

Introduction to Humanities

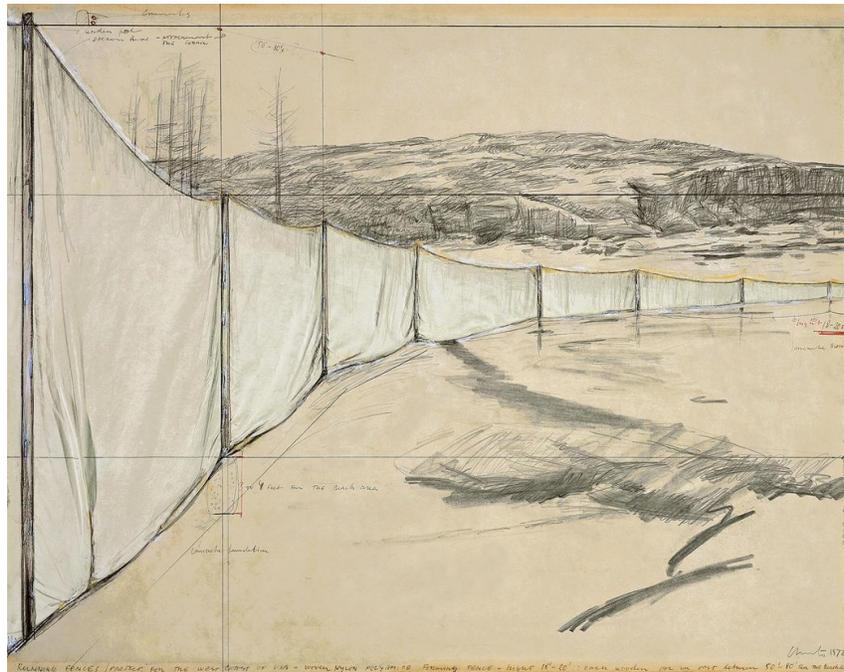
“Places, Spaces and Art”

Spring 2017 – T CORE 124 A

Class Meets: Thursday 12:50 pm – 5:10 pm Classroom: Whitney

Instructor: Elizabeth Conner econner@uw.edu 206.310.0251 mobile / text

Office Hours: Whitney – Thursdays 12:20 pm - 1:00 pm, or by appointment



Christo – “Running Fence”

Course Summary

How have mountains and skyscrapers, storefronts and malls, trains and planes, deserts and inland seas influenced human moods and aspirations? How have artists experienced, recorded, and altered our landscapes, civic spaces, and infrastructure?

This course is rooted in interactive discussion and experimentation. We will explore the aesthetic, emotional and cultural power of space, scale, emptiness, grandeur and congestion in a variety of publicly-accessible places. We will learn how artists and others use, inhabit, respond to, and represent “spaces,” across regions and across cultures, in contexts that include urban, suburban, rural and wilderness environments.

We will become familiar with a range of aesthetic and conceptual strategies used by artists in a variety of art forms and practices. Guest artists and speakers will participate in class activities, share experience and expertise, and engage in dialogue with students about work in progress.

Assignments include hands-on artwork exercises, in-class discussions, individual and collaborative projects, readings, film and video screenings, research, an oral presentation, and visual and written documentation of work completed during the quarter.

Course Objectives

Students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship of “natural” and “built” spaces and the arts, through direct experience, observation, analysis, and the use of visual grammar.
- Explore how U.S. and international visual and performing artists, have explored, represented, and transformed American landscapes, infrastructure, and other physical and virtual spaces.
- Engage in hands-on individual and collaborative experiments in making two- and three-dimensional art, using a variety of materials and methods.
- Become familiar with, and use the skills of critical thinking, evaluation, interpretation, synthesis and other analytical frameworks.
- Practice and refine skills in observation and feedback, through collaborative discussion and critique.
- Communicate creatively, effectively and critically in written, oral, performance-based, and visual forms.

Agnes Denes – “Wheatfield”



Course Requirements

Prepare, participate, and be present

- **Bring a digital camera, a thumb drive, weather-appropriate clothing, a student ID, and your daily journal** to each class. You will document all your work, in progress and completed, to share the results at the end of the quarter. We will spend time outside in a variety of weather conditions, so please dress appropriately. You will need your student ID to check out library materials, as well as for free admission to the Tacoma Art Museum, WA State History Museum, and other venues.
- **Turn off and put away all electronic devices**, including cell phones, iPods, iPads, and laptops during class, unless doing research or gathering information at designated times for those activities.
- **Class participation** is essential. Missing more than two class meetings during the quarter, regardless of the reason, may have a negative effect on completion of your work, and your class participation grade.
- **Engage in group discussions and critiques.** Be prepared to share your work during group feedback sessions, and participate fully in group discussions about the work of others, assigned readings and course-related questions and issues. Support each other in trying new things and taking risks.
- **Manage workload:** Use Canvas regularly during the quarter to receive updates and assignments in digital format, submit work, and get answers to questions that arise between weekly class meetings.
- **Monitor the weather:** Before coming to class, check UWT website for information, weather-related closures, or advisories.

Research, reflect, document, and keep an open mind

- **Maintain daily journal**), dating each entry (7 days a week). Entries may include research findings, images and data, drawings, collages, photos, and other visual information, combined with written notations and reflections on assignments, in-class work (including the work of fellow students), discussions, readings, films, field trips and guest speakers.
- **Be prepared to discuss readings** that include a variety of articles and excerpts from books, chosen by instructor based on subject matter, class experience and interest. Engage in respectful debate.
- **Create FINAL digital portfolio** documenting all work accomplished during the quarter, both in-progress and completed. This digital portfolio (10 Powerpoint slides) will be presented to the class for FINAL.

Communicate, collaborate, and take risks!

- **Stay in touch regarding attendance:** Communicate information via Canvas regarding last-minute class attendance issues (late arrival, early departure, absence) by 6 p.m. the day before class, OR, in case of emergency, call or text the instructor before 8:00 a.m. on the day you will be late/miss class.
- **Discuss and share** ideas, work in progress, and questions, both formally and informally.
- **Experiment and play** with unusual, half-formed, intimidating and improvisational ideas and processes in a safe and supportive environment.
- **Give short oral presentation** (7-10 minutes) on an artist whose work explores how humans experience space, and art that addresses the relationships we have with our surroundings.

Grades

Calculated according to UW grade point system. Please refer to:
http://www.washington.edu/students/gencat/front/Grading_Sys.html

The following criteria are used in grading assignments:

1. Familiarity with critical/analytical thinking and fluency in visual grammar
2. Development of ways to analyze and articulate creative processes
3. Ability to be inventive, with both content and form, and to take risks
4. Attention to craft and materials in hands-on projects
5. Quality and breadth of research
6. Responsiveness to suggestions to improve assignments and projects

Decimal system grades are determined as follows:

4 = OUTSTANDING work: significant time spent in developing work; risks taken; strong concepts and handling of materials; creation of an imaginative visual statement that challenges conventional thinking and image-making

3= ABOVE AVERAGE work: solid concepts; skillful handling of materials; thoughtful exploration of concepts; thought-provoking results

2 = AVERAGE work, competent execution of ideas, without pushing conventions; acceptable craft; fulfilling requirements, but with no apparent risk-taking and no evidence of extra time invested to strengthen and improve techniques and concepts

1 = BELOW AVERAGE work: minimal exploration of ideas and/or misunderstanding of assignments; little attention to craft

0 = FAILING or unacceptable work: no attempt to communicate ideas; no regard for craft

Final grades will include consideration of the following:

- effort expended throughout the course
- progress made in creative development
- development of a focused and productive approach to individual and collaborative work
- development of a critical language
- class participation / group discussion and critiques*

**Development of a critical language is essential to constructive participation in group critiques and discussions. Evidence of this skill in the discussion of a student's individual work, and the work of others in the class, is expected and will be considered in final grades. Students will share individual and collaborative projects during group feedback sessions, and all members of the class are expected to participate in these discussions. If work is turned in without having received group feedback, this may affect the final grade.*

Grades will be weighted as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| • Weekly exercises/assignments | 20% |
| • MIDTERM Journal/DRAFT Portfolio | 10% |
| • Oral presentation | 15% |
| • Collaborative work | 10% |
| • Writing (assigned) | 10% |
| • Class participation | 10% |
| • Final Project | 15% |
| • FINAL Journal and Digital Portfolio | 10% |

NOTE: Any assigned work not turned in and/or reviewed on the due date may be reduced by one letter grade per class day late.

Supplies and Equipment

Hard-cover, 8-1/2 x 11 bound sketchbook/journal, with blank pages (no lines), for DAILY entries. No lined/ruled pages or spiral bindings. UWT bookstore has a supply – ask for “black hard-cover sketchbooks.”

Digital camera: Bring a smart phone with camera or other camera of your choice to every class session. You may check out a camera from Media Services or use your own. Cell phone cameras are fine, provided you are able to download, print and project your images (.jpg format)

Thumb drive: required to copy images and presentations to classroom computer.

Computers and related equipment: Time may be scheduled with the Whitney lab assistant working with art classes, or lab technicians in the Multimedia Lab. You may use computers during class time, and also come to the Whitney during lab times to use the equipment and/or obtain technical assistance.

Materials: pencils, erasers, newsprint, old magazines, glue sticks, small tools, etc. will be available in the classroom and may be supplemented by your own scavenging of found objects and images. When considering materials to use in projects, think “free” or “very inexpensive.”

Other information

Dropping a course: If you choose to drop this course, you are responsible for reporting the change to the Registrar's office. If you stop coming to class and do not contact the registrar, you will receive a failing grade, even if you attended class only once.

Counseling: The Counseling Center offers short-term, problem-focused counseling to UW Tacoma students who may feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of college, work, family, and relationships. Counselors are available to help students cope with stresses and personal issues that may interfere with their ability to perform in school. The service is provided confidentially and without additional charge to currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students.

For appointment: visit Student Counseling Center (SCC) - Mattress Factory 253, or call 253-692-4522. Or visit: http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/scc_about.cfm/

Disability Support Services (DSS): The University of Washington Tacoma is committed to making physical facilities and instructional programs accessible to students with disabilities. DSS services for students with disabilities. In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any enrolled student at UW Tacoma who has an appropriately documented physical, emotional, or mental disability that "substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working]," is eligible for services from DSS.

To find out if you are eligible for accommodations on our campus, contact DSS (253) 692-4522. Or visit: http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SHW/dss_about.cfm/

Teaching and Learning Center (TLC): TLC offers free academic support for students at all levels, in Snoqualmie Library 260 (second floor):

- individual consultations and group workshops in writing, math, statistics, science, and Spanish.
- help with English grammar & vocabulary, writing, reading, and learning strategies.

For special needs or tutoring requests, email uwteach@uw.edu or call (253) 692-4417. Schedules for appointments and drop-in visits are posted at www.tacoma.uw.edu/tlc

The e-Syllabus: Course Links to UW Tacoma Resources, Policies, and Expectations: <https://www.tacoma.uw.edu/teaching-learning-technology/e-syllabus-campus-information-resources-policies-expectations>

Assignments, Group Discussions, Development of Skills

This is a hands-on class, in which active participation is essential. All students will share their work during group feedback sessions, and will participate in group discussions about their own work, the work of others, assigned readings, film/video viewings and course-related questions and issues.

This is also a skills class, in which you will develop abilities to look at and make art, develop concepts, work collaboratively, think critically, and communicate clearly. Active preparation for, and participation in class is how you acquire and practice the skills of the class: to make observations, pose questions, find evidence, and engage in the processes of making and thinking about art.

Course Calendar

The “Introduction to Humanities” course calendar is designed as an outline of topics, activities and assignments. It is intentionally flexible, to accommodate field trips, guest artists and speakers, and some shifts in emphasis and activities, in response to class interests, needs, and concerns.

Classes will include traditional, inventive, collaborative ways of answering questions such as:

- What are the humanities?
- What is open space? What is civic space? Who uses it, and why?
- What is natural? How have our concepts of “the natural” affected architecture, streets, parks, and use(s) of natural resources?
- What is land art?
- What is documentation?
- What is an intervention?

Assignments between class sessions will include:

- Daily journal entries
- Weekly assignments, including readings and short writings
- Continuing work on oral presentations and projects

Field trip(s) and guest speakers – date(s) and location(s) to be announced

General course outline

March 30

How do we define “humanities?” How are we creative?

- Introductions, to include paired interviews and collaborative choice of meeting space.
- Walking field trip – Tacoma Art Museum. **Assignment:** Field Trip paper. *Submit – Canvas.*

April 6

How do we define space? What roles do different spaces play in our lives?

- Collaborative on-campus exercise in exploring and documenting space and place.
- Film screening
- Introduction to oral presentation project.
- In-class drawing exercises.
- **Assignment** – visual representations of “home.” *Bring to class to display/share.*

April 13

What is natural?

How have land art, parks and highways influenced our views on the environment and ecology?

- In-class exercise – What is a vacation? Where do we spend it, and why? How do we get there?
- Film screening/slide presentations re: development of American parks.
- Guest speaker/field trip – Metro Parks Tacoma / Point Defiance Zoo and Aquarium.
- In-class exercises in three-dimensional construction using found materials.
- **Assignment** – temporary visual gestures in public spaces (using found and scavenged materials). *Bring digital photographic documentation of assignment to share with class.*

April 20

What is civic space? Where do we find it, and how do we use it?

How is space shared and used in different regions? Across cultures?

How do the experiences and realities of migration and immigration influence American spaces?

- Short documentary screenings – contemporary artists whose work relates to civic space, public art, installation and performance installation.
- In-class mapping/collage exercise; guest speaker.
- Collaborative off-campus exercise exploring and documenting public spaces and their use.
- **Assignment** – public spaces where you live (photographic documentation and mapping)
Bring results of assignment to share with class.

April 27 – **Field Trip** – destinations and details TBD

(during week ending May 4)

Prepare for individual midterm meeting with instructor, to include:

- **Daily Journal**, for review with instructor
- **DRAFT final project**, with discussion and agreement on next steps.
- **Self-evaluation/reflection**, 2 typed pages, reflecting on your participation in class discussions, your art process and developing interests, insights gained from individual and collaborative work, writing, reading and research, as well as participation in and information gained from discussions. Include choice of sources for oral presentation, with reasons for choice. Provide feedback to the instructor on how the course is proceeding, from your perspective.

By midnight Tuesday May 2nd: SUBMIT self-evaluation/reflection on Canvas

May 4 Individual midterm conferences with instructor. All-class work sessions.

What is public infrastructure? *Where do we find it, and how do we use it? Who pays for it?*

What is a concept? What is an intervention?

- Short documentary screenings – contemporary artists who work with public infrastructure.
- Collaborative off-campus exercise in identifying and documenting infrastructure.
- In-class writing and photographic exercise relating to site/place.
- In-class experiments with “scale,” as it relates to our experience of space.
- **Assignment** – physical gestures in public spaces (brief collaborative performances).
Bring digital photographic documentation of physical gestures to share with class.

May 11

How can an intervention transform space? *Inspire thought? Provoke change?*

- Guest speaker and walking field trip
- In-class writing and drawing exercise.
- Collaborative off-campus site-related exercise.

Oral presentations.

Continuing individual midterm conferences, if needed.

May 18

What is “spectacle?” *What is the role of spectacle in public spaces and contemporary cultures?*

How do developing technologies affect our experience of “space.”

- Collaborative off-campus exercise in identifying and documenting infrastructure.
- Guest speakers and/or field trip.
- Short documentary screenings – art and spectacle.
- **Assignment** – document how “spectacle” affects the places where you live and work.

Continuing oral presentations; in-class work on final projects, review of work-in-progress.

May 25

What American spaces are less known or hidden, to the general public and visitors to the U.S.?

- Guest speakers and/or field trips.
- Short documentary screenings – contemporary artists whose work relates to immigration, borders, reservations, military bases and operations, shipping, railroad yards, etc.
- In-class written/illustrated artist statement and proposal exercise.

Continuing oral presentations; in-class work on final projects, review of work-in-progress.

June 1

How has “work” been depicted in art, and influenced the thinking of artists over time?

- Guest speakers and/or walking field trips.
- Short documentary screenings – contemporary artists whose art relates to work/labor.

Continuing oral presentations.

In-class work on final projects, review work-in-progress, prepare final project installations.

Hand in FINAL Journal w/related materials, for instructor review, comments, grade

June 8 – FINALS DAY – see next page for details



Robert Smithson – Spiral Jetty

FINALS WEEK

Wednesday June 7 (by midnight)

SUBMIT FINAL self-evaluation/reflection on Canvas:

2 typed pages, reflecting on your progress, process, and goals met since midterm, with thoughts about how experience gained in the class will support future work and study.

Also include responses to the following:

- What has changed in your work and process since midterm?
- How have your thoughts about what you might do differently post-midterm worked for you? What progress do you feel you have made?
- What surprised you most during this class?
- What have you learned from your FINAL Project? Describe challenges involved in the process, and how you met them, individually and collaboratively.
- Which two of the assigned readings, videos, guest speakers, oral presentations, or projects by other students were most interesting to you, and why? Which had the most impact on your work (individual and/or collaborative), and why?
- What is the first thing you can do, following the end of this class, to help you build upon the knowledge and skills gained during the quarter?

**Students MUST submit final notebook, digital portfolio and self-evaluation to receive final grade.

Thursday June 8 - FINAL in-class portfolio review

*Class review of final digital portfolios, return of journals with instructor comments.
De-installation (removal) of final project proposal/prototype. Course wrap up and celebration!*



Introduction to Humanities – Daily Journal - Spring 2017

IMPORTANT:

“**Visit**” your journal every day to develop a discipline / habit / practice. Use at least one page per daily entry, and include the date on each page.

For strong daily journal entries:

- Record thoughts and questions related to the course content, in a variety of different formats. If you disagree with opinions expressed in class, record your thoughts; if you are confused or feel lost in a discussion, project or exercise, write about that as well.
- Develop and strengthen your thinking, your creative skills, your drawing, your writing, and your “voice.” This daily practice is a tool to invent and improvise, deepen your understanding of the subject matter, and also to record and reflect upon your own evolution as an artist.
 - Record what you are learning and how you participate in the creative process. Make connections between what you experience in class and your daily life outside the university. Explore the ways in which issues and the arts relate to contemporary art practice, to your field of study at UWT, and to your own life.
 - Cut and paste! Include **research notes, news articles, collages, photos, ads, fliers, maps, schedules, receipts, postcards and other visual information.** Combine these with written reflections on assignments, in-class work (including the work of fellow students), discussions and readings.
- Include reflections, not only about what occurs, but what you think and feel regarding:
 - class discussions
 - assignments
 - work-in-progress
 - readings (assigned and other)
 - research
 - questions
 - field trips
- Make your journal “your own.” Alter its form, cover, color, texture, and structure over the course of the quarter to keep it interesting, relevant, unique, and personal. How would you quickly identify your notebook in a disorganized pile of other journals?
 - Add scribbles, doodles, dreams, musings and ideas, fleeting, incomplete, or almost fully-formed thoughts. Draw on top of earlier entries, alter and/or cut pages.
 - Include materials, photographs, small objects, etc. that appeal to you or intrigue you. Be inventive. How many different ways can you cut, paste, tear, fold, punch, sew, clip, glue, weave, or otherwise attach/insert these discoveries? How do the materials you choose, and the ways you attach these items affect their meaning?
 - How can you make your journal more three-dimensional?