SOPHSEM 2900 080, 3 credits
Thursday, 1-4pm, Spring 2020
Class Location: 012-A

Instructor: Hope Esser
Email: hesser@saic.edu
Mentoring hours: by appointment

Writing Fellow: TBD

Course Description

What happens when the artwork that we make is so close to us that criticism is hard to take? As an audience, how do we provide feedback for work that comes from a place of personal experience? And how does one’s own identity as a viewer play into the interpretation and response to the work? In this course, we will engage with these questions, and come up with strategies to approach one another’s work with empathy and care while providing critical response. We will also consider how such work can be made the most poignant through a variety of strategies, including personae, humor, endurance, metaphor, trace, and site.

The course will provide opportunities to present and get critical feedback on live work, and/or work that is personal in nature. While the focus of this course will be on embodied practices, it is open to all disciplines and areas of study. Studio assignments, readings, and writing projects are aimed to contextualize discussions around identity and the body, with particular attention to performance.

We will look at artists that complicate and question the agency of the body, the performer, and the viewer, including: Santiago Sierra, Andrea Fraser, Vito Acconci, Clifford Owens, Ron Athey, Coco Fusco, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Tino Sehgal, James Luna, Adrian Piper, Sharon Hayes, Tania Bruguera, Leigh Bowery, and Bob Flanagan. We will also read critical responses of these works to expand our own notions of critique.
More information about Sophomore Seminar and the Academic Spine curriculum can be found on the SAIC website:
http://www.saic.edu/academics/departments/academicspine/

**Student Learning Goals**

At the conclusion of the Sophomore Seminar course, students will be able to:

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.
2. Communicate a rationale for a self-designed curricular pathway for the third and fourth year at SAIC as well as a post-graduation goal.
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.
4. Demonstrate the ability to think, speak, and write clearly and effectively especially in regards to the developing body of creative work.
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.

You are responsible for keeping track of your assignments and due dates. Remember to ask for help or clarification when you need it. **I want you all to excel.**

**Course Materials**

Bodies, minds, laptop, sketchbook, pencils, pens
Additional materials upon request

**Course Texts + Written responses:**

All texts available on Canvas in PDF format. Please consult the course schedule for deadlines. All assigned readings require a written response by the class on which the reading is due. This should be at least one paragraph, addressing the main point(s) of the text as well as your own thoughts. Failure to turn in responses by the due date will negatively impact your grade.

**Course Texts include:**

bell hooks, “Understanding Patriarchy”
Judith Butler, excerpts from “Subversive Bodily Acts”
Patty Berne, “Tenets of Disability Justice”, From Disability Justice: a working draft

**List of Major Assignments:**

- **Critique 1:** present either a work in progress or a work that you have had critiqued previously that you feel you did not get enough feedback on or are still unsure of what the next step should be.
- **DIY Futures Essay:** Write an essay that describes who you are as a creative practitioner, where you imagine your practice might take you, and how you plan to utilize the time, space, and resources during your remaining time at SAIC.
- **Critique 2:** Present a new work that is personal in nature.
- **Artist Manifesto:** Inspired by assigned readings, write a manifesto or statement for yourself as an artist, art movement, activist, etc.
- **Critique 3:** (final critique) Present another iteration of the work presented in Critique 2, alongside previous iteration(s)
- **Self-Reflective Essay:** Write an essay that reflects on what you have learned during your sophomore year at SAIC.
- **Documentation of Practice:** 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.

Please see the course schedule and Canvas course page for expanded project narratives.

**Course Evaluation**

**Students will have at least two opportunities to provide feedback on the course:**

1) **Mid-Semester Evaluation:** This is a chance for students to informally reflect on their learning experience during the midpoint of the semester (around Week 7), so that potential changes and suggestions can be implemented before the course ends. What are you learning? What do you hope to still learn? What suggestions do you have to enrich your learning experience, in the form of constructive feedback for the instructor, the classroom community, and yourself as the student? Unlike the semester-end course evaluation form that is officially collected by SAIC, this feedback is for the instructor and students only. The format of this evaluation will be determined by the instructor (questionnaire, form, discussion, etc.).

2) **End-of-Semester Course Evaluation:** At the end of the semester, students will be asked to complete a digital course evaluation. The instructor will reserve about 15 minutes of class time, and students will need to bring in laptops to complete the evaluations during one of the last class meetings.

**Student Attendance**

SAIC policy states that students are expected to attend all classes regularly and on time, and prepared to participate with assignments that are due, materials for studio time, and the ability to engage with work vocally, cognitively, and physically. Simply showing up is not enough.

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: March 27, 2018 (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

Lateness: Please arrive before class with your lunch already eaten so that you are ready to participate promptly at 1pm. For a class that meets once a week, 3 latenesses will count as an absence on your record.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES:

Digital Devices: 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 CRIT Helpdesk on the 9th floor of the 112 S. Michigan (Maclean) Building for assistance addressing these issues.

You are requested to come to class on time and prepared to actively engage with your peers. Texting and/or Facebook, etc. during class means that you are no longer present in the activity taking place in the classroom. Plus, it’s rude.

Critiques:
A critique is a critical analysis of work that you have developed. During critiques, we articulate our sensory and intellectual response to your work. We discuss the formal and conceptual merits of the work and note areas for improvement. You are expected to discuss your own work as well as that of classmates with generosity and a devoted interest in assisting your peers to improve their work. You will listen to others and provide each other the challenging, compassionate, direct feedback that is essential to creative development. In this class, we will be examining the critique closely as a means to furthering your understanding of it, and empowering you to take control of the critique process so as to benefit your work! Critiques are an essential component of this course. Missing a critique day, or failure to show work without a reasonable cause, may result in a grade of ‘No Credit.’ If you are struggling with an assignment, it is your responsibility to contact me prior to the due date. Please allow 24 hours for a response as I always have a full inbox.

ademic 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.
- Read the Flaxman Library's quick guide titled “AVOID PLAGIARISM.”

**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**

SAIC offers free, hour-long writing tutorials at the Writing Center, which is located in the basement of MacLean. Tutors are available to assist all currently enrolled students with any stage of the writing process.

The Writing Center
MacLean Center Basement, 112 S. Michigan Ave., B1–03
Fall and Spring Semester Hours
Monday–Thursday 9:00 a.m.–7:15 p.m.
Friday 9:00 a.m.–5:15 p.m.
4:15–7:15 p.m. are designated as walk-in hours Monday–Thursday

Appointments
To schedule an appointment with a Writing Center tutor, students first need to create an account through the online sign-up system: [https://www.supersaas.com/schedule/saic/WritingCenter](https://www.supersaas.com/schedule/saic/WritingCenter).

Once students have set up their own account, they may sign up for appointments. Weekly standing appointments are available upon request. When students come to their tutoring appointments, they should make sure to bring their assignments with them and have any work printed out. Online schedule instructions are available outside of the Writing Center suite (in the hallway outside of the MacLean Center B1–03).

Contact Information
Leila Wilson, Writing Center Coordinator: lwilson@saic.edu or 312.345.3588
Writing Center Suite: 312.345.9131 (Call to see if there are any last-minute openings.)

**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.

My Commitment to Inclusion
I believe that protecting freedom of speech and expression in the classroom is vital. However, hate speech, discrimination, harassment, bullying, or targeting will not be tolerated. I am dedicated to maintaining a classroom environment where every member feels comfortable expressing their diverse ideas, beliefs, and values consider this to be the responsibility of the whole class community. I will make every effort to provide content “trigger warnings” for sensitive course material and but ask that you try to engage with challenging material so that we can learn from our differences. I believe that our differences, which may include differences in race/ethnicity, socioeconomic background, physical and cognitive ability, culture, religion, gender identity, citizenship/visa status, and/or sexual orientation, create a rich and positive learning environment.

*Please make every effort to learn one anothers’ pronouns. If I misgender someone, I will point out the mistake, apologize, and move on. Further information can be found here: https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/blog/why-pronouns-are-important