

A primer in the rigors of making without the padding of artisanship.



Is it surprising that we willingly engage in such disciplinary actions?

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Art 7973 Interdisciplinary Seminar – Tulsa Fall 07 – Davis

This seminar will force the exponential potentials of each participants' agendas through an explicit engagement with realms somehow left outside of disciplinary thought and deed.

Three postulates: 1. This seminar is a gathering of experts.
 2. Each participant is expert in their agendas.
 3. Each participant is expert in their discipline(s).

Now prove it.

Take three initial steps: define, defend and diverge/converge.

Define

This course will begin with a critical definition of each experts' central issues and their chosen discipline(s). Every effort will, in fact must be made to keep these definitions distinct. Said simply: what do you want to say and what do you use to say it? The intention of this process is a heightened awareness of each participants' core ideas and an emphatic awareness of the inherent language "built-in" to each discipline. These definitions will be shared with and tested by the group through written texts and round-table discussion. [*Definition*: weeks 1-3]

Defend

Following the development of these initial definitions, each participant will act as an apologist for their choices; for their combination of discipline and idea; for what they have been using to attempt to speak of what. How are they alike? Or, is there anything at all alike about them? Every effort though will be made to see similarities between the two. The ambition of this process is commingling. It is a search for congruence between the chosen discipline and idea. Documentation of actual work, (rather than just text description) will be part of these defenses, which will be shared with and tested by the group through text and round-table discussion. [*Defense*: weeks 4-5]

Diverge/Converge

After defense, each participant will make a specific effort to identify and explore potentially productive shifts, both within their chosen discipline, outside their discipline, or perhaps a shift to an approach which draws from activities which are not "a discipline" at all, in order to more easily match core ideas with their expression. The ambition of this process is to identify the straightest lines between the two, and to recognize obstacles which might be keeping the participant from using them. Central to this process of address will be a set of texts comprising, "the argument", authored by the instructor and then acted upon by each participant. This process of identification and challenge will then be aggressively aided by the group, who will act simultaneously as devils' advocates for the core ideas, as exclusionist representatives of their disciplines, and as critical assessors of one other participants' exploration, (or lack thereof). These peer assessments will conclude the text-centric phase of the seminar. [*Divergence or/is Convergence*: weeks 6-8]

Now move on.

Take two more steps: circle and evolve.

Circle

Each participant will be given a specifically designed studio exercise by the instructor. This exercise will be deliberately problematic. It will be reflective of the participants' discipline(s), proclaimed interests and ambitions, but tremendous license will be taken in creating a task which is, in the instructors' opinion, an obvious and necessary measure apart. Greatest benefit will be achieved if these exercises remain secret until after the work has been seen and discussed by others. This work will be critiqued according to a "show and tell" method which requires all participants to sit on the floor in a circle, and to speak in turn. [*Dilemma in Direction (the Circle)*: weeks 9-11]

Evolve

At this point each participant will design and execute a final written and/or studio project that exhibits an understanding and address of the topics and treatments thus far. This work can take any form whatsoever. [*Evolution*: weeks 12-15]

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Process

Every non-studio response must be completed in two forms: one, as a basic written discussion / argument; and two, as an oral presentation to the group. This oral version may be scripted or simply highlighted on-the-fly from the text version. Written versions must be legible, submitted on paper, and distributed to every member of the group. Artwork documentation must also be legible and on 8 ½" x 11" paper or on CD or ? but needn't be ultrahigh-quality.

Grading Criteria

Each course component will be graded according to the degree by which it is engaged and communicated. Letter grades will be distributed with each project. Letter grades received in this course reflect "mastery of content", not effort. Grades are not used to motivate or penalize students and every attempt is made to apply the grading criterium evenly.

Grading Distribution

60% Production; personal writings and studio project(s)
40% Discussion; response writing and round-table participation

Additional Opportunities

All participants are strongly encouraged to author and distribute discussions on any relevant topic. These efforts could indelibly augment the scope of this course and will be warmly received and rewarded at any point during the quarter.

Instructor Topics

At regular and unfortunate moments, the instructor may present on various topics through writing and/or song and dance presentation. It is advised that you humor him as he skates.

Disclaim and Proclaim

This course employs both an acceptance and critique of artistic disciplines. The intention of its design is not to create interdisciplinary artists, (probably just another set of disciples) but is to facilitate the recognition of disciplines as part and parcel of the communications they are assumed to benignly carry, and to foster the (re)deployment of disciplinary deeds within a liberated creative process where independent and satisfying production can be valued above allegiance to any known approach, product or reward.

This course considers creative production to be limitless - activities which should never be (un)knowingly bowed to a system which confines them. (Art must be seen for its confinement). This course (re)considers craft and material choices to be critical and an almost always overlooked centrality of the creative equation: craft is tantamount vocabulary rather than a mere curve of mastery; material is and must remain linked to meaning and not enslaved to discipline. These are considerations anyway that will not be overlooked here.

The greatest ambition of this course is to provide the participant with some inkling of the potent potentials within an *absolutely* personalized creative process which can readily evolve according to its base needs, and thereby allow the greatest potential for continued production, development and self-defined success.

Schedule

August

30 The first day of the rest of your life.

September

6 *Define*

13 *Define*

20 *Defend*

27 *Defend*

October

4 *Divergence or/is Convergence*

11 *Divergence or/is Convergence*

18 *Divergence or/is Convergence*

25 No Meeting

November

1 No Meeting

8 *Dilemma in Direction (the Circle)*

15 No Meeting

22 No Meeting

29 *Evolution*

December

6 *Evolution*

and Course Wrap Party / The last day of what your life was.