

Classes: **Tuesdays 11:30-2:30pm**

Room: **JLVAC 249**

Professor: Kelly Wood

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Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:00pm-2:30pm
or by appointment

1. Course Description

Organized as a creative research group, *Making Art with Environmental Awareness* explores artistic responses to ecology, sustainability and related social issues. In the first half of the semester, the course examines select themes in environmental discourse through readings and lectures, paying particular attention to how artists have engaged with them. In the second half of the semester, students develop individual projects that may take the form of **a)** a research paper (or, curatorial theme), and a presentation; or, **b)** an artistic project in any media and a presentation. Other options for final projects may be possible if you discuss your idea with the instructor early in the course.

2. Goals and Objectives

-Understand key themes in contemporary environmental art practice through research, viewing, and discussion

-Develop a formal and critical vocabulary through discussion and critique of artworks dealing with environmental themes.

-Enhance research and writing skills for critical and creative inquiry in the arts.

-Build aesthetic and conceptual sophistication through the creation of one major project exploring ecological issues through art.

-Engage in an interdisciplinary learning environment through presentation, discussion, and collaboration.

3. Expectations

This upper-level course is structured to be responsive to students' backgrounds, interests, and existing creative practices and/or curatorial, or, historical research. In contrast to the "expert" model typically found in higher education - in which a professor determines everything that will be presented and discussed in class - this course is structured as a collaborative, creative laboratory. Beyond several weeks of background reading, select slide lectures/screenings, the specific content of the course will be student driven, with the instructor acting as a resource person, respondent, and creative facilitator for student work. This structure demands that everyone - students and instructor alike - be exceptionally cooperative, respectful, good-humored, and well-

prepared. Students are expected to make a serious, sustained commitment to individual and group research, which includes taking notes on readings, contributing to discussion, and developing your project over the course of the entire semester. Students should expect to spend at least four hours per week on this course outside class meeting times.

As course instructor, I expect to be consistently challenged to expand my knowledge and deepen my understanding of art and ecology over the course of the semester. I offer to personalize each student's experience of the course by meeting with students outside of class and office hours when necessary for discussion and technical assistance.

I will make every effort to foster a class environment that is comfortable for all students and where students respect all class members. We do not always have to agree with one another, however, it is important that we respect each others' viewpoints. Behavior that is disruptive or discriminatory will not be tolerated.

4. Course Requirements

Each student is responsible for knowing the assignments, procedures, and due dates. Students are expected to complete all assignments by the due date; failure to do so may result in a failing grade (F). Requests for deadline extensions cannot be considered unless approved by the instructor before the assignment is due and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. Attendance is mandatory and missing 15% or more of class time can result in a failing grade. All students are expected to be present and available for discussions at the **beginning** of each class meeting. Students are also responsible for the preparation, installation, and de-installation of final projects.

4.1. Reading reflections 25%

Students will participate in a number of seminar-like discussions on a variety of texts. Thorough knowledge of these texts will be required for active participation and students will be required to submit short (200-250 words), written reflections **in point form** on **each text**. Ideally, these points will be used for discussion in your presentation. A **summary** of all reading points will be evaluated for critical thinking, clarity of expression and relevance to each text.

4.2. Presentation 20%

Students will give a presentation (approx.. 20 min) on a theme or concept integral to their own practice. Topics will be chosen with the Professor before the end of January. Presenting students are expected to generate a critical discussion based upon their own research into the theme. Presentations should include audio-visual material (at least 20 slides or equivalent) and will be delivered to the class in a standard lecture format (casual speech/point form). This presentation must incorporate the work of at least two artists (or collectives, exhibitions, category, etc.) whose work responds to and extends the theme as well as suggesting connections to the student's own final project work, and who has not been researched in any previous presentation or essay.

Note:

An aim of this course is to engage the student with a very broad range of artistic practices. Some of the most canonical or universally esteemed works contain what is now called 'mature subject matter.' Be forewarned that a small percentage of the visual material students will be expected to view is of an explicit nature, containing for example, scenes or depictions of sexual and/or

violent acts. Students must accept that by taking this course they have consented to viewing such material. If this poses a problem for a student, for whatever reason, it must be BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE INSTRUCTOR IMMEDIATELY (DURING THE FIRST CLASS).

4.3. **Participation 15%**

Given the structure of the class, active participation in discussion, critique, and group projects is vital. Studio arts practice has a tradition of oral critique, and students must also verbally share their thoughts generously, respectfully, and frequently throughout the semester in order to earn a top grade in the course. Recognizing that people have varying levels of comfort with verbal participation, Please let me know if there is anything I can do to make it easier for you to speak up in class discussion

4.4. **Final project: 40%**

Students will develop final creative projects employing ecological forms and themes. This body of work will be drawn from conceptual or material investigations undertaken during the semester The work should be devised in connection to the theme of the course and the conversations that will have developed throughout the class presentations. Alternately, a term paper researching a topic related to the course can be arranged, or a curatorial idea can be explored and outlined in detail.

5. **Evaluation**

Evaluation will be based upon the demonstrated ambition and resolution brought to meeting the creative, conceptual, and formal demands of assignments and studio work, and/or research, as well as in the level of participation demonstrated in all other aspects of the course. Students will be evaluated on their understanding of relevant theoretical issues introduced in class and their ability to integrate these ideas in their own practices.

| Term Assignments Quantified | Grading Weight |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Reading Responses (5) | 25 |
| Presentation | 20 |
| Participation | 15 |
| Final Project | 40 |
| Total | 100 |

6. **Texts**

There is no required text for this course; all instructor-assigned texts will be distributed as pdfs and web links. Accordingly, you should be prepared for a reading-intensive course. The reading load is not distributed evenly but rather most intense in the first five-six weeks of the course. Be prepared to read the assigned texts and come to class with your summaries and notes for discussion.

7. Materials and Equipment

Part of what we will be challenging in this course is our resource consumption and what it may mean to change our ideas about our material sources for art-making and exhibition engagement. Thus, experimentation with different materials is encouraged, but students must exercise sound judgment regarding safety and legal restrictions for all venues, due to the communal space of the Visual Arts Building. I will be encouraging eco-friendly options and conservation of materials. Be aware of the toxicity of your materials and consult with the instructor if you are uncertain about the safety of a material. Students will be responsible for any supplies needed for their research and presentations.

8. Learning Outcomes

- A. Application of Knowledge
 - Students will use their capacities with the medium as a critical, discursive and expressive tool to develop creative works; understand the potential viability of their works, and will utilize their reflections on their works to explore and develop further projects in order to create a body of work
 - Students will utilize their knowledge of appropriate methods, the vocabularies pertinent to the field, and their ability to make appropriate judgements, in order to develop a sound argument regarding a particular historical development, and will be able to defend their argument according to a knowledge of scholarly works
- B. Communication Skills
 - Students will be able to communicate in writing and orally regarding their projects and regarding relevant art and culture, and will recognize the range of language suited to differing communication opportunities (i.e. a grant application vs. a grad school application)
 - Students will be able to communicate orally and in writing with regard to their art history research, and will be able to utilize different genres of writing for different purposes (i.e., to write an academic paper, or a magazine article)
- C. Awareness of Limits of Knowledge
 - Students will be aware of the field of research/inquiry in relation to which their studies are situated, and will understand the limits/opportunities inherent to their research capacities within the framework of their studies