ARH 353-01 (Spring 2017): Late Twentieth-Century Art  
Tuesday/Thursday 3:30-4:45 p.m. in Cone 107 (WAM)

This course focuses on art practices in the U.S. and Europe since 1945. It will begin with American Realism as context and resistance for Abstract Expressionism as the dominant movement to emerge in the aftermath of World War II. Pop Art, Minimalism and the movements that followed in the late sixties and early seventies -- Process, Earth, Body, and Conceptual -- will be examined in relation to the challenges they pose to more conventional understandings of painting and sculpture. The latter part of the course will take up postmodernism as the dominant paradigm of the last third of the 20th century. Photography, video, installation and performance-based art, as well as the emergence of an explicitly feminist art practice will be addressed. Finally, the course will consider the increasing globalization of art at the start of the 21st century. The artworks and exhibitions on display in the Weatherspoon Art Museum will constitute a significant component of the course. They will serve as primary sources against which to test the more theoretical and generalized concepts presented.

Readings
Lectures and discussions are organized around two required texts. They will be abbreviated in the reading assignments as [VoM] and [TiCA] respectively. They can be ordered directly from Yale University Press. You can also find them at slightly lower cost and used on Amazon. The links are provided below. It's essential that you order these books as soon as possible. It will make all the difference in terms of your successful completion of the class.

1. Paul Wood (ed.), Varieties of Modernism, (Yale University Press in association with The Open University), 2004 [VoM]  
http://yalepress.yale.edu/book.asp?isbn=9780300102963


2. Gill Perry and Paul Wood (eds.), Themes in Contemporary Art, (Yale University Press in association with The Open University), 2004 [TiCA]  

http://www.amazon.com/Themes-Contemporary-Art-Twentieth-Century/dp/0300102976/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1420750497&sr=1-1&keywords=themes+in+contemporary+art
Course Structure
The lectures, class exercises, and discussions will attempt to clarify and make sense of the history, theory, and art works presented in the readings. I will be using UNCG’s Electronic Canvas as a way of keeping you updated as to all course assignments and changes as we go. It is essential that you check electronic postings regularly.

Prerequisites
It is strongly recommended that you have familiarity with the material presented in ARH 111 and/or ARH 352 (Early 20th-Century Art). A workable alternative is to be conversant with the material covered in H.H. Arnason and Marla F. Prather, History of Modern Art (any edition). ARH 353 is intended for those students who have previously surveyed the terrain of modern art and now wish to explore particular aspects of late 20th-century art in greater detail. Without some prior familiarity with the concepts and histories of Modernism, Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Minimalism, and Postmodernism, this course may prove difficult and unrewarding.

Expectations
Close reading, understood as a crucial activity situated at the heart of liberal humanism, will be practiced in an overtly self-conscious and critical fashion. To this end, each student will be asked to confront, at length and with undivided attention, a wide-ranging series of critical and theoretical arguments presented by a wide range of authors. In an earlier, pre-digital age, there was a general default expectation with regard to the ratio of time spent reading relative to time spent in the classroom: two hours of reading per week for every course credit hour. This means that I will be counting on you to budget six hours per week of concentrated and undistracted reading time. Given the dominance of visuality and orality in our screen-centered contemporary culture, this may take some commitment and perseverance on your part. Deep literacy (to be discussed) is at the heart of this course. Students will be expected to consult UNCG’s Canvas and UNCG e-mail on a regular basis as a way of keeping updated as to all course assignments and changes as we go.

There will be 3 exams (image identifications, multiple choice and true/false questions) designed to support your close reading and comprehension of the texts. The emphasis throughout will be on informed discussion and personal critical responses to the assigned texts and to the concepts and arguments presented in class. Students will be required to engage in a variety of ways with each other and with their teacher.

Grading
I will be doing my best to separate out my role as teacher and advocate for the pleasures and difficulties of late 20th-century art from that of authority, gatekeeper, and grader. (It’s my job to do both.) To this end I will be using a contract grading system. The successful completion of the following requirements will insure a final course grade of B+. All grades lower than B+ will reflect specific instances of noncompliance with one or more of the criteria listed above.

1. No more than two unexcused absences for the semester. Please understand that you cannot expect to do well in this course unless and until you commit to attending all the classes and to doing the readings carefully and on schedule.
2. A combined average score of 75 or better on the three exams (based on a 100-point scale).
3. Good-faith class participation in group work, class discussions, conferences with me, etc.

[Please note: Class # 18 on March 23rd will NOT meet as regularly scheduled. You are expected to attend an evening lecture on that same Thursday instead. Please make every effort now to organize your schedule to make this happen.]

Course Upgrade
Those of you interested in a higher grade will need to fulfill all requirements for the B+ (1-3 listed above) and achieve a combined average score on the exams of 88-92 (A-), 93-96 (A), and 97-100 (A+).

Rules of Engagement
I will be communicating with you outside of class by means of Canvas. You will be expected to check it on a regular and timely basis. I also expect to hear from you by e-mail concerning all class absences and any other questions or difficulties that you may be having. My e-mail address is <g_dimock@uncg.edu>.

Course Schedule & Reading Assignments
Please note: By no means all of the material covered in the text will be presented in class. Nevertheless it constitutes a central component of the course. Students are expected to keep up with the reading. There is a standing invitation to make any and all reading experiences (interests, struggles, affinities, affirmations, negations) the topic of class discussion.

READINGS in Varieties of Modernism (VoM)

1. (1/17) Course Introduction

2. (1/19) Realism and modernism
Reading in VoM: Introduction (pp. 1-8) and Chapter 3 (pp. 75-115)
* Chapters 1 & 2 are recommended by not required reading.

3. (1/24) Jackson Pollock
Reading in VoM: Chapter 4 (pp. 117-145)

4. (1/26) Abstract Expressionism & Masculinity
Reading in VoM: Chapter 5 (pp. 47-185)

5. (1/31) Abstract Expressionism & Masculinity (continued)

6. (2/2) The Critical Terrain of “High Modernism”
Reading in VoM: Chapt. 6 (pp. 189-213)

7. (2/7) “High Modernism” (continued)
Reading in VoM: Review pp. 1-8 & 75-213
8. (2/9) Exam # 1 on Introduction & Chapters 3-6

9. (2/14) Minimalism’s Situation
   Reading in VoM: Chapter 7 (pp. 215-239)

10. (2/16) Vernacular Modernism
    Reading in VoM: Chapter 8 (pp. 241-268)

11. (2/21) Vernacular Modernism (continued)

12. (2/23) The “Neo-Avant-Garde” & Weatherspoon Art Museum Assignment
    Reading in VoM: Chapter 9 (pp. 271-313)

13. (2/28) The “Neo-Avant-Garde” (continued)

14. (3/2) Avant-garde and Queer
    Reading in VoM: Chapter 10 (pp. 315-337)

15. (3/7) Andy Warhol’s “Factory”
    Reading in VoM: Chapter 11 (pp. 339-361)

16. (3/9) Exam # 2 on VoM Chapters 7-11

SPRING BREAK

READINGS in Themes in Contemporary Art

17. (3/21) An Introduction to Postmodernist Art
    Reading in TiCA: Chapter 1 (pp. 5-43)

*18. (3/23) No class. Evening Lecture at 7:00 p.m. in the Weatherspoon Auditorium
    George Dimock, “The Poetics of Incongruity in the Photographs of Lucinda Devlin”

19. (3/28) Conceptual Art
    Reading in TiCA: Chapter 2 (pp. 45-86)

20. (3/30) Gerhard Richter
    Reading in TiCA: Chapter 3 (pp. 89-135)

    Reading in TiCA: Chapter 4 (pp. 138-180)

22. (4/6) Performance, Installation and Video
    Reading in TiCA: Chapter 5 (pp. 183-229)
23. (4/11) Performance, Installation and Video (continued)

24. (4/13) Installation Art  
**Reading in TiCA: Chapter 6 (pp. 231-275)**

25. (4/18) Installation Art (continued)

26. (4/20) Art and Globalization  
**Reading in TiCA: Chapter 7 (pp. 277-313)**

27. (4/25) Art and Globalization (continued)

28. (4/27) **Exam # 3 on Themes in Contemporary Art, Chapters 1-7**

**Grading Scale for Exams**

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