



SYLLABUS

STUDIO ART IN ATHENS
Instructors: Colleen Choquette-Raphael and Carla Bengtson
Language of Instruction: English
UO Credits: 6
Contact Hours: 60

ATHENS, GREECE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The unique landscape of the Greek islands and the multilayered city of Athens provide the setting for this intensive three-week studio art course. Through a series of lectures, creative work, daily excursions to archaeological sites and museums, contemporary galleries and engagement with land and sea, students will have the opportunity to weave global history and theory into the practice of making art. Our methods will be interdisciplinary and open to various modes of expression, which might include but are not limited to, drawing and painting, performance, installation, photography and video.

A central mission of the course will be to utilize all of our bodily senses to as a way to interpret the environment and to consider artifacts from the cultural past not only in regard to their influence but also in terms of their contemporary relevance. In what ways has the image of the siren of classical mythology been reinterpreted in contemporary thinking? Where might we locate various manifestations of the Greek urn in contemporary art? A primary focus of the course will be a study of how artists from Picasso to Ann Hamilton have translated historical artifacts into art to tell the story of human experience. First hand observation of cultural and historical artifacts from vessels to street art will provide a forum for students to situate themselves within this living continuum of western art.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students in the course will:

- Gain a basic understanding of Greek history, culture and art.
- Be exposed to many facets of contemporary art in Athens from commercial galleries and design studios to alternative creative hubs and political street art.
- Apply media, techniques and strategies to create art that interprets objects, images and gestures from the natural world and culture of Greece.

- Fully engage with all five of our senses in the sensual construct of this land, to explore using expansive means to decipher the light, the language, the food, connections with people, through some aspect of creative practice.
- Determine how to interpret found materials and question what makes an artifact become art and evaluate its success.
- Explore the nature of materialism and the idea of travelers as consumers, how artists working with found materials are often involved in a critique of commodity fetishism and how context informs the way we interpret objects.
- Investigate how technology is restructuring the way we document experience and discover how artists use their travel to inform their practice.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

The proximity of notable historical sites, alternative contemporary artist hubs and the stark beauty of the Greek islands will function as a laboratory for students to experiment with a variety of art making strategies. Instruction will be offered in methods of documentation, the interpretation of found materials, digital archiving, the use of sequencing and layering, and the fusion of text and image to create a visual narrative.

*As this is a studio art course, the focus is creative production. **Students are expected to keep some form of a journal with them at all times** to record their daily observations using their desired combination of media; sketching, photographic documentation, the collection of ephemera and text. Each day there will be an assigned observation relevant to readings, slide lectures and excursions. Students are asked to collect the intangible and tangible using a method of visual documentation.*

Through observation and the recording of an expansive array of data, we will embrace the creative challenge of such tasks as finding a way to narrate the light encountered for one hour in the morning or the fleeting interactions with strangers while walking the streets, unreadable signs, or distant swimmers in the bay.

These journals will be handed in to the instructors for review at the end of each week.

The ideas recorded in the journals will cumulatively work toward a final project of the student's choosing to be presented and exhibited at the end of the course.

The Athens Centre has excellent facilities for the viewing and creation of art. There are several computers and a printer available for students to use for rendering basic digital work. Studio days will be kept to a minimum and most work will be done on site or in the field. Each Thursday, we will collectively critique the results of our observations.

Open to all disciplines, this course immerses students in rich cultural history and exposes them to cutting edge artistic aspirations. Students will be challenged to not simply record their impressions, but to use their experience to initiate a new way of thinking about the creation of art and its value to society.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Student assessment will be based on the following components:

- Assignments
- Discussion of the reading material, responses to excursions and site visits and completion of the studio assignments to be included in your journal.
- Participation in excursions and critiques of student work.
- One short analysis paper comparing the work viewed in class to the specified reading as described on handout.
- Final presentation: A ten-minute presentation of work at the Athens Centre
- Weekly projects
- Final project

As stated above, this course will be conducted through field research and creative practice. Your grade will be based on your level of engagement both in terms of the physical artifact and your intention. Completion of all assignments with a degree of excellence is how you achieve an A. I will offer evaluations and grades as we go so you are aware of your progress.

Class Participation: 20%

Students are expected to actively participate in all lectures, site visits and projects encountered in the course. They are expected to maintain a journal in which they will record daily observations, responses to Weekly projects given by the instructors, notes from the lectures and collected ephemera.

Short analysis paper: 10%

1000-word paper comparing an artifact or archaeological site to some aspect of contemporary culture.

Weekly projects: 45%

Ideas are peripherally noted on the schedule below:

Journals: 10%

Presentation and Exhibition: 15%

Students will present their projects with a ten -minute explanation of their intent and outcome.

It is a given that you are here to strive to a standard of excellence but the following is to provide clarity on the distribution of grades.

A+ = Truly exceptional work, unusually sophisticated level of engagement with course concepts, insightful participation in class discussions, extraordinary growth. Highest distinction, typically very few if any students receive this grade.

A = Distinctive work, complete success in synthesis of thinking and making, thoughtful and perceptive contributions to discussions, significant personal progress. Typically, no more than a quarter of the students in a class receive this grade, more in upper-division classes.

(A+ = 100 Points / A = 93-99 points / A- = 90-92 points)

B = Successful and well-executed work, competency with all course materials, concepts, and

objectives, frequent and thoughtful participation, evidence of progress. Typically, this is the most common grade.

(B+ = 87-89 points / B = 83-86 points / B- = 80-82 points)

C = Competent work with most assignments and class work completed, satisfactory grasp of material, participates in discussions most times, made some growth. Typically, this grade indicates weak performance in at least one area of expectation.

(C+ = 77-79 points / C = 73 -76 points / C- = 70-72 points)

D = Subpar work with significant lack of completion and/or low attendance, course concepts poorly understood, minimal participation, minimal to no growth. Typically, this grade indicates significant problems in more than one area of performance.

(D+ = 67-69 points / D = 63-66 points / D- = 60-62 points)

F = Inability to meet lowest standards **(0-59 points)**

COURSE OUTLINE (may be subject to change)

Week One:

- Introduction: Classical Greece and its influence on art.
- The Athens Centre. Walking tour of Athens neighborhoods and discussion of Greek culture and concepts of beauty (including an informative honey tasting, group dinner)
- An overview of Greek history and art. Slide presentation on how classical art and antiquity have influenced modern and contemporary art.

First media techniques: Traditional means of documentation including photography, video, drawing and collage.

Concepts explored: mapping, the fragment and layering

Visits to the Acropolis, The Acropolis museum

Guided tour of The National Archaeological Museum: discussion of how artifacts, their formal attributes and symbolic significance, are translated in contemporary art and culture.

Excursions to Delphi, the Temple of Poseidon at Sounion (discussion of the concept of the sacred and ritual and their applications in art)

Week Two:

Land, Sea and Sky

Excursions to the islands of Kea and Spetses. Possible side excursions to Hydra and Nafplion.

Field work. Students will break up into three small groups and design an ephemeral site-specific installation or land art project. This will involve finding a site to respond to either in terms of context or formal attributes, developing a series of notational drawings and photographs and presenting the project to the rest of the group.

Concepts explored will involve collaboration and performance, art as a series of gestures. Site specific work. The meaning of place. Psychogeography/Light and space as formal conventions in a variety of media.

Other activities and discussions will emphasize the concept of meta-modernism and art history as oscillation and not a linear progression. (Greece is not a singular culture but the nesting of many different cultures-- Hellas).

Week Three:

Civic Spaces/Street Art. The influence of politics on art.
Artist talks, site visits to The Museum of Contemporary Art and alternative creative hubs

Visit:

Contemporary Art Museums and Galleries

Street art

Gastronomy Museum

Syntagma Square

Visit to design centers. Greek design (and how it references artifacts and ruins).

Create a set of instructions for a work of art that could be carried out in a public space that we will visit this week. These instructions should be detailed and be specific to the function or the history of the civic space that you have selected.

Continuous:

Journals

Your journal is an important element of your creative practice over the three weeks of travel. You can think about this object as a portable studio space where ideas can be generated quickly as well as a place where you can linger or return to in reexamining and assimilating your daily experience. This is a place where found materials and debris of everyday activity can accumulate in relationship to mark making, drawing or color studies. In essence, the journal will create a record of your daily events and experiences but not through an ordinary narrative. Explore how time expands and contracts when one is out of their normal routines and surroundings. How do our senses become attuned in a different way when we are confronted by unfamiliarity? Your journal will be the retainer of your daily recollections and will be central to our daily discussions

SUGGESTED READINGS

-Robert Smithson, *Collected Writings*

-Roman Signer, *Travel Photos*

-Judith Adler, *Travel as Performing Art*

-Henry David Thoreau, *Walden, Walking*

-William Beebe, *Pheasant Jungles*

-Italo Calvino, *Cities and Signs*

- Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory*
- Xavier De Maistre, *A Nocturnal Expedition Around My Room*
- Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*. Beacon Press, 1994.
- Italo Calvino, excerpts from *Invisible Cities* and *Mr. Palomar*. 1978.
- Susan Stewart. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, and the Collection*.
- Peter Schwenger. *The Tears of Things, Melancholy and Physical Objects*.
- Nina Simon. *The Participatory Museum*, Chapter 4: Social Objects. Museum 2.0, 2010.

Academic Misconduct

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism.

Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Reporting

Any student who has experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender-based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment may seek resources and help at safe.uoregon.edu. To get help by phone, a student can also call either the UO's 24-hour hotline at 541-346-7244 [SAFE], or the non-confidential Title IX Coordinator at 541-346-8136. From the SAFE website, students may also connect to Callisto, a confidential, third-party reporting site that is not a part of the university.

Students experiencing any other form of prohibited discrimination or harassment can find information at respect.uoregon.edu or aaeo.uoregon.edu or contact the non-confidential AAEO office at 541-346-3123 or the Dean of Students Office at 541-346-3216 for help. As UO policy has different reporting requirements based on the nature of the reported harassment or discrimination, additional information about reporting requirements for discrimination or harassment unrelated to sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment is available at [Discrimination & Harassment](#).

The instructor of this class, as a Student Directed Employee, will direct students who disclose sexual harassment or sexual violence to resources that can help and will only report the information shared to the university administration when the student requests that the information be reported (unless someone is in imminent risk of serious harm or a minor). The instructor of this class is required to report all other forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment to the university administration.

Specific details about confidentiality of information and reporting obligations of employees can be found at titleix.uoregon.edu.

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

UO employees, including faculty, staff, and GEs, are mandatory reporters of child abuse. This statement is to advise you that your disclosure of information about child abuse to a UO employee may trigger the UO employee's duty to report that information to the designated authorities. Please refer to the following links for detailed information about mandatory reporting: [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#).