

## **Gender and Art (Art 250)**

Art and Art History  
Gustavus Adolphus College  
Spring 2008

Instructor: Travis Nygard  
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Office hours: Monday, Wednesday, 11:20-12:20 and by appointment  
Class Meeting Time: Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 9:00-9:50  
Location: FAA Lecture Hall

### **Course Description**

This course will consider the impact of gender on the production, reception and cultural understanding of art and imagery. We will study a number of artists, both women and men, who have used art to effect social change. Influenced by feminist approaches to art historical study, we will explore perceptions of gender through visual culture and personal experience. We will examine the ways that certain ideals of masculinity and femininity are represented in art and its history to gain insight into gender performance and sexual identity both in past periods and in contemporary society.

### **Course Goals**

Obtain an overarching understanding of how gender and art relate.  
Develop ways to think about the form and content of art and visual culture.  
Develop an understanding about “artistic identity” as it relates to gender.  
Gain insight into reading scholarship about and criticism of art as both a reader and writer.  
Gain research skills

### **Online Teaching**

The syllabus and some other course materials will be posted on Moodle, and the assignments are to be turned in via a Moodle drop box before class on the day they are due. <http://moodle.gac.edu/>

### **Communication**

My primary means of communication with you outside of class will be email, via Moodle. Because I will use this to send assignments and announcements, you should check your email frequently during the term. Moodle allows me to send emails only to your Gustavus address.

### **Distractions**

Our classroom environment will be best if we can minimize distractions. As such, please turn off your cell phones. Also, many people (including me) are easily distracted by the smell, sound, and appearance of food, so do not eat during class. Beverages are fine.

## **Late Work**

All work must be uploaded to Moodle before class on the day that it is due. In general I will not accept late work. My reason is that the class will be progressing through the material quickly, and accepting late work would allow you to fall behind in your studies. Exceptions may be made on a case by case basis for documented personal emergencies, such as hospitalizations and funerals. Meet with me individually to discuss your situation.

If you know in advance that you will need to miss a class for personal reasons, then I may allow you to turn in an assignment late. However, you must petition me by the third day of class (February 15th). To do this, you must turn in a typed memo that lists when and why you will be absent and the date that you will turn in your assignment.

## **Attendance**

Attendance in class is required. Two absences are permitted during the term without negatively impacting your grade. For every additional absence your final grade will be lowered by 5%. For pre-approved absences and documented personal emergencies, you may make up the class period. To do so, read a scholarly article that addresses gender in either *The Art Bulletin* or *Art Journal*. The article must be at least 15 pages. Turn in a 3-4 page paper about the article. The first page must be a summary of the readings, and the next 2-3 pages must be your personal critique of them.

## **Participation**

You will be graded on participation based on the following criteria: (1) careful listening to your peers, (2) responding with thoughtful comments, and (3) successfully encouraging other members of the class to share their thoughts. At the end of the term you will do a self-assessment as well as an assessment of several peers, in which you suggest the number of points that you deserve.

## **Online Discussion Forum**

A major part of your participation grade in this course is based on your participation in an online "Wild Card" forum. You are required to post messages at least two paragraphs long to the Wild Card Forum five times per week throughout the term, excluding Spring Break. Your two paragraphs may be in response to someone else. You may post shorter messages as well, but they will not count toward the five messages per week quota. In general I will not be participating myself in the forum, as I want you to develop relationships amongst each other. Some days I will dictate a discussion topic to the class, and you are required to respond to it. Other days you are in charge of stimulating your own conversations. In the latter case, your discussions may be about the readings, assignments, practical library skills, or anything else course-related that you believe would be of interest to your peers.

## **Collaboration**

In general, I encourage collaboration. You may work with any of your peers on any assignment, and multiple people can turn in the same paper if you discuss it with me first. If you choose to collaborate on an assignment I may alter the requirements slightly. For example, I might ask for a 6-8 page paper instead of a 3-4 page paper.

It is great if you discuss your ideas with each other, but please disclose that at the end of the paper. For example, you might say, "I would like to acknowledge the insights of <name> who critiqued my ideas and suggested some further questions." This is a matter of academic respect, and if you look in almost any art history book you will find a similar list of acknowledgements in it.

### **Formatting**

All papers must be double spaced, use Times New Roman, Times, or Calibri font in size 11 or 12, and have 1 or 1.25" margins. All papers must be stapled.

### **Attribution of Sources and Academic Integrity**

To avoid plagiarism, any time that you summarize or quote another person's ideas you must cite them. Art history majors must use the humanities style with footnotes and a bibliography outlined in the Chicago Manual of Style (15th edition). It is the standard for our discipline—as indicated by its use in College Art Association publications—and therefore all majors need to be familiar with it. Non-majors may opt to use MLA style.

You are expected to abide by the highest standards of academic integrity, as outlined in the College Honor Code. Plagiarized assignments will not be accepted, resulting in a 0% for the grade. Incidents of plagiarism will also be reported to the Dean, who may choose to take further action. If more than one assignment is plagiarized, the consequence is failing the course.

[http://gustavus.edu/academics/general\\_catalog/current/?pr=acainfo](http://gustavus.edu/academics/general_catalog/current/?pr=acainfo)

### **Disabilities**

Should you require accommodations for a disability I am happy to work with you and the Disability Services Coordinator. The College policy on accommodation for disabilities is as follows: "Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) work together to ensure 'reasonable accommodation' and non-discrimination for students with disabilities in higher education. A student who has a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical, learning, or attentional disability that may have an effect on the student's ability to complete assigned course work should contact the Disability Services Coordinator in the Advising Center, who will review the concerns and decide with the student what accommodations are necessary."

[http://gustavus.edu/academics/general\\_catalog/current/acainfo](http://gustavus.edu/academics/general_catalog/current/acainfo)

### **Assignments**

Orientation Quiz:	3
In-Class Participation:	5
Online Discussion:	10
Homework:	10
Book Review:	12
Exhibition Review:	15
Visual Essay:	10
Annotated Bibliography:	10
Theoretical Questions:	10

Final Paper and Presentation:	15
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Total:	100

### Grading Scale

94-100	A
90-93	A-
88-89	B+
84-87	B
80-83	B-
78-79	C+
74-77	C
70-73	C-
68-69	D+
60-67	D
0-59	F

### Books

The five required books are available for purchase in the Book Mark. Please bring the assigned readings to class each day, as we may refer to them in discussions.

Peter Barry. *Beginning Theory*

John Berger. *Ways of Seeing*

Guerrilla Girls. *The Guerrilla Girls' Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art*

Carol Strickland. *The Annotated Mona Lisa*

John R. Trimble. *Writing with Style*

### Course Schedule

#### Week 1

#### February 11: Introduce Course

**Homework:** Write a 600 word biography of yourself and post it on Moodle.

**Assignment:** To give the class a good start, orient yourself to my policies, textbooks, and course content.

**There will be a quiz.** The quiz will be closed book, but you may bring a single standard sized sheet of paper with notes on one side. The sheet of paper cannot contain information from the syllabus simply copied and pasted in tiny type, the names of your textbook authors or any drawings or photos. You will turn in your sheet of notes. Feel free to ask the reference librarians for help. By this Friday, February 15th, you must know:

1. The policies on the syllabus.
2. Who the authors of your textbooks are. (In one paragraph each, could you state their professional credentials and current employer and note their important scholarly publications?)
3. Five scholars who are not on the syllabus, but have made important contributions to the study of gender. (In one paragraph each could you state their key contributions?)

4. Ten facts about art or gender that you find interesting, from ten different books or journals in the Gustavus library—not your textbooks. These must be facts that you did not know before the start of this class. Each student must use different facts.

### **February 13: Lecture and Workshop on Thinking about Art in Multiple Ways**

**Homework:** Find a reproduction of a work of art and bring it to class on February 15. You must hand in the reproduction.

### **February 15: Workshop on Formal Analysis of Art Quiz on orientation assignment**

## **Week 2**

### **February 18: Workshop on Describing Nudes**

**Homework:** Read one of the following articles and prepare a one page handout for your peers. Bring 16 copies to our next class. The handout must summarize the key ideas from the article, discuss whether the author likes or dislikes nudes, and propose three discussion questions that your peers could address with only the knowledge you provide in the summary.

- Clark, Kenneth. Excerpt from *The Nude*. 1956. Posted online
- Nochlin, Linda. "Offbeat and Naked." 1999  
<http://www.artnet.com/magazine/features/nochlin/nochlin11-5-99.asp>
- Dworkin, Andrea. "Vargas' Blonde Sambos." 2001  
<http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/collection/print/vargas/dworkin.shtml>
- Bright, Susie. "Varga in Drag." 2001  
<http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/collection/print/vargas/bright.shtml>
- Buszek, Maria Elena. "Of Varga Girls and Riot Grrrls: The Varga Girl and WWII in the pin-up's feminist history." 2001  
<http://www.spencerart.ku.edu/collection/print/vargas/buszek.shtml>

### **February 20: Looking at Nudes in the Hillstrom Museum of Art**

Class will convene at the front of the Hillstrom Museum below the college cafeteria. We will use your handouts to help us better understand the art on display.

**Homework:** Prepare a list of 10 typed questions that you would like to ask the artist Arnoldus Grüter and bring them to class on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. The questions can be about specific works of art, his life as an artist, and his life as a psychologist.

### **February 22: Meeting with artist Arnoldus Grüter in the Hillstrom Museum of Art**

Class will convene at the front of the Hillstrom Museum for a discussion with one of the artists whose work is on display.

**Online Discussion:** Post a 2 paragraph response to our meeting with the artist.

## **Week 3**

### **February 25: Workshop on Defining Gender, Sex, and Sexuality**

**Homework:** Read Peter Barry's chapter "Feminist Criticism" and prepare a 1 page handout that summarizes his key ideas, and then pinpoints 3 techniques he proposes for interpreting literature that

could be easily applied to visual art and 3 techniques that cannot be easily applied. Bring 16 copies -- enough for the entire class.

### **February 27: Lecture and Workshop on Feminist Art**

**Online Discussion:** Read Peter Barry's chapter "Theory Before 'Theory' – Liberal Humanism." Reflect on the ten tenets of liberal humanism that he describes, and write a paragraph on which tenets you most strongly identify and disagree with, and explain why. Post your paragraph on Moodle before the next class.

### **February 29: Lecture on the Canon of Western Art and Liberal Humanism**

**Homework:** Read Carol Strickland's *The Annotated Mona Lisa*, marking each time that you see a female artist. Compile a list of all female artists you found in the book, and bring your list to next class.

## **Week 4**

### **March 3: Workshop on the Canon**

**Homework:** Locate the best written piece of non-fiction that you have ever encountered and reread it. This writing may be about gender and art, or it could be about something else entirely. If you are referring to a book you only need to reread 20 pages. Reflect on what makes the writing particularly effective, which is *not* the subject matter. Prepare a 1 page handout for the entire class (16 copies) that summarizes the main ideas of the writing and explains strategies that the author used to write effectively. Note: often the most interesting strategies break the "rules" of writing.

**Assignment:** Read *The Guerrilla Girls' Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art*, which is a critique of the canon. Write a 600-800 word review of the book. The review must be aimed at a general college-educated audience—the same group of people that read *The New Yorker* and *Harper's*. The review must summarize the Guerrilla Girls' ideas and explain the merits and weaknesses of those ideas. The review must cite Barry's ideas on liberal humanism. (Remember to use proper footnotes or parenthetical citations for this and all future course assignments, as described above.) The review must include ideas of your own not discussed in class or on Moodle, and you must express a strong opinion of the book. At the end of the review, you must tack-on a paragraph that explains which writing strategies discussed in class you tried to use in the review. You will be graded on both form and content. The review is due March 10.

### **March 5: Workshop on the Best Writing You Have Read**

**Online Discussion:** Research the artists Auguste Rodin, Camille Claudel, and Malvina Hoffman online, and post 2 paragraphs about what you find on Moodle.

### **March 7: Lecture on Women Artists and the Exotic**

**Homework:** Prepare a list of 10 discussion questions that you would want to ask an expert on Auguste Rodin, Camille Claudel, and Malvina Hoffman. Your questions might be about the artists, the art itself, or the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Particularly if you are an art history major you might also ask practical questions about doing research, working in museums, or life as an art historian. The questions must be general enough that scholars could have differing opinions, not questions about factual trivia that could be easily looked up. Bring a copy of your questions to class on Monday, which you will turn in.

## **Week 5**

### **March 10: Meeting with Ruth Butler, an expert on Auguste Rodin**

Class will convene in the front of the Hillstrom Museum

**Homework:** Read Jonathan Culler's essay "Reading as a Woman," posted on Moodle. Prepare a handout for the class (16 copies) that identifies 3 observations of his that you found particularly insightful and explains why.

**Due: Book review.**

### **March 12: Workshop on Auguste Rodin Exhibit in Hillstrom Museum**

Class will convene in the front of the Hillstrom Museum.

**Assignment:** Write a 600-800 page review of the exhibition, focusing on how the art would be viewed by a man and a woman during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and how we view it differently today. Your review must be aimed at a college-educated audience. You must cite Culler's ideas explicitly. You must specifically refer to at least 3 objects of art in the exhibition to illustrate your points. You must assume that your reader will visit the museum. You must take a strong stance on both the exhibition and specific works of art, and tell the reader what they should think about when they visit the exhibition. You will be graded on both form and content. Due March 17.

### **March 14: Lecture on Feminist Art**

**Homework:** Read Peter Barry's chapter "Psychoanalytic Criticism." Focus on Freud's ideas, and come to class with a list of all terms in italics clearly defined.

**Online Discussion:** Reflect on your skills as a writer by making an inventory of the types of writing that you have done in your life. Decide which piece of your writing is most interesting and you are most proud of. (This writing does not need to be about art or gender.) Post a 2 paragraph reflection on Moodle about this writing, which explains how your peers might benefit from strategies you employed. The goal is to build a bank of strategies that we can all use in the future.

## **Week 6**

### **March 17: Workshop on Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Art**

We will use the ideas from Barry's writing to interpret a film by Salvador Dali, as well as the painting *Dakota Wheat Harvester* by Charles Hagens.

**Online Discussion:** Look at essay 2 in John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, which is composed entirely with pictures. Reflect on how this essay conveys meaning and what you believe Berger is trying to communicate. Then post a 2 paragraph response on Moodle.

**Homework:** Find 15 interesting and high quality images from either fine art or advertising. These images must relate to gender in some way, but the relationship can be tangential. Print or photocopy each image and write where it was published on the back of the paper. Bring all of the images to our next class.

**Due: Exhibition Review**

### **March 19: Workshop on Visual Essays**

We will discuss Berger's essay in class, brainstorm different types of questions about gendered representation that could be answered with a visual essay, and trade images with each other as a step toward creating such essays.

**Assignment:** Compose a visual essay that is similar to Berger's by scanning 10 images that relate to each other and juxtaposing them in a way that conveys meaning. Your visual essay must address a specific question about gendered representation. Then write a 300-400 word statement that explains what you are conveying in your visual essay. The statement must explain how the images you chose factually document as well as how they distort reality. Print out your essay and bring it to class after spring

break. Be prepared to show it to your peers and discuss the content. You will have approximately 5 minutes to show your essay and explain it. You will be graded on form, content, and presentation. Due March 31.

## **Spring Break**

### **Week 7**

#### **March 31 and April 2: Student Presentations of Visual Essays**

**Online Discussion:** Read John R. Trimble's chapters on "Diction," "Readability," and "Superstitions." Reflect on his ideas and post a 2 paragraph response on Moodle.

**Homework:** Browse through at least 1 full year each of the *Art Bulletin* and *Art Journal* to find a scholarly article about a work of art that you find interesting. The article must be at least 15 pages long and contain footnotes. The article must not interpret the art in terms of gender theory, but you must see the potential to do so. Take this assignment very seriously, as the work of art you choose will be the basis of your final paper and presentation. Photocopy the article, read it carefully, and bring it to class on April 4.

**Due March 31: Visual Essays**

#### **April 4: Workshop on Structure of Scholarly Writing**

Be sure to bring the photocopy of your article to class.

### **Week 8**

#### **April 7: Library Workshop**

Class will convene in the front of the library, and we will be working with the library staff. Be sure to bring the photocopy of your article to class.

**Online Discussion:** Read John Trimble's chapter "Getting Launched" and post a 2 paragraph reflection on Moodle about it.

**Assignment:** Prepare an annotated bibliography of peer-reviewed secondary sources on your final paper topic. To prepare an effective research presentation, you must make use of scholarly print and electronic sources in the holdings of the library rather than the internet. To do so, you must be able to find books and articles, cite sources, summarize information and evaluate materials for your research need. A bibliography is a list of sources that were used as resource materials for the presentation at hand. Due April 18.

To complete an annotated bibliography:

- Search the library catalog and journal databases for your topic.
- Find six books and/or print articles relevant to your paper. You may not use the course textbooks. You may not use any source earlier than 1985.
- Examine the sources and decide if they are relevant. If not, find others.
- Read the sources.
- On a separate piece of paper, type the citation for each source following either the Chicago Manual or MLA guidelines.
- Beneath each citation, using your own words, type an annotation. An annotation is a evaluative description that provides a description of the content, the ideas and the relevance of the source.



To write an annotation, you will comment, in paragraph form, on the following elements. Each annotation should be one page, double spaced.

- Content. What is the source about? What important information and ideas are presented? How is it relevant to your paper?
- Purpose. What is it for? Why was it written?
- Methods. What methods were used to collect data? Where did the information come from?
- Reliability. Is the information accurate?
- Authority. Is it written by someone who has the expertise to author the information?
- Currency. Is it new? Is it up-to-date for the topic?
- Scope. Coverage. Limitations. What does it cover? What does the author state that he or she will cover? What does the source not provide that would be helpful?

#### **April 9: Lecture on Sexuality in Art**

**Homework:** Read Peter Barry's chapter "Lesbian / Gay Criticism." Barry states that one of the tasks of this approach is to "establish a canon of 'classic' lesbian / gay writers." Find 1 image by a lesbian or gay artist that you believe should be considered a 'classic' and 1 image that should not. Print out and bring these images to our next class. Be prepared to discuss why you have chosen them. The following index may help you find images, but you may use any source:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:LGBT\\_visual\\_artists](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:LGBT_visual_artists)

#### **April 11: Workshop on Gay / Lesbian Interpretation**

We will discuss the images that you brought to class, and we will watch the short film Blow Job by Andy Warhol.

**Online Discussion:** Read Roy Grundmann's essay on Andy Warhol's Blow Job – one of the most canonical works of 20<sup>th</sup> century gay art. Identify two points from his article that you found particularly compelling, and explain why in a 2 paragraph Moodle post. Each student must either choose different compelling points or comment on a point in a substantially new way.

#### **Week 9**

#### **April 14: Library Workshop**

Class will convene in the front of the library, and we will be working with the library staff. Be sure to bring the photocopy of your article to class.

**Homework:** Find an example of information that is difficult to cite. Your information does not need to be about Mesoamerica or art. We will use the examples on April 16 to practice thinking through citations.

#### **April 16: Workshop on Bibliographic Citations**

**Online Discussion:** Read John Trimble's chapters on "Openers," "Middles," and "Closers" and post a 2 paragraph response to his ideas on Moodle.

#### **April 18: Workshop on What Counts as Art**

**Due: Annotated Bibliography**

#### **Week 10**

**April 21: Library Workshop**

Class will convene in the front of the library, and we will be working with the library staff. Be sure to bring the photocopy of your article to class.

**Assignment:** Choose one of the 3 theoretical approaches that we have covered in class that you would like to focus on in your final paper. Go to the library and photocopy the entry on your approach from the *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*. Your choices are psychoanalysis, feminism, or queer theory. In light of the strategies presented both in your Barry textbook and in this encyclopedia, develop a set of 10 questions that you might be able to address in your final paper about the work of art you have chosen. Under each question, write a paragraph of observations that might help you to answer the question. These observations can be about the formal properties or subject matter of the art, as well as the artist's life. Each paragraph must be at least 100 words long. Some observations will fit into more than 1 paragraph and should therefore be repeated. Rank your questions from 1 to 10, with the question you most want to answer as 1 and least want to answer as 10. Due May 2.

**April 23: Lecture on the Body as Art**

**Online Discussion:** Reflect on how you or someone you know alters their body aesthetically, and why that is culturally meaningful. Post a 2 paragraph statement about this on Moodle.

**April 25: Lecture on Clothing**

**Online Discussion:** Read John Trimble's section "Odds and Ends of Writing," and focus on at least 2 topics which you personally struggle with. Reflect on these topics and post on Moodle why you struggle with them as well as how you will try to overcome your struggle. Each student must contribute different strategies for overcoming the struggle.

**Week 11****April 28: Workshop on Masculinity and Architecture**

We will watch a portion of the film *The Fountainhead*, and use it to examine how some architecture is masculine.

**Homework:** Prepare a 1 page handout for everyone on 10 things that are highly masculine and bring it to class on Friday May 2. Some items on your list must be abstract concepts, some must be activities, and some must be objects. (16 copies.)

**April 30: May Day Peace Conference**

**Online Discussion:** We will not meet formally this day, but you are required to listen to at least one May Day speaker. Reflect on the type of evidence that the speaker uses to make their points, and how that evidence is similar or different from the type of evidence we are using in this class. Also reflect on the presentation style of the speaker, noting any strategies for speaking that you might be able to use when presenting your final project to the class. Post 2 paragraphs on these topics on Moodle.

**May 2: Continue Workshop on Masculinity and Architecture**

**Online Discussion:** Read Michael Kimmel's essay *Invisible Masculinity*, which is about the paradoxical situation that almost all history written has been about men, but very little of this history reflects thoughtfully on masculinity. Identify two points from the article that you found particularly compelling, and write a 2 paragraph Moodle post on them. Each student must choose different points of comment on the points in a substantially different way.

**Week 12**

**May 5: Lecture on Architecture and Feminism**

This lecture will build on our workshop to show the relationship between the architect Frank Lloyd Wright and feminism.

**Homework:** Make a floor plan of either your home or the home of someone you know, and plot out the areas that are masculine versus feminine within the home. Be prepared to discuss your diagram in class on Friday May 2.

**May 7: Workshop on Architecture that Students Know****May 9: Workshop on How to do an Effective Presentation**

**Assignment:** Prepare a 10 minute PowerPoint Presentation on your work of art that explains how the work has been interpreted by other scholars, identifies the approach you are using to reinterpret the art, poses several questions about the work of art, and presents your new interpretation of it. You must write a paper to accompany your presentation that is at least 1,500 words, excluding citations and the bibliography, illustrated with scanned images that are fully labeled. Your presentation must contain the key ideas from your paper, but you must not the paper verbatim. Rather, your presentation must be well-rehearsed to strictly conform to the time limit. If you are more than 1 minute over or under the allotted 10 minutes, your grade will be negatively impacted. At 11 minutes I must cut you off whether you are finished or not to stay on schedule. Your PowerPoint presentation is due on the day that you present it, and the final version of your paper is due May 27.

**Week 13****May 12-19: Student Presentations on Final Projects**

**Assignment:** Prepare a self-evaluation of your participation, as well as the participation of other members in your small group. Instructions will be posted on Moodle.

**Due: PowerPoint presentations are due on the day that you present them.**

**May 21: Capstone Activity**

**Due: Self-Evaluation of Participation**

**Reading Break**

**May 27: Final Papers Due.**