

Art in Social Scientific Perspective (GLS 560), Spring 2006

Dr. John Rice

Office: SB 208D, 962-7313

Web Page: <http://www.uncw.edu/soccrj/about-faculty-rice.html>

(go to course pages link at bottom of my department page))

Email: ricej@uncw.edu

Office Hours: MWF, 9:00-10:15 (or by appointment)

I. Course Description

Art, of whatever historical epoch or medium (and in this course, the term art will subsume various media, and so-called "high" and "popular" arts), is the product and the basis of extensive social networks; it both organizes and is organized by social interaction. The course will examine this dialectic between art and society, focusing upon the social relationships among and between artists, critics, aestheticians, patrons, and institutions. We will examine the systems by which art is produced, distributed, and aesthetically defined, as well as what some see as the ideological messages it contains and purposes it serves. Each of these factors contributes to the ways in which art is performed, exhibited, evaluated, and supported. The goal in recognizing these contributions is to provide a fuller and more nuanced understanding of works of art, rather than to reduce those works to no more than the social forces which shape its character.

II. Texts, Course Requirements, and Grading

A. There are three required texts for the course

Art Worlds, by Howard S. Becker

The Painted Word, by Tom Wolfe

Ways of Seeing, by John Berger

(There will also be additional readings assigned. These will be available as hot links and/or PDF files on the e-syllabus accompanying this course.)

B. It will be possible to earn 100 points over the course of the semester:

50 points: a term paper (10 points of this will be determined by a prospectus/draft – see below)

10 points: an in-class presentation of the key findings from your research/term paper

40 points: attendance and participation. A successful and enjoyable class depends to a significant degree upon the active intellectual involvement of both students and professor.

This is especially the case in a graduate course that is primarily a seminar format (although I will also need to combine this with lectures). Students are not simply receptacles into which teachers "pour" information, and learning involves the ability to actively engage – wrestle with, think through, challenge – the ideas presented in the class. I both encourage and expect that active intellectual involvement in my classes, and that involvement requires that students be present in class (both physically and mentally) and

that they be prepared for the class. In the interests of fairness, I start all student scores on this measure at 28 points (which is 80% of the total points you can earn for attendance/participation), and either add to or subtract from those points based upon your in-class performance. Points will be added for perfect or near-perfect (all but 1 or, at most, 2 classes) attendance, and for positive involvement in the life of the class; they will also be added in the event that students take advantage of my office hours to clarify any points about which they are uncertain or interested. Points will be subtracted for excessive absences and/or late arrivals, and for being a negative presence in the class (disruptions, mentally absent). At the extremes, it is possible to earn all of the points or to earn no points at all.

The term paper (15-20 typed, double-spaced pages, including the appropriate reference sections) should be a discussion of each student's independent and original research relating either to an "art world" as a whole, or to key elements of that world (e.g., the artists or other producers; the ways in which distribution of the product is accomplished; the effects of distributors or audience members upon the art work itself). The research should be empirical, but theoretically "driven" – that is, you should use the empirical material to explore a particular theoretical argument that has been covered in readings or lectures for the course. The methods of analysis may be, broadly defined, either quantitative or qualitative, but there must be a clear connection between theory and the method you choose to use. In general, the goal is to teach yourselves and the rest of the class something interesting and important about the social organization of artistic labor. **Final Papers due to my office by 5:00 p.m. on May 2nd.**

The prospectus, 10 points: a short, 4-5 pp. initial draft of your term paper will be due in class during the 6th-7th week of the semester.

- a. this short paper should include: (1) the specific theoretical issue(s) you will address; (2) the specific research project you have chosen; (3) a description of how you will conduct the research and why you will take that approach; and, (4) a bibliography of the published research that will guide your own work. (The bibliography should comprise complete citations: i.e., date of publication, author(s), title of book/article/journal, city of publication (for books), and complete page numbers.

III. Other Important Course Policies

A. Make-Up Exam Policy: There will be ONE date and time for ALL make-up exams: on Reading Day, 10:00 a.m. sharp, in my office.

B. Late Papers and Missed Exams: The general rule, here, is do not do either of these things. If you must miss an exam or turn in a paper late, you will be expected to notify me in advance, and/or be able to provide some proof of your trouble (obviously, in the case of an emergency, advance notification may well be impossible). If you are not able to meet these conditions you will not be allowed to make up the exam or turn the paper in late.

C. **Grading:** Your grades for the course will be determined by the number of points you have earned, divided by the total possible points. This percentage will convert into letter grades (Note: since the total is 100, your actual number of points will, of course, be your percentage):

THERE WILL BE NO POSSIBILITY FOR EXTRA CREDIT WORK! YOUR COURSE GRADES WILL DEPEND UPON YOUR PERFORMANCE IN THE REQUIRED COURSE WORK ONLY!

D. **Cheating, Plagiarism:** All work – tests, papers – must be the product of your own efforts. Any attempt by a student to represent the work of another as her or his own is considered plagiarism; this includes copying the answers of another student on an examination or copying or substantially restating the work of another person or persons in any oral or written work without citing the appropriate source, and collaborating with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution. Pay close attention to this definition, because any student caught engaging in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "F" for the entire course.. It is not difficult to tell when a term paper or exam has been plagiarized, and I do take the time and make the effort to apprehend cheaters. Academic dishonesty is nothing other than lying and stealing; if you choose to lie or steal you will be treated as a liar and thief.

Course Outline

PART I: GENERAL THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Date

Topics

Jan 17

Overview of the course
Some General Approaches to Art and a Sociology of Art

Readings (NOTE: assigned readings should be read before the class meetings that come after them on the course outline): W. Kandinsky (<http://www.gutenberg.net/etext04/cnsp10.txt>), "Introduction," "The Movement of the Triangle," "Spiritual Revolution," and "The Pyramid"; J. Dewey (http://www.ptess.jhu.edu/books/hopkins_guide_to_literary_theory/john_dewey.html), "The Live Creature"; J. Berger, chapter 1. OR, much more easily done, hit the hot links for these on the course web page.

Readings: J. Berger, chapters 5 and 6; Becker, chapters 1 and 9

Jan. 24

The Artist as "Genius" in Historical Perspective
"High Culture" and the Mass Culture Critique: The Social
Origins of "High" and "Popular" Culture
Art Worlds and the Art/Craft Distinction

Film: The Artist's Identity

Readings: Becker, chapters 2 and 8

Jan. 31

The Role of Institutions in High Culture: The Boston Brahmins,
the MFA and the BSO

Art Worlds: Convention and Innovation

Circles and Networks in the Production of Culture

The case of French Impressionism

*For those who would like a pretty simplistic, but helpful overview
of Impressionism, click the following links:*

<http://arthistory.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.impressionism.org%2F>

<http://arthistory.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.artchive.com%2F74nadar.htm> (check out the
accompanying hot links – the “critics” and “ridicule” links, e.g.)

Feb. 7

Selection and Socialization

Art students

Readings: Becker, chapters 3 and 4; Peterson, "Cycles of Symbol Production";

Lopes, "Innovation and Diversity" (for both, hit the PDF link on the course web page)

PART II: FACTORS SHAPING THE ART WORK

Feb. 14

The Impact of Market Structure

Oligopoly and artistic innovation

The popular and country music industries

Film: "The Art Market"

Readings: Becker, chapter 7

Feb. 21

Editors and Publishers as Gatekeepers

Factors determining publication
Art Galleries as Gatekeepers
Invention vs. Innovation Galleries (Bystryn)
The Abstract Expressionists

For those who would like a pretty simplistic, but helpful overview of Abstract Expressionism, & Jackson Pollock, especially, go to the following links:

<http://www.biddingtons.com/content/pedigreeabstract.html>

<http://www.nga.gov/feature/pollock/painting1.html>

Readings: Becker, chapters 5 and 11; Tom Wolfe, All

Feb. 28

Art Galleries as Gatekeepers (cont'd):
Film: "Pollock"

(N.B. PROSPECTUS/DRAFT DUE March 14th)

Mar. 14

Critics and Aestheticians
Abstract Expressionism and Art Theory
Jackson Pollock and Art Criticism

Readings: J. Berger, chapter 7

Mar. 21

Patronage
Past forms of patronage (a brief reprise)
Corporate Patronage and the Production of Culture
Commercial art and advertising ("publicity")
Film: "Selling the Dream"

Readings: Becker, chapter 6

Mar. 28

State Patronage
The National Endowment for the Arts
Arts administration
Cultural democracy vs. cultural hierarchy

Film: "Crisis in the Arts: the NEA Debate"

Readings: J. Berger, chapters 2 and 3; Nochlin, "... Women Artists?" (<http://www.csupomona.edu/~plin/ews410/nogreatwomen.html>); Tuchman & Fortin, "Fame and Misfortune" (Go to the course web page and hit the hot links for PDF file.)

Apr. 4

Art and Ideology
Film: "Art in Nazi Germany"
Women as subjects of art
Women as Makers of Art: "Fame and Misfortune"
as Victorian Novelists
as Visual Artists

Apr. 11

Women and Art (Cont'd)
Summary and Review

Apr. 18

Presentations

Apr. 25

Presentations

FINAL PAPERS DUE by May 2, 5:00 p.m. in my office

General Notes re: Term Papers and Prospectus

Term Papers

The prospectus/draft should be 3-5 pages, typed, double-spaced, stapled; it should identify the substantive topic you will be writing about for your term paper and should also begin to outline the theoretical framework with and through which you will examine that topic. What, then, will the final paper analyze? how widespread is the phenomenon you will address (what does the research say)? what has been written about your topic? by whom? what do they say? (Note: at this relatively early stage in the semester, it may be too soon to do more than "outline" your theoretical perspective. I will give you feedback on the prospectus, making suggestions, etc.)

Given the relative shortness of the assigned paper (10-15 pp., including references and notes), I would encourage you to keep your theoretical framework and your topic as closely focused as possible. Use the theory, or a part of the theory, and make explicit connections between the theory and your subject matter. You must have a sociological focus to the paper. It doesn't have to be incredibly complex or nuanced, but you must examine an art-related topic, and you must examine that topic from a sociological/social scientific perspective. There is a natural tendency, especially in an interdisciplinary course such as this, to try to cover all of the possible related ideas. Avoid this. The best papers are invariably those that develop a detailed analysis of a few major themes, rather than a superficial analysis of a lot of themes.

Please note: I expect you to incorporate and deal with the comments and suggestions that I will make on your prospectus. My comments are designed to help you write a better, and a sociological, paper. Every year when I teach this course, at least a couple of students ignore the prospectus comments. This is a bad idea – not because I expect you to write the paper I tell you to write, but because my remarks point to flaws – major or minor – in the paper you have proposed. At this point in your college career, you can fairly be expected to write a logical, coherent, and persuasive argument, in whatever course you are taking. My comments on the prospectus are aimed towards helping you to do that.

Organization of the Paper, Style, References: Conventional sociological journal articles can give you a model to work from for preparing your own papers; think about the way they are organized, the way the authors structure and present their arguments, and use that to guide you. At a more specific level: (A) Your papers should start with 1-3 pages that identify the topic and then explain the specific theoretical approach you will use. EG: "This paper will comprise an analysis of [e.g.,] Dada as an example of what Kadushin calls a movement circle; I will explore the ways that the Dada movement both fits Kadushin's views and the ways that it did not. According to Kadushin, ..." etc. Then lay out the specific concepts you will use. Then, be sure to use them. There's an old saying about how to organize social science papers: (1) tell 'em what you're going to tell 'em, (2) tell 'em, (3) tell 'em what you told 'em. Simplistic, but helpful. (B) Style: final papers should be edited. Although the sociology in the paper is most important, grammar, punctuation, and spelling all count. Good ideas cannot come across in a sloppily organized and poorly written paper. (C) References: In the text of the paper itself, all direct quotes from other sources must be put in quotation marks and cited, either in a footnote or endnote or in parentheses next to the quoted passage, with the name, date, and page number where the original quote appeared (EG: Crane 1987, p. 57). Paraphrases must also be cited (EG: see, Crane 1987, pp. 32-36). The paper must include a references section, which lists ONLY the materials you actually REFER to IN the paper. Do NOT give me a bibliography -- a list of books and articles that might be related to your topic. All articles, books, etc., actually referred to in the paper must be cited at the end of the paper. Use the following model, for the appropriate citation of references:

Article: Lopes, Paul. 1992. "Innovation and Diversity in the Popular Music Industry, 1969 to 1990." *American Sociological Review* 57: 56-71

Book: Wolfe, Tom. 1976. *The Painted Word*. New York: Bantam Books.

Article or chapter IN a book: Schiller, Herbert. 1989. "The Corporate Capture of the Sites of Public Expression." Pp. --- in *Culture, Inc.* New York: Oxford.

If you are more comfortable with a different citation style, use that. The point is that credit must be given when and where it is due. Everything else is plagiarism.