AH374
Australian Art and Architecture
The search for beauty, meaning and freedom
in a harsh climate

Boston University Sydney Centre
Spring Semester 2015

Course Co-ordinator
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Course Description

The course provides an introduction to the history of art and architectural practice in Australia.

Australia is home to the world’s oldest continuing art tradition (indigenous Australian art) and one of the youngest national art traditions (encompassing Colonial art, modern art and the art of today). This rich and diverse history is full of fascinating characters and hard won aesthetic achievements. The lecture series is structured to introduce a number of key artists and their work, to place them in a historical context and to consider a range of themes (landscape, urbanism, abstraction, the noble savage, modernism, etc.) and issues (gender, power, freedom, identity, sexuality, autonomy, place etc.) prompted by the work.

Course Format

The course combines in-class lectures employing a variety of media with group discussions and a number of field trips. The aim is to provide students with a general understanding of a series of major achievements in Australian art and its social and geographic context. Students should also gain the skills and confidence to observe, describe and discuss works of art.
Course Outline

Week 1

Session 1

Introduction to Course

Introduction to Topic


b. Readings – both readers are important short texts. It is compulsory to read them. They will be discussed in class and you will need to be prepared to contribute your thoughts and opinions.


Visit Art Gallery of NSW

Session 2

Descriptive Attributes and Theoretical Concepts

Group Library Session

Aboriginal Art – An Introduction

a. Artists – Unknown rock artists, Najombolmi (Barramundi Charlie), Djawida, Les Mirrirkuriya, Albert Namatjira, Clifford Possum, Tim Leura Tjapaltjarri, Rover Thomas, Robert Campbell junior, Michael Riley, Richard Bell, Danie Mellor, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, Trevor "Turbo" Brown, Dorothy Napangardi, Tracey Moffat, Jonathan Jones

b. Themes – land, community, dispossession, power, dreamtime, landscape, spirituality, humor, sexuality, assimilation, land rights, art market

c. Reading

Colonial Art and Architecture


b. **Themes** – vision and representation, science, idealism, realism, romanticism, imperialism, landscape, noble savage

c. **Reading**
   
   
Week 2

Urbanism in Sydney / Canberra / Melbourne

a. Planners – Arthur Phillip, Lachlan Macquarie, John Bradfield, Walter Burley Griffin, James Hoddle, Craig Alchin,

b. Themes – the planned city, the grid, fine grain, topography, pragmatism.

c. Reading
   i) Peter John Cantrill, ‘Forming Sydney”, in Public Sydney (Historic Houses Trust of NSW, Sydney) 2013
   iv) Craig Alchin, Fine Grain Review – Recommendations For A Lively And Engaging City Centre, (City of Sydney, Sydney) 2012

Heidelberg School and Early Modernism


b. Themes – nationalism – naturalism, realism, impressionism, influence, imperialism

c. Reading

Essay Question – Discussion of options, approaches, expectations.

War and Art

a. Artists – George Lambert, Sidney Nolan, George Gittoes, Wendy Sharpe, Ben Quilty

b. Themes – objectivity, subjectivity, truth, globalism

c. Reading
Week 3
Canberra Field Trip – Departs 7:30am

Session 2

Recap on Field Trip to Canberra
In class test exam/essay

Modernism


b. **Themes** – abstraction, modernity, realism, truth, humanism, romanticism, sexuality, spirituality, freedom, autonomy, commitment

c. **Reading**

i) Terry Smith, ‘What was Australian Modernism?’ in Transformations in Australian Art: The Twentieth Century – Modernism and Aboriginality(Craftsman House, Sydney), 2002

Late Modernism

a. **Artists** - Michael Johnson, Richard Dunn, Sydney Ball, John Peart, Robert Jacks, Robert Hunter, Burt Flugleman

b. **Themes** – purity, abstraction, hard-edge, autonomy, internationalism, centre, periphery, hegemony, freedom, style

c. **Reading**

Week 4

Session 1

Art in the 60s, 70s and 80's

a. **Artists** – Brett Whiteley, Colin Lanceley, Jeffrey Smart, Martin Sharp, Richard Larter, Immants Tillers, Mike Parr, Stelarc, William Yang, Rosemary Gascoigne

b. **Themes** – fashion, popular culture, sexuality, the body, return of painting, rise of photography and other mediums

c. **Reading**


Field Trip – Pop Art AGNSW

Session 2

Popism

a. **Artists** – Howard Arkley, Maria Kozic, Immants Tillers, Jenny Watson, Juan Davila

b. **Themes** – appropriation, bricolage, centre, periphery, influence, translation, transmission, commercialism, fetish, commoditity


Contemporary Aboriginal Art

a. **Artists** - Richard Bell, Danie Mellor, Trevor "Turbo" Brown, Tracey Moffat, Jonathan Jones, Fiona Foley, Judy Watson, Julie Dowling,

b. **Themes** - race, racism, tradition, sexuality, death, post-colonialism, power, abstraction, humor


Presentations
Week 5
No Classes – Program Melbourne Field Trip

Week 6
Session 1
Australian Architecture
  a. Architects – Francis Greenway, John Verge, Edmund Blacket, James Barnet, Glenn Murcutt, Harry Seidler, Robin Boyd, Peter Stutchbury, Ashton Raggatt Mcdougall,
  b. Themes – identity, context, environment, landscape, place, shock, modernity, tradition, materiality, sustainability.
  c. Reading - TBC

Session 2
Australian Art and the Asia Pacific Region
  a. Artists – Ai Weiwei, Michael Stevenson, Colin McCahon, Sangeeta Sandrasegar, Lindy Lee, Qin Ga, John Young, Guan Wei, Shigeyuki Kihara
  b. Themes – regionalism, globalism, post-colonialism, activism, gender, sexuality, immigration, transnationalism
  c. Reading

Photography, Video and Performance
  a. Artists – Max Dupain, Harold Cazneaux, Olive Cotton, David Moore, Tracey Moffat, Michael Riley, Darren Sylvester, Anne Zahalka, Bill Henson, Carol Jerrems
  b. Themes – Representation, documentary, subjectivity, objectivity, sexuality, otherness,
  c. Reading
    i) Bernice Murphy, ‘Australian Video Art since the 1980s’, Video Logic (Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney), 2008

Art Today
  a. Artists – Brooke Andrew, Patricia Piccinini, Callum Morton, Dale Frank, Daniel Crooks, Shaun Gladwell, Hany Armanious, Jenny Watson, Fiona Hall, Adam Cullen, James Angus
b. Themes – globalism, regionalism, identity, transnationalism, post-medium, tradition, post-art, death

c. Reading


Recap and discussion of essay and exam topics
Field Trips

Art Gallery of NSW Collection
View key works from the permanent collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, including the exhibition Drawing Out that reveals how the process of drawing allows contemporary artists to engage with the landscape – urban, rural, natural or constructed.

National Gallery of Australia - Canberra
View key works from the permanent collection of the NGA, including inaugural exhibition in the new NGA Contemporary that features a selection of significant works from the National Gallery of Australia’s collection of 21st century Australian art.

National Portrait Gallery of Australia – Canberra
View works from the permanent collection and view the exhibition In the flesh which is an enthralling and immersive experience of contemporary figurative art that explores the concept of humanness.

Australian War Memorial – Canberra
View key works and the exhibition Ben Quilty: After Afghanistan based on the artists tour of Afghanistan in 2011 as the Australian War Memorial’s official war artist.

Pop to Popism – AGNSW
View the major survey exhibition exploring the origins of pop art and its reception and reworking in the Australian context.
Assessment

Presentation
Students will be allocated to groups of 3 to make a 10-minute presentation on the following topic. Each presentation will be followed by a short class discussion. Please email me a one-page point form summary of your presentation by 5.00pm on the Day prior to your presentation.

Topic
Select and discuss 3 works viewed during your visit to the Art Gallery of New South Wales or the National Gallery of Canberra. Discuss its attributes (scale, colour, shape, texture, focus, orientation, composition, framing, sound) and place it in a historical context. Identify a concept that could be used to speculate on the works possible meaning.

Short Essay – 1000 words

Topic
Select and discuss a work viewed during your visit to the Art Gallery of New South Wales or the National Gallery of Canberra. Discuss its attributes (scale, colour, shape, texture, focus, orientation, composition, framing, sound) and place it in a historical context. Identify a concept that could be used to speculate on the works possible meaning.

Major Essay – 2200 words

You must conduct research beyond the set course reading material, combining academic research with first hand observations of the works being discussed.

Definitions
Colonial Art 1788 to 1880
Modern Art 1880 to 1970
Contemporary Art 1970 to today

Final Examination – 2 hrs (date/time tba)

Grading/Assessment
Successfully completing the course involves the fulfillment of four tasks:

i. Presentation, 15 minutes — 15%
ii. Short papers, 900 words — 20%
iii. Longer Essay, 2200 words — 40%
iv. Exam (open notes) — 25%
**Attendance**
Note that attendance without an acceptable excuse (including confirmation, such as a medical certificate) is a basic expectation of the course. Unsatisfactory attendance will be met with a severe penalty.

**Punctuality**
Punctuality is also an expectation – late students are disruptive, especially when the first five to fifteen minutes consists of a preview of content and expectations for that session. Tardiness of more than twenty minutes will be regarded as an absence and dealt with accordingly.

**Participation**
The course aims to create an open dialogue on the themes and concerns of the unit. Art is a fascinating human pursuit that opens a world of possibilities. So don’t be shy, ask questions, share your experience and perspective, we will all be the richer for it.

There are numerous field trips to this unit, which involve walking as a group. It is essential that you keep up with the group and your instructor. If you lag behind you may miss vital information relevant to the examination and this won’t be repeated. It may also mean you have to find your own way back to the building as the group will not wait for late comers. This could mean you will be recorded as missing class and suffer grade penalties.

**Plagiarism**
All students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are advised that the penalty against students on a Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be “expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalty as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct, subject to approval by the Dean. The link is: www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/

**Late Work**
In general no extensions will be granted. The exceptions are where there are clear and acceptable reasons for late submission. In this case a written statement outlining any serious illness or misadventure together with supporting documentation (e.g. medical certificates) must be provided or a strict penalty of five per cent (5%) per day will apply. You must consult the Academic Director, Dr. Sharon Clarke, on such matters.
Research Materials and Resources

- See the AH374 Blackboard page for a full list of recommend texts
- Visit BUSC Library collection of art and architecture titles
- See BUSC Library for access to significant electronic data base collection
- Visit the specialist fine art library at the University of Sydney
- Visit Art Gallery of New South Wales and AGNSW Library
- Visit Museum of Contemporary Art
- Visit State Library of NSW (colonial art collection)
- Visit Powerhouse Museum (decorative art, fashion, design collection)
- Visit Museum of Sydney (colonial art and first contact exhibitions)
- Visit Sydney’s vibrant contemporary art gallery scene