development of a personal aesthetic students will be led through a series of carefully structured and sequential activities leading to the discovery, exploration, and manipulation of elements that are integral to the works of art serving as texts. Students will explore how choreographers use space, line, shape and color; how filmmakers make choices and guide the viewer; how storytellers build tension and release through a careful shaping of lines; how visual artists define problems and explore possible solutions; how actors and playwrights involve the audience in their work. Because of the experiential nature of the course all students will attend performances and view original, two and three dimensional works of art. These performances and original works will serve as the actual text of the course. All classroom activities will have direct relevance to the works of art under study and will occur both prior to and following the encounter with each work of art.

Students will be guided to develop a vocabulary that is both pertinent and comfortable and that will reflect their own aesthetic development. They will be challenged to develop their own sense of the beautiful and the ugly, the sublime and the comic. Students will be taken through exercises that will furnish them with the tools to see beyond the obvious, feel beyond the surface, hear beyond the immediate and to enlarge perceptions of their world.

