

AMGT 610: Directions in Gallery Management

Professor Claire Huschle

Spring 2012

Wednesdays: 5:30-7:10 pm (please note start time!)

3 credits

Founders Hall Room 324

Please note that at least two sessions will take place off site.

Office Hours: 30 minutes after class or by appointment.

Phone: 202-550-3538

Email: chuschle@gmu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course discusses the many facets of visual art gallery management, from the practical considerations of daily operations to the broader examination of the gallery's role in art education, criticism, and the art market.

Gallery Management students will develop an understanding of a wide range of internal practices, including exhibition coordination and installation, contracts, artist representation, fine art insurance, exhibition policies, budgets, and marketing. We will also discuss location, audience, community outreach and related programming, and mission identification.

After addressing these practical concerns, we will explore the role of contemporary galleries in the understanding of culture, how galleries are affected by (or help determine) trends in the art market, the importance of criticism and art history, and the responsibility of educating a diverse public, among other issues.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will be asked to visit area galleries, produce a variety of written documents, and coordinate a "virtual" exhibition to include all appropriate images and documentation. By the end of this class, students should have a good understanding of the diversity of the gallery world and have a series of documents and models which can be adapted to professional purposes as needed.

COURSE TEXTS & MATERIALS

The Artist-Gallery Partnership, third ed., Tad Crawford and Susan Mellon, Allworth Press, 2008.

Putting the Arts in the Picture: Reframing Education in the 21st Century, Nick Rabkin and Robin Redmond, eds., Columbia College, Chicago, 2004.

Seven Days in the Art World, Sarah Thornton, Granta Books, 2008 (hardcover) or W. W. Norton & Company, 2009 (paperback).

OPTIONAL:

A Short Guide to Writing about Art, tenth ed., Sylvan Barnet, Prentice Hall, 2010.

The Law in Plain English for Galleries, Leonard D. Duboff, Allworth Press, 1999.

In addition, you are required to read the following each week, and to prepare a 1-2 page summary of one article of choice. You should be prepared to share your article with the class, explaining why you found it of interest, and how it fits within the context of this course or Arts Management more generally. Please see this as an opportunity to bring in your own interests or to open discussion around subjects about which you wish to learn more.

New York Times: An excellent resource for information related to galleries, museums, and the art world generally. Plan to spend time each week reviewing feature stories as well as the Art in Review column found on the Art and Design pages:

<http://www.nytimes.com/pages/arts/design/index.html>. You should also read the *Arts Beat* blog: <http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/>

Arts Journal is another great resource for national and international news. Please read the visual arts column weekly: <http://www.artsjournal.com/visual.shtml>

Locally, visual arts coverage is weak. Scan the following weekly for relevant articles:

Washington Post Style blog: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/arts-post> and museum section: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/museums>

And **City Paper's Arts Desk** Blog: <http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/blogs/artsdesk/visual-arts/>

Other readings will be distributed as the class progresses and will include readings on the art market, the roles of visual art fairs and biennials, museum competition/ partnership, gallery ethics, advice for establishing relationships with artists, and management challenges in visual art galleries.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

In the gallery world, you will find that writing skills are extremely important. Gallerists and arts managers must often take abstract concepts and theories and transform them into understandable language for grant applications, statements, press releases, pedagogical texts, and reviews. Moreover, contracts and correspondence are a vital part of dealing with artists and collectors. As such, students in this class will be required to do a substantial amount of writing. Each week, a 1-2 page summary of one article selected from the weekly media reading will be required. These writings will not be graded, but will count towards class participation. You will be asked to hand these either to me or to one of your classmates for review. Please take advantage of this exercise to reflect upon your own writing.

In the case of the Exhibition Critical Review, a draft will be **required**. In all other instances, a draft can be submitted for review two weeks prior to final due date. Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of this option. Deadlines are firm; points will be deducted for late papers.

As important as writing is the ability to discuss art works and exhibitions in a cogent way. Readings and gallery visits in this class will serve as a basis for discussion and students are expected to actively participate.

PARTICIPATION: 25%

WRITING

Artwork Comparison (based on gallery visit): 5%

Exhibition Critical Review (based on a different gallery visit): 10% (draft is not graded)
Review of Arts Related Programming (lecture, performance, etc): 10%
Gallery Packet (contracts, loan agreements, etc.): 5%
Written Materials in **Final Presentation** (statements, press materials, and essay): 25%

FINAL PRESENTATION: 20%

Students will be asked to put together an exhibition using one of the gallery models we will cover in class. Exhibitions **must** include at least one studio visit, statements describing the work of the artist(s), an essay, press materials, gallery lists, contracts, and a planning calendar, with other options possible. Presentation will include a virtual “walk through” of the exhibition as well as an explanation of the planning process.

CLASS SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

1) Wednesday, January 25. Introduction and goals, gallery experiences, and definitions.
Talking and writing about the visual arts.

Assignment for next week: Artwork comparisons based on a gallery visit. Also read *Seven Days in the Art World*, Introduction and chapters 1-2.

2) Wednesday, February 1. The Gallery Exhibition: Determining what an exhibition should say, and how to say it. Practical considerations (from staff to budget) and aesthetic concerns (from labels to lighting).

Artwork comparisons are due today.

Assignment for next week: carefully read arts reviews in Washington Post and local papers. Spend time at pinklineproject.com to get a sense of what the current shows are. Prepare for upcoming gallery visits by looking at the galleries' websites and thinking of questions to ask. Also read *Seven Days*, chapters 3-4.

3) Wednesday, February 8. Review of artwork comparisons. This session will prepare us for an off-campus field trip to area galleries as an application of last week's discussion and next week's writing assignment.

Assignment for next week: Exhibition review based on a gallery visit. Also read *Seven Days*, chapters 5-6.

*3.5) Saturday, February 11. Gallery Visits: A tour through the 14th Street Gallery District

4) Wednesday, February 15. Artists: Where to find them, what to look for in a studio visit, how to build a relationship with them. We will conduct studio visits at the AAC, just two blocks from Founders Hall.

Drafts of exhibition reviews are due today.

Assignment for next week: selected readings from *Partnership*. Finish *Seven Days*.

5) Wednesday, February 22. Nuts and Bolts: Part I. From opening the crate to making a sale. Contracts, commissions, insurance, taxes, and other not-so-creative responsibilities.

Drafts of exhibition reviews returned.

Assignment of Gallery Package project (due March 7), discussion of final project.

Assignment for next week: Final versions of gallery reviews are due, plus selected readings from *Partnership*.

*5.5) Saturday, February 25 or Sunday, February 26. Museum Trip (location chosen by vote)

6) Wednesday, February 29: Nuts and Bolts: Part II. Making it shine to the outside: press packages, resumes, statements, and other slightly-more-creative responsibilities.

Final draft of exhibition review due today.

Assignment of arts-related programming review (due March 28).

Readings for next session will be assigned.

7) Wednesday, March 7: The Market: The strength and weaknesses of galleries, curators, and collectors, as well as ethical and legal concerns.

Gallery Packages are due today.

Readings for next meeting will be assigned.

March 14: Spring Break

8) Wednesday, March 21. A Broader View: Audience and Community. Thinking outside the box to find new audiences, collaborate across disciplines, and plan for the future.

For next week: Readings from *Putting Arts in the Picture*: Grumet, Madeline, "No One Learns Alone", and Wakeford, Michael, "A Short Look at a Long Past".

*8.5) Saturday, March 24 or Sunday, March 25. Ancillary programming event (chosen by popular vote)

9) Wednesday, March 28. Art Education: How galleries pick up where formal institutions leave off.

Review of arts-related programming is due today.

Readings for next week will be assigned

10) Wednesday, April 4: Alternative spaces and adaptive reuse of space.

11) Wednesday, April 11: Criticism, art writing, and Galleries

12) Wednesday, April 18: Wrap up, presentation and final paper review

13) *Wednesday, April 25: Presentations 1-3*

14) *Wednesday, May 2: Presentations 4-5*

Academic Integrity and Conduct

It should go without saying that in this course, as with all others, you should conduct yourself and your research with the highest level of integrity and ethics. Cite others when appropriate in written work and oral presentations, listen to the opinions of classmates with an open mind, and generally treat others (and the work of others) as you would like to be treated. To review the Honor Code of George Mason university, please visit: <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/index.html#Anchor12>

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may self-disclose at any point while enrolled at the University. Students are encouraged to disclose their first semester at the University. Upon self-identification you will register with the Disability Resource Center (993-2474). The DRC staff will work collaboratively with you to choose the most appropriate and effective accommodations and resources.

An incomplete grade (IN) is used only if you request it in writing. An IN counts as a failing grade until completed, and it automatically turns into an F if a grade is not turned in by the deadline in the Schedule of Classes.

You are encouraged to sign up for the Mason Alert System by visiting the website <https://alert.gmu.edu>.