

ART-SHU 250 Visual Culture and Social Art Practice: Collaborations and Community Interactions



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Class Meeting Time: Thursday 1:14-4:15

Location: Art Studio 816 East

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is the function of art in our contemporary society? Who is it for, what does it represent, and why? How can we, as visual culture participants and producers, ensure that we are relevant, engaged, engaging, and inclusive? How does locality and culture play a part in how we think about and present what we are making?

Visual Culture and Social Art Practice: *Collaborations and Community Interactions*

is an interdisciplinary course which combines relational, performative, and collaborative community-based engagements with theoretical and conceptual investigations. Students interact artistically and directly with local communities as well as consider themselves in relation to those communities. Through the lens of social and relational art practices, they will develop and realize projects specific to various communities in Shanghai.

The purpose of this course is two-fold. 1. Students will gain an understanding of Social Art Practice in China (including projects such as Social Sensibility, The China Rural Reconstruction Academy, and Grass Stage) and 2. students will engage directly with Shanghai publics through outreach and collaborative projects. This is an opportunity for students to interact artistically and directly with local populations through the lens of social and relational art practices to develop and realize projects specific to various communities in Shanghai.

Students will learn to incorporate theory, studio, and social engagement practices (collaborative activities, ethical interactions, and interactive skills) in their understanding and making of art. They will consider notions of visibility, viewership, and authorship, in a global context, joining the dialogue regarding art practice shifting towards a dematerialisation of art and engaging communities outside of the specific art sphere. In the visual arts, conscious engagement with communities is both a way to open up new considerations and approaches to visual culture language as well as make spaces for autonomy and agency. Inter-personal and collaborative techniques can inform other disciplinary pursuits and life beyond this particular class.

In order to ground their visual pursuits, students will deepen their conceptual development of ideas through discourse based on selected art references, theoretical, critical and contemporary readings. Students will become proficient in the fundamental skills needed to conduct research, write a research paper, develop language for critical thinking, and formulate a project in collaboration with a community organisation. Students are encouraged to bring with them previous experiences and their individual perspectives in order to personalize and deepen their understanding of this course material.

Prerequisites: None

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course students will be able to:

1. Define and paraphrase foundational terms, seminal theories and aesthetic principles used to characterize works of Community-based Art.
2. Summarize and be able to critique key arguments presented in assigned course readings through verbal and written means. Compare and contrast arguments by different authors on related topics and effectively apply these arguments to other contexts and current issues.
3. Formulate effective formal, iconographical and contextual analysis of works in both verbal and written form and synthesize different methods of art analysis to create engaging interpretations of them.

4. Experiment with various visual art, collaborative, interpersonal, and performance techniques and effectively describe and defend how certain techniques and mediums impact the viewer.

5. Develop an engaging and original research paper and/or presentation project on a/an artist, artwork/s or art movements that draws on primary and secondary sources across a range of media, utilizes appropriate methodology, is persuasively and logically articulated, correctly formatted and free of serious grammatical errors.

6. Design, develop, organise, and conduct a community-based project in collaboration with a public organisation and be able to defend such work in both written and verbal form.

INSTRUCTIONAL MODE

This class meets in-person once a week for 3 hours. Lectures and discussions comprise approximately 1/3 of the time and skill-based learning, workshops, and collaborative work the remainder. Periodically workshops and off-site activities will take up the entire class time.

The Visual Arts Studio is available Monday through Thursday, 9AM-8PM and Friday through Sunday noon-6PM in either 816 East or 816 West unless there are classes in session. The schedule is posted on iPads outside the studios indicating which studio is available at any given time. You must go through a studio orientation in order to gain swipe-card access. There is a 200 RMB course fee to help cover the cost of art materials and equipment.

MATERIALS

- Zhao Chuan, *The Body at Stake*
- Kester, Grant H., Editor. *Art, Activism, and Oppositionality: Essays from Afterimage*
- Course pack (excerpts from books, art critiques, essays, and exhibition catalogues)
- Tate Glossary of Art Terms: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation: 20%

Students are expected to participate in a number of specific ways.

During regular class meetings, students should come prepared to present the work they completed the previous week as well as bring two questions/ideas drawn from the readings. Students will be asked in rotation to facilitate discussion.

We will have workshops, tutorials, and activities which utilize the body through performance, challenge conventional notions of art-making, create unexpected conversations, and ask you to enter into off-campus community relationships. Therefore, it is crucial that we respect each other, our different experiences and levels of comfort, and our encounters with new materials so that the classroom remains a supportive and safe environment for all students. If you are for any reason uncomfortable with any aspect of the course, please contact me immediately.

In addition to the regular class time, students should attend Museum workshops (these are in exchange for class time), one exhibition, two talks/events, and the end of the semester Arts Open House. These will count towards the semester grade. Event list to choose from TBA.

One aspect of participation is the Group Art Critique of on-going and finished projects. These critiques are meant both as an evaluative tool by the instructor and peers as to how successful each student is in manifesting and communicating ideas materially as well as provide each student with interpretive and language skills beneficial to discussing their practice. The main focus of these discussions is for students to develop and share their own interpretations of the work – drawing from previous experiences (outside of this particular course) as well as the readings and on-line discussion forum – in order to explore links between subjects and ground them in lived experience. As such, these critics are an open class forum in which students will place their work on view for discussion.

Written Responses 20%

Written responses to the readings (350-400 words) will take place via a forum. Students are expected to post their original individual responses by the Sunday at 5:00 PM following the assignment and respond meaningfully to two other students by the following Wednesday at 5:00 PM. Although these responses should indicate a grasp of the reading material, they are meant to be more open-ended and emphasize individual interpretations and impressions of the writings.

Art and Communication Assignments: 20%

The semester, students have 5 foundational art practice and communication assignments: Performance, Game/Craft Design, Interpersonal/Communication Skills, Workshop Ideation, and Art Workshop Conduct/Facilitating Skills.

Research Paper: 10%

For the research paper, students will write a short 4-page research paper connected to their Art Practice, Community-based Project. The paper will demonstrate clear understanding of the course readings, discussions and skills, as well as synthesize their community-based art-practice work with theoretical and historical research. Students will develop their research assignments through the use of a research tracker, group discussions, and multiple drafts.

Art Practice, Community-based Project Collaborative Assignment: 30%

The Semester project is to design and execute a community-based collaborative art project which incorporates research into a local community, group participation, creative engagement with the public, and documentation of the event. In small groups, students will develop a theme based on the course materials and in conjunction with the site. The project is a culmination of the art and communication assignments, community collaboration, and

socially-aware theories learned in the course. The work will be presented as a group at the end of the semester (5-8 minutes + Q&A).

GRADING

All assignments, are listed in our shared Google Drive Folder. This list indicates their weight (on a scale of 100). The point system corresponds directly to a grade based on the following:

Class Participation: 20%

Weekly Writing Assignments: 20%

Art and Communication Assignments: 20%

Research Paper (4 pages): 10%

Art Practice, Community-based Project Collaborative Assignment: 30%

Grading Expectations

A Range: Excellent work. The work lacks for nothing or next to nothing. The execution of the work displays strong conceptual development and attention to detail, is clearly thought out, well executed and appropriate to the subject matter and meaning of the project

B Range: Good work. The work is sufficiently finished so that it doesn't at all detract from the experience. The execution of the work displays some conceptual development, an awareness of detail and is sufficiently executed and appropriate to the subject matter and meaning of the project.

C Range: Satisfactory work. The work is mostly finished but some parts feel rushed or haphazard. The execution of the project shows some conceptual development and displays some awareness of detail but also some lack. I.e. it is unevenly considered and executed and are unevenly appropriate to the subject matter and meaning of the artwork.

D Range: Passable work. Meets minimum requirements but is not coherent or well articulated. Not very focused on the problem at hand. Based on limited attention to detail and work.

F: The work is clearly incomplete. The execution of the project is haphazard and lacks attention to detail, showing little or no consideration or execution. The concept is not appropriate to the subject matter and meaning of the artwork.

All assignments are posted and submitted in our shared Google Drive course folder. This list indicates their weight (on a scale of 100). The point system corresponds directly to a grade based on the following:

Grading Scale:

A 94-100

A- 90-93

B 84-86

B- 80-83

C+ 77-79

C 74-76

C- 70-73

D 60-69

F Below 60

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity:

Carefully read NYUSH's *Statement on Academic Integrity* (in your Student Handbook). Breaches of academic integrity could result in failure of an assignment, failure of the course, or other sanctions, as determined by the Academic Affairs office.

Disability Disclosure Statement

NYU Shanghai is committed to providing equal educational opportunity and participation for students with disabilities. It is NYU Shanghai's policy that no student with a qualified disability be excluded from participating in any NYU Shanghai program or activity, denied the benefits of any NYU Shanghai program or activity, or otherwise subjected to discrimination with regard to any NYU Shanghai program or activity. Any student who needs a reasonable accommodation based on a qualified disability should register with the [Moses Center for Student Accessibility](#) for assistance. Students can [register online](#) through the Moses Center and can contact the Academic Accommodations Team at shanghai.academicaccommodations@nyu.edu with questions or for assistance.

Title IX Statement

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX) prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs. It protects victims of sexual or gender-based bullying and harassment and survivors of gender-based violence. Protection from the discrimination on the basis of sex includes protection from being retaliated against for filing a complaint of discrimination or harassment. NYU Shanghai is committed to complying with Title IX and enforcing University policies prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex. Mary Signor, Executive Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity, serves as the University's Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator is a resource for any questions or concerns about sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, or sexual misconduct and is available to discuss your rights and judicial options. University policies define prohibited conduct, provide informal and formal procedures for filing a complaint and a prompt and equitable resolution of complaints.

Links to the Title IX Policy and related documents:

- [Sexual Misconduct, Relationship Violence, and Stalking Policy](#)
- [Procedures for Complaints Against Students](#)
- [Procedures for Complaints Against Employees](#)
- [Resource Guide for Students](#)
- [Resource Guide for Employees](#)

Attendance

Each unexcused absence will lead to a 5% grade drop per absence in your final class participation grade. (For instance, if you are at 94%, an A, an unexcused absence will result in an 89%, B+ end of semester grade.) Documented medical conditions and the observance of

religious holidays are legitimate excuses for an absence. Contact me via e-mail about (and before) each documented absence.

Observance of Religious Holidays: You may miss class for the observance of religious holidays. If you anticipate being absent because of religious observance, notify me in advance so we can create a plan for making up missed work. For more on this policy: <https://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html>

If you are late to class, each arrival of five or more minutes late counts as a 1/3 absence, so three late arrivals would count as one full absence.

There are additional mandatory dates/times that we will meet outside of the regular scheduled class times. The dates are one Monday or Tuesday evening towards the end of semester for our student gallery exhibition installation, a weekend day for a Museum workshop, and the end-of-semester joint Vis Arts-IMA open house (exact dates/times TBA).

On days we have visitors, special workshops, and critiques, late arrival will count as an unexcused absence, regardless of previous attendance, and will result in a 5% grade drop.

* In addition to the regular class time, students should attend two talks/events, two off-campus workshops, an exhibition installation and the end-of-the-semester open house.

Late assignments

Assignment times and dates are listed in the course schedule and you are responsible for being aware of those deadlines. Late submission grades will receive a 10% deduction per day overdue.

Electronic Devices (Laptops, phones, tablets)

Unless otherwise stated, no use of electronic devices will be allowed, following the policy set forth by Professor Lehman for GPS lecture. There may be exceptions at several points during the semester, especially during units on research and during drafting and workshopping, but in general we will use paper in class.

Unauthorized use of devices during class will result in points deducted from your participation grade.

Studio Hours

Students are required to attend one of three orientations sessions before being given swipe access to the studios. An announcement with that schedule will be sent out.

Open Studio hours are available 7 days a week, 9AM-8PM in either 816 East or 816 West. All There is a schedule posted outside the studios indicating which studio is available at any given time. Please be very sure to consult the schedule before entering the studios.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The syllabus and course schedule is subject to change.

Week	Agenda and assignments
1	Class activities: • Introductions • Syllabus and course objectives • Intro to Social Practice history and theory: talk and slideshow • Intro to Project 1: Museum workshop (development and preparation, engagement through facilitating, documentation) • Group activity • Project 1 – Workshop for PSA Assignments: • Project 1: Preparation for Museum workshop • Read: “Artists as Activists: Pursuing Social Justice,” Huffpost. • Response 1 – post
2	Class activities: • Discuss Project 1 • Project presentation guidelines • Tutorial: Art Workshop Conduct/Facilitating Skills • Tutorial - Documentation Assignments: • Read: Volume 1, Pp 253-263, and CULTURAL APPROPRIATION: A ROUNDTABLE, 2017:https://www.artforum.com/inprint/issue=201706&id=68677, • Read: excerpt from Zhao Chuan, <i>The Body at Stake</i> • Response 2 – post • Art and Communication Assignment 1: Art Workshop Conduct/Facilitating Skills (outline)
3	Class activities: • Discuss workshop • Visiting Artist workshop – Zhao Chuan and Wu Meng Assignments: • Project 1 due October 11 at 13:45

	• Read: Ai Weiwei: https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/sep/17/ai-weiwei-without-the-prison-the-beatings-what-would-i-be, • Read: Kester, Grant H., Editor. Coco Fusco "Fantasies of Oppositionality," <i>Art, Activism, and Oppositionality: Essays from Afterimage</i>, (excerpts) Duke University Press, 1998 60-75 • Response 3 - post • Visiting Artist Workshop response • Project 1
4	Class activities: • Social Practice in China • In-class group workshop: performance • Museum workshop preparation Assignments: • museum workshops • Art and Communication Assignment 2: performance • Read: Foster, Hal. The Artist as Ethnographer? 1995, and Pleasant, Amy.
XX	Museum workshop • Facilitate workshop • Notes, documentation Assignments: • Assess workshop (written) and organise documentation (into folders and slides)
5	No Class – replaced by Saturday/Sunday Museum Workshop Assignments: • presentation for week 6
6	Class activities: • Workshop presentations and discussions • Sites and potential projects • Tutorial: Interpersonal skills and community-based project organization Assignments: • Site contact selection • Response 4 – post • Art and Communication Assignment 3: Interpersonal skills

7	Class activities: • Slide show/Intro to Project and Research paper: semester project/ artist references – concept, theme, material, content, aesthetics, Formal critique/presentation • Group and Site assignments – workshop development, materials gathering, and strategies • Tutorial: concept proposals, outreach letters • Tutorial: Game and Craft design Assignments: • Art Practice project outline • Site visit • Art and Communication Assignment 4: Game/Craft design
8	Class activities: • Project discussion • Workshops: Game/Craft • Tutorial: Workshop Ideation • Research paper Assignments: • Project • Research paper topics • Art and Communication Assignment 5: Workshop Ideation
9	Class activities: • Workshops: Game/Craft • Research paper topics due • Group work Assignments: • Project workshops (weeks 9-11) • Art and Communication Assignment 5: Workshop Ideation • Read: 2 articles by Alessandro Rolandi: (https://hyperallergic.com/50855/a-performance-that-should-be-remembered/) (https://hyperallergic.com/67380/destroying-boundaries-with-experimental-musician-feng-hao/) and efflux (about Rolandi) http://e-flux.com/aup/project/alessandro-rolandi-beggars-banquet • Research tracker
10	Class activities: • Visiting artist talk/workshop – Alessandro Rolandi

	Assignments: • Project workshops (weeks 9-11) • Research paper draft 1
11	Class activities: No Class (Class Meets on a Monday/Tuesday week 13 or 14 for exhibition installation) • Last week to conduct Project workshops Assignments: • Project workshops (weeks 9-11) • Research paper draft 1
12	Class activities: • Research paper draft 1 due • Studio work • Exhibition prep Assignments: • Project presentations
13	Class activities: • Project presentations, informal critique • Open house/exhibition posters • Open house activity/exhibition Assignments: • Project revisions • Research paper final draft • Open house activity/exhibition prep • Open house/exhibition posters
XX Mon or Tues	Class activities: • Exhibition Installation
14	Class activities: • Final Projects/Presentation due • Open house activity/exhibition prep • Open house/exhibition posters - finalize

	Assignments: • Open House project
XX Friday	Class activities: Friday, 5-8:30 (will confirm time) • open house
Sun, May 16 midnight	• Research paper due