

SCHOOL OF FINE ART AND MUSIC
Winter Semester 2021
ARTH4310 Topics in Art
& Visual Arts
AVC*6310
Marxism in Art History



INSTRUCTOR: Jessica Jacobson-Konefall
TIME: T 11:30-2:20pm
LOCATION: online
OFFICE: online
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OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday, 11:00 – 12:00am

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:

Our course will explore the history of Marxist theory and approaches in Art History. In terms of arts approaches, we will consider a large and diverse range of media, practices, artists, and theoretical contexts within various historical and socio-political contexts globally, considering them through the lens of Marxist thought.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Together, we will analyze specific case studies and exhibitions of modern and contemporary art, while appraising the use of discursive frames such as “alienation”, “the commodity” and “labour.” We will consider the application of theoretical approaches including feminist, queer, poststructural, critical race and Indigenous thought, as Marxist theory has influenced, or resonates, with the same in our approaches to art production and reception, as well as social and historical context.

In order to work through the stakes of Marxist thought both in art production and reception as well as art history writing, we will engage with the knowledge production of BIPOC artists, cultural workers, activists and scholars, and their arguments regarding visual culture, critical writing, art practices and arts institutions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Define the key concepts, movements and practices in Marxist approaches to art history
- Engage with the complexity of intersections of gender, race, class, sexuality and ability in modern art discourses
- Define and apply terminology relevant to the study of art through the lens of Marxism
- Understand the role that global capitalism has played in the development of “art” in modernity
- Explain and analyze the key interpretive stances and strategies employed by Marxist critics and historians of art

- Analyze art production in relation to historic and contemporary socio-political contexts
- Engage with the significance of colonialism as an ongoing process contextualizing modern arts, art writing, and art institutions
- Write analytically on the subject of Marxist thought in relation to modern artworks, artistic practices, or key exhibitions and/or movements



Paul Klee. *Angelus Novus*. 1920.

REQUIRED TEXT

Weekly readings will be assigned and placed either in course reserve or on Courselink.

METHOD OF EVALUATION:

Presentations.....	25%
Short writing assignments (750-1000 words x3) dates ongoing.....	25%
Final Paper.....	25%
Take home test (Due one week after final class).....	25%

*Please note: This is a preliminary web course description only. The department reserves the right to change without notice any information in this description. The final, binding course outline will be distributed in the first class of the semester.