Course Description:

As the course title suggests, this upper-level course undertakes central questions in philosophy of art and aesthetics as they relate to issues of gender and contemporary feminist theory. The semester is divided into three parts, each dealing with topics related to a particular theme. Part One looks at the relationship between gender and the canon of Western Art. Here we will examine topics such as the underrepresentation of women in the arts and the sources of this phenomenon such as the assumed association between maleness and artistic genius and historical barriers that kept women from pursuing artistic endeavors. Part Two involves a detailed examination of the representation of women in various artforms and genres. Here we will examine topics such as the “male gaze” and the ways that women are portrayed in works of art created by men. Then, we will contrast this with the ways in which women have represented women in the arts. Finally, Part Three deals with questions of taste and artistic value and their relationship to gender. Each week, we will also be reading portions of Katy Hessel’s The Story of Art Without Men which presents a history of Western Art told through the works of women artists which are often marginalized in traditional art-historical texts. Some weeks the works and movements discussed by Hessel will fit well with our other readings. Some weeks, not so much. However, it is my hope that each of these chapters will introduce you to overlooked women in art history and will serve as a shared foundation for our discussions over the course of the semester.

Required Texts:

  - Listed in Course Schedule as SAWM.
- All other readings have been uploaded to Canvas.
  - These are denoted on the syllabus with a “C.”

Course Requirements:

- Six Response Papers (2-3 pages) @ 5% each- 25%
- One Midterm Essay (5-7 pages)- 20%
- One Art Event Write Up (2-3 pages)- 15%
- One Final Essay (6-8 pages)- 30%
- Attendance and class participation- 10%

Questions and due dates for the response papers are found in the course schedule below. At the end of the semester, your lowest response paper grade will be dropped. Due dates for the midterm and final essays are also provided in the course schedule. As we move toward these due dates, I will post handouts providing you with guidelines and prompts for the midterm and final essays. A description of the “Art Event Write Up” can be found on Canvas. This assignment can be completed at any point over the course of the semester but must be submitted by the end of the semester (Monday, December 11th, 2023). Late assignments may be accepted with significant daily deductions.
Attendance:
Attendance and participation are essential for learning. Therefore, attendance is required for all in-person classes and synchronous online sessions. Unexcused absences are likely to result in course penalty; more than 12 unexcused absences may result in a grade of FA (Failure due to Absence) for the course.

If you are unable to attend class due to a non-COVID-19 related illness, communicate directly with me through email. If your physical absence is due to isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19 infection or exposure, it is your responsibility to contact me within 48 hours outlining both the date of your expected return to class and a plan to stay on pace with readings and assignments during your mandated physical absence.

Course Schedule and Readings: (Subject to change as needed)
Readings should be completed in advance of each week’s classes.

Part One: Gender and the Canon

Week One: September 6th (No Class September 4th)
- Hessel, “Introduction,” SAWM.
- Devereaux, “Feminist Aesthetics,” C.

Week Two: September 11th and 13th
- Hessel, “Chapter One: Painting Herself into the Canon,” SAWM.
- Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” C.

Prompt for Response Paper One: “What is Nochlin’s main argument as to why she believes there have been no great women artists? What is the traditional perceived connection between genius and artistic creation and how have gender and social class impacted our understanding of genius according to Nochlin?”

Week Three: September 18th and 20th
- Response Paper One Due September 18th
- Hessel, “Chapter Two: Looking to a Heroic Past,” SAWM.
- Kant, Critique of Judgment (Selection), C.
- Battersby, “Genius and Feminism,” C.

Week Four: September 25th and 27th
- Hessel, “Chapter Three: From Realism to Spiritualism,” SAWM.
- Danto, “The Artworld,” C.

Prompt for Response Paper Two: “Explain the difference between the imitation theory and the reality
theory according to Danto. What is the ‘is of artistic identification’ and how is Tracy Emin’s My Bed (1998) different from a bed you would find in someone’s home? Do you see any problems with this institutional theory of the arts given the concerns of Nochlin and Wallace?”

Part Two: Gender and Artistic Representation

Week Five: October 2nd and 4th
- **Response Paper Two Due October 2nd**
  - Hessel, “Chapter Four: War, Identity and the Paris Avant-Garde,” *SAWM*.
  - Kaplan, “Is the Gaze Male?” *C*.

Week Six: October 9th and 11th
- Clover, *Men, Women, and Chainsaws* (Selection), *C*.

**Prompt for Response Paper Three:** “Using examples from visual art, explain what the concept of the ‘male gaze.’ Next, explain certain tropes in the horror genre that demonstrate this concept. (Using another genre is fine if horror isn’t your thing!).”

Week Seven: October 16th and 18th
- **Response Paper Three Due October 16th**

Week Eight: October 23rd and 25th
- **Midterm Essay Due October 23rd**
  - Hessel, “Chapter Seven: War and the Rise of New Methods and Media,” *SAWM*.

Week Nine: October 30th and November 1st
- Shanita Hubbard, “I Love Hip-Hop. But I’m So Over the ‘Ride-or-die’ Chick.” *C*.

**Prompt for Response Paper Four:** “Analyze Hubbard’s concept of the “ride-or-die chick” in light of our discussion of the male gaze. How might this stereotype be reformed so as to address the concerns of Black female subjectivity discussed by O’Grady?”
Week Ten: November 6th and 8th
- **Response Paper Four Due November 6th**

Part Three: Gender, Taste, and Aesthetic Value

Week Eleven: November 13th and 15th
- Bell, “The Aesthetic Hypothesis,” *C*.

Prompt for Response Paper Five: “How might an overemphasis on disinterest and formalism further marginalize the works of women artists? Do you think that the formal qualities of visual art are ever value neutral as Bell’s work seems to suggest?”

Week Twelve: November 20th (No Class November 22nd)
- **Response Paper Five Due November 20th**
- Hessel, “Chapter Twelve: The Era of Feminism,” *SAWM*.

Week Thirteen: November 27th and 29th

Prompt for Response Paper Six: “The concerns of Riot Grrrl bands like 7 Year Bitch, Bikini Kill, Bratmobile, and Sleater-Kinney seem very similar to those concerns identified by Howard as those of lesbian aesthetics. Yet Riot Grrrl was not a queer movement in any traditional sense. What are these features and why do you make of this? Do you think it is problematic to relegate these concerns to exclusively queer aesthetics? Or might a queer standpoint offer unique insights?”

Week Fourteen: December 4th and 6th
- **Response Paper Six Due December 4th**
- Hessel, “Chapter Fifteen: Radical Change in Britain,” *SAWM*.
- Morse, *Selfie Aesthetics* (Selection), *C*. 
Week Fifteen: December 11th

- Hessel, “Chapter Seventeen: Figuration in the Twenty-first Century,” SAWM.
- Hessel, “Chapter Eighteen: The 2020s,” SAWM.

Final Essay Due Monday, December 18th by 11:59 pm.

Disability Statement:
Your academic success is important. If you have a documented disability that may have an impact on your work in this class, please contact me. Students must provide documentation of their disability to the Academic Success Center in order to receive official University services and accommodations. The Academic Success Center can be reached at 856-256-4234. The Center is located on the 3rd floor of Savitz Hall. The staff is available to answer questions regarding accommodations or assist you in your pursuit of accommodations.

Academic Honesty:
Plagiarism and academic cheating are prohibited by University policy and by the prevailing norms of university education. Your work must be your own. Written materials must include proper citation of all sources used. Infractions may result in a failing grade for the work in question or a failing grade for the course. Repeated infractions may result in suspension or expulsion from the university. Please check your student handbook and if you have any questions feel free to ask me.

Class Recording:
Be advised that by taking this course you consent to some or all class sessions being recorded by the instructor. Recordings are intended to focus on the instructor but the voices and/or likenesses of other individuals in the class may also be recorded. Video and/or sound recordings will be stored on Canvas for one week and will only be used or distributed only for educational or academic purposes, e.g., to allow for remote, asynchronous learning for those students who miss a synchronous meeting. If you have questions about the use of such technology or you do not consent to being recorded, you must discuss and resolve your concerns with your instructor before the end of the drop/add period.