



*"...the computer is the computer. The role of the human is not to be dispassionate, depersonalized or neutral. It is precisely the emotive traits that are rewarded: the voracious lust for understanding, the enthusiasm for work, the ability to grasp the gist, the empathetic sensitivity to what will attract attention and linger in the mind. Unable to compete when it comes to calculation, the best workers will come with heart in hand."*  
David Brooks

### **Course Description:**

This introduction to studio art will enable you to utilize digital tools to engage in aesthetic and conceptual practices in contemporary art with an emphasis on experimentation. Personal studio projects will investigate a variety of subjects such as: the role of digital media in the history of artistic practice, the relationship of the arts to popular culture, the aesthetics of abstraction, the development of metaphor, new versions of magic-realism and the effects of social issues on the creation and interpretation of art work. You will come to understand the fundamentals of composition and develop technical skills with a variety of computer tools including still-image and video-editing programs. Through theory and practice, effective art criticism skills will be developed, allowing for creative group interactions and defining of your personal aesthetic vision. Presentations by the professor will be supplemented by elements on the class website and student preparation on artistic and technological issues. This course can satisfy the foundation course requirements for art majors or minors, or fine arts diversification requirements. It is offered every semester and requires no prerequisite.

### **Class Structure:**

This class will include demonstrations and presentations by the professor related to the current assignment. You are expected to be prepared for class by working outside of class on your projects and on training supplied through the class website and sessions with a teaching assistant. Expect to spend at least ten hours per week on this homework.

Approximately the first half of the semester will be spent investigating **still imaging** with assignments that lead to understanding of the techniques and concepts of digital image making. We will use Photoshop, Lightroom and InDesign software for this section. Assignments may include Abstract Formalism, Experimental Collage, Altered Portraits, Altered Scapes with an emphasis on Magic Realism, Exhibition Publicity and Artist's statements.

The second half of the semester will be centered on **moving images**, utilizing video/audio techniques and concepts to express ideas that utilize time/movement/ sound. Video editing will be done with Adobe Premiere. You will need card access to Horvitz 206 digital lab to do most of your homework. Assignments for this section include Soundscape, Gesture, and Alternative Narratives. *If you are studying remotely, you will use the same software on your own computer, provided by the college. You will either use your own camera or one provided by the college.*

### **Departmental Learning Goals:**

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 Class Goals:**

#### ***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? 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 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, the website, office hours 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:**

- **COVID 19 protocol:** because we are sharing computers, we need to clean our keyboards and mice (and anything else we share) at the beginning and end of every use. Spray and gloves will be available for this. We will not share cameras, tripods, audio recorders. I will provide enough of these for each of you to have your own. **Per Kenyon Protocol, you always need to have a mask on.**
- **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 (**even those online**) and give everyone a turn.
- **Bodily care:** Please plan to eat before and after class but not *during* class. A closed container of water may be placed below your desk for urgent care. You may leave if you need the restroom without asking but please be as quiet as you can.

- **Internet/phone/ Computer work:** Do not use your phone for communications during class unless needed FOR class. Put your computer to sleep for critiques, demos, discussions (*unless we need the computer for zoom communications*) Take notes in your journal. Be a full participant in the critique observation and discussion.
- **Zoom etiquette:** Please leave your image visible during class and your audio muted unless you are asking to speak. You may use a fake background if you like, but please don't turn off your video feed.

### **Instructional Aides:**

You will be processing a lot of information technically and developing conceptually. To aide this process, I have many alternatives that I expect you to take advantage of. You will not be graded individually on them, but your **effort** in attending and viewing/reading will affect your performance and therefore affect your work.

- TA's are available two nights a week (at least TBD) from 7:30-10pm. You must attend one of these sessions each week for at least an hour. Attendance will be taken (sign in). You may also call TAs during these times.
- Online videos and handouts are available at [www.esslingersclasses.com](http://www.esslingersclasses.com) 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.
- Office Hours with the professor as needed. You may call for help with problems outside of office hours from 9am-9 pm. Please text first. I will respond to the text if I am available. Please work with TA's also as much as possible.

### **Equipment policy:**

- 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 financially and you must tell me immediately. You may sign out equipment through Lisa Dilts between the hours of 8:30 and 3:30 (except the lunch hour, 12-1pm) Return time is determined by the assignment in agreement with me (sometimes you may keep it for the length of the assignment, *or the semester during COVID*). *We provide camera equipment, including an SD card so please make sure you don't leave the card out of the camera.*
- **Sharing computers:** You are sharing your computer with at least one other student (from the film class and advanced art students) get to know them and arrange times to work. You should only book 3 hours at a stretch in order to be fair to each other. Only students enrolled in Installation art, Digital Imaging, Digital Photo, Experimental Video and Film, Acting and Directing for the Camera and Photography and Advanced Studio may use Horvitz Digital Studios. Anyone else, for any other project is not allowed (even with you helping them!)
- *You may choose to leave the equipment in the locking cabinets in 206 instead of bringing them to your room, but you are still responsible for their safety. You will be sharing the cabinets.*

### **Communication and grading:**

**You are responsible to read your email, communicate with me in person and by email and text and phone 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 (*or on facetime*), 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 practice after each demo and start work right after the assignment is given so that you can revise as needed. If you miss a presentation, demonstration or lecture, you will have to work with a TA and will not be able to visit the material as thoroughly.

**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% of the final grade where as a longer project could be 30%.**

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:** Projects are due *at the beginning of the class period on the date of the progress or final critique.* A project is considered late if it is not ready at that time and will receive a 0 until submitted. *We will use Google Drive to upload our projects for critiques.* If you have an excused absence coming up on a critique day, the work is due **before** you leave. 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. The final portfolio for the semester is due on what would have been the next class day after the final critique. The final portfolio is a current version of all of your projects for the semester.***

**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.

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

- Abstract Formalism 5%
- Experimental Collage 5%
- Altered Portrait 10%
- Magic Realism 5 + 15%
- Soundscape 5+10%
- Gesture 15%
- Alternative Narratives 5%+ 10% +15%

**Attendance Policy:** *If you suspect that you have been in contact with a coronavirus patient or have the virus yourself, contact me through phone or email but do not come to class in person. Attend remotely if at all possible. Otherwise,* 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 6-10 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. I cannot recreate the class for you.*

After three (3) 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 (**NOT COVID**) 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, a COVID diagnosis or quarantine requirement (then attend remotely and communicate with me immediately) Kenyon sanctioned activities such as athletic events, etc., and must be okayed **before** the missed class whenever possible. Do not leave for these events early. If you have more than three excused events (**NOT COVID**) that pull you away from class, you will have to start using your three allowed unexcused absences (for instance, if you have 5 scheduled events, two of them will use up some of your allowed unexcused absences.) *Excused absences do not include taking a friend to the airport, leaving early for break or the common cold (but they do include COVID!...just communicate with me. If you are sick but able to attend remotely, that will count for attendance!*

**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.

**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 contact Erin Salva in Student Accessibility and Support Services (SASS) at [salvae@kenyon.edu](mailto: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. It is helpful for you to notify me about these accommodations as well.

**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. The Health and Counseling Center, the College chaplains, and the staff at New Directions Domestic Abuse Shelter & Rape Crisis Center are confidential resources.

<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/>

**Statement on Names and Pronouns:** As noted by the Office for Civil Rights, Kenyon College is committed to diversity, inclusion, equity and non-discrimination. Many people might use a name that is different from their current legal name. In all areas of campus, we refer to people by the names, in addition to the pronouns, that they use for themselves. Students are invited to share their names and the pronouns that they use. Students are also encouraged to use gender-neutral language, if they aren't sure of someone's pronouns. For more information on Kenyon's commitment to diversity and non-discrimination, please refer to the Office for Civil Rights and/or the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

**For additional help contact Visiting Artist/ Contemporary Technology Specialist Emily Zeller (individual appointments available) Contact Emily at [Zellere@kenyon.edu](mailto:Zellere@kenyon.edu) or at her office in Horvitz Hall. Teaching Assistants are also available in the digital studio several nights a week (look for schedule).**

**Textbooks, Tutorials and Supplies:**

A History of Art and Technology, (video presentations by Prof. Esslinger, online at [esslingersclasses.com](http://esslingersclasses.com))  
Multiple Tutorials at [esslingersclasses.com](http://esslingersclasses.com)  
Digital Currents by Margot Lovejoy: recommended, in library  
Photographic Inkjet papers as needed (available in Art Office or in print lab)  
Sketch/ note-taking journal (Available at the Bookstore) please keep notes from class in here.

***Changes to the syllabus will be discussed in class as needed.***

***PANDEMIC CONTINGENCY PLANS:***

*If the college changes to remote learning, we will meet on ZOOM during class times. You are responsible to check your email for the class link. We will use Google Drive to upload our projects for critiques. You will be responsible to look at everyone's work before our critiques and then we will have time to discuss the work during class time. Sometimes we will watch alone synchronously and then join for commentary.*