
DEBUNKING THE MYTH OF THE GREAT ARTIST in Spring 2021 (AH1099FB2)

Course Code	AH1099FB2	Professor(s)	Herve Vanel
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	C-504
Class Schedule	M: 15:20-16:40 in C-505 R: 10:35-11:55 in C-505	Office Hours	TBD
Credits	4	Email	hvanel@aup.edu
Semester	Spring 2021	Office Tel. Ext.	633

Course Description

Topic

"Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" asked, with some irony, art historian Linda Nochlin in a seminal 1971 essay. Part of the answer, she replied, lies in in a common misconception of what art is: the naive idea that art is the direct, personal expression of individual emotional experience —a translation of personal life into visual terms. The class will rely on an extensive selection of films (old and new, mainstream, documentary and experimental ones) to examine both the cultural construction and perpetuation of the myth of the "Great" artist and its rebuttal.

Course Learning Outcomes

General Education

FIRST BRIDGE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Students will enhance their information literacy, acquiring an understanding of how information is produced, and discovering how to evaluate, create and use it effectively and ethically. Students will develop an awareness of the conversational nature of

scholarship and be able to identify appropriate secondary sources to conduct effective research.

- Students will develop public speaking and presentation skills in order to participate effectively and appropriately in academic discussion and as community leaders, in a professional and engaging manner that can convey complex information.
- Students will be able to appreciate place as a site of knowledge, to interrogate the multiple meanings of place and develop a more informed and sensitive understanding of interactions between people and their physical environment.
- Students will learn to formulate questions that can lead to greater learning and productive individual and group research projects.
- Students will strengthen the concrete skills and aptitudes to be successful at AUP and beyond, such as study skills and time management, the mindsets that lead to lifelong learning, and desired classroom behaviors and interpersonal skills.

INTEGRATIVE INQUIRY LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- **Local and Global Perspectives:** Students will enhance their intercultural understanding of languages, cultures, and histories of local societies and the global issues to which these relate.
- **Aesthetic Inquiry and Creative Expression:** Students will engage with artistic or creative objects (e.g., visual art, theatrical works, film) in different media and from a range of cultural traditions.

Course Outline

Week 1 – The Myth of the Great Artist

1. Monday January 18 [03:20 to 04:40 pm on Teams]

General Introduction

Questions of Interdisciplinarity / disciplinary specificities

2. Thursday January 21 [10:35 AM to 11:55 am on Teams]

Reading – Discussing

Linda Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artist,” (1971) in *Art and sexual politics; women's liberation, women artists, and art history*, Thomas B. Hess and Elizabeth C. Baker, (eds.), New York, Macmillan, 1973, p. 1-43.

Week 2 – Women Artist: A Documentary Account

3. Monday January 25 [03:20 to 04:40 pm on Teams]

Watching-Discussing

2017 - *Artistes femmes: à la force du pinceau*, (dir.) Manuelle Blanc 2017. [Documentary, French / English Subtitles]

\$ Wednesday January 27: Reflective Seminar 03:20 to 4:40 pm on Teams

4. Thursday January 28 [10:35 AM to 11:55 am on Teams]

Watching-Discussing

1956 *Lust for Life* (van Gogh) dir. by Vincente Minnelli

1991 *Van Gogh* by Maurice Pialat (French / Subtitles)

Reading

[Louis Van Tilborgh and Teio Meedendorp, "The life and death of Vincent van Gogh," *The Burlington Magazine*, July 2013, Vol. 155, No. 1324, p. 456-462.](#)

Richard Alleva, "Three faces of Vincent," *Commonweal*, June 11, 1992, Vol. 119 no 19 p. 18-20.

Week 3 – Dramatized Life

5. Monday February 1 [03:20 to 04:40 pm on Teams]

Watching-Discussing

2002 *Frida* [Frida Kahlo] by Julie Taymor

Reading

Tina Olsin Lent, "Life as Art/Art as Life: Dramatizing the Life and Work of Frida Kahlo," *Journal of Popular Film & Television*, Summer 2007, Vol. 35, no 2, p. 68-76.

\$ Wednesday February 3rd: Reflective Seminar 03:20 to 4:40 pm on Teams]

Art and life: Biography, fiction

6. Thursday February 4 [10:35 AM to 11:55 am on Teams]

Library: Databases, research tools (an introduction)

Week 4 - Playing Jackson Pollock

X. Monday February 8 [No class]

7. Thursday February 11 [10:35 AM to 11:55 am Q-509]

Watching-Discussing

2000 Pollock Ed Harris [Biopic]

Reading

Solomon, Deborah. "Portrayal of the artist: to play Jackson Pollock, Ed Harris went deep." *The New York Times Magazine*, 24 Sept. 2000, p. 56

Amelia Jones, "Dis/ playing the phallus: male artists perform their masculinities," *Art History*, Vol. 17 No. 4 December 1994 p. 546-584

Week 5 – Alpha Male and *Study for a Portrait*

8. Monday February 15 [03:20 to 04:40 pm @ Q-509]

Watching-Discussing

1971 *Georges Mathieu ou la fureur d'être* by Frédéric Rossif (French / Subtitles)

\$ Wednesday February 17th: Reflective Seminar 03:20 to 4:40 pm

9. Thursday February 18 [10:35 AM to 11:55 am Q-509]

Watching-Discussing

1998 *Love Is the Devil: Study for a Portrait of Francis Bacon* dir. by John Maybury

1985 "Francis Bacon and the Brutality of Fact - Interview with David Sylvester" by Michael Blackwood

Read

Sam Ishii-Gonzalès, "Beyond the Pale: Francis Bacon and the Limits of Portraiture," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 6.4, 2000, 631-639.

Week 6 – Louise Bourgeois: An Intimate Portrait

10. Monday February 22 [03:20 to 04:40 pm @ Q-509]

Watching-Discussing

2008 Louise Bourgeois: The Spider, the Mistress and the Tangerine by Marion Cajori

Reading

Suzanne Isabelle Trimble (aka Bella Land), "Louise Bourgeois in Conversation," *Third Text*, Vol. 23, Issue 6, November, 2009, 779–788.

\$ Wednesday February 24th: Reflective Seminar 03:20 to 4:40 pm

X. Thursday February 25 [No class]

Week 7 – The Artist and the Model

11. Monday March 1 [03:20 to 04:40 pm @ Q-509]

Watching-Discussing

1991 La Belle Noiseuse by Jacques Rivette [Part 1 and 2]

Reading

Honoré de Balzac, *The Unknown Masterpiece* (1845), first English translations 1899, 1908, this translation © Anthony Rudolf, in *Gillette or the Unknown Masterpiece*, London, Menard Press, 1988, p. 7-32.

\$ Wednesday March 3rd: Reflective Seminar 03:20 to 4:40 pm [Louvre Museum](#)

12. Thursday March 4 [10:35 AM to 11:55 am Q-509]

Watching-Discussing

1972 Warhol by Lana Jokel and Barbara Rose.

Reading

Andy Warhol, Interview by Gretchen Berg, "Andy Warhol: My True Story," *The East Village Other*, November 1, 1966.

Week 8 – “True” Story

13. Monday March 8 [Midterm Exams] [03:20 to 04:40 pm @ Q-509]

[*Short in class response to a short audio-visual document*]

14. Thursday March 11 [10:35 AM to 11:55 am Q-509]

Watching-Discussing

1996 *I shot Andy Warhol* (Valerie Solanas), by Mary Harron

Reading

Dana Heller, "Shooting Solanas: radical feminist history and the technology of failure," *Feminist Studies*, Spring 2001, Vol. 27 Issue 1, p167-189, 23p

Week 9 – Figuring Out Basquiat

Due date: Selection of final projects from the list of documents provided [see below]

15. Monday March 15 [03:20 to 04:40 pm @ Q-509]

Watching-Discussing

1981 *Downtown 81* dir. by Edo Bertoglio [released in 2000]

Reading

Amy Abugo Ongiri, "Downtown 81: A Tribute to Jean Michel Basquiat" (review) *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*, Number 16-17, Fall-Winter 2002, p. 107-108.

Chris Fite-Wassilak, "Myth-making: An exhibition on Basquiat repeats a well-worn narrative," *Apollo*, Vol. 186, Issue 659, December 2017, p. 104-105.

\$ Wednesday February 17th: Reflective Seminar 03:20 to 4:40 pm Orsay Museum

16. Thursday March 18 [10:35 AM to 11:55 am Q-509]

Watching-Discussing

1996 *Basquiat* by Julian Schnabel.

Reading

Toija Cinque "‘Canvas of Flesh’: David Bowie, Andy Warhol in Basquiat," *Cinema Journal*, Volume 57, Number 3, Spring 2018, pp. 158-166.

Week 10 – Visuality in African American Culture

17. Monday March 22 [03:20 to 04:40 pm @ Q-509]

Watching-Discussing

2016 *Black is the Color* by Jacques Goldstein [documentary]

Reading

Michele Wallace, "Why Are There No Great Black Artists? The Problem of Visuality in African American Culture" *Dark Designs and Visual Culture*, Duke University Press, 2004.

18. Thursday March 25 [10:35 AM to 11:55 am Q-509]

Watching-Discussing

2012 Marina Abramovic *The Artist is Present* [Documentary] by Matthew Akers

Reading

Jennifer Wolfe, "Performance, Perspective, Production," *Digital Video*. August 2012, Vol. 20 Issue 8, p, 22-24.

Week 11- – Life and Legacy

19. Monday March 29 [03:20 to 04:40 pm @ Q-509]

Watching-Discussing

2019 - *The New Bauhaus - The Life & Legacy of Moholy-Nagy* [Documentary by Alysa Nahmias]

\$ Wednesday March 31st: Reflective Seminar 03:20 to 4:40 pm Museum TBA

20. Thursday April 1st [10:35 AM to 11:55 am Q-509]

Watching-Discussing

1990 *John Cage - I Have Nothing to Say and I Am Saying It*, Documentary by Allan Miller

Week 12 – In the Footsteps of Merce Cunningham

X. Monday April 5 [No Class]

21. Thursday April 8 [10:35 AM to 11:55 am Q-509]

Watching-Discussing

2019 *Cunningham* by Alla Kovgan

Week 13 Art in the Land

22. Monday April 12 [03:20 to 04:40 pm @ Q-509]

Watching-Discussing

1995 *Passageways: James Turrell* by Carine Asscher

or

2010 *Exit Through the Gift Shop* by Banksy

\$ Wednesday April 14th: Reflective Seminar 03:20 to 4:40 pm Museum TBA

Thursday April 15

Week 14 – Presentations

23. Monday April 19 [03:20 to 04:40 pm @ Q-509] Two Oral Presentations

24. Thursday April 22 [10:35 AM to 11:55 am Q-509] Two Oral Presentations

Week 15 - Presentations

25. Monday April 26 [03:20 to 04:40 pm @ Q-509] Three Oral Presentations

Documents available for final projects [selection]

The class syllabus relies on a limited selection out of 50 films (both documentaries and fictions) made available to you. For your final project, you will select one of the films not discussed in class and review it.

In addition, will select two articles on the artist (or movement) as sources (you may include a text by the artist or an interview of the artist if available) in order to incorporate scholarly reflection in your discussion of the film.

How is/are the artist(s) depicted? Does the film go beyond the hagiography?

What kind of figure of the artist does the film deliver? What kind of relationship between art and society does the film reflect? How does the artist's aesthetic [or type of art discussed] informed the aesthetic of the film?

Do the words/writing of the artist(s) inform the content of the film? What is the importance given to the biographical elements?

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1956 *Le Mystère Picasso* by Henri-Georges Clouzot

1969 *To Open Eyes: A Film on Josef Albers* by Arnold Bittleman

1974 *Chris Burden Documentation of Selected Works 1971-74*, by Chris Burden

1980 *Mur Murs* ["wall walls", also punning on English "murmurs"] documentary film by Agnès Varda.

1986 *Caravaggio* by Derek Jarman (Fiction)

1988 *Camille Claudel* by Bruno Nuytten (French / Subtitles)

1990 *Vincent and Theo* dir. by Robert Altman [in Four parts]

2002 *Chi-hwa-seon* dir. by Im Kwon-taek [fiction]

2003 *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, by Peter Webber

2006 *Josef and Anni Albers: Art is Everywhere* by Sedat Pakay

2006 *Yves Klein la révolution bleue* François Lévy-Kuentz.

2007: *Fully Awake: Black Mountain College* by Cathryn Davis Zommer and Neeley House.

2010 *Basquiat, A Life* by Jean Michel Vecchiet [Documentary]

2010 *Exit Through the Gift Shop* by Banksy

2011 *The Ballad of Genesis and Lady Jaye* by Marie Losier.

2012 *Ai Wei Wei: Never Sorry* Dir. Alison Klayman [documentary]

2012 *Salvador Dali, génie tragi-comique* by François Lévy-Kuentz [Documentary, French Subtitles]

2014 *Richard Hamilton in the reflection of Marcel Duchamp* (documentary)

2016 *Le Portrait interdit* [The Lady in the Portrait] Charles de Meaux [Fiction /French Subtitles]

2017 *Boom for Real: The Late Teenage Years of Jean-Michel Basquiat* by Sara Driver.

2020 *Troublemakers: The Story of Land Art* by James Crump.

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

Requirements

1. General Participation 10%

Students will be graded on their presence and their active contribution to the class; exceptional engagement and/or improvement may affect the final grade.

2. Moderating 10 %

Starting week 2: for each session, one student will be in charge of introducing the discussion by formulating a general response to the audiovisual document and formulating a few introductory questions.

3. Mid-Term Exam 20 %

A short in-class response to an audio-visual document

4. Oral Presentations 30% and final paper 30%

A 15-minute final presentation on a film from a selection provided below. Accompanied by 2000 words review.

Other
