



Digital Imaging in the Visual Arts¹⁰⁷

Professor Claudia Esslinger

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Course Description:

This introduction to studio art will enable students to utilize digital tools to engage in aesthetic and conceptual practices in contemporary art. Personal studio projects will investigate a variety of subjects such as: the role of digital media in the history of artistic practice, the relationship of the arts to popular culture, the aesthetics of abstraction, the development of metaphor, new versions of magic-realism and the effects of social issues on the creation and interpretation of art work. Students will come to understand the fundamentals of composition and develop technical skills with a variety of computer tools including still-image and video-editing programs. Through theory and practice, effective art criticism skills will be developed, allowing for creative group interactions and defining of one's personal aesthetic vision. Presentations by the professor will be supplemented by student readings on contemporary artists and issues.

Class Goals:

Be Curious, playful, dedicated, innovative and unafraid of risk.

Develop metaphors, irony and mystery in your work while avoiding clichés.

Structure your time well and pay attention to detail.

Develop an understanding of visual forms as vocabulary for your explorations.

Learn techniques and processes in still and moving digital image making and use them for your work.

Learn how to control and care for digital imaging equipment.

Make art in relationship to others: your class, your community and beyond.

Anchor your work in its appropriate context: historically, culturally, socially, aesthetically and with regard to other courses you are taking and knowledge you have.

Class Structure:

This class will include demonstrations and presentations by the professor related to the current assignment along with readings and presentations on the topic. Approximately the first half of the semester will be spent investigating **still imaging** with assignments that lead to understanding of the techniques and concepts of digital printmaking. We will use Adobe Photoshop software for this section. The second half of the semester will be centered on **moving images**, utilizing video techniques and concepts to express ideas that lend themselves to movement/ sound/ etc. Video editing will be done with Apple's Final Cut Pro Software. You will need keys to the Bexley digital lab to do most of your homework. (sign these out from Lisa Dilts, department secretary/ technician first floor Bexley Hall).

Evaluation Criteria *Does your work show:*

1. An approach that is visually, intellectually and emotionally **compelling**? Is there something that initially draws the viewer in to want to see more?
2. Originality/ creativity/ **innovation**/ surprise/ cleverness? Does the work avoid clichés and pat expectations? Did you take a risk ...step away from your comfort zone?

2. **Conceptual depth**, sophistication or complexity that allows a **sustaining** interest by the viewer.
4. **Form** (its color, media, rhythm, etc) that supports the **content** (the idea or concept). Does it make sense to use this form for this subject?
5. **Resolution** in the way that makes sense for your own project. The various themes and metaphors should pull together into a unified whole that makes sense. It should be finished. It should fulfill the assignment.
6. A **commitment** to the work that involves creative problem solving, development of technical skills, attention to detail, meeting deadlines, showing artistic integrity and effort, a willingness to learn from others including faculty and students, participation in group critiques and discussions and attendance during TA hours. (because this is very important, there will be a separate 10 points available for this at the end of the semester, in addition to how it affects each assignment)
7. An awareness of the **appropriate audience/ assignment/ social context** of your work as relating to other artists and non-artists, those of your generation and beyond, what era you are working within, what cultural knowledge you can refer to and what will be lost on the viewer. *The piece should be appropriate for experimental galleries and/or video festivals. It should be a creative response to the guidelines of the assignment.*

Communication and grading: Grading comes in the form of comments and numbers. I really value talking to you in person, writing emails in response to your work and I only give number grades as a supplement to these more important methods. Nevertheless, the numbers can tell you how I think you are doing in relationship to my overall expectations which are based on a history of knowing what other students can do, what the rest of the class might be able to do in the allotted time, and what I think you *personally* are capable of all in relationship to the above mentioned goals. Please do not compare your grades with others! There are many reasons for variations in grades. What is taking a risk for one person might be comfortable and predictable for someone else with more experience. Good work comes in many forms! Please take initiative in scheduling conversations with me if you don't understand something. *It is your responsibility to catch up on work you have missed by talking to me and working with a TA.* Communication is key to understanding! To do the best in this class you should start work right after the assignment is given so that you can revise as needed. If you miss a demonstration/ lecture, you will have to work with a TA and will not be able to visit the material as thoroughly.

Critiques will offer a variety of possible points at a time (5, 10 ,15, depending on their weight) You can interpret them loosely on the following 5 point scale that does NOT equate to traditional 100 point scales (where 70 is a C) ...instead I am trying to SPREAD out the scale. You can translate the numbers as follows:

4-5 = A- to A+ The high end of this indicates exceptional work to which nothing can be added, on time, following the assignment and with special insight, effort, risk-taking and creativity. All of the evaluation criteria are met. Excellent participation in critique and discussions.

3-4 = B- to B+ This indicates above average work, competent, safe and interesting but still lacking something or it could be innovative work without a high enough skill level. Good comments during critique and discussions.

2-3= C- to C+ This indicates average work, average effort, basic amount of skill and creative ideas. Low participation in critique and discussions.

1-2= D- to D+ The work is handed in but shows less than acceptable effort creativity and skill. Little to no participation in critique and discussions.

0-1= F Little effort, skill, imagination.

Due Dates: Projects are due rendered, output and ready to show *at the beginning of the class period on the date of the progress or final critique.* A project is considered late if it is not ready at that time and will receive a zero until submitted. The zero will then be averaged with your grade if the piece is handed in BEFORE the next scheduled critique. If you have an excused absence coming up on a critique day, the work is due *before* you leave. Most projects will have one or more progress critiques for which you will receive points toward the final score. *The final project is due before the last day of class, not during final's week. The final portfolio for the semester is due on the next class day after the final critique (the last day of classes). Lateness will cause lost points on any project.*

Resubmission: You may always improve and resubmit work and the new grade will be averaged with your initial grade if it is submitted within a week and before the next critique. This doesn't apply to the final project.

Collaboration: You all have different aptitudes and experiences. Working together will improve all of your pieces. You are expected to help each other out and to pull your part of the load. Groups will also be important at idea sessions and critiques. It is here that feedback from your peers becomes collaborative. Your participation at critiques and discussions will influence your grade on each project.

Attendance Policy: Attendance in this class is extremely important because you cannot make up lost days by just reading or any other independent work. The class time is full of demonstrations, presentations, critiques and workshop time. If you miss demos you may never catch up and not know how to use the equipment. Workdays in class allow personal assistance from the professor on assignments and should be prepared for (*you should work outside of class to be at the next stage of work, ready for assistance. Expect to spend at least 10 hours per week outside of class*). Slide lectures and video screenings are wonderful opportunities to inspire your work and describe the nature of the assignment. Students who miss these invariably don't do as well on the associated project. For all of the above reasons, I am strict about attendance and accountability.

After three (3) unexcused class absences I will begin to **lower your final grade 3 points for each additional absence**. Unexcused absences should be saved for occasional minor illnesses and you should still notify me through a call or email. **Two times late (10 min after class starts) will count as one absence. An absence before or after a school break will count as two absences.** Excused absences are only given for illnesses that require a doctor (includes severe flu), a death or marriage in the family, Kenyon sanctioned activities such as athletic events, etc, and must be okayed **before** the missed class. Do not leave for these events early. If you have more than three excused events that pull you away from class, you will have to start using your three allowed unexcused absences (for instance, if you have 5 scheduled events, two of them will use up some of your allowed unexcused absences) Excused absences do not include taking a friend to the airport, leaving early for break or the common cold. Use precautions such as washing hands and using disinfectant wipes (provided) on the mouse and keypad. Since we share these devices they can become transmitters of illness.

Copies: All documentation of your work will be handed in as a copy on DVD and for inclusion in the Kenyon Art Department Archives. They maybe exhibited on our website or for promotional reasons within the college. You can purchase blank tapes and DVD at cost from Lisa Dilts for this purpose.

Academic Honesty: Being honest academically in an art class is more difficult to define than in other classes. Sometimes using another image is intended as a cultural reference. It even has a name: "appropriation". Whenever this is intended, the image is well known enough in the culture for most people to know where it came from, and therefore it evokes some ideas or feelings tied to the original. This is fine for an artist to do. Occasionally students find compositions or images that they want to use in their work. Drawing from a photograph in a magazine is a common example. This should not be done just to make things easier, rather than drawing from life or gathering one's own photos, and the images often look stiff or commercial, but can be used if that is part of the concept of your piece. Taking another artist's image, composition or idea directly and passing it off as your own is a case for dishonesty however. I suggest that if you have a question, come talk to me first.

Disability Statement: If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact you ability to carry out assigned course work, I would urge you to contact the Office of Disability Services at 5453. The Coordinator of Disability Services, Erin Salva (salvae@kenyon.edu) will review your concerns and determine, with you, what accommodations are appropriate. All information and documentation of disability is confidential. Please notify me as well.

Equipment policy: *You may not use any equipment until you have been trained on it.* You will be trained in class, but for additional help you can ask Jenn Figg, our Visiting Artist and Contemporary Technology Specialist, as well as our student teaching assistants. Their hours will be posted. You are expected to care for all equipment both on the premises and off. If something breaks or is lost while in your possession, you are responsible for it financially. You may sign out audio visual equipment through Lisa Dilts between the hours of 8:30 and 3:30 (except the lunch hour, 12-1pm) and from Rebekkah Palov, our visiting artist and manager of

technology and lastly from me when necessary. Return time is by 12 noon the next day unless I extend it. If you are late in returning equipment, your borrowing privileges may be revoked. The keys must be returned when your portfolio is handed in or you will not receive final comments/grades. Make sure you clean up after yourself, don't bring food or drink in the edit facilities. Only Students enrolled in Installation Art, Digital Imaging, Digital Photo, Video Art, Acting and Directing for the Camera, Photography and Advanced Studio may use Bexley Computer Lab. *Anyone else, for any other project is not allowed (there is a media lab in the library for all other classes or other projects you create for other classes.* You will have to share your computer with other students from other classes. Get to know them, be kind, arrange ahead of time to edit and don't expect more than 3 hours at a time during deadlines. PLAN AHEAD!

Class Etiquette:

Critiques: You don't need to raise your hand to comment, and I encourage you to participate. Make sure to speak loudly enough for everyone to hear and give everyone a turn.

Bodily care: Please plan to eat before and after class but not *during* class. If you must have a snack for health reasons, please speak to me about it and *never* eat near a computer. A closed container of water may be placed below your desk for urgent care. You may leave if you need the restroom without asking but please be as quiet as you can.

Internet/phone/ Computer work: In a class where you are sitting in front of a powerful computer all the time, with your phone in your pocket, it is very tempting to use that technology when we are meant to be doing other things. We all get very distracted by mouse clicks or texting when someone is presenting something or when we are having a critique. Please do not continue to work on your project when we are looking at someone else's work. Being a full participant in the critique observation and discussion is part of what I evaluate you on. Email may be done before or after class, or during a break. If you are waiting for something to render, please plan other aspects of your project during wait time rather than get distracted by e-communications.

Textbooks and Supplies:

History of Art and Technology, (by Esslinger, supplied and required)

Digital Currents by Margot Lovejoy: recommended, in library

A Jump Drive that is at least 2GB. (available in Art Office) 4-8 GB is better.

Photographic Inkjet papers as needed .(available in Art Office or in print lab)

MiniDV video tapes, DVDs (available in Art Office)

Sketch/ note-taking journal (Available at the Bookstore)

For additional help contact Visiting Artist/ Contemporary Technology Specialist: Rebekkah Palov (individual appointments available) Contact Rebekkah at Palovr@kenyon.edu or at her office: Bexley 209. Teaching Assistants are also available in the digital studio several nights a week (look for schedule).