Syllabus
Diving Into the Wreck: Rethinking Critical Practice
Yale School of Art, Fall 2019
with Dean and Professor Marta Kuzma
Tuesdays, Thursdays, 10:30am-12pm
E.I.K., 32 Edgewood Ave.

Required for all First Year Graduate Students at Yale School of Art

Unless otherwise indicated, the format each week will be:
Tuesday: seminar in E.I.K., 32 Edgewood Ave, 10:30-12
Thursday: TA Reading Groups, 10:30-12

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It is required and expected that enrolled students attend each session, have read the requested readings in advance, submit a designated writing assignment at the end of the semester, and participate in group presentations on the final week of class.

All readings will be provided in English in the form of a reader containing a selection of key texts, as PDFs stored on Canvas, or as links. You are encouraged to find the readings in translation in the alternative language of your choice if it helps with comprehension. Final papers will be submitted in English.

Mobile devices, including phones, tablets, and laptops are not permitted for use during seminars. Please also refrain from taking photos during the lectures.

This course borrows its title from Adrienne Rich's poem written in 1973 at the beginning of the second wave of feminism, in the wake of the civil rights movement, amid the student protests against the Vietnam War, and in reflection of the author's own process of self-discovery and personal emancipation. As a work that focuses as much on the isolation of life as it does on a sense of shared community, Rich's poem brings forth a perspective that there can be no understanding of the "wreck" without becoming one with the wreck. It is possible to see how this self-motivated, even self-legislated, impulse toward autonomy is mirrored within the very

constitution of a work of art that is bound by the dialectic between autonomy and dependence, individuality and collectivity, randomness and resoluteness (Jacqueline Rose), and expression and rationality (Adorno). Taking “Diving into the Wreck” as a point of departure, the course aims toward a cultivation of consciousness that extends self-knowledge outwards into a sense of community, through the act of critical reflection.

It is perspective on affirmative society and the “critical category” that holds significant relevance today, “in summoning a critique of current conditions and the analysis of their tendencies to necessarily include future-oriented components, within contexts that transcend the realm of established conditions.” Diving into the Wreck aspires to promote a larger and longer collective conversation around the consideration of “critical relevance,” with respect to and outside of one’s studio practice (critical practice/critical engagement) within a widened field of “rage” and a largely dehumanizing backdrop—with a staggering increase in social and economic inequality as well as a rise in and support for authoritarian populist political movements. Additionally, we must acknowledge the ease with which a vocabulary of narrow ethno-nationalisms have been applied, within the emergence of what Adorno foresaw as “authoritarian personalities” who, in turn, expound on racist and xenophobic agendas, with continued violent oppression and proliferation of racially motivated police violence, mass incarceration, and other state-sanctioned violences, which, amongst their many demands, call for new languages in feminism. Other prescient issues include the question of human sexuality, no longer being, according to the writer and activist Jennifer Finney Boylan, “about who you want to go to bed with, but about who you want to go to bed as.”

The course will adopt a lecture/seminar approach with fourteen sessions scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30 am – 12:00 pm throughout the Autumn semester, led by Dean and Professor Kuzma with the additional participation and engagement of Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, visiting professor Peter Osborne, Mark Bomford from the Yale Sustainable Food Program, artist Andrea Fraser, critical race scholar Denise Ferreira da Silva, assistant professor Rizvana Bradley from Yale Film and Media Studies, and artists Walid Raad, A.K. Burns, and A.L. Steiner, among others.

Schedule
as of 9/25/19 (Subject to change. Additional guests to be announced)

9/3 Marta Kuzma
9/5 Fred Moten & Stefano Harney

9/10 Peter Osborne
9/12 Peter Osborne

9/17 Mark Bomford
9/19 Reading Groups/Harvest session at Yale Farm

9/24 Walid Raad
9/26 Reading Groups/Harvest session at Yale Farm

10/1 Andrea Fraser
10/2 Group Relations Group Critique Workshop with Andrea Fraser [Optional]
10/3 Andrea Fraser

10/8 Denise Ferreira da Silva
10/10 Reading Groups

10/15 Marta Kuzma
10/17 Reading Groups

10/22 A.L. Steiner & A.K. Burns
10/24 Reading Groups

10/28 Jessica Stockholder with Lynne Tillman, All-School lecture
10/29 Rizvana Bradley
10/31 Reading Groups

11/5 TBD
11/7 Reading Groups

11/12 TBD
11/14 Reading Groups, YUAG Panel w/ Wangechi Mutu, Howardena Pindell, Kobena Mercer, Kevin Beasley, and Courtney J. Martin

11/19 TBD
11/21 Reading Groups

12/3 Student Presentations
12/5 Student Presentations

Tuesday, September 3

Introduction: Art as the Site of Encounter of the Other: on the Junction of the Political and the Erotic
with Marta Kuzma

Read

- Adrian Piper, “Ideology, Confrontation, and Political Self-Awareness”
- Adrienne Rich, *Diving into the Wreck*
- Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power"

- Herbert Marcuse, “A Biological Foundation for Socialism?” in *An essay on Liberation*
- James Baldwin, The Artist’s Struggle for Integrity (listen to it)

Optional recommended further reading
- Nancy Fraser, *The Old is Dying and the New Cannot be Born: From Progressive Neoliberalism to Trump and Beyond* (epub and Kindle file on Canvas)

Thursday, September 5

On the Entanglement of Complicity
with Stefano Harney and Fred Moten

Read
- Denise Ferreira da Silva, “On Difference Without Separability”
- W. E. B. Du Bois, “Sociology Hesitant”

Optional recommended further reading
- Cedric Robinson, *The Terms of Order: Political Science and the Myth of Leadership*
- Fumi Okiji, *Jazz as Critique: Adorno and Black expression revisited* (no PDF on Canvas)
- Giorgio Agamben, *Creation and Anarchy: The Work of Art and the Religion of Capitalism*

Tuesday, September 10

Commodity-Form: the Metaphysical Peculiarity of Capitalistic Sociality
with Peter Osborne

Exploring the metaphysical peculiarity of capitalist relations of exchange, and its connection to the metaphysical peculiarity of the artwork.

Read
- Etienne Balibar, “Commodity Fetishism” section in *The Philosophy of Marx*
- Fred Moten, “Resistance of the Object: Aunt Hester’s Scream”
- Fred Moten, “Resistance of the Object: Adrian Piper’s Theatricality”
- Karl Marx, “The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret” in Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. 1., Ch. 1, Section D
- Peter Osborne, “Commodity: Fetish and Hieroglyph” in *How to Read Marx*

Look at images and videos of Adrian Piper's *Mythic Being* series (1973–1975) online.

Optional recommended further reading
- Peter Osborne, *Capitalism: Concept, Idea, Image: Aspects of Marx’s Capital Today*

Thursday, September 12

Object, Thing, Signifer: Cady Noland's Dirty Minimalism, Squeeky Clean
with Peter Osborne

This lecture extends the terms of the discussion of Marx's conception of reification from Tuesday's lecture to Cady Noland's work as it plays with relations between the artwork as signifier, object and thing – thematizing 'Americanness' as the national culture of capitalism, connecting the Trumpian present back to the 1980s, deregulation and the dual expansions of the art market and the penal system of incarceration.

Read

- Cady Noland, "Towards a Metalanguage of Evil"
- Hal Foster, "Subversive Signs" in *Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics*

Tuesday, September 17

Knowing and Doing "Sustainable Food" — God-trick or Not?
with Mark Bomford from the Yale Sustainable Food Project

Guiding Questions: What does sustainability look like? How do we know when we encounter a sustainable food or a sustainable agricultural practice? What does it feel like? How does it affect us? How did we "learn to be affected" (following Latour) by sustainable food? What mediates this affect: is it statistics? Infographics? Sadomasochistic PETA videos? Entrepreneurial powerpoint pitch decks? Celebrity spectacle as per Guy DeBord? Cartographic artifacts?

Read

- Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." p. 581-591
- Michael Carolan, "Do You See What I See? Examining the Epistemic Barriers to Sustainable Agriculture*." p. 232–239 until you hit "Methods"
- Charolette Biltekoff, "Interrogating Moral and Quantification Discourses in Nutritional Knowledge."
- James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State : How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. p. 270-279

Thursday, September 19

Yale Farm harvest session: Bryant, Efrat, and Angela's groups
Meet on the front steps of 1156 Chapel at 10am
Reading Groups: Nick, Mariel, and Karinne's groups

Tuesday, September 24

Imaginary Collectives as a way to Reclaim History or at least a Psychically Tolerated One: Or a Negotiation with History, Historical Writing, Memory and Power Relations
with Walid Raad

Read

- Peter Osborne, "The Fiction of the Contemporary," in *Anywhere or Not at All: Philosophy of Contemporary Art*
- Walid Raad with Ixel Rion, "Scratching on Things I Could Disavow: Walkthrough"
- Walid Raad with María Minera, "Desperately looking for a title…"

- Walid Raad with Seth Cameron, “In Conversation”

Thursday, September 26

Yale Farm harvest session: Nick, Mariel, and Karinne’s groups
Meet on the front steps of 1156 Chapel at 10am
Reading Groups: Bryant, Efrat, and Angela’s groups

Tuesday, October 1

On Melanie Klein, Social relations or lack thereof, group relations and collective formation
with Andrea Fraser

Read

- Alexander Alberro, “Institutions, Critique, and Institutional Critique”
- Andrea Fraser, “An Artist’s Statement”
- Andrea Fraser, “L'1%, C'est Moi”

Wednesday, October 2

Group Relations Group Critique Workshop with Andrea Fraser [Optional]

Participation is limited to 18 first year students.

The workshop will introduce students to the application of psychoanalytic perspectives on object-relations and group dynamics to art through experiential demonstrations of a group relations-based approach to group critique.

Read

- A.K. Rice, "Learning for Leadership: The Basis of Conference Design"
- Andrea Fraser, "'As if' we came together to care"
- Melanie Klein, "Our adult world and its roots in infancy"
- Sigmund Freud, "Negation"
- W.R. Bion, "Experiences in Groups: 1"

Thursday, October 3

On Pierre Bourdieu
with Andrea Fraser

Read

- Andrea Fraser, "There's No Place Like Home"
- Pierre Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed"

Tuesday, October 8

Corpus Infinitum

with Denise Ferreira da Silva

Read

- Saidiya Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts”
- Karen Barad, “Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart”
- Hortense Spillers, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe”

Recommended:

- Denise Ferreira da Silva, “Unpayable Debt: Reading Scenes of Value against the Arrow of Time”
- Octavia E. Butler, *Kindred*

Tuesday, October 10

Reading Groups

FURTHER SCHEDULE TBD