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"Teachers open the door, but you must enter by yourself." – Chinese proverb

introduction

This course is about how you, the student, react to and interact with art, using critical thinking, creativity, awareness, appreciation and observation. You will not be evaluated on how well you memorize the facts of an artist's life or historical context. You will be evaluated on how well you articulate your own observations of an artist's work, your personal and spiritual analysis of it, and your response to it in the context of the rest of the course, Chicago Semester, even your own history. Your success in this course will be based on your willingness to *personally engage the art* we encounter as well as contribute to our efforts as a class to define and reflect on questions and issues raised.

generalaimsandgoals

This course aims to help you foster heightened sensitivity to and critical understanding of the arts through three main components:

1. **Experience:** art events, personal art/artist encounters, and guest speakers
2. **Reflection:** small group discussions, written assignments and final art project
3. **Exercises:** free writing, creativity workshops and others

You will bring a distinctive perspective to each of your artistic encounters based on birth culture, faith commitment, race, gender, social class, and individual temperament. This will have as much of an impact on your critical thinking as the art itself. The goal of this course is to help you recognize, embrace and challenge your perspective more consciously as you integrate it into your critical engagement with the arts.

smallgroups

Each week, we will meet in two small groups for 50 minutes of discussion and activities. Your small group, as well as your small group leader (Joe or cin), will be randomly determined the first week and stay the same throughout semester.

Our goal as your small group leaders is to keep our discussion space consistent and welcoming so that you have a safe environment in which to explore and share your ideas.

The goal of small groups is to create a more intimate environment where you can more openly share your opinions, questions, inspirations and concerns. You will be expected to participate fully in the discussion each week as this is where the bulk of your participation grade, along with attendance, will be determined (see chart below).

guestspeakers

Each week, we will also meet as one large group to experience a guest speaker/artist, usually related to the event we will be seeing that week. The goal of this is to give you an opportunity to encounter the art events on a deeper, more knowledgeable level, as well as to meet and experience the lives of professional artists living and working in the city.

grading

Overall Participation	30%
Encounter with an artwork/genre	30%
Final Paper	15%
Project	15%
Presentation	10%

participation

Attendance and promptness both in class and at events is mandatory. Unexcused absence or late arrival will be counted against your final participation grade.

Everyone begins the semester with a 4.0 for attendance and punctuality. Each missed event or class will subtract 0.3 from this; each late arrival will subtract 0.15. To be excused, an absence must be a family emergency, illness, job or school interview, or other equally serious event. If there is an internship-related reason why you need to miss class or an event, contact your small group leader ahead of time to discuss ways to make up the absence so it will not impact your grade. The following scale converts these numbers to your attendance grade:

4.0	3.7	3.3	3.0	2.7	2.3	2.0	1.7	1.0	0.0
A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F

twowrittenassignments

One: Encounters with an Artwork/Genre/Artist

How it works: choose an artwork, artist, or genre you would like to encounter at least three times during the semester. An encounter can be an interview with an artist, sitting with a chosen work at different times of the day, researching it from different media, etc.

Write ups can be journalistic, descriptive, fictional, poetic, interpretive, critical (as in analytical), philosophic, and should include photos/reproductions of what you encountered. Be creative. Be serious. Be focused. Be yourself.

overall semester Week 2: your chosen artwork/genre
schedule of due Week 3: 1-page write up of your first encounter
dates Week 5: 1-page write up of your second encounter
 Week 7: 3-page paper on final encounter and summary of experience

Two: Final Paper

We can think of the universe as having three general levels: the individual, the world, and the divine. An artist can choose to create their work to be in dialogue with any or all of these (for example, a poem about my feelings about my father, a poem about my country of birth, and a poem about God). Similarly, when we encounter art, we can appreciate it as speaking to us on all three of these levels.

The final paper should be a five-page response to one of the following questions:

- How does art serve you in everyday life?
- How does art serve you as a member of your community, neighborhood, city, state, or country?
- How does art serve you in your relationship to God?

These are big questions there is not a single answer and so the assignment is to find YOUR answer. You may draw on any/every part of your experience this semester to write it: events,

guests, discussions, your encounters, your final project, our creativity workshops, other seminars, your internships, your roommate experiences, things that have surprised you about your time here, how you've changed, and how you haven't. It's your answer. There is no right or wrong you will be graded on your willingness to explore your own journey and articulate it.

finalartprojectandpresentation

"What we learn to do, we learn by doing." - Aristotle

The goal of the art project is two-fold. First, we want you to encounter the arts by doing them: the process of creating art is what matters here, not the artistic skill displayed. Second, we want you to encounter an aspect of your own life or experience through the arts. Just as we can sit by a lake, pray to or worship God, and talk with friends or family as forms of self-reflection, we can also do so through artistic expression.

With your small group leader, you will choose a form of artistic expression (e.g., writing, photography, spoken word, sculpture, textile arts, performance, painting, drawing, installation) best suited to express the experience, idea, issue, or event you've chosen. This can be drawn from your personal experience, internship, living situation, etc. You will then write a proposal briefly outlining both your final art project and presentation.

You will present your project to the class as a whole during one special evening at the end of the semester. You will be asked to prepare a half-page written statement about your project that will be read during your final presentation. It can describe the process of creating the art (initial idea and its evolution), discuss the issue or theme the art is expressing, describe how you felt working on the project, or any other pertinent information. The statement is about your choices, your reasons for those choices and any additional reflections on doing the final art project that you'd like to share.

The final project will be graded on how well you've accomplished the goals in your proposal as well as how thoughtful your presentation is (dressing appropriately, being rehearsed and prepared, and treating the presentation as a public performance).

afinalword

Chicago Semester will make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students can alert us in the "Additional Information" portion of the Application Form prior to their coming, or they can notify the Director privately if necessary. Students should also alert their instructors during the first two weeks of class so that accommodations can be made.

For further assistance, contact Clinton Stockwell at clintons@chicagosemester.org