

ART 390

## CONTEMPORARY STUDIO PRACTICE

Instructor: Jim Skalman, M.F.A., Professor of Art  
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email: jskalman@pointloma.edu  
office hours: before, during and after class.

Class meets: Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-4:20 PM Spring 2016

Final Critique: Thursday, last class session 1:30-4:00  
Tuesday, Finals Week 1:30-4:00  
Thursday, Finals Week 4:30-7:00

### **PLNU MISSION To Teach - To Shape - To Send**

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

## **Course Description**

ART 390 is an advanced Visual Art studio course for students working in any media. Emphasis is placed on contemporary art practices, strategies and theoretical issues.

Prerequisites: One of the following: Art 310, 321, 322, 323, 326, or consent of instructor. May be repeated once for credit.

## **Course Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the semester, successful students will have:

- Produced a body of original artwork that is cohesive, relevant to Contemporary Art, and is of the highest quality possible.
- Demonstrated familiarity with studio practices and theoretical strategies employed by successful professional contemporary artists.
- Developed and articulated a contemporary theoretical foundation and direction for their artwork.
- Demonstrated an understanding of issues relevant to Christian artists in a contemporary cultural context.
- Demonstrated their familiarity with the Contemporary Art world: artists, media, trends, important conceptual and aesthetic issues, including the relationships between artist/audience/galleries/museums/academic institutions.

## **Agenda**

During the semester you Will:

1. Give an **Influences Presentation**. You will show and discuss your current artwork and show and discuss the personal, cultural, psychological, spiritual and/or art historical influences that have affected the form and content of that work.
2. **Make art** for a series of four Class Critiques: You will—in stages—explore, develop, focus, and hone your artwork, gradually discovering your unique artistic voice, finding a direction and developing a production practice all of which are relevant to Contemporary Art. (Which begs the question: What is Contemporary Art?) **Assignments/Projects** will be introduced by means of lectures, discussions, and image presentations. The assignments will be, essentially, prompts that are meant to possibly create the conceptual conditions in which you might make art that has some value. (Which begs the questions: What is value? What is quality?)
3. **Participate in Critiques** as both artist and critic. Each Critique usually takes 3 class sessions to complete. You will know beforehand on which day your turn will be. Of course, everyone is expected to attend all critique sessions.

Each critique discourse will include these approaches or stages:

**Descriptive** (Just what exactly does the viewer see? What properties or characteristics of the work seem to be important?)

**Intentionalist** (What are the intentions of the artist for the work? Does viewer response meet the artist's intentions and expectations? Are responses that are unintended, nevertheless important, useful )

**Interpretive** (What might the work "mean"? What are the possible readings of the work?)

**Judgmental** (Is the work successful? What are the various criteria by which we might judge the work's success or value? )

4. Complete a semester-long, three-phase **Writing Project**. In each of these stages you will write—with growing insight and knowledge— about your artwork and its relationship to your personal artistic goals, your personal and art historical influences, and the contexts in which your artwork operates: art historical/theoretical, psychological, spiritual, cultural, and political.
5. **Read:** Readings which are intended to expand and strengthen your thinking and writing will be assigned or suggested by the instructor. (See **Required texts** and **Required monthly reading**, located at the end of this syllabus.)
6. Maintain a weekly **Studio Work Log** and a **Sketchbook**. The Work Log is for you to record the dates and hours you have worked on your art and what you did. The Sketchbook can be combined with the Work Log in one book if you wish. A copy of the Work Log will be turned in on the first class of every month and at the end of the semester. This is to keep you, or teach you, to be industrious and dedicated to making art.

## Course Logistics

- A **Course Agenda** with due dates for all assignments and critiques will be distributed near the beginning of the semester and adjusted as needed during the semester. Due dates will be discussed by the group and finalized with ample lead-time. Due dates will be strictly adhered to.
- **Field Trips** and **Visiting Artists** will be discussed in class. If you find out about exhibits that you think would make good field trips, let me know.

## Professor's Expectations:

1. I expect you to attend all class sessions and field trips. Exceptions must be arranged with me prior to the event.
2. I expect you to come to class on time and remain for the entire class session. Exceptions must be arranged with me prior to the class.
3. I expect you to come to class prepared with necessary tools, materials, etc.

*The above items 1-3 refer to **all** class sessions: those when we meet as a group AND those that are “**work days**”, when you will be working in your studios. I will be taking attendance in both situations—when we are meeting as a group and on studio work days.*

4. I expect you to work during the entirety of each actual class session (5 hours per week) and outside of class at least 5 hours per week. This is a very labor-intensive course. You are required to turn in a **work log** on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month.
5. I expect you to meet all deadlines and due dates. Any work turned in late will receive an automatic grade of “D”.
6. I expect you to abide by all rules and use common sense regarding safety, clean-up, hazardous waste disposal, and storage.
7. I expect you to read your **pointloma.edu** email accounts on a daily basis. All email communication between you and I will be conducted via **pointloma.edu** email addresses.

## Grading

Final Course Grades will be based on:

- The quality of your artwork.
- The quantity of the artwork produced for this course.
- The quality of your presentations.
- The quality of your written assignments.
- The quality of your participation in class discussions and critiques.
- The amount of time you have worked on projects and assignments for this course as evidenced by your Work Log.
- The improvement made during the semester in the quality of your artwork and writing

Grade Deductions will be made for:

- Poor attendance (You are allowed 3 absences without penalty)
- A poor work ethic, as evidenced by your Work Log and my observations.
- Work that is turned in late (Any assignment that is not completed on time will receive a “D”, regardless of its quality.)

## Attendance Policy

More than 3 unexcused absences will result in your grade being lowered by at least 10%. Per PLNU policy, if you have 6 unexcused absences you may be de-enrolled without notice. If the date of de-enrollment is past the last date to withdraw from a class, you will be assigned a grade of W or WF consistent with university policy in the grading section of the catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) in the (undergrad/graduate as appropriate) academic catalog. and may also result in the

Instructor . Excessive absences may result in your being dropped from the course, per PLNU policy.

Absences will be excused only for extreme emergencies in your immediate family or your own disabling illness. If you have a **contagious disease** such as a cold or flu, please notify me by phone or email rather than coming to school.

Please let me know if you know that you are going to be absent and, in general, please communicate with me about anything related to absences.

**If you have been absent** you are responsible for finding out what you missed, making up for your missed time and catching up.

## **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

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Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. As explained in the university catalog, academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. Violations of university academic honesty include cheating, plagiarism, falsification, aiding the academic dishonesty of others, or malicious misuse of university resources. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for a) that particular assignment or examination, and/or b) the course following the procedure in the university catalog. Students may appeal also using the procedure in the university catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for further information.

## **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

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While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations. At Point Loma Nazarene University, students must request that academic accommodations by filing documentation with the [Disability Resource Center](#) (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once the student files documentation, the Disability Resource Center will contact the student's instructors and provide written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the individual needs of the student. See [Academic Policies](#) in the (undergrad/graduate as appropriate) academic catalog.

## **Required texts:**

### *Art and Fear*

by David Bayles and Ted Orland,  
Capra Press, 1993  
(Available in the PLNU Bookstore and through amazon.com)

### *The Critique Handbook: The Art Student's Sourcebook and Survival Guide*

by Kendall Buster and Paula Crawford  
(Available through amazon.com)

## **Required ongoing reading:**

[Art in America](#) , [ARTFORUM](#), Other contemporary art periodicals. These are available in the Ryan Learning Center, at art museum bookstores, Barnes and Noble, etc.  
Subscriptions are surprisingly cheap: around \$40 per year

Any useful online resources that are available to you

# PERSONAL INFLUENCES PRESENTATIONS

## Assignment

You will make and present a digital image lecture in which you disclose to the class the “things” that have been or continue to be influential on your artwork.

### Examples of influences include:

- Family background (Be very brief.)
- Friendships (Be very Brief)
- Religious/spiritual beliefs and experiences
- Your specific cultural context: your time and place, i.e. American, Hispanic, Christian, middle class, female, etc.
- Art: ANY artwork, artists, art movements, genres, fine art or applied arts, famous, not famous, old, current, local—whatever has actually been influential
- Other cultural influences, such as music, books, movies, TV, nature, architecture, cars, furniture, clothes, toys
- Personal issues: psychological, spiritual, social, political — you may disclose as much as you feel comfortable with.
- Anything else

## The Presentation

Show images that illustrate these influences. Examples: images of your family, home, artists and art work, CD covers, book covers, quotes from books, stills from movies. You may use short samples of music.

Show images of work that exemplify the influences. You may bring in actual work as well.

### How to give your presentation:

- The duration of your entire presentation should be approximately **20-30 minutes**, so edit carefully.
- Edit if you need to in order to keep within the time limit. If you need to edit, start by shortening or deleting the elements that have the least bearing on your current artwork.
- Before you give your presentation, do practice runs to make sure of the time.
- When you give your presentation, move quickly through the entire thing and let the audience stop you along the way to ask questions or make comments. If there is time at the end, we can go back and focus on interesting elements.

# SEMESTER-LONG WRITING ASSIGNMENT

In **three successive phases**, discuss the issues listed below:

1. In the **FIRST PHASE**, answer the questions in the Questionnaire and address, in a general way, the issues and topics (see below) that are interesting to you.

Regarding the issues that are not very interesting, explain why not. This phase of the writing should be a survey of what your thinking is at this time, an inventory, so to speak.

Print this first phase in black.

2. In the **SECOND PHASE**, begin to go more deeply into issues and topics that are of particular interest to you. Also, address issues that you ignored in the first phase if you are starting to think about them. Also, write about anything else that seems relevant to your work.

Print anything new, written during this second phase, in red.

Leave the first draft text in black.

3. In the **THIRD PHASE**, you should go even deeper into topics that are of particular interest to you, including any that may not be included in this hand-out

Print anything new, written during this third phase, in blue.

Leave the second phase text in red

Leave the first phase text in black.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose for doing this type of descriptive, analytical, and explorative writing is to increase your self-awareness, strengthen the quality of your art-making process, and generally improve your artwork.

## **DUE DATES**

Due dates for each phase will be on the course agenda.

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## **Start with this QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Cut and paste it into a separate doc., answer the questions, and email it to me when it is due.**

What is your Major and Concentration?

What upper-division art courses have you taken?

When will your Senior Show take place?

What is your preferred medium, currently?

Which Contemporary artists and/or Contemporary Art issues/trends interest you?

What are your goals for your artwork in the next year?

What are your long-term artistic and career goals?

Where do you physically do your work? Describe the space.

Is the size and nature of that space adequate? If not, what can you do to improve the situation?

What do you need?

Do you have adequate access to tools and materials? If not, what can you do to improve the situation? What do you need?

Are your technical skills adequate to do the work you wish to do? If not, what can you do to improve the situation? What do you want to learn how to do?

When and how much do you work? Do you work enough? Why? Why not? What can you do to improve the conditions that interfere?

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### **The rest of the writing assignment**

#### GENERAL ISSUES

Define QUALITY as it pertains to the visual arts: What characteristics do you associate with excellent art? Is quality universal or conditional? What are your feelings about the value of craftsmanship, technical expertise, and originality?

How does art acquire value? What is the relationship between value and quality? what do you mean by value, and quality?

Describe your intended audience.

What are your thoughts about what Art is?

#### PERSONAL ISSUES – GOING DEEPER

To what degree and in what ways is your work autobiographical? What are the personal, psychological forces influence your work? What personal spiritual issues and/or values are operating in/on your work?

Is there a socio-political or religious aspect to your work? If so, do you intend to be didactic? Are you opinionated or neutral? Are your opinions/beliefs evident in your work? Do you intend for your viewers to learn your point of view from your work or are you assuming that they will know it beforehand? Are you assuming they will agree with you or disagree?

Is there a spiritual aspect to your work? This might be distinct from a religious aspect.

What cultural influences affect your work? What is distinctly American, regional, and/or sub-cultural about your work? what are the generational or age-related aspects of your work. Could your work be made by someone who is much older or younger than yourself? Someone from another culture? Someone from a bygone era? Someone with less education? someone who is of another ethnicity? Some one who is of another socio-economic class?

What is distinctly feminine or masculine about your work? Could your work be made by someone who is not of your gender (or sexual orientation?)

How or from what do you receive “inspiration”? Are you influenced by visual art, music, film, literature, social media or other phenomena? How?

Describe the way(s) in which you “arrive” at your images or forms.

What are the intellectual, psychological, and emotional difficulties, challenges, or obstacles you experience in making your work?

## ART HISTORICAL ISSUES

What artists, art movements and/or issues are referred to in your work? In what ways?

Which artists movements, styles do you admire? Why? Is this reflected in your work? How?

How does your work address the philosophies or issues or trends that are currently operating within the Contemporary Art world? Which ones? How so? (This is where reading the art magazines, books, seeing shows, accessing what you have learned in classes will really come into play. These are important issues to think about. Even if you do not think they play a role in your work, they actually Do... in ways that are perhaps unknown to you. None of us work in a vacuum. We are touched by all that is going on around us.)

## CONTENT ISSUES

What is your work about? What does it mean to you? What do you want your intended audience to “get “ from it? Or, what do you want to happen when people encounter your work?

## FORMAL ISSUES

What medium or media do you work in? What materials do you work with? What are your thoughts and feelings about the physical materials you work with? Are you passionate about the materials? What really matters to you in this aspect of your work? Are there other media that you are interested in working with? What is the relationship between the materials you use, the skills you possess, and the “style” or approach of your work? (e.g. I practiced carpentry for many years. As an artist I make use of those skills in creating large installations. I could not make the installations without the skills. I probably would not have initially conceived of the pieces if I did not have that technical knowledge and experience.)

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FORMAL ISSUES and CONTENT ISSUES

What is the relationship between form and content in your work? Which takes priority? Do you manipulate the form of your work (the materials, the visual elements and the principles of design) in order to affect the content or meaning that you have preconceived? Or do you manipulate materials and forms until you come to an understanding or a vision of the meaning in your work? Or is your process something in between?

What is the Style or movement or art historical classification of your work? Is Style a content or a formal property? (e.g. Cubism is a style that is very much concerned with formal issues like shape, line, pictorial space, and color. If a painting is made in the Cubist style, is its style nevertheless part of its meaning? )



# RELEVANT TOPICS FOR GROUP DISCUSSIONS, CRITIQUES AND WRITING

**ANYTHING YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT? ( [almost] NOTHING IS OFF-LIMITS.)**

## **GENERAL PHILOSOPHICAL TOPICS**

ART AND MONEY  
ART AND BEAUTY  
ART AND GOD  
ART AND RELIGION  
ART AND THE WORLD  
ART AND YOU

## **SCOPING AN AUDIENCE**

CHOOSING A CONSTITUENCY  
COMMUNICATING WITH THE AUDIENCE  
RELATING TO THE AUDIENCE

## **SOURCING INSPIRATION**

INTERNAL SOURCES OF INSPIRATION  
EXTERNAL SOURCES OF INSPIRATION  
EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

## **CRAFTING AN ARTISTIC SELF**

DISCLOSING BIOGRAPHY  
INVENTING BIOGRAPHY  
TRANSCENDING BIOGRAPHY  
EPITOMIZING BIOGRAPHY

## **EXPRESSING AN ARTISTIC ATTITUDE**

## **CHOOSING A MISSION**

## **MEASURING SUCCESS**

FINANCIAL SUCCESS  
ECOLOGICAL SUCCESS  
PIOUS SUCCESS  
POLITICAL SUCCESS  
SENSUAL SUCCESS  
STRATEGIC SUCCESS

**ART 390**  
**AGENDA FOR SPRING 2015**

(as of Jan 21, 2014)

**JAN 12** t no class

**15** r first day: Introduction, schedule the Influence Presentations

**19** t Influences Presentations:

**21** r Influences Presentations:

**26** t Influences Presentation or work day:

**28** r work day. Writing Questionnaire + Phase 1 due. Email it to me.

**FEB 2** t work day Work Log due

**4** r work day

**9** t work day

**11** r work day

**16** t work day

**18** r Critique #1

**23** t Critique #1

**25** r Critique #1

**MAR 1** t work day Work Log due

**3** r work day Writing Phase 2 due. Email it to me.

**8** t **Spring Break (No Classes) Mar 9-13**

**10** r **Spring Break (No Classes) Mar 9-13**

**15** t work day

**17** r work day

**22** t work day

**24 r Easter Recess (No Classes)**

**29 t**

**31 r** work day      Work Log due

**APR 5 t**

**7 r** Crit 2: 3 people

**12 t** Crit 2: 3 people

**14 r** Crit 2: 2 people

**19 t**

**21 r**

**26 r**

**28 t Final Critique** regular class time

**Finals Week**

**MAY 3 t Final Critique 1:30-4:00**

**5 r Final Critique 1:30-4:00 or 4:30-7:00**

The Final Work Log and Writing Phase 3 are due by the end of the day Friday.  
Email them to me.

