

# ART 4400 // Social Practice: An Introduction



Suzanne Lacy & Pilar Riaño Alcalá, *The Skin of Memory Revisited*, 2011

CSUB Art & Art History Dept.  
Spring 2024  
Mon/Wed 10–12pm  
Course Zoom: 814 2108 1967

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**Office Hours** via Personal Zoom  
Mon 7-8:30am  
Tue 7-8:30am / 10-10:30am  
Wed 7-8:30am

Students are introduced to a variety of theoretical and philosophical approaches to social practice art making. The field is developing and professionalizing rapidly around institutions, both within and without art. But the field of practice is not new and has antecedents that go back decades, across the hemisphere. The San Joaquin Valley of Alta California has its own rich history. This course will have two components. The first is a **lecture and reading** section will be a large portion of the class. The lectures will be made up of case studies and short readings I provide, as well as the class textbook. The second is that you will also be asked to create a **research proposal** for work in the community. You will share this in class as your final exam and turn in the related digital documents. It will be based on the three intersecting corridors of action/reflection: Research / Network / Collaboration.

By the end of this course, students will be able to discuss community-based art practices through dialogically-driven research assignments in public space and through critical readings in class. Students should also be able to analyze socially engaged art from multiple points of view and speak about different theoretical perspectives. 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 two exams (Mid-term and Final) and their research proposal using assigned readings and lectures.

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

- Pablo Helguera. *Education for Socially Engaged Art: A Materials and Techniques Handbook*, (Jorge Pinto Books, 2011).

Students must plan to have the textbook by the second week of class. It is available online, 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)

- Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, (University of California Press 2013).
- Bill Kelley Jr., Grant Kester, eds. *Collective Situations: Readings in Contemporary Latin American Art, 1995-2010*, (Duke University Press, 2017).
- Suzanne Lacy, *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, (Bay Press, 1994).
- Johanna Burton, Shannon Jackson, Dominic Willsdon, eds. *Public Servants: Art and the Crisis of the Common Good*, (MIT Press 2016).

## GRADE BREAKDOWN

25% - Midterm	A+: 100-98	A: 97-93	A-: 92-90
25% - Final	B+: 89-88	B: 87-83	B-: 82-80
35% - Proposal Project	C+: 79-78	C: 77-73	C-: 72-70
15% - Participation	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, please come talk to me to arrange for work to make up the material missed.

Because nonverbal feedback is essential in human interactions, **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. Do not participate in class while driving or travelling. Repeatedly having your cameras off will affect your Participation grade. 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.

## VISITING ARTIST LECTURE SERIES (VALS) REQUIREMENT

As part of your participation in this class you are required to go to one visiting artist talk (VALS) this semester (if you're unable to go to any of these talks, please let me know as soon as possible to arrange an alternative assignment). You will have to turn in a 250-word summary of the topics covered.

## EXAMS

The two exams will not be cumulative. There will be a class prior to each exam where we review the material and students are encouraged to study together outside of class. Missed exams 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 Written Exam: Mon. 3/11 // Midterm Proposal Presentation: Wed. 3/13**
- **Final Exam Proposal Presentation: Tuesday, 5/14, 11:00-1:30pm**

### **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.

### **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.
- Don't check your phone or other media while class is on.
- Always keep your cameras on. If you don't, I will assume you left and mark you absent.
- Be in a quiet, stationary space where you can take notes during class.

### **LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Late assignments and exams will not be accepted unless prior arrangements are made (i.e. a legitimate, justifiable reason is needed to consider granting a student extra time, so plan ahead) 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 on late assignments.

### **PLAGIARISM**

I use TurnItIn software on all exams and papers ([www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com)). It checks for AI use and all forms of plagiarized material. Don't tempt fate. Plagiarism is generally an automatic failing grade on the assignment. 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 regularly check to see if material has been plagiarized. 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 [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

Since production in art making and writing require analytical and critical thinking skills and are central to the learning outcomes of art courses, all art and writing assignments should be prepared by the student. The development of strong competencies in these areas is critical to preparing yourself for both class discourse and the creative workplace. Therefore, AI-generated or assisted submissions are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism. Students are not allowed to use advanced automated tools

(artificial intelligence or machine learning tools such as ChatGPT or Dall-E 2) on assignments in this course.

## **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.

## **SCHEDULE**

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

### **❖ WEEK 1**

- 1/24 – Introduction to the class
  - COVER: Class syllabus, use of Canvas & Box folder, Class Research Proposal, Mind Mapping exercise explained in class
  - READ:
    - Helguera, Ch. 1: *Definitions* (pp. 1-8)

### **❖ WEEK 2**

- 1/29, 1/31 – Mind Maps, Happenings: review of historical cases in the public sphere
  - Mind Mapping exercise presented in class, upload to Box folder.
  - Lecture on history of Happenings, take careful notes.
  - READ:
    - Helguera, Ch. 1: *Definitions* (pp. 1-8)
  - READ:
    - Helguera, Ch. 2: *Community* (pp. 9-25)

### **❖ WEEK 3**

- 2/5, 2/7 – 1<sup>st</sup> Semi-formal Draft Proposal / Case Study: *Piel de la Memoria* (Skin of Memory)
  - PRESENT: Informal 1<sup>st</sup> draft proposal exchange: An informal presentation of a local site/community you find interesting that could serve a basis for your project. Bring in an object that represents the space and issue you wish to study. (10 min.)
  - Lecture on *La Piel de la Memoria* by Suzanne Lacy and Pilar Riaño Alcalá (Medellín, Colombia: 1998 & 2011)
  - READ:
    - “Skins of Memory: Art, Civic Pedagogy, and Social Reconstruction” by Suzanne Lacy and Pilar Riaño Alcalá in *Collective Situations*. (PDF online)

- WATCH:
  - Project videos: [Visual Background](#) (7 min) & [Project Background](#) (3 min, 46)
- PRESENT:
  - Write up 250-word reflection on Canvas and orally present your reflection. Due 2/5 before class.

#### ❖ WEEK 4

- 2/12, 2/14 – Studio time and 1:1 Sessions both days / Canvas reading and response
  - STUDIO: On days cited as Studio, I am giving you studio time to work on your project. On these days I will host one-on-one sessions to go over your long-term research plan. Be prepared with updated materials. Scheduling done on Doodle.
  - READ:
    - Helguera, Ch. 3: *Situations* (pp. 27-38)
  - RESPOND:
    - Writing prompt on Canvas for Chapter 3, due 2/14 before class

#### ❖ WEEK 5

- 2/19, 2/21 – Semi-formal 2<sup>nd</sup> draft proposal presentation / Freire reading
  - PRESENT: A more formal presentation of the materials you have researched, and contacts made so far in your local site/community. Bring PowerPoint and materials.
  - Paulo Freire: *Critical Pedagogy, a problem posing education*
  - Lecture on artist Pablo Sanaguano and the Kichwa community in Chimborazo
  - READ:
    - “Paulo Freire: Community-Based Arts Education” by Christine Ballengee Morris (PDF)
    - Helguera, Ch. 4: *Conversation* (pp. 39-49)
  - RESPOND: Writing prompt on Canvas for Chapter 4

#### ❖ WEEK 6

- 2/26, 2/28 – Case Study: *El Señor de Maíz* (The Corn Man)/ Collaboration challenges, Ch.5
  - Case Study: Alfadir Luna, *El Señor de Maíz* (Mexico City, 2009-2019)
  - READ:
    - Liz Goldner, “Corn Man: A Mexican-Inspired Animistic Sculpture Arrives in Santa Ana and Los Angeles” in [KCET Artbound](#)
  - WATCH:
    - Alfadir Luna, [Procesión para unir el Señor de Maíz](#), 2011 (11min).
  - RESPOND:
    - Write up 250-word reflection on Canvas and orally present your reflection.
  - READ:
    - Helguera, Ch. 5: *Collaboration* (pp. 51-57)

#### ❖ WEEK 7

- 3/4, 3/6 – Studio time and 1:1 Sessions both days / Canvas reading and response
  - STUDIO: On days cited as Studio, I am giving you studio time to work on your project. On these days I will host one-on-one sessions to go over your long-term research plan. Be prepared with updated materials. Scheduling done on Doodle.

## ❖ WEEK 8

- 3/11, 3/13 – MIDTERM
  - MIDTERM Written Exam
    - Timed written exam on Canvas (10-11:15am, Mon 3/11)
  - MIDTERM Proposal Presentations (Thu 3/13)
    - 12-15 min. visual presentations summarizing your research proposal

## ❖ WEEK 9

- 3/18, 3/20 –Antagonism and art / Midterm review
  - Antagonism, provocation and art making
  - READ:
    - Helguera, Ch. 6: *Antagonism* (pp. 59-65)
  - WATCH:
    - The Yes Men, [The Yes Men Fix the World](#), 2009. (1 hr. 35 min)

## ❖ WEEK 10

- No Class 3/25 – 3/29, Spring Break

## ❖ WEEK 11

- 4/1, No Class, Cesar Chavez Day
- 4/3: – Performance Chapter / Canvas reading and response
  - Chapter 7 on Performance and art
  - READ:
    - Helguera, Ch. 7: *Performance* (pp. 67-71)
  - WATCH:
    - Francis Alÿs, [When Faith Moves Mountains](#), 2002 (15 min.)
  - RESPOND: Writing prompt on Canvas for Chapter 7 and Alÿs video

## ❖ WEEK 12

- 4/8, 4/10 – Studio time and 1:1 Sessions for both dates/ Canvas reading and response
  - STUDIO: On days cited as Studio, you will have studio time and private sessions with me

### ❖ WEEK 13

- No Class, Professor at a conference

### ❖ WEEK 14

- 4/22, 4/24 – Documentation and Transpedagogy readings/ Guest speaker Teresa Flores.
  - Artist [Teresa Flores](#) (Los Angeles/Fresno) joins us to present her work.
  - Documentation: The residue of action or new art?
  - READ:
    - Helguera, Ch. 8: *Documentation* (pp. 73-76)
  - Transpedagogy or Extra-Disciplinarity, working outside the canon.
  - READ:
    - Helguera, Ch. 9: *Transpedagogy* (pp. 77-81)
    - Helguera, Ch. 10: *Deskilling* (pp. 83-88)
  - WATCH:
    - Frente 3 de Fevereiro, [Zumbi Somos Nos](#), 2007 (51 min.)

### ❖ WEEK 15

- 4/29, 5/1 – Case Study: *The Gentrification Library*. Catch up week on late material.
  - STUDIO: On days cited as Studio bring your materials to work in class for feedback.
  - CASE STUDY: *The Gentrification Library*, by Ultra-red & School of Echoes, 2017
  - READ:
    - Carribean Fragoza, “Art and Complicity: How the Fight Against Gentrification in Boyle Heights Questions the Role of Artists” [KCET ArtBound](#), 2016.
  - WATCH:
    - [City Rising](#) (Broadcast Episode), KCET, 2017.
    - School of Echoes, [Boyle Heights Mariachi Rent Strike](#), 2017 (9 min.)
  - PRESENT:
    - Write up 250-word reflection on Canvas and orally present your reflection.

### ❖ WEEK 16

- 5/6, 5/8 – Studio time and EXTENDED 1:1 Sessions
  - STUDIO: On days cited as Studio, you will have studio time and private sessions with me

### ❖ FINAL EXAM (Research Proposal presentations)

- Tuesday, 5/14, 11:00-1:30pm
  - 12-15 minute presentations using PowerPoint and/or video or other visual, material aids.
  - Turn in copies of your digital materials to course Box folder