ART 215 - 010
Seeing and Being

University of Delaware Spring 2018

Location: Gore Hall room 303

Instructor:
Anthony Vega

E-mail: avega@udel.edu
Please only email me directly at this address

Days: Thursday 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
Dates: February 8 to May 10

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Define "seeing" and "being" in 2018, and create pathways to action and investigation through honest curiosity, design thinking, criticality and a hope for social impact

- Connect the activity and thinking process of art and design to social and historical elements and actions through the act of making art and critically thinking about art in a broader social context

- Explore the formal elements of translating our visual experience into meaningful communications and investigations

- Investigate the conceptual practice (ideas, narratives, cultural and social components) of sharing our visual experience publicly

- Develop an awareness and intention around our roles in the social and cultural ramifications of our contemporary visual world

- Discover how to meaningfully provide to ourselves and others ways to address problems inside and outside of an art context

- Have a record, through our assignments that operate as a document and a tool for social investigation, dialogue and progression

BASIC PREMISE AND APPROACH

This course investigates the use of art and design as a vehicle for exploring our contemporary social identities and visual experience. The broader question this course aims to address is: How can we think about art and design and implement those ideas to make accessible social impact at any level?

Seeing and being in 2018 needs to address, the visual, the relationship between cultural and individual meaning, digital impact (speed, access, expectation, editing) physicality (experience) problem solving, effort. *Ideas are the bridge between seeing and being* - ideas are social, cultural, individual and ultimately political. The intention of this course is to define "seeing" and "being" in 2018, and create pathways to action and investigation through curiosity, design thinking, criticality and a trust in society for real impact.

Some topics we will consider: visual literacy in the digital age, expectation of our visual landscape, individual feelings in context of social progression and cultural influence, the role of message and attention, who something is for (audience) and how to make any of this do something in 2018

One of the elements of art that I will argue is that art is always within, influenced and an influencer of culture and society. In short art is political. This simply means dealing with public affairs and the body or bodies that manage those affairs. It is a dialogue of folks in a community, dealing with issues of the community at any given time. In a way it deals with managing our roles, preferences and being aware of those that are benefited in some way. Politics implies a position and an intention. Art operates very much in this framework; it is not outside of community and certainly deals with issues of our communities. If art is political we must explore or role and position in its function in society.

This course will attempt to offer a positive application of critical thinking, across disciplines toward using the tools of art and design (via physical art projects, digital cameras and social media) to connect ideas to action. We will bridge individual, social, formal and conceptual, elements through making art, creating social awareness and involvement. Your work in this course will offer a more significant and potentially progressive social contribution and exploration of our world that will benefit you and our community regardless of professional field.

To be clear this is not simply a "how to" course, or a course filled with standard directives given by me, it is a collaborative learning, critical thinking and problem-solving course using art and design as a tool for exploration.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Throughout the course we will discuss and experiment with a number of topics around art making and delve into certain digital elements as a medium for this exploration. Each class will be devoted to a topic and will connect with the objectives of the course and the previous conversations around art and design. We will look at, present, edit and evaluate our work and their influence(s). You are expected to come to class on time, prepared and ready to work. In addition to the lecture, we will look at images in class to make concrete some of the topics we will be dealing with. You are expected to complete assigned research and be prepared to discuss those points in our critiques and meetings.

A NOTE ON CONTENT

In this course we will engage and discuss potentially and intentionally offensive material. Please know that the nature of art operating in society, includes a necessary conversation and acknowledgment of race, gender, identity, sex, history ect. in standard and highly charged and targeted ways. Your continued enrollment in this course is considered an acknowledgement of this issue and indicates a commitment to engaging the course material and class discussion. It is not my intention to alienate anyone, or any viewpoint by including this content, it is meant to illustrate the material and the discussion to be inclusive to all.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments will be given to explore our discussions and practices. It is expected that all assignments be completed ON TIME and finished. Late and unfinished assignments will lower your grade by one letter per day. A completion date will be given for all assignments and these completed assignments will be discussed in our group critiques. Any work not submitted after 2 weeks from the due date (without a request for extension) will be marked as a "0" for that assignment.

PARTICIPATION

It is expected that you will come to class on time and ready to work. The time, work and community created in this course is necessary to understand the material and concepts. Your focus is essential in generating helpful discussion and a meaningful class.

CRITIQUE

In addition to posting we will discuss the assignments as a group. This communication and relevant input is necessary to grow. The entire group will talk about your work, offer positive and negative criticism, ideas and support. This critique should never be an attack, should always be constructive and grounded in trust and honesty to foster understating and improvement.

GRADING

Evaluations will be made based on completion and assessment of assignments, participation during class and critiques and attendance.

15% of your grade will be based on our "Terms test"
20% on the "Shopping experience Photo Project"
25% on the "What's in a Place? Video Project"
35% on the "Making Media Real Project"
5% on your results exhibiting growth, participation, exploration and commitment to all work.

MORE ON ASSESMENT AND EVALUATION

Response to art can be a very personal experience. It may be difficult to see another point of view or accept outside thoughts on your work, especially if it is negative criticism. That being said, we can learn from ANY relevant feedback, and it is important to know that the feedback we give is NOT an attack on you.

There are however particular and concrete elements that can be evaluated. One can see improvement in ability and clarity of intention, reasoning of decisions, effort made and creativity devoted on assignments.

That said, your grade will not be based on whether I "like" your work, but on your willingness to actively DO the work. Have it be complete, use the tools and language from the course and explore deeply the projects and ideas.

If you have a concern, question or wish to discuss where you stand in the class please feel free to contact me.

Assignments (both visual and written) will be evaluated by this criteria:

Directions - Did you complete the assignment within the parameters set and follow all guidelines for the work

Strength of Images and Ideas – Use of principles from the course either visually or verbally. Level of completion and use of course content to convey a complete refined and not haphazard result.

Depth of Research and Investigation- Clarity of intention and idea of the work. Depth of questioning and of exploring leading to full and complete research on an idea or topic

Clarity – How refined, clear (in regard to images or grammar and text) is the work

GRADE BREAKDOWN

A = Outstanding. A student that goes substantially beyond requirements offers insightful and constructive contributions in critique and is engaged at the highest levels each day in the work of the studio. Work that is fully considered, investigated and complete to the highest level possible. All assignments completed on time. A- is a grade option as well

B = Above Average. A student that goes moderately beyond requirements, offers insightful and constructive contributions in critique and is engaged each day in the work of the studio. Work that is fully considered, investigated and complete at a high level. All assignments completed on time. B+ and B- are grade option as well

C = Average. All assignments done competently and completed on time. Average investigation of concepts and compositions. Moderate participation in critique. C+ and C- are grade option as well

D = Marginal Work. Late projects, limited investigation of ideas, incoherent compositions. Limited contributions to critiques.

F = Unsatisfactory Work. Course failure due to minimal idea development, disjointed compositions, lack of participation, late assignments, or excessive absences.

ATTENDANCE

Due to the intensity, timing and frequency of the course attendance should be 100%. Even one absence can cause a significant amount of course content to be missed. If missing a class is unavoidable please contact me prior to that date. **Any work or information missed due to absence is your responsibility**; you may, and should, call or e-mail another student, if they have agreed to this, to find out what you need to do for the next class.

You are allowed to miss 2 days of class without an excuse. On your 3rd unexcused absence your grade will be lowered by one letter step. An unexcused absence is a day that you elect to not come to class, due to non-serious sickness or other reason. Over 6 unexcused absences will be an automatic failure of the course.

Being to class on time ensures that as a group we can learn from each other, respect the course and each others time. Tardiness over 20 minutes will count as a half absence. Also, leaving class early or for extended periods of time will count as a half absence.

FACILITIES

Be mindful of others that use this space in addition to you. Keep the room clean; remove trash from your area and floor after each class.

USE OF DEVICES

Please, keep the use of our mobile devises in class to classwork. If there is an emergency please take the call outside.

ACCOUNTS and use of posting to social media

You will need to create one or more social media accounts for this course. It is your responsibility to keep this account active, organized and appropriate for sharing with the rest of the course. We will view some in-class assignments using social media.

PRIVACY

I understand this is a unique course with unique requests and expectations but our safety and privacy is very important. Please keep all private information private and only post and share online what you deem appropriate. Also consider all content will be shared with the rest of the course and via a publically accessible media platform. It is your responsibility to keep any digital content you do not want shared private.

LOGISTICS

We will be using smart phones, digital cameras, apps, online and social media tools and digital presentation software in this course. It is important that your devices are charged and have the ability to charge your devices while in class. I will not have additional chargers for your phones, tablets or laptops.

PLAGIARISM AND HONESTY

All students must be honest and forthright in their academic studies. To falsify the results of one's research, to steal the words or ideas of another, to cheat on an assignment, or to allow or assist another to commit these acts corrupts the educational process. Students are expected to do their own work and neither give nor receive unauthorized assistance.

Any violation of this standard must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. The faculty member, in consultation with a representative from the Office of Student Conduct, will decide under which option the incident is best filed and what specific academic penalty should be applied." http://www1.udel.edu/stuguide/17-18/code.html#honesty

INCLUSION OF DIVERSE LEARNING NEEDS

Any student who thinks they may need an accommodation based on a disability should contact the office of disability support services (dss) office as soon as possible. The dss office is located at 240 academy street, alison hall suite 130, phone: 302-831-4643, fax: 302-831-3261, dss website (http://www.udel.edu/dss/). You may contact dss at dssoffice@udel.edu

HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

The university of Delaware works to promote an academic and work environment that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment. As a member of the community, your rights, resource and responsibilities are reflected in the non-discrimination and sexual misconduct policies. Please familiarize yourself with these policies at http://www.udel.edu/oei . You can report any concerns to the university's office of equity & inclusion, at 305 hullihen hall, (302) 831-8063 or you can report anonymously through ud police (302) 831-2222 or the ethicspoint compliance hotline at http://www1.udel.edu/compliance. You can also report any violation of ud policy on harassment, discrimination, or abuse of any person at this site: http://sites.udel.edu/sexualmisconduct/how-to-report/

TITLE IX STATEMENT

The University of Delaware does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, age, veteran status, gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law in its employment, educational programs and activities, admissions policies, and scholarship and loan programs as required by title ix of the educational amendments of 1972, the Americans with disabilities act of 1990, section 504 of the rehabilitation act of 1973, title vii of the civil rights act of 1964, and other applicable statutes and university policies. The university of Delaware also prohibits unlawful harassment including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

For inquiries or complaints related to title ix, section 504 of the rehabilitation act of 1973 and/or the Americans with disabilities act, and title vii and age discrimination please contact:

> Susan l. Groff, ed. D.
> Director, institutional equity & title ix coordinator
> 305 hullihen hall
> Newark, de 19716
> (302) 831-8063
> titleixcoordinator@udel.edu
> or contact the u.s. department of education – office for civil rights (https://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/cfapps/ocr/contactus.cfm).

STATEMENT ON ATTENDING VISITING ARTISTS, CRITICS, AND CURATORS LECTURES AND GALLERY EXHIBITS

Art majors are expected to attend all visiting artist lectures in the department of art & design during the semester. In addition, students are expected to see all the art exhibitions in the department's galleries. As a part of this course, you are asked to bring a sketchbook and take notes. Engaging in dialogue with our guests by asking questions is highly recommended.

MATERIALS

Requirements for this course is a mobile smartphone or use of a digital camera and access to the internet. The use of a computer with the ability to create slideshow presentations will be required, as well as the ability use and submit word processing documents as PDF's. **There is no textbook for this course**. Some PDF readings are assigned over the course of the semester digitally via our course website.

BASIC SCHEDULE AND OVERVIEW

WEEK 1

2/8 – Overview and general Intro – what is possible through art? Categories of seeing and being and our roles – argument for the personal replacing the social (a new idea I have been kicking around) the notion of an irrefutable feeling and a questionable actuality

WEEK 2

2/15 - Optics – the easier conversation to have (how something looks)
Formal conversation around art – intro to some art terms - Shopping assignment given, due 3/10

WEEK 3

2/22 – "like warm laundry"
Semiotics - Coded language and its application
language and meaning – long lecture (sorry)
Reading- Jonathan Bignell Chapter 1 media Semiotics

WEEK 4

3/1 - Formal conversation meets Semiotics – a critical view of how things look
Reading- Arcades Project pages 1 to 13

WEEK 5

3/8 - Formal conversation – examples and exercises

WEEK 6

3/15 - Formal conversation and Semiotics in Practice – AKA Test and discussion – "Place" assignment given, due 4/16

WEEK 7

3/22 – Problem Solving - the ability to address these categories aimed around an intention and potential need - Design Thinking – Introduce Project and set teams
Reading - Design Thinking Article

3/29 – Spring Break

WEEK 8

4/5 - Fluidity - the flexible and changing nature of meaning based on context, the harder conversation to have - Social and Cultural Conversation around art – Meet in Groups about final project – discuss the topic and consider themes.
Reading - A world Like Santa Barbara – Hickey

WEEK 9

4/12 - Idealism, Control and Challenge - Social and Cultural Conversation - a potentially surprising point, counter to norms or aimed at addressing a new way of being – Meet in Groups about final project – Present as individual groups to Anthony what you want to do and get feedback and approval

WEEK 10

4/19 – More feedback and implementation

WEEK 11

4/26 – Work week

WEEKS 12 AND 13

5/3 - Work week

5/10 - Presentation week – all final project materials are due 5/??

Cancellations of class due to weather or other institution related reason will be made via Canvas

AN UNCONVENTIONAL EXAM

Due: The test will take place during class time on 3/15

100 pt test on terms – this will be a pretty straight forward multiple-choice test dealing with the formal terms we have defined in this course as well as some semiotic terms we have used. Pretty simple format. The evaluation and discussion will be unconventional.

SHOPPING EXPERIENCE PHOTO PROJECT

Due: 3/10 (individual assignment)

How do we shop in 2018, and what could we learn from exploring this? What do our habits, trends and observations of contemporary shopping tell us about our culture, society, expectation, privacy and control? This is a photo diptych project where you will explore visual ideas of the way we shop. Think about where you shop, what is advertised to you and where. Consider a question or questions that deal with how we buy, sell and consume goods and services. Some questions to address could be: how has our shopping landscape changed over time; Is our relationship to shopping sustainable, is it ethical; do people have different shopping experiences geographically, regionally, nationally, internationality; How does access to online shopping shift our expectation of products, care of products and speed of wanting; Does our access and pervasive experience to digital ads, trolling ads, social media ads, hide the nature of shopping in 2018; how does fashion and the power of buying or not being able to buy construct elements of our identities? There are many other questions you can think of as well.

For this project you will be asked to make 3 digital photo diptychs (a diptych is two images, generally side by side or in proximity to each other that relate in some way. The relationship can address either a synergistic or antagonistic connection grounded in concept and form. Remember everything is a choice, consider each action as a choice.

You will create and submit three separate horizontal diptychs submitted via canvas each diptych will have two images next to each other; each individual image will be a square. A small white border is fine for this assignment, but if you need to have no border that is acceptable as well. Final completed work dimensions for each of the 3 pieces will be two squares next to each other, any size is fine as long as the resolution allows the image to be clear and not pixelated (if that is your desired effect). This will not be printed, only a jpeg will be submitted. You can use Photoshop if you are comfortable or any online or app based software to construct the diptychs. Pic Stich App's free 2x1 template is fine for this assignment.

Use your smart phone camera, screen shots, ask lots of questions and make many drafts. Evaluate each one and make changes based on your new insights. Consider locations and pay attention to each time you are asked to or consider buying something. Make sure you take into account all formal elements when constructing this piece.

Each diptych should deal with a theme, observation and some degree of tension, juxtaposition or surprising connection. This project will be evaluated on conceptual strength, how clear, thoughtful and sophisticated the ideas and created meanings are in the project; formal strength, the use of formal tools to illustrate the ideas clearly (the use of all of our formal art and design tools); Execution and finish, does the project feel complete, well thought and fully considered; Finally, did you follow directions.

Be prepared to talk about and tell us these ideas and intentions.

Scale, composition, dynamic arrangement, space, color, focus

Folks to look at: Pennelope Umbreco, Richard Prince, Barbara Kruger, Damien Hirst, Jeff Koons

WHAT'S IN A PLACE? VIDEO PROJECT

Due: 4/16 (2 person or 3 person team assignment)

What's in a Place? – architecture/ Walking Project – 2 person team video project aimed at exploring our walking, where we go, what our experience is of place, our paths, interactions and time.

You ever look at your feet sometimes when you walk and wonder what the world must be like from the perspective of your shoelaces, or from the heels of your shoes, or the soles of your shoes. Or do you ever find yourself looking up at the sky when walking down the street? Or seeing someone really tall and wondering what the world is like to that person?

We experience the world in time and space. We wake up, go to things centered around a clock, or being hungry, or getting bored, then go to bed; we also move around in some capacity during this time around the world. Generally as we move about during our day we tend to have a consistent and reality affirming experience, grounded in routine, dependable vantage point (our eyes), obligations, fun and some amount of deviation (either intentioned or not). We tend to take many elements for granted. The places we go, the speeds that we walk are so ingrained in our being that we forget that this can be a great place to investigate. This project will ask you to explore and challenge these notions.

This project asks you to pay attention to where you walk and consider the varied perceptions that could change or shift that experience and perhaps connect you in new ways to our surroundings and those around us. For example, I am not very tall, I often wonder what the world would be like if I were 6ft tall, how would people treat me. How would I feel entering a room, what kinds of things would I notice about the folks around me? But what if I considered what the world would be like if I were 12ft tall? We design our world for a general and somewhat average experience. However this average experience changes over time and by place. Doorways and sizes of seats have changed over time (think about the seats on a plane), or regulations have shifted. Even allowable behaviors and norms change (you used to be able to smoke in hospitals for example). All of these ideas impact our experience and interactions. What if we turned them upside-down or on their side?

You will explore many of these ideas and compile a short 2-minute video edited and shot of how you think of wand want to communicate about places, the way we get there and how we experience them. Try to approach this in an unconventional way that exposes you and by default us (the audience) to a new way of seeing. Only live audio can be used in this project and no "soundtrack". Text screens cannot be used, only text that is filmed can be included (no digitally added text). The piece should have a tile and you should conceive of "story board" ideas before implementation of the project, then edit and reshot based on need. Consider movement, distance and time in addition to the other social and formal ways of thinking that we have discussed. What if our day was sped up into 2 minutes, what if we explored two simultaneous ways of getting to the same location? There are literally countless versions of questions you can ask in this project.

This project should be completed using a smart phone or other small handheld video device. This project will only be viewed online and submitted via vimeo. Only horizontal camera orientation. You can use any video editing software you like, but the intention is not to teach you software, but to use the very user friendly tools available via apps on our smartphones to generate the results for this project.

The thinking is that, if we pay attention to where and how we walk from different perspectives can we find new places to explore, problems to solve and questions to develop into new ideas.

This project will be evaluated on conceptual strength, how clear, thoughtful and sophisticated the ideas and created meanings are in the project; formal strength, the use of formal tools to illustrate the ideas clearly (the use of all of our formal art and design tools); Execution and finish, does the project feel complete, well thought and fully considered; Finally, did you follow directions.

This piece should have a title and use multiple perspectives, including time, space, fiction, expectation and any other unconventional ideas you wish to explore.

This is a two person project. With four components: Research notes – notes of ideas, thought process and other failed ideas should be submitted; story board – a small sketch of what you want the final shoot to look like, this is obviously made before the video is shot; final video, posted to vimeo with title and authors and a short written

reflection and explanation of intention

Folks to look at:

Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla all of their work is good, but this piece may be most fitting for this assignment https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJYWA7CxwQc,

Bruce Nauman (Again lots of work is super great and will help you in this project, but Contrapposto Studies, I through VII is great

Paul Pfeiffer, most of his work will help you with ideas for this project. I especially like After the Deluge and the Long Count pieces.

MAKING MEDIA REAL

Due: last day of class (4 or 5 person teams)
Project runs from 4/12 to 5/9

In the final project of the semester you will be assigned a team to see how you can generate actual, real and positive or challenging action via social media and our art and design concepts. You will be using the theme of "everyday object" only. Can you impact the real world using the ideas of things we use all the time and the power of social media?

The idea is can we create a "viral" action that actually happens and could be challenging and meaningful and deal with some of the ideas we have discussed in the course. This final project will include a presentation, short paper (that you each contribute to in the team) and some type of public or real world evidence/ documentation of your work.

You will be assigned a team to see how you can generate action in the real world via social media accounts. This project will include a presentation, short paper (that you each contribute to) and some type of evidence/ documentation of your work.

Goal - Create measurable action in the real world through social media as a type of fine art and reflect on the process of generating that action (a measurable action of zero is allowed)

Path – Using the social, metaphoric, conceptual, and visual elements of art, inside the medium of social media and limited materials generate an action in others.

Rules – Only use the theme and materials allowed. You cannot ask your friends or family, or anyone else in a physical way to act, only calls to action can be made via social media. Creative problem solving within the confines of the assignment are encouraged.

Everyday objects may seem super boring or really limiting; that is the point. The intention is in taking a seemingly boring and meaningless object(s) and transforming it into a message or object symbolizing something else. Can something most of us use every day operate as metaphor? Similarly to other objects like the umbrella during the Umbrella revolution in China or the safety pin after Brexit.

What I like about the idea of "everyday object" is that for such a simple idea it can do and represent quite a lot:

Connects us no matter how we live or where we live (i.e. we all use sponges or wear tee shirts, or use soap or ice. They can be cheap and easily accessible or usually cheap and accessible, but someone could make one or charge lots of money for a usually cheap thing (i.e. really expensive jeans, or super high-end bags etc.)
Can be used to reach in unconventional ways (think "life hacks", but also how something can become something else if used in a new or surprising way)

You will only select one object (or limited set) to work on with your project and it must be an "everyday" object. Think about a type of metaphor you want to explore through your object and then consider an action you would like to have happen in the real world using this object, then plan and execute a way to make that action take place using social media and our tools as designers, artists and critical problem solvers. Then reflect and present what happened. Individual peer reviews will be included as part of the assignment

Links:
https://ww2.kqed.org/learning/2015/04/28/students-find-significance-in-everyday-objects/ (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umbrella_Movement (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/safety-pin-trump-brexit_us_58251b53e4b0c4b63b0c11a9 (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/09/30/what-objects-tell-the-story-of-your-life/?_r=0 (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

Again the idea is if _you_ can you use social media actually make something happen in the real world? In this assignment you will:

- Come up with the idea – you must work as a team and agree what you want to try to change or impact in some way. It must use social media to create a physical action or effect and take place on campus. It must be safe, ideally aimed at a positive result and able to be documented. This idea can be small or large, insignificant or massive. It can be social, political, serious, funny or all of the above. It can be anything you want; such as having people (without physical direction make something or do something using your object, or having an event that gets created and implemented that deals with or uses your object only through using social media. The only catch, clearly is that the theme must deal in some way with your object. Also, do not implement an idea that already exists, think critically and poetically. In other words avoid the expected and the cliché. Don't do a can drive, or something that already happens, we want to elevate the idea to fine art by offering social comment, interpretation and poetics.

- I must approve the idea and if it deals with a physical augmentation or manipulation of any kind on campus it must be approved by me, any and all necessary UD administrators if it impacts campus in any way. We will have an approval form for you to fill out

- Create a plan to implement the idea. Be thorough and think of everything you want to happen, and what may go wrong and try to make changes to the idea based on more evaluation of the idea and feedback from me. Also be prepared if it does not go the way you plan. Execute the idea – see it through and …

- Make sure you document the execution and results. Take pictures, screen shots, video whatever to document the transition of the idea via social media to the actual thing happening in the real world. If it does not actually impact the real world document that as well.

- Reflect on the idea. How did it go? Did you achieve your results? Where did you not? What could have been done differently? What did you love about the project? What did you hate about it? What did you learn from the exercise? What did you learn about your participants? What did you learn from your group? Can we use social media to make a physical thing happen? Can social media be fine art?

- Write your answers to all the questions in line 6 and as a group write a short group reflection that you will share with the class. At least 3 pages.

- Present your project, documentation and reflection to the class via a social media account that you make for the project.