

# CRITICISM AS PRACTICE

ART/ARTHIS 270: Ginger Wolfe-Suarez

## Course Overview:

This class is intended to function as both a course on the muddled history of art criticism and as a writing seminar specific to criticism. We will begin by exploring readings from the mid-1700's and then trace both academic and subversive trends, apprehensions, and inter-disciplinary approaches to art criticism through today. There are many frameworks in which contemporary critics work within ranging from feminism to philosophy of aesthetics, and from post-structuralism to psychoanalytic theory. My personal approach is inclusive in that I believe many models and frameworks are valid and relevant. As a teacher of this material I can only say that I truly believe that understanding the discipline and history of art criticism is empowering. My hope is that you will leave this class better understanding the written discourse surrounding your art and the art that preceded yours.

## Class Format:

Each class we will be exploring a few texts. Reading and having a basic understanding of them beforehand is required. It is ok if there are portions of the text you are unsure about- there will always be opportunities to ask questions about each reading. Students will be assigned to a designated text and will be in charge of expositing and critiquing it as a point of departure for group discussions. The last hour of each class will be dedicated to examining students written work.

## Grading and Assignments:

### A. 50% Create a publication

Each student in this class is responsible for creating a publication of their own. It can take the form of a magazine or 'zine', book, or a series of ephemeral materials (sequential leaflets, pamphlets, posters). It can be produced and printed in any manner that seems to fit your content. You are expected to work on this project throughout the semester and have periodical meetings with me about your progress intended as an opportunity for you to get personal feedback.

### B. 25% Presentation on your reading

Each week, students will be assigned to a specific reading. It is your job to read, understand, exposit, and be able to critique that text.

### C. 25% Participation

1. Participate in all group discussions, as questions, have fun!
2. Turn in typed notes on each reading not to exceed one page.

### Readings:

You will need to pick up your Reader before the second week of class. All of the texts we will be discussing at length are in that reader. I will occasionally bring in publications from 1970- present to share with the class. See below for further resources.

### Other Resources:

The experimentality and energy within the field of art criticism does not always come from the only places you might be aware of (e.g. nationally distributed art journals with advertising as part of their content (or) those aligned with academic institutions). I always emphasize the importance of more peripheral journals usually run by small collectives with a small budget.

Below is NOT a definitive list of any sort, just a range of approaches important to be aware of. Please visit the following websites -

[www.interreview.org](http://www.interreview.org)

[www.ltrr.org](http://www.ltrr.org)

<http://www.afterall.org/>

[www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org](http://www.journalofaestheticsandprotest.org)

<http://www.makeshiftmag.com/about.htm>

<http://web.ukonline.co.uk/n.paradoxa/>

<http://www.springjournal.com/>

[www.badatsports.com](http://www.badatsports.com)

<http://criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu/>

<http://www.x-traonline.org/>

Also these individuals have websites for you to look at:

<http://www.maryjanejacob.org/>

<http://emilyroysdon.com/>

[www.jameselkins.com](http://www.jameselkins.com)

[www.collectiveexperience.com](http://www.collectiveexperience.com)

[www.suzannelacy.com](http://www.suzannelacy.com)