

**The Museum of Art: Postmodernism and Critique**  
**SAIC ARTSAD 4802-001 Fall 2006 MC 818 Tuesdays 1 - 4 PM**  
**Instructor: Christopher Cutrone**

Course title: The Museum of Art: Postmodernism and Critique

Instructor: Chris Cutrone (e-mail: [ccutrone@speedsite.com](mailto:ccutrone@speedsite.com)), office hours by appointment

Course description:

The institution of art is a distinctly modern phenomenon whose meaning and importance have been in contention since its emergence in the late 18th - early 19th Centuries: in the wake of the Enlightenment and the 1789 French Revolution. Through the close reading of arguments and texts in the critical theory of modern art, this course traces a history of the institution of art and its critique to the present, focusing on Marxian critical social theories of art, poststructuralist critiques of art as ideology, and the postmodernist critique of the modern institution of art by the *October* group: Benjamin and Adorno; Barthes and Foucault; and Crimp, Foster, Krauss, Owens, et al.

Course requirements and grading policy:


This is an advanced, discussion-based undergraduate and graduate course organized as a seminar that meets once per week. Attendance is mandatory; no unexcused absences are allowed.

Class participation consists of student attendance and discussion. Students volunteer for 5-10 minute class presentations of the readings, consisting of their critical reactions, beyond summary overview, and focusing on 2 or 3 passages from the text(s) to discuss in depth. All students will be expected to attend every class session and bring one or two written reaction questions for each of the assigned readings. Student reactions to the readings (presentations and reaction questions) will guide the class discussions.

The grade evaluation of student performance in the course will consist of 3 components:

1. Attendance and class discussion participation: **15%** (~1% per class session)
2. In-class presentations on readings (1 or more per student, depending on enrollment): **10%**
3. Writing assignments: 2 of 3 short papers (4-5 double-spaced pages or ~1,000 words): **75%**

Course readings: all readings are available at <http://docutek.artic.edu> (password: "museum"):  

Additionally, 2 audio CDs, Adorno CDs 1 & 2, are available for listening before Week 7: 

Course schedule:

Week 1: Introduction: critical art and critical theory 9/5/06

*PROLEGOMENON:* Hamza Walker [profile of contemporary art curator in August 2005 *University of Chicago Magazine*]  
Susan Buck-Morss, response to "Visual Culture Questionnaire" [from *October* #77, 1996]  
Robert Pippin, on Critical Theory [from *Critical Inquiry* 30.2, 2003]

Week 2: 9/12/06

Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?" (1784); and Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" (1978) [2]  
Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity -- An Incomplete Project" (1980)  
Jean-François Lyotard, "Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism?" (1982) [2]

Week 3: 9/19/06

Daniel Sherman, "Quatremère / Benjamin / Marx" [from *Museum Culture*, 1994] [1]  
Robert Pippin, "What was abstract art? From Hegel's point of view" (2002) [1]  
Clement Greenberg, "Towards a Newer Laocoon" (1940), and "Modernist Painting" (1961)  
T. J. Clark, "Greenberg's Theory of Art" (1982); and Michael Fried, response to Clark (1982) [2]

Week 4: 9/26/06

*FILM:* scene from Ronald F. Maxwell, Gettysburg (1993) "No Divine Spark"  
Karl Marx, from 1844 Manuscripts and Marx and Engels, from Manifesto of the Communist Party (1848) [2]  
Herbert Marcuse, "A Note on Dialectic" (1960)  
Louis Althusser, "Marxism and Humanism" [from *For Marx*, 1964] [2]

Week 5: 10/3/06

Rosa Luxemburg, from "The Crisis in German Social Democracy" [a.k.a. the "Junius Pamphlet," 1915]  
Leon Trotsky, Literature and Revolution (1924) Ch. 6, 7, and 8; and "Art and Politics in Our Epoch" (1938) [1]  
Georg Lukács, "The Phenomenon of Reification" [from *History and Class Consciousness*, 1923] [2]  
Wilhelm Reich, "Ideology as Material Power" [from *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, 1933/46] [1]

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ARTSAD 4802 The Museum of Art (Fall 2006) Tuesdays 1 - 4 PM  
School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 112 S. Michigan Ave., room 818

Week 6:	10/10/06
Siegfried Kracauer, " <u>The Mass Ornament</u> " (1927), and " <u>Photography</u> " (1927)	[2]
Walter Benjamin, " <u>Little History of Photography</u> " (1931), " <u>Experience</u> " (1913), " <u>Experience and Poverty</u> " (1933), " <u>Mickey Mouse</u> " (1931), and " <u>On the Mimetic Faculty</u> " (1933)	[2]
Week 7:	10/17/06
AUDIO: <u>Aphex Twin</u> , " <u>Girl/Boy Song</u> " (1996); <u>50 Cent</u> , " <u>In da Club</u> " (2003); and <u>Anton Webern</u> , <u>5 Pieces for Orchestra</u> (Op.10, 1913)	
Theodor W. Adorno, " <u>The Curves of the Needle</u> " (1927), and " <u>The Form of the Phonograph Record</u> " (1934)	
Adorno, " <u>Commodity Music Analysed</u> " (1934-40), and " <u>On the Social Situation of Music</u> " (1932)	[2]
Adorno, " <u>On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening</u> " (1938)	[2]
Week 8:	10/24/06
FILM: <u>René Clair</u> , <u>Entr'acte</u> (1924), and scene from <u>À Nous la Liberté</u> (1931) "The Singing Flower"	
Benjamin, " <u>The Author as Producer</u> " (1934)	[1]
Greenberg, " <u>Avant-Garde and Kitsch</u> " (1939)	[1]
Benjamin, " <u>The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction</u> " (1936)	
Adorno, letter to Benjamin on the "Work of Art" essay (1936)	[2]
Week 9:	10/31/06
Baudelaire, from 1846 and 1855 art criticism, and prefaces and poems from <u>The Flowers of Evil</u> (1867)	
Benjamin, " <u>The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire</u> " (1938)	[2]
Benjamin " <u>Paris, [the] Capital of the 19th Century</u> " [ <u>1935 Arcades Project</u> exposé, revised in 1939]	
Benjamin and Adorno, <u>exchange on Benjamin's Arcades Project exposé</u> (1935)	[2]
Week 10:	11/7/06
Friedrich Nietzsche, " <u>On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life</u> " (1873)	
Nietzsche, " <u>On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense</u> " (1874)	[2]
Michel Foucault, " <u>Nietzsche, Genealogy, History</u> " (1971)	[1]
Week 11:	11/14/06
Baudelaire, from <u>Fusées</u> (1867); and Benjamin, <u>Arcades Project: Conv. D</u> [" <u>Boredom, Eternal Return</u> "]	[2]
Benjamin, " <u>On the Concept of History</u> " [a.k.a. the "Theses," 1940], and <u>Paralipomena</u> (1940)	[2]
Week 12:	11/21/06
VIDEO: Paula Greif, New Order "Round & Round" video (1989);	
FILM: scene from <u>Sergei Eisenstein</u> , <u>October</u> (1927) "April 3rd [1917]: Lenin Leads the People [at the Finland Station]"	
Michael Fried, " <u>Art and Objecthood</u> "	
Daniel Bell, " <u>Modernism and Capitalism</u> " [Forward to <u>The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism</u> , 1978]	[2]
Rosalind Krauss, et al., " <u>About October</u> " [inaugural journal editorial statement, <u>October</u> #1, 1976]	
Craig Owens, " <u>Photography en abyme</u> " [from <u>October</u> #5, 1978]	
Douglas Crimp, " <u>The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism</u> " [from <u>October</u> #15, 1980]	[2]
Week 13:	11/28/06
Roland Barthes, " <u>The Death of the Author</u> " (1968); and Michel Foucault, " <u>What is an Author?</u> " (1969)	[2]
Crimp, " <u>The End of Painting</u> " [from <u>October</u> #16, 1981]	
Krauss, " <u>The Originality of the Avant-Garde: A Postmodernist Repetition</u> " [from <u>October</u> #18, 1981]	[2]
Week 14:	12/5/06
Adorno, " <u>Valéry Proust Museum</u> " [from <u>Prisms</u> ]	[1]
Owens, " <u>The Allegorical Impulse</u> " (parts 1 and 2) [from <u>October</u> #12-13, 1980]	
Crimp, " <u>On the Museum's Ruins</u> " (1980)	[2]
Week 15:	12/12/06
Hal Foster, " <u>Re: Post</u> " [from <u>Parachute</u> #26, 1982; in <u>Art after Modernism</u> , 1984]	[1]
Michel Foucault, " <u>Polemics, Politics, Problematizations</u> " (1984)	
Adorno, " <u>Cultural Criticism and Society</u> " [from <u>Prisms</u> ]	[2]
ENVOI: <u>Hamza Walker</u> [profile of contemporary art curator in Aug. 2005 <u>Univ. Chicago Magazine</u> ]	