ENGL 219. 500 Literature and the Other Arts  
Fall 2012  
TR 9:35 10:50 5XX LAAH  
Professor Susan Stabile

ENGL 219 Literature and the Other Arts. Aesthetic principles linking imaginative literature to such other arts as painting, sculpture, architecture, and music, with attention devoted to cultural periods and to interpretation of individual works.

Course Description

Framed by three field trips to the Menil Collection, Blanton Museum, and Bayou Bend Collection, the course explores the aesthetic intersection of literature (poetry, fiction, nonfiction) and the visual (painting, collage, sculpture, installation art, architecture, and furniture) arts. This intersection occurs through various modes of ekphrasis (from the Greek ek ["out"] and phrasein ["speak"]), which museum critic Barbara Fischer calls "a form of critical mediation," an invitation for museumgoers to contemplate how they understand the world through both words and things. Course themes include the politics of silence, poetics of erasure, aesthetics of bricolage, and intimacy of still lives.

Learning Outcomes

At the course's conclusion, students will be able to:

- Explain the intersecting aesthetic techniques of literature, painting, sculpture, architecture, and decorative arts
- experience these arts through inquiry-based, experiential museum visits
- describe how their cultural literacy has developed
- engage in critical thinking and analysis through reading, class discussion, and writing
- experiment with aesthetic theories and practices (including ekphrasis, erasure, exquisite corpse) through collaborative projects
- exercise and develop their creative processes
- appreciate the cultural functions of the fine and decorative arts
- collaboratively construct a manifesto on arts appreciation and critique

Core Curriculum Objectives:

Critical Thinking Skills (CTS): The course will enhance critical thinking skills through consistent reading and class discussion of key ideas in texts which explore the relationship between literature and other arts.

Communication Skills (CS): The course enhances communication skills through small and large
group discussion of ideas, issues, questions, and themes central to course reading and viewing.

_Teamwork (TW):_ The course will enhance students’ ability to consider different points of view and to work effectively with others to support a shared purpose or goal.

_Social Responsibility (SR):_ The course enhances social responsibility by providing students with a cross cultural understanding of how history, region, and broader social forces have shaped the differing interpretations of the connection between literature and other arts.

**Evaluation of Core Objectives**

CTS: The evaluation of critical thinking skills will be based on exams and class participation and may include written work. Exams will be designed to allow students to demonstrate their ability to evaluate and synthesize key ideas from the assigned reading. Class room discussion will focus on helping students better understand the nuances and complexities of the connection between literature and other arts.

CS: The course will help students learn how to develop a greater understanding of the relationship between literature and other arts that may involve guided writing assignments in which they will receive feedback, exams in which students will be expected to effectively convey key ideas from the course succinctly and clearly, and class room discussion in which students will learn how to express questions and thoughts about the subtleties of each text or object under examination.

TW: Students will be expected to work on collaborative projects in which they will they have to experiment with an array of aesthetic techniques and frame a statement articulating the cultural value of the arts. Each group will be graded on creativity, organization, and coherence.

SR: The evaluation of social responsibility will be based upon an end-of-the-semester short writing assignment in which students will be asked to reflect upon how their knowledge of outside of their own has changed in light of the new information that they now possess. Students will be expected to demonstrate how key insights from the course have helped broaden their understanding of how history, culture, and philosophical outlooks have shaped the intricate relationships that exist between literature and other arts.

**Instructor Information**

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Dr. Stabile</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Office hours</td>
<td>Wed., 12:30-2:00</td>
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<td>Office location</td>
<td>LAAH 5XX</td>
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**Textbook and/or Resource Material**

Mark Doty, _Still Life with Oysters and Lemon_ (to be ordered online)
Charles Simi, _Dime Store Alchemy_ (to be ordered online)
All other required readings are provided on course Moodle page

**Grading Policies**
Grading Policy:

- 3 short essays (45% of course grade). The three 1,500-word essays will be generated by the student's observations, interpretations, and experiences at each of the three museums. Detailed instructions will be distributed in class. Each essay should present an original thesis, concrete examples and offer a rich and careful analysis of those examples. The essay should have a well-crafted introduction and conclusion, smooth transitions between paragraphs and clear, concise prose, including proper syntax and grammar.

- final exam (35% of course grade). The final exam is a comprehensive test of the course's main themes, concepts, and theories of the arts. The exam will be made up of short and longer essay questions and will include a specific question in which students will be asked to reflect upon how their knowledge outside of their own has changed in light of the new information that they now possess. Students will be expected to demonstrate how key insights from the course have helped broaden their understanding of how history, culture, and philosophical outlooks have shaped the intricate relationships that exist between literature and other arts.

- collaborative manifesto on the cultural value of the arts (5% of course grade). Each group will have to frame a statement that describes why and how art is important for society. The group will be graded on creativity, organization, and coherence.

- participation: Students are expected to participate actively in class, including: reading and discussing the assigned readings; completing in-class exercises and formal essay assignments; and attending the three required museum trips. (15% of course grade).

Required Museum Field Trips: Students are expected to participate in professor-led field trips to the Menil Collection (Houston, TX), Blanton Museum (Austin, TX), and Bayou Bend Collection (Houston TX) on the designated dates. Detailed instructions, analytic questions, and writing prompts will be distributed in class.

- readings: Students should come to class with assigned readings completed, prepared to participate in class discussion.


Attendance and university excused absences: Attendance is required. TAMU Student Rule 7 (http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07)

Academic Integrity: "An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do." You are expected to be aware of the Aggie Honor Code and the Honor Council Rules and Procedures, stated at http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu

Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute providing comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, B-118 Cain Hall (845-1637). For additional information visit http://disability.tamu.edu
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Required Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aesthetics of Silence</td>
<td>Course Introduction: Pictures at an Exhibition CTS, CS</td>
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<td>Susan Sontag, “The Aesthetics of Silence” CTS, CS</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Ephemera</td>
<td>Charles Simic, <em>Dime Store Alchemy</em> CTS, CS</td>
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<td>Charles Simic, <em>Dime Store</em> CTS, CS <em>Alchemy</em>. Discussion of essay 1, and handout.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Memorial Dreams</td>
<td>Mary Ruefle, “Monument”; Billie Collins, “Silence”; Alice Friman, “At the Rothko Chapel”; Stephen Haven, “The Last Sacred Place in North America” In-class video of Michael Arad CTS, CS</td>
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<td>Ande Breton Surrealist Manifesto (1924 and 1929) In-Class Activity: Surrealist Games CTS, CS</td>
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<td>Field Trip to Menil Collection (Houston). CTS, CS</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>Essay #1 due. Discussion. CTS, CS</td>
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<td>Mark Slouka, “Listening for Silence” CTS, CS</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, excerpts from <em>Dictee</em> CTS, CS</td>
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<td>Discussion of collaborative group project. Each group will have to frame a statement that describes why and how art is important for society. CTS, CS, TW</td>
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<td>Mind’s Eye</td>
<td>Joyce Carol Oates, “The Museum</td>
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of Dr. Moses”; Katharine Connelly, “Is Reconciliation Possible? Non-Western Objects at the Menil Collection and the Quai Branly Museum” CTS, CS

Edgar Allan Poe, “The Domain of Arnheim” and Rene Magritte series Le domaine d’Arnheim (1938-62) CTS, CS

Elizabeth Bishop, “The Street by the Cemetery”; “The Soldier and the Slot Machine”; “Objects and Apparitions”; “Sestina “Monument” and “The Weed”; Max Ernst “Compositions with Letters, pencil, and frottage 1919,” “Erectio sine qua non,” and “False Positions”; Bishop’s shadow boxes at Alice Methfessel Collection CTS, CS

Janee J. Baugher, “Art to Art: Ekphrastic Poetry”; John Ashberry, “And Ut Pictura Poesis is Her Name”; Frank O’Hara, “Favorite Painting at the Met.” Discussion of essay 2, and handout. CTS, CS

Field Trip to Blanton Museum (Austin) CTS, CS

Richard Wilbur, “A Dutch Courtyard” and “Museum Piece”; Anne Sexton. CTS, CS

“The Starry Night”; William Carlos Williams, “The Dance” and Portrait of a Lady” CTS, CS


Excerpts from Mary Ruefle, Friends with Fur and Feathers in Gulf Coast (Summer/Fall 2008);
11 Collecting the Daily

Mikhail Epstein, “Thing and Word: On The Lyrical Museum” CTS, CS


12 Small Intimacies

Brenda Miller, “Opalescent.” Discussion of essay 3, and handout. CTS, CS

Ted Kooser, “Small Rooms in Time” CTS, CS

Field Trip to Bayou Bend (Houston) CTS, CS

13 House Museum

Discuss Bayou Bend; Mark Doty, Still Life with Oysters and Lemon CTS, CS

Thanksgiving Holiday

14 Still Lives

Susan Stewart, “Thoughts on the Role of Humanities in Contemporary Life. Students present their collaborative “Literature and the Other Arts Manifesto” CTS, CS, TW

Essay #3 Due. Final exam TBA: The final exam is a comprehensive test of the course’s main themes, concepts, and theories of the arts. The exam will be made up of short and longer essay questions and will include a question in which students will be asked to reflect upon how their knowledge of literature and other arts has
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