

## ARTH 612 COURSE SYLLABUS – Spring 2020

**Course Code & No. - Section:** ARTH 612 - Section 1  
**Course Title (Credits):** Graduate Seminar: Curatorial Practices and Art Writing (1.5)  
**Term & Year:** Spring / 2020  
**Course Ref. No. (CRN):** 10465

**Instructors:** Kristin Heavey and Chris Lanier  
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**Office:** N/A  
**Office Hours:** By appointment

**Class Meeting Time:** Various  
**Location:** N/A

**Prerequisites:**  
**Corequisites:**

### Course Description

There are two interconnected layers to this course – the theoretical level of criticism (what is the function of a critical approach to art and life), and the practical level of writing about art (how can you talk and write about your own practice in a way that can move your practice forward).

#### THEORETICAL

On the theoretical side, we are looking at criticism beyond the role of the ordinary “reviewer” – that sort of market-based function that lets you know if a work of art, a show or performance is “good” or “bad” – meaning, is it worth your time or money to go see it, experience it, or own it? Saying a work of art is “good” or “bad” is a very narrow, and not necessarily very illuminating, conclusion to arrive at. Part of this class is carving out space for criticism that goes deeper, that can actually unpack a work of art – criticism that is able to determine how a work of art functions (or fails to function). And beyond that, criticism that is able to place a work of art in the context of the society in which it was produced, tying it to the history of its form. What does the work of art say, not only about the artist who made it, but about the community it grew out of, and the audience that it was intended for?

#### PRACTICAL

On the practical side, we will be doing a series of exercises geared toward helping everyone talk about and frame their work in ways that will help them communicate to a variety of audiences – from spectators to curators to funders. The main engine for this will be a recorded interview you will conduct about your work (in this class, you will be paired with another student, and you’ll be both an interviewer and an interviewee). Before the interview itself, we have a series of exercises that are intended to develop useful terminology around our practice, and to be articulate about our influences. The interview itself will be used as raw material to generate artist statements, as well as an application for a grant, residency, or exhibition proposal.

### Student Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:

1. Be conversant in current art practice terminology in their field
2. Talk and write cogently about their influences, and their place in the current art ecosystem
3. Write an effective artist statement
4. Engage in critical appraisals of artwork, including their own work

### **Methods of Assessing Student Outcomes**

Student outcomes will be assessed using the following:

1. Writing assignment(s); projects
2. Contribution to group discussion via online class site

### **Instructional Strategies**

Students will contribute to website set up for class interaction and posting of projects, discussion and research.

### **Required Texts and Materials: tbd**

### **Attendance**

Due to the remote aspect of “attendance” for this class, students are responsible for checking SNC email accounts on a regular basis and responding to prompts accordingly. If a student does not keep up with posted assignments and schedules, this will negatively affect her grade.

### **Class Requirements**

Internet access

### **Sanctions for Cheating and/or Plagiarism**

### **The Honor Code**

The faculty of SNC believes students must be held to high standards of integrity in all aspects of college life in order to promote the educational mission of the College and to encourage respect for the rights of others. Each student brings to the SNC community unique skills, talents, values and experiences which, when expressed within the community, contribute to the quality of the educational environment and the growth and development of the individual. Students share with members of the faculty, administration and staff the responsibility for creating and maintaining an environment conducive to learning and personal development, where actions are guided by mutual respect, integrity, responsibility and trust. The faculty and students alike must make diligent efforts to ensure high standards are upheld by their colleagues and peers as well as themselves. Therefore faculty and students accept responsibility for maintaining these standards at Sierra Nevada College and are obligated to comply with its regulations and procedures, which they are expected to read and understand.

### **Consequences of Violating the Student Honor Code**

SNC students and faculty share the responsibility for maintaining an environment of academic honesty. Thus, all are responsible for knowing and abiding by the SNC Faculty/Student Honor Code published in the current SNC Catalog. Faculty are responsible for presenting the Honor Code and the consequences of violating it to students at the start of their classes AND for reporting all incidences of academic dishonesty to the Provost. Students are responsible for knowing what constitutes CHEATING, PLAGIARISM and FABRICATION and for refraining from these and other forms of academic dishonesty. Violations of the Honor Code become part of a student’s academic record.

1<sup>st</sup> Offense: Student receives a zero for assignment/exam and counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

2<sup>nd</sup> Offense: Student fails course and receives counseling with faculty on the honor code, consequences for violating the honor code, and the value of academic honesty in learning.

3<sup>rd</sup> Offense: Student is expelled.

### **ADA Accommodations**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, students with a documented disability are eligible for support services and accommodations. If a student wishes to request an accommodation, please contact the Director of Academic Support Services, Henry Conover, at (775) 831-1314 x7534, [hconover@sierranevada.edu](mailto:hconover@sierranevada.edu), office in Prim Library: PL-304.

### **The SNC Email System**

The SNC email system is the official communication vehicle among students, faculty members and administrative staff and is designed to protect the confidentiality of student information as required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 Act (FERPA). Students should check their college email accounts daily during the school year.

Students have a right to forward their SNC e-mail to another e-mail account (for example, @hotmail or @gmail). However, confidentiality of student information protected by FERPA cannot be guaranteed for SNC e-mail forwarded to an outside vendor. Having email redirected does not absolve a student from the responsibilities associated with official communication sent to his or her SNC email account.

### **The Sierra Nevada College Mission Statement:**

Sierra Nevada College graduates will be educated to be scholars of and contributors to a sustainable world. Sierra Nevada College combines the liberal arts and professional preparedness through an interdisciplinary curriculum that emphasizes entrepreneurial thinking and environmental, social, economic and educational sustainability.

### **The Core Themes:**

Liberal Arts	Professional Preparedness
Entrepreneurial	Thinking Sustainability

### **PRELIMINARY Class Schedule (Subject to change...)**

This is a preliminary schedule of subjects to be covered. As opportunities arise, we reserve the right to alter the order and to add to or subtract from this syllabus.

#### **REFINING TERMINOLOGY, DEFINING INFLUENCES**

##### **Week 1**

Reading Jonathan Lethem's "The Ecstasy of Influence" – thinking about our artistic influences and predecessors, and developing one's "tribe" of artistic inspirations and fellow-travelers.

##### **Week 2**

Influence versus "appropriation" – can influences be taken in bad faith?

**Week 3**

Contemporary terminology in one's field, and developing a short piece on influences.

**Week 4**

Writing a short piece on your personal artistic influences.

**Week 5**

Readings on Liz Lerman, and her "critical response" techniques.

CRITICISM AS CONVERSATION: THE ARTIST INTERVIEW

**Week 6**

Reading of artist interviews – and examining how artists frame their work through talking about it. Looking at and listing the types of questions interviewers use to get revealing, interesting answers.

**Week 7**

Developing sets of questions for each other, in collaboration. Questions will reference terminology and influences, and use some "critical response" techniques.

**Week 8**

Spring Break – no classes

**Week 9**

The week of interviews – students pair up and record half-hour interviews with each other. Transcription of 10-15 minutes of the artist interview.

**Week 10**

Developing Artists Statements. Using the interviews as a foundation, students will draft and edit artist statements.

BROADER ISSUES IN CRITICISM

**Week 11**

Readings on the critic as antagonist – can critics define what is permissible and impermissible in art? How does an artist negotiate that tension between self-definition and being defined by a critic?

**Week 12**

Reading about the critical response to life – writers and artists who apply their critical mindset to things beyond works of art – but to social institutions and relationships.

**Week 13**

Students begin to create an artwork that is a deliberate critical response to another artist, and artistic movement, or social construction.

**Week 14**

Students continue to work on the "artwork as critical response" assignment, posting in process sketches or thoughts for feedback.

**Week 15**

Final "artistic response" and "artists statements" posted for feedback.