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Stan Brakhage



Pipolotti Rist

THE ART OF EXPERIMENTAL FILM AND VIDEO: ARTS 391

PROFESSOR: CLAUDIA ESSLINGER OFFICE HOURS: 11-12 MWF AND BY APPOINTMENT

CELL: 740-504-5896

WEB SITE: ESSLINGERSCASSES.COM FOR INFO, EXAMPLES, LINKS.

In this course you will experiment with the creation, manipulation and exhibition of digital film projects. In doing so you will continue a tradition from early filmmaking, where abstract montage, surreal juxtapositions and obscure narratives reflected innovations in the art, science and politics of the time. Like many current artists and filmmakers, we will follow the path of these historical trajectories by using contemporary technologies and concepts for acquisition, development and distribution of our work. Although experimental work can be widely defined, we will emphasize the aspects that separate it from mainstream commercial work. Demonstrations of a wide range of equipment and software will be provided from low-tech to high-tech, but in addition you will be expected to be problem-solvers and researchers as well, and to share your discoveries with your colleagues. Discussions of historical/cultural forms, will offer a context for the assignments. Frequent critiques will offer important feedback. Any additional talent you bring from other creative abilities from music to dance to writing creatively will be useful in this class.

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 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 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 with Digital Imaging students, 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. If you do need to share a novel camera like the GoPro, you will use the same cleaning protocol at the beginning and end of that use. **Per Kenyon Protocol, you always need to have a mask on, and therefore talking will need to be louder.**
- **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 (through masks) 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:** **Please put your computer and phone to sleep for critiques, demos, discussions.** In a class where you are sitting in front of a powerful computer all the time, with your phone in your pocket, it is very tempting to use that technology when we are meant to be doing other things. We all get very distracted by mouse clicks or texting when someone is presenting something or when we are having a critique. Please do not continue to work on your project when we are looking at someone else's work, instead put your computer to sleep. 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. If you are waiting for something to render, please plan other aspects of your project during wait time rather than get distracted by e-communications.
- **If we must meet on ZOOM: 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 performance.

- TA's are available two nights a week at least (TBD) from 7:30-10pm. You will have to share times with Digital Imaging students.
- Online videos and handouts are available at 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 though not replace the class demonstration.
- 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. (make sure I have your contact info in my phone) 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 at the beginning of the semester and 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, other times you must share). Only students enrolled in Installation art, Digital Imaging, Digital Photo, Experimental Video and Film, Photography and Advanced Studio may use Horvitz Digital Studios. Anyone else, for any other project is not allowed (even with you helping them!)
- **Sharing computers:** You are sharing your computer with at least one other student (from the Digital Imaging 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! **COVID PROTOCOL: always wipe down the mouse and keyboard with provided disinfectant when you start and end the class.**)
- **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: Grading comes in the form of comments and number grades. I really value talking to you in person (or **facetime or zoom**), 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 above goals. 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. If you miss a demonstration/ 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 10% of the final grade where as a longer project could be 30%.

The evaluation criteria will all be taken into account for each due date, not just the final result.

90-100 (A range) The high end of this indicates exceptional work to which nothing can be added, completed 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.

65-70 (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 65 (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 and exported at that time and will receive a 0 until submitted. The 0 will then be averaged with your grade if the piece is handed in BEFORE the next scheduled critique. 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**

before the last day of class, not during final's week. The final portfolio for the semester (a final version of all of your projects) is due the next weekday after the final critique or earlier.

Resubmission: 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: *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 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 miss a class **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 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. 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!**

Collaboration: You all have different aptitudes and experiences. Working together will improve all of your pieces. You are expected to help each other out and to pull your part of the load. Groups will also be important at idea sessions and critiques. It is here that feedback from your peers becomes collaborative. Your participation at critiques and discussions will influence your grade on each project.

Copies: All documentation of your work will be handed in as an electronic file for inclusion in the Kenyon Art Department Archives. They may be 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.

Disability Statement: If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your ability to carry out assigned course work, I would urge you to contact the Office of Disability Services at 5453. The Coordinator of Disability Services, Erin Salva (salvae@kenyon.edu) will review your concerns and determine, with you, what accommodations are appropriate. All information and documentation of disability is confidential. Please notify me 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 or at her office in Horvitz Hall. Teaching Assistants are also available in the digital studio several nights a week (look for schedule).

Emily Zeller, Technology Artist is available through email, zellere@kenyon.edu and her office: 209? Horvitz

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

Equipment and Materials:

Notebook/Journal, (Bookstore)

An external drive if you can and desire it.....thunderbolt or USB 3 should work well.

Books available through me and Library....see ***bibliography and links on website.***

Assignments:

Lyrical Juxtapositions

Artist Research Presentation

Abstract Montage

Appropriation and Social Comment

Extended Cinema

& Terms If time: ***Expanded Cinema***

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.