"Art is not what you see, but what you make others see."
Edgar Degas

"The holy grail is to spend less time making the picture than it takes people to look at it."
Banksy

Course Description:
This course is an exploration of art as it pertains to our daily lives, contemporary society, and cultural identities. It focuses on contemporary art and artists, while often comparing and contrasting them with artists throughout history and placing the work within a historical context. The course utilizes artistic themes to help relate content in the artwork to our own experiences. These themes range from self-exploration/identity, religion and spirituality, politics, technology, race, time, language, place/environment, science, memory and sex and sensuality, among other topics. The course and the artwork we look at in the course present challenging questions and ideas. An open mind is essential to engaging with the course material.

Course Objectives:
• gain an understanding and appreciation for contemporary art and its role in our own and other cultures
• discover and examine the role of the artist in contemporary society
• investigate the materials and methods employed by contemporary artists
• improve our ability to “read” and evaluate the visual images that surround us
• expand critical thinking skills through readings, discussions, writings and original research within the subject matter
• embrace a personal ability to make a creative, visual, and critical work of art

Text:
Themes of Contemporary Art: Visual Art after 1980 by Jean Robertson and Craig McDaniel
Publisher: Oxford University Press, 2017, fourth edition

Supplementary Texts and Resources:
Why Is That Art?: Aesthetics and Criticism of Contemporary Art by Terry Barrett
Publisher: Oxford University Press, USA, 3rd edition, 2017

Art21: Art in the 21st Century, PBS documentary series
http://www.pbs.org/art21/

TED Talks: Art, TED Conferences, LLC.
http://www.ted.com/topics/art

Assessment Methods:
The majority of work in this course involves a series of writing projects. There will be one larger research project on a contemporary artist to be submitted in writing to the professor and orally to the class. To complement this research, you will make one art project that relates to the artist you have chosen. Throughout the semester, you will write three shorter critical review papers. You will be graded on your responses to four quizzes given over the course of the semester in addition to the writing assignments. You will be evaluated by your investment in the subject matter as evidenced by your dedication to and concerted effort towards the assignments. There will be a broad assessment of your participation in class discussion over the course of the semester; this is one of the most important indications of your engagement with course material.
Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>240-226 = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>225-216 = A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist Collaboration Project</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>215-209 = B+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Reviews (3 @ 18 pts ea)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>208-199 = B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Work (2 @ 5 pts ea)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>198-192 = B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes (4 @ 15 pts ea)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>191-185 = C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion/Participation</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>240 pts possible</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading Scale:

- 240-226 = A
- 225-216 = A-
- 215-209 = B+
- 208-199 = B
- 198-192 = B-
- 191-185 = C+
- 184-175 = C
- 174-168 = C-
- 167-161 = D+
- 160-151 = D
- 150-144 = D-
- 143-0 = F

Attendance Policy:

You are expected to attend class regularly and to come prepared to discuss and engage with the material. A maximum of 3 excused or unexcused absences will be allowed without consequence. I advise saving these for illness or other unforeseen circumstances. More than three absences will result in lowering your final grade by 1/2 grade for each class missed. If you miss 6 or more classes, you will automatically fail the course. Arriving 10 minutes (or more) late or leaving 10 minutes early counts as a tardy. Three tardies will count as an absence. If you are absent, you are responsible for the information presented during the missed class; there are no make-up lectures or presentations.

Lecture and Discussion/Participation:

Many class days will consist of a combination of powerpoint lectures showing a variety of artists' work, short videos, visiting artist lectures, gallery visits or bringing in physical art objects. Students' full engagement of the subject matter, through their participation in discussions, is the best way to approach the subjective, interactive and open-ended nature of contemporary art. A variety of opinions about each work are essential to a vibrant discussion. Your overall discussion/participation grade is based on your regular contribution to the class.

Research Paper and Presentation:

The main research project for the semester will consist of three parts: the research paper, oral presentation of that research, and the artist collaboration project. This research project will investigate the artwork of one contemporary artist, chosen from the provided list of artists. The paper will cover the artist's working methods, philosophy, materials, audience and themes or content among other things. An oral presentation, which utilizes sample images of the artist's work, will coincide with the research paper.

Artist Collaboration Project:

In order to better understand the artist you have chosen to research, and artists in general, you will “collaborate” with your artist to make a work of art. You will chose some aspect of your artist’s working methods to utilize in making a work of your choosing. This may be materials, process, subject matter, etc. The results of this project will be presented with the oral presentation to the class.

Critical Reviews:

There will be three critical review papers assigned throughout the semester. The essays will describe, analyze, interpret and respond critically to a single contemporary work of art that you have seen in person. Two will be written in response to work seen on the field trips and one in response to a piece in a gallery exhibition on campus.

Quizzes:

There will be four quizzes covering the chapters in the book given throughout the semester. The quizzes will consist of essay questions, pulling from chapters covered up to that point in the semester. These will be schedule, closed-book quizzes; the questions will require that you have kept up on the readings and have understood basic concepts. They will ask that you illustrate points with examples (of art/artists).

Group Work:

You will be working with one or two other students to respond to artwork seen in videos and contribute to discussion related to the topics presented.
**Field Trips:**
We will be taking two field trips as a class during the semester. We will often leave in the morning on a Tuesday or Thursday and return mid-afternoon. You will need to pay your own entrance fees (CMA $11.95, MF $8) to each museum. Do your best to attend these trips or make other arrangements to see the work on your own. We will order boxed lunches to take with us or arrange to eat near the museum on these days.

**Classroom Etiquette:**
Out of respect for our collective class time, cell phone use during class, including texting, tweeting, and/or ringtone disruptions is prohibited. However, the quick access to online image or content searches is often useful during class and we may utilize phones or laptops to this end.

**Academic Integrity:**
Students are expected to abide by the academic integrity policies outlined in the Westminster College Student Handbook. The Westminster College faculty and students are bound by principles of truth and honesty that are recognized as fundamental for a community of teachers and scholars. The college expects students and faculty to honor, and faculty to enforce, these academic principles. All forms of cheating are prohibited, including but not limited to the following: plagiarism, submitting work previously submitted for grading in another course, misrepresentation, falsification, fabrication, or professional misconduct. Any form of cheating will result in an automatic F for the assignment, and the issue will be presented to the Academic Dean for review. I utilize turnitin.com as a tool in checking student writing for plagiarism.

**Accessibility Statement:**
Westminster College actively strives for the full inclusion of all our students. Students who have special needs that may affect their academic or personal life should seek resources on campus to assist them, such as Disability Resources, the Learning Center and Diversity Services. In this course, accommodations consistent with college policy will be made for students who are utilizing appropriate support services. After consulting with the appropriate support service, students are encouraged to speak with me in a confidential appointment about necessary accommodations.

Disability Resources: Thompson-Clark 209, craigfa@westminster.edu, 724-946-7192
Disability Services: McKelvey Suite 240, diversity@westminster.edu, 724-946-6178
Learning Center: McGill Library 206, learningctr@westminster.edu
Course Calendar

This syllabus sets forth a tentative schedule of topics, learning activities, and due dates. However, some modifications may occur but will not substantially change the intent or objectives of this course.

Week 1:  
Aug 28/30  
• introduction of course, review syllabus, reading: from Why is That Art: Aesthetics and Criticism of Contemporary Art, Chp. 1, pgs 3-15  
• lecture/discussion, reading: Intro & Chp 1 The Art World Expands, pgs 1-37

Week 2:  
Sept 4/6  
• lecture/discussion, gallery visit  
• lecture/discussion

Week 3:  
Sept 11/13  
• lecture/discussion, reading: Chp 2 Identity, pgs 41-74  
• field trip – Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh

Week 4:  
Sept 18/20  
• lecture/discussion  
• lecture/discussion, reading: Chp 3 The Body, pgs 77-111, due: Critical Review #1

Week 5:  
Sept 25/27  
• lecture/discussion  
• lecture/discussion, quiz #1, reading: Chp 4 Time, pgs 115-148

Week 6:  
Oct 2/4  
• lecture/discussion  
• lecture/discussion, reading: Chp 5 Memory, pgs 151-189,  
• lecture/discussion

Week 7:  
Oct 9/11  
• lecture/discussion, due: preliminary list of 5 artists for final research project  
• lecture/discussion

Week 8:  
Oct 16/18  
• field trip - Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh  
• lecture/discussion, quiz #2, reading: Chp 6 Place, pgs 193-232

Week 9:  
Oct 23/25  
• lecture/discussion, due: Critical Review #2  
• lecture/discussion, due: final selection of artist for research project

Week 10:  
Oct 30/Nov 1  
• no class – Fall Break  
• lecture/discussion, gallery visit, reading: Chp 7 Language, pgs 237-277

Week 11:  
Nov 6/8  
• lecture/discussion  
• lecture/discussion, quiz #5, reading: Chp 8 Science, pgs 281 – 317, due: Critical Review #5

Week 12:  
Nov 13/15  
• lecture/discussion  
• lecture/discussion, reading: Chp 9 Spirituality, pgs 321 – 356

Week 13:  
Nov 20/22  
• lecture/discussion  
• no class, Thanksgiving Break

Week 14:  
Nov 27/29  
• lecture/discussion  
• lecture/discussion, quiz #4

Week 15:  
Dec 4/6  
• student presentations/final project, due: final paper  
• student presentations/final project

Week 16:  
• Final Period, Wednesday Dec. 12th, 8:00am - 10:30 pm