

**Kenyon College Department of Art**  
Gambier, Ohio

**Beginning Printmaking 245.00**

Fall 2008

*Professor Read Baldwin*

*Office hours: TR 11-12, 4-5pm, or by appointment*

*pbx 5068, home # 427-3525*

[baldwinr@kenyon.edu](mailto:baldwinr@kenyon.edu)

Printmaking's history in the modern era has always been closely aligned with social and cultural change. Because of its speed of production through mechanical reproducibility it became the media of choice for an artist wishing to affect change. It also served the practical function of visual art journalism, a trend that has exploded with the advent and expansion of the media arts and the internet. In short, printmaking was a cheap and direct way to depict, as well as comment on, modern culture and society.

Parallel and intertwined with this aspect of the history of printmaking is the modern history of the Avant-garde. Starting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century one of the central projects for artists was the depiction of contemporary society. A preoccupation with the present as opposed to historical or classical themes became the artistic mandate for this new cadre of artist, the Avant-garde. Avant-garde was the French military term for the "front line", those who would charge the enemy first. The battle in this case may have been perceived as fought against a stagnant, backward-looking society. In some ways I think the desire was to revolutionize culture to the same degree that Politics had been revolutionized with the advent of Democracy. To define and articulate an artistic sensibility worthy of the new social and political freedoms was, and still is in many ways, the driving force behind Avant-garde culture.

One of our projects as a class this semester will be to construct a book that depicts contemporary life. You will seek out imagery that defines today's culture, exploring what we value as a society, what we strive for, and what we dream of. The reality as well as the fiction of these cultural and social norms may be the foundation for some of this imagery. You will need to explore the intimate and the personal, as well as the political and global. Everything from your immediate lives to the imagery purveyed by the media may become source material. The final, compiled book, or *folio*, is intended to serve as a kind of document of our times. One unique copy will be created for each member of the class.

The images that comprise the book will be taken largely from the smaller, quicker exercises we will do in class and as homework. The exercises will double as a way of sampling and mastering new printmaking methods that are introduced throughout the semester. Included in these processes will be mono-printing, woodcuts, drypoint, and intaglio. There will be five larger scale projects that will be part of your own portfolios separate from the book.

Your larger portfolio projects will use the concept of contemporary imagery as a stepping stone to other areas of exploration, such as connections between past and present, dialogues with other artists, abstraction, and narrative.

Also as a part of this class you will need to make a slide/digital/powerpoint presentation about two artists that relate to the projects at hand. These presentations will include the production of a handout, and should last approximately 20-30 minutes.

There will also be some readings that will accompany your class work in this course.

**Grading/Criteria for evaluation of work:** *a sample grade sheet is included with this syllabus. The five largescale projects will constitute **60%** of your course grade, the book assignments will total **20%**, your artist presentation will be worth **10%**, and your class participation and critiquing ability will be another **10%**.*

**Materials:** *Most of the materials you will use for this course are available for purchase here in the classroom, in the storage closet. You will not have to pay directly for inks and solvents, but you will need to purchase paper, and various printing plates. Checklists that refer to the inventory are available in the supply room. There is an honor code system for the purchase of materials, and any materials used but unaccounted for will be assessed to the group as a whole. Please keep careful record of what you use. On average the cost of materials for this class is about \$150.*

**Attendance:** *In accordance with my colleagues in the department I have a fairly strict attendance policy. Regular attendance in art classes is vital to the integrity of the class as well as to the individual learning process. You will benefit immeasurably from what your colleagues are creating, as well as the discussion that surrounds the art-making process. Therefore, if you have more than two unexcused absences your final grade will be docked a third of a grade. Each late arrival to class counts as one half of an absence. It is mandatory that you be present for critiques, and that your work be completed on time. If you cannot attend a critique for some reason, you must discuss this with me ahead of time. You also need to communicate with me regarding any missed classes.*

**Disabilities:** *If you have any disabilities that may affect your performance in this class, be sure to communicate this to me so that I can make any adjustments possible that will enable you to succeed at your highest level.*

**Schedule of events:**

**Week 1—Aug 28: introduction to object printing and monoprinting:** *five contemporary faces/the cultural impact on the portrait*

**Week 2—Sept 2, 4: begin first major project using object printing and monoprinting:** *depicting scenes unique to contemporary society, five objects you couldn't live without*

**Week 3—Sept 9, 11: completion and critique of first portfolio project: DUE in class Sept 11.**

**Week 4—Sept 16, 18: introduction to linoleum block printing: create studies in a narrative format, begin second portfolio project:** *conditions of "surreality" in the modern world*

**Week 5—Sept 23, 25: completion of second project: DUE in class Sept 25.**

**Week 6—Sept 30, Oct 2, 7: introduction to dry-point etching:** *studies in 'shock and beauty'.*

**October Reading Days**

**Week 7—Oct 14, 16: begin third large portfolio project:** *giving the personal a political context, consider themes of connectedness vs alienation*

**Week 8—Oct 21, 23: completion of third project, DUE in class Oct 23.**

**Week 9—Oct 28, 30: introduction to acid etching:** *images from the community exploring social contrasts and extremes*

**Week 10—Nov 4, 6: begin fourth portfolio project:** *the personal and the cultural*

**Week 11—Nov 11, 13: completion of fourth portfolio project, DUE in class Nov 13.**

**Week 12—Nov 18, 20: create/assemble BOOK OF \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Thanksgiving Break**

**Week 13—Dec 2, 4: introduction to photo-etching, begin final project:** *self-generated topic.*

**Week 14—Dec 9, 11: progress critiques on final projects, Dec 11 final projects DUE in class, final room clean-up.**