Sophomore Seminar: Interdisciplinary
Why Make Art, Now?
Jason Dunda, instructor

Course Description
What motivates artists to make art? What is the role of the artist today? The very fact that these questions need to be asked is a hallmark of the plurality of forces that currently fuel cultural production. This course provokes second semester sophomores to consider in-depth their specific practice within contemporary and historical contexts. Students will investigate and analyze their own production and dissemination within the current environment as well as founding movements and prospective achievements. This seminar is constructed to be both a practicum and a think tank. Along with writing, practices such as drawing, design, image gathering, curating, and other studio-based activities may be incorporated into responses to readings and assignments. Students in this class will bring together practical and theoretical approaches to define their practice within the context, history, methodology, and presentation of art and artists in the 21st century.

The curriculum of Why Make Art, Now? consists of discussions and conversations based upon topical readings, visiting artists, critics, and curators, and field trips to museums and galleries in the Chicago area. An important activity for the student of this class is to identify and utilize essential venues and resources, both locally and nationally, that will support and maintain their practice.

This class consists of several interrelated tasks leading up to a fifteen minute presentation and major written/illustrated project proposal to be executed independently and/or brought into a future studio class.

Key Readings
Steven Henry Madoff, ed, Art School: (Propositions for the 21st Century
Heather Darcy Bhandari, ART/WORK: Everything You Need To Know (And Do) As You Pursue Your Art Career

Key activities/highlights
- Choose an excerpt from Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art and lead a brief discussion.
- Before group critique, write a paper citing ideas/questions/problems from the reading discussion to the piece you will critique.
- Write a critique response paper outlining important elements of the discussion and how you will follow through on them.
- Present small works outlined in critique response paper.
- Give a 10-15 minute project proposal talk describing a major project and SAIC classes/resources you need to access in order to realize it.