

City University of Hong Kong

Information on a Course
offered by School of Creative Media
with effect from Semester B in 2010 / 2011

Part I

Course Title: Introduction to Contemporary Art

Course Code: SM1011

Course Duration: One semester

No. of Credit Units: 3

Level: A1/B2

Medium of Instruction: English

Prerequisites: (Course Code and Title) NA

Precursors: (Course Code and Title) NA

Equivalent Courses: (Course Code and Title) NA

Exclusive Courses: (Course Code and Title) GE1110 Exploring Contemporary Art

Part II

1. Course Aims:

This course is designed to provide a selective overview of the background, aims and forms of modern art, with a strong emphasis on experimental film and video art, installation, performance, and intermedia work. The approach will be based on extensive class discussions and practical assignments. This course will encourage students to reflect critically about the fundamentals of their activity as creative media artists. Awareness of the diversity of modern artistic forms enables students to recognize that there are many different ways of being creative. Instead of accepting existing norms blindly, they will learn to explore new media independently and so think “out of the box”. Knowledge of avant-garde visual art helps future creative media professionals to appreciate the value of independence and innovation. Students will also be required to write research/creation documents that trace in detail their artistic process, in order to enhance their ability to reflect upon and communicate about their creative decisions.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance)

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

No.	CILOs	Weighing (if applicable)
1.	To theorize the main features of each artistic media, while recognizing that there is not one single “model answer” to the question “What is the definition of an artistic medium?”	
2.	To create art works and projects exploring one or more unique or distinctive feature of a given medium, and to defend their approach to the medium.	
3.	To produce work that blurs boundaries across media through the use of innovative materials, tools, and/or techniques, including art works that use concepts as a material.	
4.	To describe and theorize about the ideas and motivations underpinning many of the changes introduced by contemporary artists.	
5.	To theorize and communicate clearly about the basic stages and problems involved in the creative process.	
6.	To create art works that take into consideration the physical site and the body of the visitor or participant.	

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

(designed to facilitate students’ achievement of the CILOs)

Indicative of likely activities and tasks students will undertake to learn in this course. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course.

ILO No	TLAs	Hours/weeks (if applicable)
CILO 1 to CILO 6	in-class presentation and critique of student ideas and projects	
CILO 1 and 2	in-class discussions comparing two or more media.	
CILO 3, 4, and 5	Students to collect alternative artistic materials, tools, and techniques, and discuss their possible artistic uses.	
CILO 4 and 5	Discussion of sample artists employing random methods or creating “open” works, and proposals by students of new methods to enhance the unpredictability of their artwork.	

CILO 4, 5, and 6	Create short ideas for art works and discuss whether they are site-specific or not, and how it mobilizes the body of the visitor, and give detailed reasons for their answers. If the work is to be set in a special location, the student has the choice of researching the unique features of the location and explain whether/how the work relates to those features.	
CILO 4	-To debate in class how to design a course on contemporary art based on some of the ideas of contemporary artists	

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities

(designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs)

Indicative of likely activities and tasks students will undertake to learn in this course. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course.

ILO No	Type of assessment tasks/activities	Weighting (if applicable)	Remarks
CILO 1, 4, and 5	To write a research/creation document outlining the basic idea for the work, the evolution of the idea through various stages to its final form, and the motives for the various artistic decisions made.		
CILO 2, 3, and 6	Expand one of the short in-class exercises into a final project. This project can be a street performance, a course with a full set of learning materials, a performance, a public artwork, or a conceptual art piece. Present the ongoing evolution of the work in class critique sessions.		

5. Grading of Student Achievement: Refer to Grading of Courses in the Academic Regulations and to the Explanatory Notes.

100% coursework and in-class participation
Grading pattern: Standard (A+AA-...F)

Grading is based on performance in assessment tasks / activities.

Part III

Course Outline

1. Opening art: randomness, improvisation, and open works.
2. Expanding art: new materials and tools
3. Structured research: thinking through the specificity of the artistic medium
4. Intermedia and experimentation
5. Art and its audience: designing experience.
6. Space and the body: installation, performance, site-specificity, etc.

7. The organization of time: film, video, and other time-based media.
8. Conceptual artists and the institutions of art
9. Art and the unconscious

References:

Alberro, Alexander and Stimson, Blake. Conceptual art : a critical anthology (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 1999).

Bishop, Claire. Installation art : a critical history (London : Tate, 2005).

Clark, John. *Modern Asian Art*. Sydney: Craftsman House and Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998.

_____, ed. *Modernity in Asian Art: The University of Sydney East Asian Series*, no. 7. Broadway, New South Wales: Wild Peony, 1993.

Gao Minglu (ed.). Inside/out : new Chinese art (Berkeley : University of California Press, 1998).

Howell, Anthony. The analysis of performance art : a guide to its theory and practice (Amsterdam, The Netherlands : Harwood Academic, 1999).

Lynton, Norbert. The Story of Modern Art (Oxford : Phaidon, 1989).

Schwartz, Peter. Media--art—history (Munich ; New York : Prestel, 1997).

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