

ART 4040: Professional Practices



*"Remember how we used to ignore you
before you became a successful artist?"*

Pablo Helguera, 2009

CSUB Art & Art History Dept.
Fall 2025 • T/Th 10:00–12:05pm
Visual Arts Building #103

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www.billkelleyjr.net/csub.html

Office Hours: Lecture Building #103:
Tue 1-2:30pm / 4-4:30pm • Wed 10-11am (zoom)
Thu 1-2:30pm / 4-4:30pm

This course is designed to assist in both art and art history students professionalize their practice. In my experience, most artists do not get any sustained professional advice until after they graduate with their MFA degree. The university experience is a unique period as it asks that you spend a great deal of time thinking about and producing work. This conceptual work, if done rigorously will lay a foundation for your future art making, but it rarely prepares you for your professional development. A copy of this CV and course info is listed on: www.billkelleyjr.net/csub.html

Students are introduced to a variety of practical and complex concerns around being a professional artist. The field is developing and professionalizing rapidly around the non-profit sector, the art market and educational institutions, both within and without art. The question of what direction you might want to take will be upon you shortly. Will you go to grad school, like many of your professors are suggesting? If so, are you prepared for those applications? Or will you begin your career immediately after graduating? There are some documents and skill sets you will need in either case. The first one involves being able to “talk” about your work. This involves writing skills as well as the emotional distance to be able to have a conversation about your work. You will need these skills to do everything from grant writing for projects and artist statements for grad school applications, or simply to have a conversation during a studio visit. Being concise and precise about how you speak about your work will go a long way. The second skill set is the ability to develop a professional list of documents in order to improve your visibility, both in the short and long term. Those include the aforementioned artist statement, but they also include some form of online presence, and the early development of your CV and portfolio.

- Develop the skills to present and defend your work (12 min oral presentation)
- Artist/Teaching Statement fluency, both written and oral (250-300 words)
- Development of your Portfolio (7 -10 works)

Development the skills to discuss or defend your work is the most underrated of these three skills sets. Being able to handle a curatorial critique and engage in discussing ideas adjacent to your work and its interests is fundamental. We will have numerous exercises where you will be asked to discuss your work.

An Artist Statement (Research Statements for art historians, Teaching Statement for art educators) is essential for getting grants and submitting portfolios to galleries or graduate school. Statements should be between 250-500 words. We will have periodic reviews both in class, including my written feedback. Grammar here is essential. No fluff allowed.

Development of your portfolio can intersect with your Artist Statement and your Presentation skills, but your Portfolio has to be able to be carried into a room and presented orally. This will be your final review, with a guest panel where you will be asked to present your portfolio (minimum of 7 images) in 10-12 minutes, what I'm affectionally calling "curatorial speed dating." This can be shifted to an online presence of your artwork/research and can take many forms, even social media sites like Instagram can be useful. The trick is that they have to be entirely about your work (nothing personal) and be done with rigor so they are clear and professional.

The first part of the course will be frontloaded with student's working on their current projects and periodic conversations with the professor. This will assist in developing the language for your artist statement. By the end of this course students will have these documents, be able to address these questions and have a better understanding of where you need improvement. Students should also be able to analyze other's work and portfolios and learn from those examples. Pre-requisite: art major with upper division standing. Satisfactory completion of any two (2) 3000-level Studio courses and ART 4000. It is expected that students attend all classes as information will be presented that is not in the texts, take thorough notes, participate in class discussions and complete the required reading and assignments as listed in the syllabus. It is imperative that you stay current with the reading and videos as the class will be moving very quickly. Because our time is limited in class, students will have to work on assignments outside of class and work collaboratively with peers. Students will need to complete a Mid-term of assigned texts and a Final Presentation which includes an Artist Statement and Portfolio

Please be aware that some of the content we will be discussing in class may provoke strong emotions and may make you uncomfortable. Art is inherently challenging to our faculties and we must be open to that which questions our understanding of things. Part of the purpose of this class is to create a space where we can have an open, equal and honest exchange of ideas – we must be mindful that, even when disagreeing with classmates, one needs to always be respectful of differing opinions. Please feel free to stop by my office during office hours. If you are experiencing a personal issue that is affecting your ability to do well in the course, please come talk to me – it is best to discuss these things early. Do not wait for a failing grade.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

- Karen Atkinson & GYST-Ink, *Getting Your Sh*t Together: The Ultimate Business Manual for Every Practicing Artist*, 2nd Edition (GYST Ink Press 2014)

Students must plan to have the textbook by the second week of class. It is [available online here](#), including [Amazon.com](#). Please speak with me if you are having difficulty obtaining a copy.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

(for students interested in pursuing topics in greater depth)

- Bill Kelley Jr., *Personal Website*, www.billkelleyjr.net
- Vicki Krohn Amorose, *Art-Write: The Writing Guide for Visual Artists*, (Vicki Krohn Amorose, 2013)

GRADE BREAKDOWN

40% - Midterm Documents	A+: 100-98	A: 97-93	A-: 92-90
40% - Final presentation	B+: 89-88	B: 87-83	B-: 82-80
20% - Participation	C+: 79-78	C: 77-73	C-: 72-70
	D+: 69-68	D: 67-63	D-: 62-60
	F/I: 59 and below		

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Your participation grade is a combination of attendance at visiting artist talks, contributions to class discussions, group work, and pop quizzes. It is expected that students attend all classes as information will be presented that is not in the texts. Regular attendance is key as there will be a great deal of material covered in class that is not in the textbook. Two classes can be missed without an excuse. Every absence after two will cause one point to be deducted from your final grade. Habitual tardiness will also affect your final grade (each late arrival after two will count as half an absence). If you are absent for a family emergency or extended illness, come talk to me to arrange for making up the material missed.

Because nonverbal feedback is helpful in human interactions, if we are ever on zoom, I expect students in this class to keep their **cameras on** during synchronous portions of online instruction. With this in mind, please plan where you will be during class time so you can participate in a setting that is free from visual distractions. If you believe you have a legitimate reason not to have your camera turned on, please consult with me well in advance of the class period, and I will make a determination.

EXAMS

The two exams are polished presentations with sustaining documents. They will not be cumulative. Students are encouraged to present each other's work together outside of class. Missed deadlines will count as an "F" unless the student has a valid excuse, cleared in advance, in which case a make-up exam will be arranged.

- **Midterm Documents: Tue, 10/14**
- **Final Portfolio Presentation: Tue, 11/25, 11/27, 12/4**
- **Final Documents: Thu, 12/11**

POP QUIZZES

There will be periodic pop quizzes given in class based on the reading material most recently assigned or lecture material most recently presented in class. These will count as part of your participation grade.

VISITING ARTIST LECTURE SERIES REQUIREMENT

As part of your participation in this class you are required to attend one Visiting Artist Lecture Series talk this semester organized by the Art & Art History Department (if you're unable to attend, please let me know as soon as possible to arrange an alternative assignment). They are all on Zoom and you will be required to turn in a 250-word reflection on the one presentation you select.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have any needs or require accommodations related to a disability or learning difference, please contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). You can reach them by calling 661-654-3360 / TDD 661-654-6288 or visiting SADM 140. Once you have your accommodations letter, please schedule a time to meet with me during office hours to coordinate your accommodations.

RESPECT FOR THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Please show courtesy to your peers and instructor through:

- Coming to class on time and not leaving early.
- When speaking, turning off or silencing cell phones and no text messaging.
- Refraining from carrying on private conversations or sleeping in class.

TECHNOLOGY FOR ONLINE COURSE & EMAIL USE

To assure your ability to benefit from all of the resources available in this class, please be sure you have a computer that meets or exceeds the following standards:

- A PC or Mac laptop with at least an i5 processor or equivalent
- 8 GB of RAM / 256 GB hard drive
- A web camera (built in or stand-alone)
- High speed internet access

Please also check your CSUB email regularly, at least once a day, as faculty use it to communicate important information about class and assignments. The instructor will only check his CSUB email during working hours (M-F 8am-6pm) and will not be checking phone messages during this semester.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS & PLAGIARISM

Late assignments and exams will not be accepted unless prior arrangements are made (i.e. a legitimate, justifiable reason is needed for me to consider granting a student extra time, so plan ahead and budget your time) or if you have a justifiable illness with a doctor's letter. If you have an excused absence and your assignment is late, send it to me as an e-mail attachment as soon as it is complete and then check with me to see if you need to follow up with a hard copy. It is your responsibility to follow up when an assignment is late.

Always be careful about plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use of another person's ideas or words without proper acknowledgement. Two of the most common forms of plagiarism are defined by Diana Hacker in *The Bedford Handbook for Writers* (1994) as: "1) borrowing someone's ideas, information, or language without documenting the source and 2) documenting the source but paraphrasing the source's language too closely, without using quotation marks to indicate that language has been borrowed" (477). I will regularly check to see if material has been plagiarized using Turnitin. Please ask me if you are unsure of when you should document a source (see Hacker 477-78) or what is meant by paraphrasing too closely (Hacker 467-79) and read CSUB's statement on Academic Integrity:
<http://www.csub.edu/osrr/academic%20integrity>

SCHEDULE

Please note, changes may be made to the schedule if necessary and will be announced at the beginning of class

❖ WEEK 1

- Aug 26: Introduction to class
 - Please purchase the GYST textbook for reading in week 2
 - Professor will model mind mapping project for homework assignment.
- Aug 28: Personal mind/map workshop
 - Class uploads mind maps to Box folders and presents in class.
 - Complete: chapter 2 Personal Survey for homework, (GYST pgs. 7-12)

❖ WEEK 2

- Sep 2: Artist Statements
 - Begin discussion on what makes a good artist statement
 - Look at sample artist statements in class ([CCF Fellow website](#))
 - Read: chapter 6 on Artist Statements (GYST pgs. 33-38)
 - Write draft Artist Statement in class and share in groups
 - DUE: Artist Statement #1 uploaded to Box for review
- Sep 4: Open studio workday (Group 1 over Zoom)
 - Zoom meeting in studio for individual Statement crits, take notes

❖ WEEK 3

- Sep 9: Open studio workday (Group 2 over Zoom)
 - Zoom meeting in studio for individual Statement crits, take notes
- Sep 11: Open studio workday (Group 3 over Zoom)
 - Zoom meeting in studio for individual Statement crits, take notes

❖ WEEK 4

- Sep 16: Class Crits of work
 - Bring work to class for installation and group critique #1
- Sep 18: Class Crits of work
 - Bring work to class for installation and group critique #2

❖ WEEK 5

- Sep 23: Class Crits of work
 - Bring work to class for installation and group critique #3
- Sep 25: Class Crits of work

- Bring work to class for installation and group critique #4

❖ WEEK 6

- Sep 30: Oral communication and the “elevator speech”
 - Read: chapter 21 on Elevator Speech (GYST pgs. 125-126)
 - Work in rotating groups
 - DUE: Have draft Artist Statement #2 uploaded to Box for review
- Oct 2: CV & Portfolio
 - Review Portfolio and CV organization
 - Review artist CV samples
 - Read: chapter 7 on Resumes & CV (GYST pgs. 39-52)
 - Complete: Create draft CV for homework

❖ WEEK 7

- Oct 7: Document your art workshop
 - Professor Jesse Sugarmann will lead a workshop on documenting work
 - See PDF on my website for reference
- Oct 9: Portfolios, CV and Artist Statement (tune-up before midterm)
 - Bring printed copies of CV, Artist Statement to class
 - Work in groups on CV, Artist Statement, Portfolio

❖ WEEK 8

- Oct 14: MIDTERM
 - Turn in your CV and Artist Statement in Box (No late docs accepted)
 - Place midterm docs in folder called MIDTERM DOCS, due **before** class.
 - Group sharing/feedback on portfolios (Zoom break-out rooms)
 - Complete: updates to portfolio images/organization for homework
- Oct 16: Class Crits of work
 - Bring work to class for installation and group critique #1

❖ WEEK 9

- Oct 21: Class Crits of work
 - Bring work to class for installation and group critique #2
- Oct 23: Class Crits of work
 - Bring work to class for installation and group critique #3

❖ WEEK 10:

- Oct 28: Class Crits of work
 - Bring work to class for installation and group critique #4

- Oct 30: Open Studios
 - Prepare and present your best work at an open studio exhibition
 - Open to the public and faculty.

❖ WEEK 11

- Nov 4: Faculty interviews about Professional Development (Zoom)
 - Dr. Kelley interviews faculty about career. Ask questions
 - Share your Artist Statement #3 for group review in Zoom break-out.
 - DUE: Have draft Artist Statement #3 uploaded to Box for review
- Nov 6: Portfolio presentation tune-up, 10 min each (Group 1)
 - Have PowerPoint ready and uploaded to Box/desktop

❖ WEEK 12

- Nov 11: Open studio workday
 - No Class: Veterans Day
- Nov 13: Portfolio presentation tune-up, 10 min each (Group 2)
 - Have PowerPoint ready and uploaded to Box/desktop

❖ WEEK 13

- Nov 18: Portfolio presentation tune-up, 10 min each (Group 3)
 - Have PowerPoint ready and uploaded to Box/desktop
- Nov 20: Discussions regarding Graduate School
 - The particularities of different grad programs and their applications
 - Read: chapter 14 on Art Schools (GYST pgs. 81-88)

❖ WEEK 14

- Nov 25: Final Portfolio presentations (Group 1)
 - 10 minutes each, Have PowerPoint ready to go
- Nov 27: Thanksgiving
 - No class: Go thank an indigenous person

❖ WEEK 15

- Dec 2: Final Portfolio presentations (Group 2)
 - 10 minutes each, Have PowerPoint ready to go
- Dec 4: Final Portfolio presentations (Group 3)
 - 10 minutes each, Have PowerPoint ready to go

❖ FINAL EXAM

- Dec 11: Final Portfolio PowerPoint, Artist Statement, CV
 - Folder with High-Resolution images and image list
 - Everything due in BOX by the end of the day Dec 11th
 - I do not accept late documents.