

Sophomore Seminar: ***Visual Literacy***

Instructor: Kaylee Rae Wyant

Mondays, 6-9 pm

Course Description

The aim of this Sophomore Seminar course is to develop students' "visual literacy," or ability to "read" works of visual art, including their own and that of their peers. Analyzing the formal properties of artworks, students will learn to put language to otherwise non-verbal characteristics. Through readings, writing assignments, and group critiques, students will deepen their self-awareness and strengthen their visual vocabulary. The course also encourages students to step outside the classroom to engage with art all over the city, visiting galleries, alternative spaces and artist studios.

Basic Schedule

Weeks 1-3

Understanding yourself & your work

- Identifying your influences
 - Thought map
 - Cataloging personal collections
- Present about your work
- Analyzing Formal Language
 - Writing about abstract artwork
 - Read Bertolt Brecht "On Non-Objective Painting."

Weeks 4-7

Setting Goals, establishing a good studio practice

- Long-term goals
 - What makes you happy? What is success to you? How do you get there?
 - Visiting artist talk
- Short-term goals
 - Navigating SAIC
 - Chicago resources
- Work ethic
 - Midwestern notions of "work"
 - Read "Michele Grabner Works from Home" and "Make it Clean."
 - Studio visits, Alternative Space visit

Weeks 8-10

Understanding the context of your work

- Who are your peers and your audience?
- What are the circumstances and realities that give your work meaning?
- To whom do you owe gratitude for your visual language?
 - Read Faheem Majeed essay on Barbara Jones-Hogu and AfriCOBRA

Weeks 11-15

Challenging your work

- Writing critically about a past work
- Remaking a past work in a new medium
- Group Project: Making an Artist Book

Course Texts

- "On Non-Objective Painting," Bertolt Brecht

- “The Primacy of Perception,” Maurice Merleau-Ponty
- “Sculpture: Not, Not, Not (Or Pretty Air),” Johanna Burton
- “Bluets,” Maggie Nelson
- “Hairy Who?” Essays TBD
- “Barbara Jones Hugu,” Faheem Majeed
- “Do It Clean,” Molly Zuckerman-Hartung on Michelle Grabner
- “The Architect and the Housewife,” Francis Stark

Writing Assignments:

- Exhibition Review
- Critical Self-review
- DIY Futures
- Self-Reflective Essay (due one week before the end of classes)

End-of-Term Assignment:

- Documentation of Practice

Additional Assignments:

- Attend gallery and studio visits
- Participate in group critiques
- Attend visiting artist talks
- Write art criticism
- Write about your own work
- Collaborate on an artists' book