

AH-ARDP102

INTRODUCTION TO ART & DESIGN PRACTICE
SPRING SEMESTER 2020

Classroom no: t.b.a

Class times: t.t.a.

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Short Introduction to Art & Design Practice - Spring 2020

This practice-based course introduces students to the field of art & design by investigating different strategies and means of visual language. The course is roughly divided into two projects; it is research-driven and process-based.

Students will start by mapping their immediate context: their home, the classroom/studio, and the city through collecting, drawing, photography and writing. What does our surrounding consist of, and how can we record it in a novel way? Furthermore we will experiment to shape the collected material into meaningful visual narratives. Which story needs to be told, and to whom? How can we connect images with words, how can we edit, arrange this material in an engaging manner? Can we transform familiar objects by looking at them from a different perspective?

While the first part of the course focuses on experimenting with different visual media (drawing, collage, photography, creative writing), the second half focuses on learning to address an audience. Students will develop an individual project and will be asked to think how they want to show, and communicate their work. This project will be presented in a public exhibition at the end of the semester, which will involve a degree of group work.

We will work from short, practical assignments, in which you will be encouraged to develop your observations into a distinctive visual signature / language, and to develop a productive work rhythm. As a guideline, a variety of historic and contemporary artist practices will be introduced in class; additional input will be given in the form of guest lectures and an excursion.

Prerequisites

No prerequisites are required for this course: students across all UCR departments, with a hands-on making approach, and with interest in the intricate workings of visual language, are welcome to join the course. This course serves as a preparation for follow-up courses (200/300) in arts & design.

Costs

No book needs to be purchased for this course. However an average material budget of 50 euro should be taken into account.

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Course Outline

I. Track information

- Prerequisites for this course:

In order to profit from the course it is recommended to have a strong interest in making and experimenting, and an open and collaborative attitude.

- b) This course serves as prerequisite for:

The course is a prerequisite for the 200/300- level Art and Design Practice courses, which will be taught every fall, alternately.

- Good companions to this course:

See the A&DP Track Outline for a detailed list of good companion courses. All courses in Art History, History, Philosophy, Sociology and Human Geography. Furthermore, connecting the given assignments to your academic interests in, Arts & Humanities, Academic Core, Science and Social Sciences is warmly encouraged.

For further information about the track, please see the track document available on the UCR intranet.

II. Course description

This is a 100-level, medium specific course. It introduces students to contemporary art & design practice through short and inspiring practical assignments in different media (drawing, photography, mixed media). The assignments allow room to be interpreted in an applied manner, according to a given brief (design) or more freely (art). The course initiates you to different forms of research by artists and designers through empirical fieldwork, visual storytelling, and speculative thinking. During the course you will learn new, intuitive ways to observe and map a situation, to visually tell a story, to resourcefully deal with a making process, to think beyond what is possible, and to learn as a group. You will learn to make unexpected and meaningful connections between yourself, things, persons and places; you will create images, objects and interventions based on these connections, and present these in a semi-public setting.

Guest interventions from invited artists or designers will add a diversity of perspectives on the course work; fragments of books and interviews on art and design will lend a reflective framework for the hands-on work in class. Self-study time will be dedicated to keeping track of and reflecting on your process in your sketchbook, which you will use as a visual research journal.

Project 1: Mapping the Grounds / Ideas for Drawing - A Photo, An Image, A Narrative
(8 weeks)

The first weeks we will work around the idea of mapping our immediate environment. Through observation and researching the specifics of your surroundings, its architecture and structure, its usage, people and their stories, tracks left behind etc., each student will be challenged to find their own focus. By drawing and making notes these interests will be further explored and finally visualized in a map. We will investigate the concept of the 'map' together with various drawing techniques and methods to visualize these concepts. Artists with a practice in which drawing plays an important role will be introduced. Every week a concrete exercise will be given in order to help you develop a process-driven way of working; sketches are the start of every project and are as important as the final result. During the project we'll discuss various options and positions on each given topic.

During the second part photography and the analysis of images will be the main focus. Different kinds of photography such as: (self-) portrait, advertisement, landscape and documentary will be discussed and tried out. Through various assignments we will question how to create an interesting visual narrative with newly made or already existing photographs? How to find an interesting subject matter, angle to tell a story? Another topic we will address is the relation between documentary and fiction. The material made during this project will be edited into a printed series or a small photocopied booklet, gif animation. Various forms of printed matter such as artist books will be examined.

Project 2: An Exhibition (remaining weeks)

The final project will be around a more personal theme. Using the insight, skills and tools from the former projects, you will work towards an individual presentation for which you research your topic and try to put your work in a larger context. This will challenge you to take a position and work your way towards a conclusion. You also have the opportunity to connect your project with your major courses. How artists present their work and which role it has in their practice will be studied as inspiration sources. The projects will be presented in a semi-public exhibition during the last week of the course.

Another important term-long self-study project is to keep a sketchbook i.e visual research log book, by assembling a generous collection of writings, drawings, images, collages, and related artistic and scientific references, articulated in a personal and meaningful way. You have to work on this for at least 2 hours of your self-study time. Regularly you will be asked to share your sketchbook for peer review, and it will be graded at Mid Term and at the Final Evaluation

III. Study Load

This course earns students four credits (equivalent to 7.5 ECTS).

The class meets once a week for four hours.

Preparation time is estimated at 8 to 10 hours per week (8 hours of making and 2 hours of reading and reflecting, with a maximum total study load of 14 hours per week). See the course schedule for details.

IV. Course materials

- Required readings

Readings will be indicated at the end of some classes. Readings for AH192 consist of fragments that outline pivotal ideas related to artistic practice, visual story telling.

N.B. Students should be informed that they are responsible for acquiring all assigned reading individually. Many of the course's assigned journal articles are available via Utrecht University's electronic journal subscription. The remaining book chapters and articles are available through the Zeeuwse Bibliotheek (with your UCR pass you can get a free library pass). In accessing readings, students should also make use of Picarta's inter-library loans system and other online services (e.g., Google Books).

- Recommended readings

If desired personalized readings can be indicated on an individual basis.

c) Other materials

Prepare a **personal toolkit to bring to each class**, that includes the following elements. If necessary all elements can be bought from art supply shop Indigo, Lange Noordstraat 58, Middelburg.

- Pencils, pencil sharpener and eraser
- Set of color pencils and pens
- Fine liners
- Sketchbook unlined, minimum A4 size
- Roll of crêpe tape, see-through tape, glue
- Scissors, cutting knife, spare blades, metal ruler 30 cm

Recommended:

- Digital camera (or camera phone)*
- Laptop with text processing, image software**

* A digital camera is available from Rasa's Society CAMERA for loan

**Mac OS: Adobe Creative Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, Indesign)

Open Source :

Inkscape (Open Source Alternative for Illustrator, to produce vector drawings compatible with CNC laser cutting)

Gimp (Open Source Alternative for Photoshop, to correct / enhance / compose pixel images)

Scribus (Open Source 'Linux' Alternative for Indesign, to make basic document lay-outs)

It is recommended to get the yearly museum pass that gives you free access to over 400 museums in The Netherlands.

Costs p.p.: 35 euro (Excursion) + 50 euro (materialization budget)

V. Course organization and requirements

- General format of class meetings

The focus of this 100-level course is on visualizing and materializing ideas (i.e. lots of re-searching through making, and lots of experimental iteration processes). You will work both on collaborative and individual assignments, and conduct group discussions on assigned topics. Rules always need exceptions, so some classes will have a more improvised character. At least one class will be a field trip and another a workshop, given by a guest teacher/artist.

- Requirements

Art and design is something you should practice on a daily basis, in order to develop affinity with it. It is also, beyond one's personal development, a collective endeavor. You are thus expected to commit to the content of the course beyond the given assignments by taking in as many related art and design books, exhibitions or screenings in your spare time.

- **Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. If you must miss class due to extenuating circumstances, you must inform the instructor and the tutor of your absence and of the reason for your absence, preferably in advance by email. Students who miss more than 3 classes of the course will receive an automatic F for the course. Also note that you are expected to be in class for the full four hours during which class is scheduled. Train schedules, traveling plans etc. do not constitute reasons for arriving late in class or for being dismissed early from class.
- **Participation:** Active participation in discussions and group activities is required. Unsatisfactory class participation (including missed classes) may result in a student being dismissed from the classroom, and will affect the final grade.
- **Reading/preparation:** Please ensure that you have access to the indicated readings well in advance of the sessions in which they are discussed. You are expected to prepare thoroughly for the class; this includes completing the assigned tasks (making/reflecting) and handing in your process updates in time. In-class discussions of readings are student-led: coming prepared makes a constructive conversation possible. In the event that you are repeatedly unable to satisfactorily contribute to in-class discussion or activities, your final grade will automatically decrease in value.
- **Course materials:** It is recommended to organize a personal toolkit and bring it to every class. Readings will be indicated for this course at the end of every class. They should be printed out and included in your sketchbook (see Toolkit), along with your personal notes and sketches. Repeated failure to bring the toolkit to class will be noted and will result in an automatic grade deduction.
- **Deadlines:** all written work is due (1) on Moodle in a folder bearing your name and (2) in hard copy / life size at the start of the evaluation class. No exceptions will be made to this rule. Work that is late loses 5 marks per day (e.g. a grade of 90 becomes an 85, an 85 becomes an 80, etc.). Work will be considered late by one day if it is submitted anytime after the start of class (including during the break). Late work will be accepted according to this policy up to a maximum of 5 working days after the due date. If you miss the deadline by 5 working days, this will automatically result in a fail for the assignment.
- **Extensions and alternative testing arrangements:** extensions will not be granted for any work nor will alternative arrangements be made for any missed presentations or exams except in the case of extenuating circumstances (e.g. serious illness, bereavement, etc.). Colds and other minor health complaints do not normally constitute extenuating circumstances. All requests for extensions must be requested in advance and in writing (i.e. by email). Requests for extensions made on the due date or the day of testing will not be considered, except in very unusual circumstances (e.g. a serious emergency on

the day the work is due or the evaluation day). Requests for extensions will be treated on a case-by-case basis - please do not assume that your request will be granted. Computer/printer/internet failure will not be considered adequate grounds for an extension under any circumstances.

- **Submitting work:** Unless otherwise instructed, all work must be submitted (1) in hard copy at the start of the assigned evaluation class, (2) on Moodle in a folder bearing your name
- **Work format:** The format of the work produced during the art & design practice course will be decided in dialogue with the instructor, during the creative process. There is no predefined format.
- **Policy on phone / laptop use in class:** mobile phones and other devices which connect to the internet can only be used in class for research purposes when indicated. It is your own responsibility to use these tools in a productive way.
- **Course schedule:** the schedule below may need to be adjusted during the course of the semester to accommodate the schedules of guest lecturers, or in the case of instructor illness or other unforeseen situations.
- **Special needs:** students with documented learning disabilities or special needs should make their needs known to the instructor at the start of the course.
- **Plagiarism** is a serious academic offense, which carries heavy sanctions. Acquaint yourself with the UCR Plagiarism Policy (see your Student Handbook).
- **Procedures for communication:** email (m.nagtzaam@ucr.nl) is the preferred method of individual communication outside of class hours. Emails will be answered on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. For informal group announcements and events, please use the Art & Design Practice Facebook group.

This course is subject to UCR academic rules and procedures. Both students and instructors are required to know and follow these rules and procedures.

VI. Assessment

Components and build up of final grade:

Sketchbook, Self Reflection, Presentation
Projects and Presentations (2)
T.B.A.

Failing to complete one of these elements means you do not get any credits for this course.

Sketchbook: Your sketchbook is compulsory and is part of your Personal Toolkit (see IV. Course Materials). It functions as your logbook and deposit for ideas, and in that way as a means of organizing your own visual and verbal support throughout your Art & Design Practice Studies.

Reflection: You will be asked to hand in an illustrated Self-reflection (800 words + drawings or images) about the course activities and their learning outcomes, and possible connections to your other interests in the fields of science, social science & the humanities

Exercises: The exercises function as a more practice based experimental part of the course, where a variety of approaches and methods will be introduced. Each in relation to one of the 3 main projects.

Presentation: On 2 presentation moments you will be graded on how well you have assimilated, visually translated, spatially and verbally presented, and critically reflected on the course material.

Projects: Projects are the results of assignments given in class, in this case: 1. Mapping the Grounds/Ideas for Drawing - A Photo, An Image, A Narrative, and 2. An Exhibition. Your specific focus and choice of material and medium are determined in dialogue with the instructor through continuous feedback on your process. Guidelines for content, structure and assessment criteria will be indicated in separate project briefs and will be sent by email and will be made available on Moodle.

VII. Course schedule

The Facebook group page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1548226445456553/>) can be used as an extra platform. A detailed project briefing will be sent by email in advance of the first class.

Each class will start with a short lecture, ±10 minutes, by a student about a topic of his/her interest.

Time table: t.b.a.

VIII. Student learning outcomes (SLO)

Practicing art and design means you are continuously making things, reflecting on your making process, and on the way the things you make relate to a given context. Conceptual and associative thinking, visual expression, self-reflection, resourcefulness and precise communication are vital, interdependent aspects of this practice. In order to successfully complete the full Art & Design Practice track, your work should demonstrate the qualities addressed below through the four checklists (i.e. your work should answer, or at least attempt to answer the questions positively). It is highly recommended to ask yourself these questions from day one, even if they seem difficult, and to keep doing this from time to time for as long as you practice art and/or design, especially in relation to science, social sciences and the humanities.

SLO 1: Introduction to creative thinking

Upon completing AH-ARDP102, you will have visually translated and attempted to convey ideas related to the central theme of the semester; you will have experimented with making exiting connections between places, persons, and things; you will have learnt to make decisions on artistic grounds, and to weigh alternatives in a given situation.

Checklist creative thinking: Are you able to approach situations and problems in a pioneering / divergent / independent way? Is your thinking associative i.e. does your work initiate and propose meaningful connections? Is the message, which your work conveys, relevant to the con-

text for which it is made?

SLO 2: Introduction to visual expression

Upon completing AH-ARDP102, you will have learnt that forms, materials, colors and textures carry specific meanings depending on the context in which they are perceived or used; how you make and stage something influences its interpretation by someone else; balancing your intentions with that of the world is like tight rope walking. You will also have learnt to communicate making use of the vocabulary of contemporary art and design and to act according to the attitudes of these fields. And you will have experienced different ways to present your empirical fieldwork and visual research.

Checklist visual expression: Does the aesthetic, visual language and the materialization of your work fit the message it tries to convey? Does your work produce a distinct, qualitative visual / spatial / temporal / sensory experience?

SLO 3: Introduction to self-reflection & resourcefulness

Upon completing AH-ARDP102, you will have learnt that keeping a sketchbook as a logbook is a precious resource to keep track of your process, ideas, and references; it's your breeding ground for future work. You will have started a personal collection of references that connect to your work attitude. You will have formed an idea of how your work relates to a given context, and how a given environment reacts on your work. You will have formed an idea of how your work could relate to the contemporary art & design discourse.

Checklist self-reflection & resourcefulness: Are you able to make room for “not knowing” in your process? Can you overcome dead points? Can you deal constructively with uncertainty? Do you demonstrate a personal, thoughtful resourcefulness? Can you articulate the artistic and cultural references of your work, and the way your work inscribes itself in these discourses? How is this reflected in your sketchbook?

SLO 4: Introduction to precise communication

Upon completing AH-ARDP102, you will have learnt that there are many ways to present / stage / perform an idea, depending on what you want achieve and whom you want to reach. You will have been confronted to the fact that communicating is a reciprocal process, which always involves an unknown element, “the other”. You will have experimented with different modes of interaction and begun to reflect on your work from the dual point of view of its intention and reception.

Checklist precise communication: Does your chosen communication tactic convey the vital ideas behind the work, and reach your intended audience? Does it touch “the other”? Does your work do what it says it does? Which role does communication play throughout your work process?

Period

Teaching activities

Student learns to

Period 1
(Sessions 1,2,3,4,5)
Project 1
SLO 1,2,3,4

Period 2
(Sessions 6,7,9,10)
Project 2
SLO 1,2,3

Period 3
(Session 8)
Mid Term
SLO 1,2,3,4

Period 4
(Sessions 11,12,13,14)
Project 3
SLO 1,2,3,4

Period 5
(Session 15)
Editorial session and collective reflection
SLO 1,2,3,4

IX. Appendices [Course specific materials, e.g. guidelines for essays, presentations, etc.]

All additional guidelines will be provided as separate sheets IN CLASS and on Moodle.