

Sophomore Seminar Interdisciplinary Fiber 2900-014
Answers Without Questions/Questions Without Answers
3 credits
Spring 2019
Thursday 1-4pm
Sharp Room 1005
Instructor: Judith Brotman
jbrotman@saic.edu
Individual & small group meeting hours: Thursday 11-1pm
Writing Fellow: TBA
Student Mentor: Vidushi Lohia

“Have patience with everything that remains unsolved in your heart. Try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books written in a foreign language. Do not now look for the answers. They cannot now be given to you because you could not live them. It is a question of experiencing everything. At present you need to live the question. Perhaps you will gradually, without even noticing it, find yourself experiencing the answer, some distant day.”
—Rainer Maria Rilke, “Letters to a Young Poet”

“Confusion is a word we have invented for an order which is not yet understood” Henry Miller

Course Description: What are the concerns that drive one’s creative practice? How does one set the terms for its future development? Sophomore Seminar offers interdisciplinary strategies for the evaluation and communication of students’ individual practice as artists, designers, and/or scholars. Through essential readings, studio projects, and writing, students will generate narratives about how and why they make art.

This class emphasizes: 1) Depth of exploration including willingness to question, re-examine, & reconsider. 2) Commitment to work/working process 3)Active participation within the classroom----a classroom community in which supportive, honest, challenging feedback is freely given & exchanged.

In order to received credit you must fulfill ALL of the following requirements:

Significant investment demonstrated in all written, studio, & presentation assignments.

Whole-hearted participation in all critiques & discussions.

Projects must be turned in on time.

Read & be prepared to discuss all assigned readings/handouts.

Artist interview—2 page essay response

Meet with writing fellow for first draft of each writing assignment***Mandatory—Absolutely no exceptions!!*** Missing meeting = ½ absence

One individual meeting & 2 small group meetings with me during the course of the semester- Meetings will take place at a pre-scheduled time between 11-1 on Thurs./before class or after class.

Questions Journal—document/record each and every question you have for the entire semester. This

assignment is primarily related to your art practice but all questions are welcome.

Studio projects: Part 1=Remake & Part 2= Re-remake. (Each includes research component)

All projects require a depth of exploration, an attention to craftsmanship, and serious commitment. From time to time, you may be asked to rethink/redo a project; this too is a requirement of the class.

Attend Visiting Artist talk:

Required Writing Assignments:

1)DIY Futures:

Sophomore Seminar Required Essay

2) Response to Artist Interview—2 pages. Describe/discuss your interview in a cohesive essay. What did you learn? What inspired/surprised you? How might your discussion impact your own work? Did you come away with any further questions?

3) Self-Reflective Essay Assignment:

Sophomore Seminar Required Essay

OVERVIEW

Write an essay for your fellow students and faculty mentor that reflects on what you have learned during your sophomore year at SAIC. The essay must address each of the following: Strengths, Creative Production, Contextualization, Critique, and Community.

AND 4) Documentation of Practice:

Sophomore Seminar Required Assignment

OVERVIEW

All artists, designers, and writers revise work based on peer critique, personal growth, and new insights. This assignment is about documenting your practice while pieces are still developing and in process. Tell us a story of your making. It is important to be able to demonstrate how an idea, technique, theme, etc. is evolving in your work over time.

DOCUMENTATION (3-5 items)

Please choose 3-5 items (images, PDFs, video clips, etc.) to represent a documentation of your practice. One item will show the finished work, while the others will show work in progress. For example, you could choose images of three to five separate works that all share the same conceptual focus. Or, you might choose sketches, storyboards, material studies, test strips, or any items that show the development of the final work. Alternatively, you could choose a series of images or pieces of writing that document the same piece in different stages of development.

No more than 3 absences are allowed in order to receive credit for this class. You should not miss any class unless it is due to illness/hospitalization, religious holiday, or family emergency. 3 tardies =1absence. (Tardy=10 minutes or less) Please do not come late to class!

Missing a before-class meeting with me will count as ½ absence unless it is an excused absence. Please come to these meetings on time!!! If you will miss our meeting due to illness or emergency, email me before our meeting time.

Missing a mandatory meeting with our writing fellow=1/2 absence

You should not miss ANY class unless you are very ill, or there is an emergency family situation (illness or death), or for the observation of a religious holiday.

You are responsible for getting and completing any class projects/homework assignments on missed days.

Make up work is not accepted or assigned

PLEASE EMAIL ME, ON DAY OF CLASS, IF, FOR ANY REASON, YOU ARE GOING TO MISS OR BE LATE.

Check email regularly for any changes/additions to the syllabus.

You cannot change your presentation or critique days once you are signed up.

On some weeks, there may

be changes made to our syllabus; you are responsible for any changes, additions, edits discussed in class or emailed to you. Please check email every day

Failure to turn submit essays, turn in projects or present work on time may result in not receiving credit for the course. . .

Class projects require significant time, thought, considered attention. You will be asked to remake a studio project if it is not up to the standards of the class. Receiving credit for this class requires projects to meet these standards-----craftsmanship, attention to detail, conceptually rigorous, well considered installation.

Your written work requires the same attention/time/thought/care as your studio work.

Without correct spelling, grammar, and sentence structure even the best ideas will not be understood. And that's just the beginning. Sentences and paragraphs need to flow & connect one to the next in order to support your ideas. Papers that are unreadable will not be accepted by me or our writing fellow. If you find writing a challenge, please go to the Writing Center—on a regular basis. Written work will not be accepted and/or you will not receive credit unless/until essays meet above standards.

Cell phones need to be turned off during class. Do not text or check/send emails during class!

Laptops should not be open unless they are being used for note taking.

Falling asleep in class will count as being absent.

Work for other classes cannot be done during our classtime

If you wish to meet with me outside of class, I am available to meet: Before noon on

Thursdays....and after class.

Course Learning Goals:

1. Present self-motivated work of an iterative nature that demonstrates conceptual focus and technical ability as well as the beginning of a personal direction. (progression & documentation of work shown in critique)
2. Communicate a rationale for a self-designed curricular pathway for the junior and senior year at SAIC as well as a post-graduation goal. (DIY Futures essay)
3. Participate in a rigorous critique process in the art and design context that integrates peer-to-peer analysis as well as faculty to student feedback. (Critiques)
4. Demonstrate the ability to think, speak, and write clearly and effectively especially in regards to the developing body of creative work (Self reflective essay, Documentation of Practice-written contextualization, critiques)
5. Display an empathetic capacity to respect, understand, and evaluate work made by a wide variety of artists pursuing creative expression in a broad array of disciplines. (Self reflective essay, participation in critiques)

and

Students will develop iterative interplay of conceptual, formal and material development in their work. (This is a Sophomore Seminar and a BFA program learning goal)

Suggested Texts:

The Critique Handbook 2nd Edition Kendall Buster & Paula Crawford Prentice Hall 2010 Approx \$28.

“Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists’ Writings” Edited by Kristine Stiles & Peter Selz Second Edition: Revised & Expanded by Kristine Stiles University of California Press 2012

“Mapping, The Intelligence of Artistic Work” Anne West Moth Press 2011

“Art/Work” Heather Darcy Bhandari & Jonathan Melber Free Press 2009

“The Artist’s Guide: How to Make a Living Doing What You Love” Jackie Battenfield. Da Capo Press 2009

“The Studio Reader, On the Space of Artists” Edited by Mary Jane Jacob & Michelle Grabner University of Chicago Press 2010

“Why Art Cannot Be Taught” James Elkins. Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois 2001

“Art Critiques: A Guide” Jim Elkins 2011.

THE FOLLOWING REQUIRED READINGS WILL BE POSTED ON CANVAS AND/OR EMAILED TO YOU

“Tactics For Not Knowing: Preparing for the Unexpected” –Emma Cocker

“A Field Guide to Getting Lost” Rebecca Solnit 2006

“Odes to Common Things” Pablo Neruda Translated by Krabbenhoft Bullfinch Press 1994

“The Book of Questions” Pablo Neruda Translated by William O’Daly Copper Canyon Press 1991

Week 1 -Introductions. Syllabus and class requirements. In class writing assignment & discussion.

1) Describe what you have learned about your work/working process since beginning at SAIC? Be specific. Can include anything/everything. Interest in certain media/materials. Conceptual basis/main concerns of your work. Or for example: Love of process. Need to slow down/experiment. Need to take the time to resolve. Or ????????

What have you been most surprised to discover about your work? What are the biggest changes that have occurred in your work? Has anything about your work stayed the same?

2) What are some directions you are interested in your work? What do you think would be helpful to learn about your work? What do you hope to get out of this class? (If you aren’t sure, that’s ok, too)

3) Describe your best & worst critiques? What are the components of each? What are the outcomes of each? How do you know if a critique is good or bad?

FOR Feb. 1st

Homework for Next week –1/2 OF CLASS

Collect:

10+ images that you would have wanted to look at 2 years ago that no longer interest you.

10+ images that you would want to look at every day

10+ images that you are ambivalent about, but they still intrigue/interest you—a lot or a little.

Choose your images very carefully---be very selective! Do not pick the first or second images that seem ok.

(DO think about these images as they might inspire and relate to your studio work)

After selecting your images, think about how you will sequence/present. Also, before presenting the images, rehearse presentation. If you have a few general comments to make, that's fine. But don't "explain away" every image.....give us the opportunity to look carefully at/think about what you're showing.

At the end of the very end of the 30 images, please include 2 or 3 (max) images of recent work that continues to interest you.

Week 2—1/2 of class: Present your 30 images & 2or 3 of your own recent works.. 10 minute power point presentations.

Read excerpt froms "Pablo Neruda-- Odes to Common Things & The Book of Questions

Week 3 1/2 of class: Present your 30 images & 2 or 3 images of your own recent works.. 10 minute power point presentations.

Week 4 Discussion of essays. Visit to Art Institute

Week 5 Critiques ½ class: Part 1: Remakes . Chose any work from last semester (or last year) that you find interesting but feel could be made stronger/pushed further. Based on something you discovered/uncovered from your collection of 30 images, respond/remake this piece in at least 5 ways. (More is also fine!) Consider these works in a series as a way to further your understanding of your interests. It can be helpful to keep one aspect constant while incorporating other variables. (for example: keeping scale constant....while changing material choices) Be willing to take on a question that you cannot (yet) answer as part of the basis for your remakes. You will need to have at least one research component to share. **First Draft DIY Futures Due this week—Send one copy to me & one to Nathan Engel**

Week 6 Critiques Other ½ of class: Part 1: Remakes. Chose any work from last semester (or last year) that you find interesting but feel could be made stronger/pushed further. Based on something you discovered/uncovered from your collection of 30 images, respond/remake this piece in at least 3 ways. Be willing to take on a question that you cannot (yet) answer as part of the basis for your remakes. You will need to have at least one research component to share.

Meet with writing fellow this week

Week 7— TBA-Visiting artist

Mid-term self-evaluation due ---minimum one page submitted as a word document

SPRING BREAK NO CLASS

Final draft Curricular Mapping Due

POST on CANVAS: 5-10 questions from your Questions Journal that pertain to your work. These questions should be used as part of the basis for your final remake.

Week 8 Nancy Gildart will be visiting class to talk about CAPX

Readings from "Theories & Documents of Contemporary Art":

Robert Morris: Notes on Sculpture III; Eva Hesse: Letters to Ethelyn Honig; Martin Puryear:

Conversations with Hugh M. Davies & Helaine Posner; Cindy Sherman: Untitled Statement; Louise

Nevelson: Dawns & Dusks; Marina Abramovic & Ulay: Dialouge with Heidi Grundmann; Claes Oldenburg: I am for an Art

In class discussion on readings above AND on artist statements—what makes for an interesting, thoughtful statement that adds to & supports but doesn't explain/defend/detract from work?

Week 9 - CRITIQUE WEEK No Class

Artist interview essay due—first draft –sent to me and to writing fellow , DUE today/ Interview a Chicago artist. Choose an artist whose work seems to have similar concerns to your own and/or one whose work intrigues/inspires you. They can be someone who teaches at SAIC.....but I would prefer you start by looking for an artist outside of the school. If possible, interview should take place in artist's studio but email, SKYPE, or telephone interview is ok. Begin researching who you will interview first week of school AND making email contacts ASAP. Sometimes it can take a while to find an artist who is willing/able to make the time. Choose an artist who has been out of school for at least a few years. Your interview questions should focus on how s/he continues to sustain/support life as an artist---so questions about: 1) balance of job & studio practice 2) support system (Artist critique groups, studio visits, friendships) 3) Working in home vs separate studio space 4) Other interests that support and/or refresh studio practice.....& 5) Some bio info—background, education, etc. AND at least a few other questions which are of interest to you.

Week 10— In process critiques/discussion
Meet with writing fellow this week

Week 11 In process critiques /discussions
Artist interview essays due—Final draft

Week 12—TBA Field trip

Week 13— Critiques for 1/3 of class. Based on feedback from class critiques & from questions you have written in your Questions Journal ---continue to respond/rework. This may, but is not required to be, works in a series. However, it IS required that you demonstrate iteration of material, theme, idea, etc. SO explorations via maquettes, models, preparatory drawings or collages or actual works are required! (No exceptions) Research component required. Additionally you need to research work of at least one contemporary artist in conjunction with this project.
DOCUMENTATION OF PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT due May 3rd

Week 14— Critiques for 1/3 of class. Based on feedback from class critiques & from questions you have written in your Questions Journal ---continue to respond/rework. This may but is not required to be works in a series. However, it IS required that you demonstrate iteration of material, theme, idea, etc. SO explorations via maquettes, models, preparatory drawings or collages or actual works are required! (No exceptions) Research component required. Additionally you need to research work of at least one contemporary artist in conjunction with this project.
DOCUMENTATION OF PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT due May 10th

Self assessment/reflective essay—upload on Canvas. You will receive a response from me within three weeks

Week 15— Critiques for 1/3 of class. Based on feedback from class critiques & from questions you have written in your Questions Journal ---continue to respond/rework. This may, but is not required to be, works in a series. However, it IS required that you demonstrate iteration of material, theme, idea, etc. SO explorations via maquettes, models, preparatory drawings or collages or actual works are required! (No

exceptions) Research component required. Additionally you need to research work of at least one contemporary artist in conjunction with this project.

DOCUMENTATION OF PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT due May 12th

Student Attendance

SAIC policy states that students are expected to attend all classes regularly and on time. Students should miss class only with reasonable cause. If a student needs to miss class with reasonable cause, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor to receive instruction for how to make up for the missed class. It is the instructor's responsibility to give this information to the student as his/her/their schedule permits. Missing class for other than a reasonable cause may jeopardize the student's academic standing in the class.

SAIC's recommended institutional policy is as follows: If a student misses MORE than three classes, whether or not for a reasonable cause, the student will fail the class, if the student does not withdraw from the class prior to the deadline for withdrawal with a grade of "W." Deadline for withdrawal: Tuesday November 1, 2016 (fall semester) and Wednesday, March 29, 2017 (spring semester). Reasonable cause to miss a class might include:

- Illness or hospitalization (the student should contact Health Services, who will relay information to the faculty in whose class the student is enrolled)
- Observation of a religious holiday
- Family illness or death

Academic Misconduct

From the SAIC Student Handbook:

Academic misconduct includes both plagiarism and cheating, and may consist of: the submission of the work of another as one's own; unauthorized assistance on a test or assignment; submission of the same work for more than one class without the knowledge and consent of all instructors; or the failure to properly cite texts or ideas from other sources.

Academic integrity is expected in all coursework, including online learning. It is assumed that the person receiving the credit for the course is the person completing the work. SAIC has processes in place, including LDAP authentication, to verify student identity. Specific procedures for faculty to follow in the case of academic misconduct are detailed in the Student Handbook.

Additional resources for students:

- Read "Plagiarism: How to Recognize It and Avoid It: a short guide prepared by the Faculty Senate Student Life Subcommittee in 2004."
http://www.artic.edu/webspaces/portal/library/plagiarism_packet.pdf
- Read the Flaxman Library's quick guide titled "AVOID PLAGIARISM."
<http://www.artic.edu/webspaces/portal/library/plagiarism.pdf>

Accommodations Statement

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

SAIC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunities for students with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities, such as a Reading/Writing Disorder, ADD/ADHD, and/or a mental health condition who think they would benefit from assistance or accommodations should first contact the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) to schedule an appointment. DLRC staff will review your disability documentation and work with you to determine

reasonable accommodations. They will then provide you with a letter outlining the approved accommodations for you to deliver to your instructors. This letter must be presented before any accommodations will be implemented. You should contact the DLRC as early in the semester as possible. The DLRC is located within the Wellness Center on the 13th floor of 116 S Michigan Ave. and can be reached via phone at 312.499.4278 or email at dlrc@saic.edu.

Writing Center Information

Location Lakeview Building, 116 S. Michigan Ave., 10th Floor writingcenter@saic.edu 312.499.4138
<http://www.saic.edu/academics/academicresources/writingcenter/>

Appointments

Schedule in advance: <https://www.supersaas.com/schedule/saic/WritingCenter> Short-notice: Call 312.499.4138 to see if there are any openings

Hours

Monday–Thursday: 9:00 a.m.–7:15 p.m. Friday: 9:00 a.m.–5:15 p.m. Walk-in hours: Monday–Thursday: 4:15–7:15 p.m.

Auditing (Non-Credit Enrollment) Policy Resource Material

All students participating in this course must be enrolled as credit-seeking students. Given the nature of the course, requests to enroll in the course as a non-credit (audit) student will not be approved.

EXTRA CREDIT POLICY There are no extra credit opportunities associated with this course. All assignments for course credit are required as stated in this syllabus, and students should fully utilize all these assignments in order to successfully complete the course. Students requesting individual extra credit opportunities will be referred back to their copy of the syllabus and this course policy.

Statement on Shared Responsibility

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago is a diverse community of artists and scholars that celebrates both individual freedom and a strong sense of shared community values and responsibility. Students who enter this intellectual and social community make a commitment to an exchange of ideas and acknowledge that living and working within a community requires compromise and sensitivity to others. A strong community depends on respect for the rights of others, considerate behavior, and good judgment. Students are expected to maintain high standards of personal conduct; behavior should reflect maturity and respect for the rights of all members of the community. The School of the Art Institute of Chicago affirms that the responsibility to create an environment conducive to the freedom to learn is shared by all members of the academic community.

Statement on Diversity

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago is committed to an equitable, just environment where the voices of all our students, faculty, and staff are valued and respected.

Please refer to the SAIC Student Handbook for additional information on policies, procedures, and resources, including information about SAIC's Non-Discrimination Policies and Title IX contact information.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

DIGITAL DEVICES in class (LAPTOPS, PHONES, TABLETS, etc)

The student use of various digital devices in class such as laptops, phones, tablets, etc. should be limited only to appropriate use given the lecture and discussion format of the class. Use of digital devices in class to do non-class related work will not be allowed or tolerated. Similarly, use of digital devices in class during screenings will not be allowed or tolerated.

If a student has a software or hardware related problem please visit the 9th floor for the CRIT Helpdesk to address issues.