

Arts 291 Special Topic: Experimental Media in the Eternal City



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Course Description: In this course, students will use photography, video and audio media to explore historical and contemporary Roman cultures. The emphasis will be on experimentation in acquisition and production of media projects. Sample projects include; video montage, cinemagraphs, collaborative storytelling and alternative narrative synergies. Explorations of a wide range of special effects from time-lapse to stop-motion will expand our visual vocabulary. Presentations, gallery visits and discussion about the work of contemporary artists will aid conceptual development. Departmental equipment will supplement any personal equipment available and instruction in use of equipment and post-production techniques will enable completion of projects. Knowledge gained from other courses of study in Rome and elsewhere as well as personal research will contribute to the development of a body of work. Prerequisite preferred: a foundational art course, Arts 101-108.

Course Structure: This course will meet two times a week for three hours each at the Accent Center. Class periods will include presentations, demonstrations, discussions, workdays, critiques, field trips and visiting presenters. Homework is expected to take at least six additional hours per week. Students will have access to equipment and the studio, working both independently and collaboratively to achieve the objectives of the course. Four major assignments will be given increasing in length across the semester. *Changes to the syllabus will be discussed in class as needed.*

Departmental Learning Goals: *the studio art department goals are the general goals for this course as we desire:* Development of the ability to make visual art works of high quality. Success will be characterized by demonstrating creativity, gaining new art making skills, working through conceptual problems, and making formal decisions relevant to each media. Student creative development takes into consideration two different categories: (1) the progress of each student during an individual course, and (2) the progress over four years of the studio art majors.

Development of the ability to evaluate one's own artwork and the artwork of others within the context of an inclusive learning environment. Success will be characterized by gaining an understanding of the vocabulary of art appreciation, using vocabulary to speak and write about art, and demonstrating a heightened sense of individual, social, and cultural awareness while participating in artistic evaluations.

Evaluation Criteria and Specific Class Goals (*here's what I'm looking for this semester*):

Aesthetic Merit:

An approach that is visually (formally), intellectually (conceptually) and emotionally **compelling**. Is there something that initially draws the viewer in to want to see more?

Originality/ creativity/ **innovation**/ surprise/ cleverness. Does the work avoid clichés and pat expectations? Did you take a risk ...step away from your comfort zone?

Conceptual depth, sophistication or complexity that allows a **sustaining** interest by the viewer. Did you develop metaphors, irony and mystery in your work while avoiding clichés? Does the form of the piece support the content? Is the work resolved, finished?

Artistic Integrity: An awareness of the **appropriate audience/ assignment/ social context** of your work as relating to other artists and non-artists, those of your generation and beyond, what era you are working within, what cultural knowledge you can refer to and what will be lost on the viewer. The piece should be appropriate for experimental galleries and/or video festivals. It should be a creative response to the guidelines of the assignment.

Personal Commitment:

Initiative and effort in learning technical and conceptual skills through careful listening in class, showing attention to detail, using class resources such as TA hours (as offered in Rome), the website, office hour appointments in Rome, and personal problem solving. You should show the appropriate amount of ambition for the project.

Responsibility shown in meeting deadlines, having consistent attendance, caring for equipment.

Communal attitude shown by helping others, contributing to critiques, discussions and presentations, showing a willingness to learn from the professor and other students and respect for others.

Class Etiquette:

Critiques: You don't need to raise your hand to comment, and I encourage you to participate. Make sure to speak loudly enough for everyone to hear and give everyone a turn.

Internet/phone/ Computer work: Do not use your phone during class. Put your computer to sleep for critiques, demos, discussions. Take notes in your journal. Being a full participant in the critique observation and discussion is part of what I evaluate you on. Email may be done before or after class, or during a break.

Equipment policy:

Most of the time you will be sharing equipment. You are expected to care for all equipment both on the premises and off. If something breaks or is lost while in your care, you are responsible for it and you must tell me immediately. You may sign out equipment through me (I always need to know where it is).

Instructional Aides:

You will be processing a lot of information technically and developing conceptually. Online videos and handouts are available at www.eslslingersclasses.com. Manuals will need a password: bexleyhall. You are expected to view these videos while we are working on that particular topic and be ready for a pop quiz any time! If you are absent, watching these will **help** but will not replace the class demonstration where more information and ideas are given.

Communication and grading:

You are responsible to read your email, communicate with me in person and by email and text and be familiar with the class website. Grading comes in the form of email comments and number grades. I really value talking to you in person, writing emails in response to your work and I only give grades as a supplement to these more important tasks. Nevertheless, these can tell you how I think you are doing in relationship to my overall expectations which are based on a history of knowing what students can do, what the rest of the class might be able to do in the allotted time, and what I think you personally are capable of all in relationship to the goals mentioned above.

Please do not compare your grades with others! There are many reasons for variations in grades. What is taking a risk for one person might be comfortable and predictable for someone else with more experience. Good work comes in many forms!

Please take initiative in scheduling conversations with me if you don't understand something. It is your responsibility to catch up on work you have missed. Communication is key to understanding! To do the best in this class you should start work right after the assignment is given so that you can revise as needed.

Grades will use the 100% scale, but will be weighted by percentage of final grade, depending on the intensity of the project. For instance: a shorter project may be worth 5-10% of the final grade where as a longer project could be 30%. The evaluation criteria will all be considered for each critique, not just the final critique.

90-100 (A range) The high end of this indicates *exceptional work to which nothing can be added*, on time, following the assignment and with special insight, effort, risk-taking and creativity. All of the evaluation criteria are met. Excellent participation in critique and discussions.

80-89 (B range) This indicates above average work, competent, safe and interesting but still lacking something or it could be innovative work without a high enough skill level. Good comments during critique and discussions.

70-79 (C range) This indicates average work, average effort, basic amount of skill and creative ideas. Low participation in critique and discussions. Questionable preparation.

65-69 (D range) The work is handed in but shows less than acceptable effort creativity and skill. Little to no participation in critique and discussions. Not prepared for class.

Up to 64 (F range) Little effort, skill, imagination, not prepared, etc

Due Dates:

Project due dates and times will be announced according to the syllabus and during class. Although we will have class worktimes, most work will have to be done outside of class to meet these due dates. Most projects will have one or more progress critiques for which you will receive credit toward the final score. ***The final project is due on the last day of class, not during final's week.***

Re-submission: You may always improve and resubmit work and the new grade will be *averaged* with your initial grade if it is submitted within a week and before the next critique. This doesn't apply to the final project. That is due the last day of class.

Attendance Policy: Attendance in this class is **mandatory** because you cannot make up lost days by just reading or any other independent work. The class time is full of demonstrations, presentations, critiques and workshop time. If you miss demos you may never catch up and not know how to use the equipment. Workdays in class allow personal assistance from the professor on assignments and should be prepared for (you should work outside of class to be at the next stage of work, ready for assistance. Expect to spend at least 6 hours per week outside of class). You will always do better on an assignment if you are ready for the workdays in class (have completed more work on your project). Video screenings are wonderful opportunities to inspire your work and describe the nature of the assignment. Students who miss these invariably don't do as well on the associated project. For all of the above reasons, I am strict about attendance and accountability. If you DO need to miss a class, you must email or text beforehand. *you are responsible for finding out what was covered and learning from others as much as possible*

After three (2) **unexcused class absences** I will begin to ***lower your final grade for the course by three points (out of 100) for each additional absence.*** Unexcused absences should be saved for occasional minor illnesses and you should still notify me through a call or email before class. ***Two times late (10 min after class starts) will count as one absence.***

Excused absences are only given for illnesses that require a doctor and must be okayed ***before*** the missed class whenever possible. *Excused absences do not include leaving early for break or the common cold.*

Academic Honesty: Being honest academically in an art class is more difficult to define than in other classes. Sometimes using another image is intended as a cultural reference. It even has a name: "appropriation." Whenever this is intended, the image is well known enough in the culture for most people to know where it came from, and therefore it evokes some ideas or feelings tied to the original. This is fine for an artist to do. Taking another artist's image, composition or idea directly and passing it off as your own is a case for dishonesty however. I suggest that if you have a question, come talk to me first.

Accessibilities Accommodations: A student with a disability who thinks he or she may need an accommodation to access a campus program, activity, or service should talk to me at the beginning of the semester. They should also

contact any ACCENT support person, which we will identify and possibly Erin Salva in Student Accessibility and Support Services (SASS) at salvae@kenyon.edu to discuss specific needs. Advance notice is required to review documentation, evaluate accommodation requests and provide notice or arrangements for any accommodation

Privacy vs Confidentiality: *If you are having a particularly hard time for any reason, please let me know early and keep me in the loop...this need not be specific, but some general communication.* As a faculty member, I am deeply invested in the well-being of each student I teach. I am here to assist you with your work in this course. If you come to me with non-course-related concerns, I will do my best to help. It is important for you to know that all faculty members are mandated reporters of any incidents of harassment, discrimination, and intimate partner violence and stalking. Meaning, I must report any such discussion to the Civil Rights/Title IX coordinator. I cannot keep information involving sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, interpersonal violence, or any other form of harassment or discrimination based on a protected characteristic, confidential. There will likely be confidential resources available through the Accent Center. <https://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/ocr/title-ix-vawa/kenyon-policies/title-ix-policy/>

Civil Rights: Kenyon College does not discriminate in its educational programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, medical condition, veteran status, marital status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by institutional policy or state, local, or federal law. The requirement of non-discrimination in educational programs and activities extends to employment and admission. <https://www.kenyon.edu/directories/offices-services/ocr/discrimination/>

Textbooks, Tutorials and Supplies:

A History of Art and Technology, (video presentations by Prof. Esslinger, online at esslingersclasses.com)
Multiple Tutorials at esslingersclasses.com
Various Readings available through the class.
Sketch/ note-taking journal

We provide camera equipment, including an SD card so please make sure you don't leave the card out of the camera and remove your files for the next person.

Copies: All documentation of your work will be handed in as an electronic file for inclusion in the Kenyon Art Department Archives. They maybe exhibited on our website or for promotional reasons within the college.

Assignments for the semester with proportional value toward your final grade are:

Ordinary Rome 10%
Artist Presentation 10%
Collaborative Storytelling 30%
Synergy Narratives 50%

Recommended Reading:

Doerr, Anthony *Four Seasons in Rome, on twins, insomnia and the biggest funeral in the History of the World*