**COURSE OVERVIEW**

Too often creative practices and research-based scholarship are held apart when they should be brought together. In general, Visual and Critical Studies promotes the interplay of academic and artistic curiosity, while encouraging a hybrid scholarly-creative practice. As a result, this course focuses on a variety of fields of study, like, literature, sociology, anthropology, art history, philosophy, and cultural studies, to name a few. Some of the main topics this course investigates are politics and art, creativity and social life, and aesthetics and ethics. The goal of this course is to support student practices within a research-based framework, as well as to expose student to larger critical and political conversations. Please note, this course prioritizes artists that have been historically marginalized as a result of their social identities, which may include gender, race, ethnicity, able-bodiedness, sexual orientation, and more. Some artist, writers, and thinkers we will consider include: Carrie Mae Weems, Glenn Ligon, Edgar Heap of Birds, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Lorna Simpson, Sky Hopinka, Renée Green, Park McArthur, Eyal Weizman, Michel Foucault, Eve Tuck, and Alison Kafer. All kinds of making are welcome, including creative or scholarly writing, performance, photography, moving image, sculpture, painting, or any combination. All readings, screenings, and presentations are designed to provide an overview of topics pertinent to contemporary intellectual and creative production, and to offer exposure to practitioners who embrace complexity of thought.

This class is open to imaginative engagements of all kinds. However, please note that there is not a substantial in-class studio component, and that you will be expected to spend a fair amount of time reading and preparing for in-class discussions. An individual meeting will be scheduled in order to develop customized guidance and mentorship. Students are required to present a final project for class critique, which can be either a research-based text or substantial creative project that blends academic and creative production. There is great flexibility when it comes to your projects.

**READING SAMPLES**


[http://www.forensic-architecture.org](http://www.forensic-architecture.org)


Holmes, Brian. “Remember the Present: Representations of Crisis in Argentina.” *Escape the Overcode: Activist Art in the Control Society.*


**ACTIVITIES/PROJECTS**

Writing Exercise (Keywords): Take 15 minutes to create a list of keywords or key phrases that describe your interests, practices, curiosities, disciplines, genres of concern, and any materials or forms associated with those interests, practices, curiosities, and disciplines/genres. Elaborate on 3-5 of the terms you chose. Research your chosen terms (their histories and meanings) in order to be better informed. The elaborations should be both personal (what that term means for you and your practice) and also functional (what does the term mean in general to a general person). The elaboration should be about a paragraph. 3-5 well developed sentences. Your writing should a) unpack the meaning of keyword in detail [personal and social], b) describe why it is significant to you and your practice.

Screenings: We will screen a variety of videos related to contemporary art and critical theory, including…

Donna Haraway Reads the National Geographic on Primates.” (1987).

Bulletin Bored Exercise / Tear Away Flyer:
The bulletin board or public pole can be thought of as a vernacular structure where an assortment of printed matter is displayed for an as-yet-unknown readership or audience. At this somewhat unregulated site various authors/makers present their aesthetic sensibilities, approaches to communication, needs and hopes of conjuring a response of some kind, distributing information, and/or engaging in dialogue. Everything is jostling for attention; everything is in competition; everything is equal. For this project each student will produce a work to be designed, printed, and installed on a bulletin board or in public space, and/or distributed at various strategic locations throughout the city. In the end, the printed matter should embrace your interests, ideas, and approach to making. We will distribute these during class. So bring 10-15 copies.

Mid-Term Presentation:
There are two moments of critique scheduled in this class. There are three options for the mid-term presentation. 1) Present a particular project or idea-in-progress to that you want specific feedback and suggestions on regarding how to further develop the work. The idea/work presented does not have to be fully formed, but should show enough progress, material investigation, or research to provoke a productive conversation. 2) Present an artist talk that covers the body of work you have done so far. It should speak to who you are as a creative cultural worker and tell the story of your practice. How does that story unfold? What is its starting point, middle, ending? 3) Present on some concept/cultural phenomena/history/or other person's work that you find compelling enough to share with us. You should show original ideas in everything you present, however, the work to be discussed does not have to originate in this class.