

ARTH200: INTRODUCTION TO ART HISTORY
Summer Term 2023

Time: M, T, W, Th 8:35-10:55 am

Location: Arts W-215

Instructor: Dr. Emily Doucet

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Office hours: Thursday, 11-12 am [On Zoom]

Course Description:

A work of art has never come from nowhere. One of the key objectives of this course is to approach art's histories in terms of how, where, and why we come to see works of art. To do so, this course offers an introduction to the social, political, and economic forces that have shaped (and, in some cases, been shaped by) the production, exhibition, and study of art. This course is not a chronological survey of key works, artists, or movements. Instead, this course will present a variety of approaches to the study of art in/as history. Each session will be structured around a keyword selected to introduce students to the foundations, limits, and intellectual contributions of art history as an academic discipline and historical methodology. In addition to course readings, lectures, and discussions, students will complete in-class writing assignments designed to practice different genres of art historical writing. Outside the classroom, students will visit three different sites (outlined in the syllabus) across the city of Tiohti:áke/ Montréal to encounter art and architecture in a variety of environments and institutions.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the term students will have:

- gained an understanding of how to approach a range of historical concepts in the history of art.
- applied concepts from lectures and readings in weekly group discussions on key art historical problems.
- developed essential art historical skills including writing visual analysis, describing different artistic mediums and processes, developing research skills, and

situating art objects in specific social and historical contexts.

- visited several different art institutions and architectural spaces and described their experience in doing so.

Course Materials:

There is no assigned textbook for this class. All course readings will be made available in .pdf format on the MyCourses page for the relevant week and session. The readings were selected as a critical component of the course, and I expect that you will complete the readings in advance of each session. We will draw on content and frameworks from the readings to foster our class discussions and provide models for some of the in-class writing assignments.

Announcements, readings, and instructions for the assignments will be posted on the course website (MyCourses). It is essential that you consult the course website frequently for announcements and updates.

Method of Assessment:

In-class writing assignments: 3 x 10% [30%] To be completed and submitted in class.

A prompt will be provided, and writing completed in-class on **May 3rd; May 10th; May 17th**. If you miss these assignments, there will be no opportunity to make up the grade. In case of illness or emergency, please contact me ASAP to make alternate arrangements. These assignments will generally be written by hand during class time, however, if this is not possible for you for any reason, please get in touch with me so I can make an accommodation.

Site-visit reports: 3 x 15% [45%] Submission through MyCourses only.

Site visits will be completed independently though class time has been allotted to accommodate your visit (outlined in course

schedule below). A worksheet will be posted on MyCourses the morning of the scheduled visit and your completed worksheet will be due by end of day the following Monday.

Montréal Museum of Fine Arts - **Due Monday, May 8th**

Montréal artist-run center (choose your own adventure, list of options provided on MyCourses) - **Due Monday, May 15th**

STM Metro Station (choose your own adventure, list of options provided on MyCourses) - **Due Monday, May 22nd**

Audio-guide script: [25%] Submission through MyCourses only.

For your final assignment, you will select on artwork or building encountered during your site visits and create a script for an audio-guide designed to introduce a member of the public to the artwork or building you have selected. In your script, you will provide a visual description of the artwork/building and refer to at least two of the keywords outlined during our lectures (see course schedule for full list). A full assignment description and grading rubric will be made available on MyCourses. Your script is **due May 31st**.

Late assignment policy:

Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due by 11:59 pm on the date listed. Please note that all late assignments and papers will be penalized by 5% per day unless a doctor's note is given. Doctor's notes must be received within 3 days after the due date. Students who do not complete assignments by the end of term will not be given the opportunity to do supplementary assignments to pass.

Attendance:

This class is fully in-person and regular attendance will be essential to success in the course. As outlined above, several in-class writing assignments will make up a portion of your grade.

Accommodation:

As your instructor for this course, I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and/or with the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009.

University Policies:

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/).

In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

Class Schedule and Readings:

Week One: Economies and Infrastructures

[May 1] Canon

Read: Alice Ming Wai Jim, "Dealing with Chiastic Perspectives: Global Art Histories in Canada," in *Negotiations in a Vacant Lot: Studying the Visual in Canada*, eds. Lynda Jessup, Kirsty Robertson, and Erin Morton (Montréal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2014), 66-90.

[May 2] Patronage

Read: Camille Mary Sharp, "Oil Sponsored Exhibitions and Canada's Extractive Politics of Cultural Production," *Imaginations: Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies* vol. 13, no. 1(2022): pp. 13-35.

[May 3] Property

Read: David Joselit, "Modern Art Was Always Conceptual," in *Art's Properties* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2023), 39-76.

Listen: "Generative AI is Here. Who Should Control It?," Hard Fork podcast, New York Times, October 21, 2022. [Transcript available].

** In-class writing assignment.

[May 4] No lecture - Independent site visit to Montréal Museum of Fine Arts

Complete: Guided worksheet via MyCourses.

** See museum hours and admission fees here:

<https://www.mbam.qc.ca/en/information/>, please note that the museum is closed on Mondays. There is an admission fee for this museum. If the cost of this ticket is prohibitive for you, don't

hesitate to contact me [no questions asked] for an alternate site.

Week Two: Collections and Exhibitions

[May 8] Collection

Read: Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach, "The Universal Survey Museum," *Art History*, vol. 3, no. 4 (December 1980): 448-469.

Look at: Redpath Museum, "Four Pillars of the Redpath Museum: World Cultures."

** Site visit worksheet for Montréal Museum of Fine Arts due.

[May 9] Exhibition

Read: Caroline A. Jones, *The Global Work of Art: World's Fairs, Biennials, and the Aesthetics of Experience* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2017), 81-112.

[May 10] Criticism

Read: John Berger, "Critics Credo," *Art News and Review*, 1955.

Read: Hannah Black, Ciarán Finlayson, and Tobi Haslett, "Tear Gas Biennial," *Artforum*, July 17, 2019.

** In-class writing assignment.

[May 11] No lecture - Independent site visit to a local artist-run center

Complete: Guided worksheet via MyCourses.

** Choose your own adventure. I have compiled a list of current exhibitions at local artist-run centers across the city (available on the course website), please select an exhibition that interests you.

Week Three: Publics and Environments

[May 15] Audience

Read: Jessica L. Horton, "Ojibwa Tableaux Vivants: George Catlin, Robert Houle, and Transcultural Materialism," *Art History*, vol. 39, no. 1 (2016): 124-151.

** Site visit worksheet for the artist-run center due.

[May 16] Landscape

Read: W. J. T. Mitchell, "Imperial Landscape," in *Landscape and Power*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 5-34.

[May 17] Modernity

Read: Nicola Pezolet, "From Automatism to Automation: On Jean-Paul Mousseau's 1962 Lumino-Kinetic Mural for Hydro-Québec," *Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art Canadien*, vol. 37/38, no. 2/1 (2016/2017): 100-131.

** In-class writing assignment.

[May 18] Independent Site visit to STM Metro station

Complete: Guided worksheet via MyCourses.

** Choose your own adventure. A list of interesting options will be made available via the course website.

Week Four: Media and Materials

[May 22] NO CLASS - PUBLIC HOLIDAY

** Site visit worksheet for the STM Metro Station due.

[May 23] Materiality

Read: Niharika Dinkar, "Pyrotechnics and photography: Saltpeter and the Colonial History of Photographic Lighting," *photographies*, vol. 14, no. 3 (2021): 395-420.

[May 24] *Reproduction*

Read: Laura Wexler, "'A More Perfect Likeness': Frederick Douglass and the Image of the Nation," in *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of African American Identity*, eds. Shawn Michelle Smith and Maurice O. Wallace (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 18-40.

[May 25] *Medium*

Read: Howard Wise Gallery, "TV as Creative Medium," 1969 [Exhibition brochure].

Read: William Kaizen, "Open Circuits," in *Against Immediacy: Video Art and Media Populism* (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2016), 10-24.

Week Five: Artists and Objects

[May 29] *Craft*

Read: Heather Igloliorte, "'Hooked Forever on Primitive Peoples': James Houston and the Transformation of 'Eskimo Handicraft' to Inuit Art," in *Mapping Modernisms: Art, Indigeneity, Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 62-90.

[May 30] *Conservation* (last lecture)**

Read: Fernando Domínguez Rubio, "Ecologies of Containment," in *Still Life: Ecologies of the Modern Imagination at the Art Museum* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 147-181.

[May 31] No class (Study day)

**** Audio-guide script due.**