

Syllabus for VIS 208 - Thesis Exhibition

Visual Arts Department Spring 2024

University of California, San Diego

Lecture: Wednesdays 9-11:50am, VAF 366

Instructor: Dr. Ceci Moss

E-mail: clmoss@ucsd.edu

Course Website: <https://canvas.ucsd.edu/courses/56090>

Office hours: Wednesdays after class or by appointment

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

This is the general course description for the course that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ucsd.edu/courses/VIS.html>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide each student with a broad range of strategies for publicly presenting their work beyond the studio. Organized into weekly themes such as “Audiences,” “COVID 19 & After,” “Community,” and “Arts Institutions,” students will receive a practical and well-rounded foundation in curatorial studies and exhibition practice. The required readings will draw on recent publications in the field, emphasizing conversations that connect exhibition-making with broader issues such as structural inequity, new technologies and the evolving public sphere.

The course will lead to the required thesis solo exhibition for MFA candidates in Visual Arts as well as an (optional) MFA Preview Exhibition in January 2025 organized at the Mandeville Art Gallery. A detailed proposal of the MFA solo thesis exhibition is required to complete this course.

CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Attendance and Tardy Policy

In order to receive credit for weekly attendance, students must show up to weekly sessions on Wednesdays from 9-11:50am PST.

Regular attendance in all classes is required. Students are expected to arrive on time and remain in class for the entire period scheduled. The responsibility for work missed due to any type of absence rests with the student. Attendance is mandatory. Three unexcused absences will result in a student failing the class. Three late arrivals are equivalent to one unexcused absence. Any exceptions are up to the instructor.

Technology in the classroom etiquette

Turn off all devices before class. Laptops may be used to make notes only: you may be asked to close your computer if it is distracting you or your classmates. Students who surf, check email or similar will be asked to leave and marked absent for that day. If the behavior persists or becomes endemic to the class, then all student computers will be barred from the room.

Discussion etiquette

This is a graduate seminar requiring significant student input in the form of facilitation and involvement in discussion. To this end, reading assignments are to be completed BEFORE each seminar class and notes prepared to ensure class participation.

Participation in all class discussions is mandatory. Everyone is expected to come to class with specific topics or questions they would like to address in the readings.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

For all Writing Assignments, you must use consistent and properly formatted footnotes or endnotes, preferably using the Chicago Manual of Style format that is the standard in the field. If you have any questions about proper formatting, please see the Chicago Manual of Style or its website (<https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org>). You will be marked down for inconsistent and/or improperly formatted footnotes. All writing should be in Times New Roman, 12pt, double spaced.

Writing Assignment 1: Exhibition "Close Reading" Exercise

Each student will visit a group or solo show currently on view and conduct a "close reading" of this exhibit.

Writing Assignment 2: Plan for MFA Preview Group Exhibition

Working with your classmates and under guidance from the instructor, as a group you will develop a working plan for a MFA Preview Group Exhibition in January 2025. In preparation for this assignment, we will look at past MFA group exhibitions at the Mandeville Art Gallery, and engage in ample discussion regarding the structure of a group exhibition.

Final Project: MFA Thesis Solo Exhibition Proposal

You will write detailed MFA Thesis Solo Exhibition Proposal. This proposal includes:

- Exhibition Title
- Exhibition Narrative
- Checklist
- Floorplan

Please consult the MFA Handbook for more details about the MFA Final Solo Thesis: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/14oJot7RPpQgCuDFits1If1vuno4mihk3tTQ9-CgudcY/edit?usp=sharing> → [Links to an external site.](#)

PRESENTATIONS

Final Presentation: In the spirit of a [Pecha Kucha](#) → [Links to an external site.](#), each student will do a **10 minute presentation with 3 slides** on their MFA Thesis Solo Exhibition Proposal.

STUDENT FACILITATION

You will facilitate one **icebreaker activity** at the beginning of class once during the quarter. During this same session, you will **close-out the class with an example artwork (from another artist) or an exhibition** that considers the week's topic.

The aim of the icebreaker activity is to encourage you to think about how one's actions (and ultimately, one's artwork) can facilitate gathering and determine public space. You are welcome to source this icebreaker activity from someone else - such as re-staging an artist's score or adapting a dance warm-up or realizing a strategy from community organizing - but please be sure to credit the origin of this method.

The close-out example will invite a formal end to the class session and an opportunity for students to reflect on what has transpired.

GRADING

Attendance/Participation (25%)

Writing Assignment 1: Exhibition "Close Reading" Exercise (20%), Week 3

Writing Assignment 2: Plan for Group MFA Preview Exhibition (20%), Week 7

Student Facilitation (10%)

Final Presentation/ Pecha Kucha (5%), Week 10

Final Project: MFA Thesis Solo Exhibition Proposal (20%), Week 10

GRADE SCALE

A 90-100%

B 80-89%

C 70-79%

D 60-69%

F 0-59%

Grading Scale: A indicates work of excellent quality; B of good quality; C of average quality; D of below average quality; and F indicates inadequate work.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS will be deducted 10% of allowed points for each class day that it is late.

Assignment Submission Policy

All assignments must be submitted via the course website by the due date. Assignments not presented or turned in by due dates are considered late and will be penalized as described above.

Grading Timeline

Grades will be posted two weeks following submission of work.

Wellness and Health Statement

I believe a healthy work/life balance and the prioritization of overall well-being is a central component to one's success both within this class and beyond. Towards this end, I model well-being as a value in my classes. Please be kind and generous to yourself, and to others. If you are unable to attend class because of a personal or family emergency, please communicate that to me over email.

Braver Space Statement

As your professor, I strive to create an open and inclusive environment in which participants feel empowered to take risks and engage in challenging discussions. I want my classes to be joyful, democratic, inspiring, imaginative, and safe spaces for all. In order for us to collectively commit to this practice within our class sessions, please consult the principles below, which originated from Common Field's Community Agreement.

– Hold ourselves accountable first, and enter each space with a humble heart and loving criticality. Center care in our interactions with others and in representing our own

needs.

- In order to create a classroom environment that is truly intersectional and inclusive, we need to recognize that inequity is systemic. Before entering each session, take a moment to acknowledge our differences and be honest about our own privileges and power. Make a conscious effort to resist ableism, racism, classism, ageism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia in our language, imagery, and examples.
- Prioritize listening is essential in creating inclusive space. When we listen, center the voices of people with disability, trans & queer, black & brown, low-income, non-English speaking or other non-white folks. Silence can be helpful especially when it means we are actively listening and processing.
- Rather than reacting to one's immediate need to manage disagreement or achieve perfection, give space for discomfort, mistakes, vulnerability and non-closure. It is often through mistakes and discomfort that we grow.
- Respect each other's privacy and personal boundaries, including confidentiality. Understand that safety, accessibility and personal boundaries mean different things for different people. The way to create a safer and more accessible space for everyone is to ask respectfully and learn from one another interpersonally.
- Have fun. Take breaks. Allow space for yourself and others to enter and leave according to their needs.

I welcome any suggestions and feedback that will help us take better care of each other intentionally throughout these sessions and beyond. If you have additional accessibility needs or encounter any difficulties during the events, feel free to contact me.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Integrity of scholarship is essential for an academic community. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor this principle and in so doing protect the validity of University intellectual work. For students, this means that all academic work will be done by the individual to whom it is assigned, without unauthorized aid of any kind. <http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/2>

Effective 9/25/2017, UC San Diego will use new Administrative Sanctioning Guidelines to respond to academic integrity violations: <http://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/process/consequences/sanctioning-guidelines.html>.

Associated Students Office of Student Advocacy: a free and private resource providing one on one Zoom advising to students accused of violating Student Conduct or Academic Integrity policies. Contact or make an appointment at <https://asadvocacy.ucsd.edu/>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter (paper or electronic) issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (link to OSD website). Students are required to discuss accommodation arrangements with instructors and OSD liaisons in the department IN ADVANCE of any exams or assignments.

For additional information, contact the Office for Students with Disabilities:

- 858.534.4382 (V)
- 858.534.9709 (TTY) - Reserved for people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- osd@ucsd.edu
- <http://disabilities.ucsd.edu>

REQUIRED TEXTS

All readings are available as a PDF through the course website.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 - April 3

Welcome & Introductions

Introductions, Syllabus Overview

In-Class Activity:

Group Reading: *The Hundreds* by Lauren Berlant and Kathleen Stewart (Excerpts)

In-Class Writing Prompt: Write about your recent Second Year Exhibition in 100 words, crafted in the style of *The Hundreds*.

Week 2 - April 10

Curatorial Practice

Reading:

Paul O'Neill "The Curatorial Turn: From Practice to Discourse" in *Issues of Curating Contemporary Art and Performance* Eds. Judith Rugg and Michele Sedgwick (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2012)

Elena Filipovic "What is an exhibition?" in *Ten Fundamental Questions of Curating* (Mousse Publishing, 2013)

Dan Fox, "Being curated," *Frieze* (April 2013)

Student Facilitator: Cuyler Ballenger

Week 3 - April 17

Audiences

Reading/Watching:

Dan Fox "Audience Appreciation"

Hito Steyerl "Is a Museum a Factory?" in *e-flux* Issue #7 (June 2009)

Ben Davis "The Art World and the Culture Network" in *Art in the After-Culture* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2022) pp. 45-69

Student Facilitator: Maddie Butler

DUE: Writing Assignment 1: *Exhibition "Close Reading" Exercise*

Week 4 - April 24

"Exhibition as Content Farm"

Reading:

Dena Yago "Content Industrial Complex" in *e-flux* Issue #89 (March 2018)

Michael Sanchez "2011: Art and Transmission" in *Artforum* (Summer 2013)

McKenzie Wark "Introduction" in *Capital is Dead: Is This Something Worse?* (New York: Verso, 2019)

Student Facilitator: Coralys Carter

Week 5 - May 1

Arts Institutions

Reading & Listening:

Shimrit Lee "Decolonize Museums" (e-flux podcast)

Nizan Shaked "Introduction" in *Museums and Wealth: The Politics of Contemporary Art Collections* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022)

Laura Raicovich "Liberation Serif" in *Culture Strike: Art and Museums in an Age of Protest* (New York: Verso, 2021)

Student Facilitator: Nykelle Devivo

Week 6 - May 8

COVID-19 & After

Reading:

Artie Vierkant "Flatten the Cube: Post-Internet Art's Lessons for Our Current Crisis and What Comes After" in *Art in America* (April 30, 2020)

Achille Mbembe "The Universal Right to Breathe" Translated by Carolyn Shread in *Critical Inquiry* (Winter 2021)

Johanna Hedva "Get Well Soon" Introduction

Student Facilitator: Olivia Kayang

Week 7 - May 15

Exhibition Strategies in Practice

- **Guest Speaker: REDCAT Assistant Curator Talia Heiman, co-curator of Kameelah Janan Rasheed's solo exhibition "i want to climb inside every word and lick the salty neck of each letter"**

Reading:

Mark Allen, *Machine Project Guide to Curating and Planning Events* (Common Field)

Smithsonian Exhibits "A Guide to Exhibition Development" (Landover: Smithsonian Exhibits, 2015)

- Tuesday May 21 at 6:30pm in SME 149 - Lecture by Kameelah Janan Rasheed

Week 8 – May 22

Community

Reading:

Shaun Leonardo "Love" DVDL

ruangrupa *Documenta Fifteen: Handbook* (Hatje Cantz, 2022) [Excerpts]

Student Facilitator: Moe Penders Ramos

DUE: Writing Assignment 2: Plan for MFA Preview Group Exhibition

Week 9 - May 29

Imagining the Future

Chus Martinez *The Complex Answer: On Art as Non-Binary Intelligence* (London: Sternberg Press, 2024) [Excerpts]

Student Facilitator: John Singletary

Week 10 - June 5 - ONLINE/ZOOM

Pecha Kucha Presentations

Due: Pecha Kucha Presentation for MFA Solo Thesis Exhibition Proposal

Due: Final Project: MFA Solo Thesis Exhibition Proposal