

PPD 641: Art and the City
University of Southern California
Price School of Public Policy
Online
Professor Elizabeth Currid-Halkett

Office Hours: On Zoom, by appointment (Personal meeting room: <https://usc.zoom.us/my/currid>)

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Intro

How do we understand Andy Warhol's rise to prominence in the midst of millions of starving artists? Why does it matter to be a New York artist rather than one in Kansas or Kentucky? How important are art, fashion or music to the urban economy? Why is it that time and again the gritty neighborhoods artists are drawn to are transformed into highly desirable places for lots of people to live? What are the implications for those pioneering artists? This course will be devoted to the role of art in modern society with a particular emphasis on the city. Specifically, the course will consider how economists, sociologists and planners have looked at art and considered its importance to economy, society and development. We will also consider the artists' perspective, reading the works of famous writers, watching films on important artists and studying their work. Part of this exploration will focus on the way in which art "works", looking at auctions, galleries, artist communities and street art. This course will be both a survey of key reading and topics and will incorporate a number of different mediums to study the importance of the arts, including film, field trips and essays, alongside books and journal articles that deal with the nature of art and its importance to contemporary life.

What will you learn?

You will read a wide variety of texts looking at different aspects of myriad cities. You will consider fiction nonfiction, historical nonfiction, art markets, informal art worlds, high art, low art, art for art's sake, the commodification of art and how these various elements produce economic and social impacts for our cities. We will also look at how the creative world – artists, writers, musicians, filmmakers – have engaged with the city in their art forms. We will also consider the role of art in social change. When you leave this class I hope you have gained knowledge of a wider array of literature and its critical role in the urban form. Though class projects and assignments, I also hope you will learn different ways in which we can measure the importance of the arts on our economy, society and cities.

Texts

The only book you need to buy is mine because we will read a lot of chapters from it.

Currid, Elizabeth (2007) *The Warhol Economy: How Fashion, Art and Music Drive New York City*.
Princeton: Princeton University Press

The below texts will be used in class *but* I have requested the select pages and chapters from the library so you do not have to buy these books:

Thornton, Sarah (2008). *Seven Days in the Art World*. New York: Norton

Thompson, Donald (2008). *The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark: The Curious Economics of Contemporary Art*.
New York/London: Palgrave MacMillan

Smith, Patti. *Just kids*. New York: Ecco

Tart, Donna. (2013) *The Goldfinch* New York: Little, Brown

Dickens, Charles (1838). *Oliver Twist*

Additional reading can be found on Blackboard, ARES and online, as indicated. If not on blackboard, academic journal articles can be found through USC e-journals or Google Scholar.

Grading

Participation (includes speaking and bringing in art-related articles, short assignments, podcasts, mediums with art-related material) 15%

Individual project on art and social justice, environment, equality or racial justice movement 20%

Individual assignment on writing and the city 15%

Leading the discussion, in pairs (present art tour, art article, art topic as it relates to the city: film, music, art, writing for 10-12 minutes during class) 10%

Dates for leading the discussion: Feb 8; Feb 22; March 1; March 15; March 29; April 5; April 12

Final Project (in pairs): 25%

Final Presentation (in pairs): 15%

All assignments should be uploaded to Blackboard as indicated in the respective Weekly Folder PRIOR to the start of class on the due date.

Attendance and class participation

Class Participation plus in class assignments is worth 15 points. Class is only interesting with your input too!! I have found a variety of ways that you can participate as I outline above. In general, if you show up to every class and don't say a word you will get 10/15. If you skip class and don't participate you'll get much less. If you skip more than 4 classes you will fail the course. In my experience none of these scenarios has occurred in the online version of the class. So I ask simply that, as appropriate, you contribute in most classes AND **with content** (i.e. you've clearly done the reading and have something to say) and then bring in or share material as appropriate. If you do this you will get 14-15 out of 15.

PLEASE NOTE THAT IF YOU ARE AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CURRENTLY LIVING IN A VERY DIFFERENT TIME ZONE WE CAN FIND AN ALTERNATIVE FOR MEASURING CLASS PARTICIPATION IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND.

Academic integrity: Students should maintain strict adherence to standards of academic integrity, as described in SCampus (<http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/>). In particular, the University recommends strict sanctions for plagiarism, defined below:

11.11 Plagiarism

- A. The submission of material authored by another person but represented as the student's own work, whether that material is paraphrased or copied in verbatim or near-verbatim form.
- B. The submission of material subjected to editorial revision by another person that results in substantive changes in content or major alteration of writing style.
- C. Improper acknowledgment of sources in essays or papers.

Note: Culpability is not diminished when plagiarism occurs in drafts which are not the final version.

Also, if any material is prepared or submitted by another person on the student's behalf, the student is expected to proofread the results and is responsible for all particulars of the final draft.

Source: SCampus University Governance;
<http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/governance/gov05.html>

The recommended sanctions for academic integrity violations are attached to this syllabus, as is the "Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism," from USC's Expository Writing Program. If you have any questions about academic integrity or citation standards, please ask in advance.

In short: DON'T CHEAT. DON'T PLAGIARIZE. IF YOU CHEAT OR PLAGIARIZE YOU WILL FAIL THE CLASS.

Academic accommodations. Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the instructor or to a TA as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open early 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

ONLINE MODIFICATIONS

Due to the class being online, there will be a lot of asynchronous material to watch, listen to and read. So that I do not exceed the amount of time expected of you for the class, the weekly synchronous component of the class will generally run 1.5 to 2 hours depending on how much asynchronous work is assigned that week. We will begin class promptly at 9:30am!

In the second week we will organize into pairs for the semester. As a pair you will do your final project and presentation.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Week One:

January 18: NO CLASS, MLK DAY

Week Two:

Jan 25: Introduction: Hi! Why are you here? What is art to you?

Asynchronous

1. Jot down what you think art is **BEFORE** you read the below assignments.

Read:

Why I Write, George Orwell

http://orwell.ru/library/essays/wiw/english/e_wiw

Why I Write, Joan Didion

<https://www.nytimes.com/1976/12/05/archives/why-i-write-why-i-write.html>

Tolstoy, Leo (1896). *What Is Art?* Chapter IV and V (pg. 23-30), Chapter VIII (pg 37-40), Chapter XVI (pg 83-93) (on BB).

2. Okay now **AFTER** reading these essays, write down what art is to you.

Synchronous

1. Introductions
2. Ethan Hawke, Give Yourself Permission to Be Creative:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WRS9Gek4V5Q>
3. So...what is art?

Week Three

Feb 1: Public Art, Social Justice

Read:

<https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/the-new-monuments-that-america-needs>

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jan/26/whitewashed-how-gentrification-continues-to-erase-las-bold-murals>

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-secret-project-that-led-to-black-lives-matter-murals-coast-to-coast>

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/us-journal/the-defacement-and-destruction-of-black-lives-matter-murals>

Asynchronous

1. Watch: Debbie Milman, How Symbols and Brands Shape Our Identity:
https://www.ted.com/talks/debbie_milman_how_symbols_and_brands_shape_our_humanity
2. Find a mural, monument or another example of public art and consider what it is for and what it is against. In this activity you may consider monuments where meaning has changed from positive/neutral to bad or vice versa.

Synchronous

1. Lecture on public art
2. Everyone presents their public art example (2-3 minutes)
3. Watch Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman, "The Hill We Climb":
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wz4YuEvJ3y4>
4. Watch Pharrell Williams (featuring Jay-Z) "Entrepreneur"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTOoY5MIkvM>
5. **Discussion of first assignment: The Role of Art in Social Justice**

Week Four

Feb 8: The formal art world. What is Art? How Does the Art World Work?

Read:

Thompson, Don *The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark* (Introduction, "The \$12 Million Stuffed Shark", "Damien Hirst and the Shark", "Warhol, Koons and Emin") (ARES)

Thornton, Sarah (2008) *Seven Days in the Art World*, New York: Norton (Chapter 1 "The Auction"; Chapter 2 "The Crit") (ARES)

Watch:

1. Watch: The Ricky Gervais Show "What is Art" (Special Guest: Damien Hirst):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3AixO0siDvU>

Synchronous

1. Virtual Tour of the Met or another museum around the globe. Pick a section and explore to get yourself into the space of an artist, art critic, auctioneer: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/art-at-home> and <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/igKSKBBnEBSGKg?hl=en>
2. Auction activity and breakout rooms
3. **Students lead the discussion**
4. Discussion

Week Five

Feb 15: NO CLASS -- PRESIDENT'S DAY

Week Six

Feb 22: How Writers Write about the City (and the World)

Read:

Didion, Joan "On Malls" Taken from *The White Album* (ARES)

Smith, Patti Just Kids, pg. 93-104 (ARES)

Tartt, Donna *The Goldfinch*, select pages pp. 219-225; 230-241; 286-288 (ARES)

Dickens, Charles *Oliver Twist*, select pages (on BB)

Watch:

Jay-Z (featuring Alicia Keys) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QsZlY0Vz4-o>

Oliver Jeffers, An Ode to Living on Earth: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpn6MCmoK0g>

Asynchronous activity

Individual writing on the city: Pick a place in the city, can be mundane and ordinary or absolutely unusual and rare. Write a page about it in any form with any style – poetry, descriptive language, facts, your choice. “Give yourself permission to be creative!”

Synchronous activity

1. Discussion of readings and music
2. Students lead the discussion
3. Discuss/Share Writing on the City assignment.

Week Seven

March 1: The Social Life of Creativity

Smith, Patti, *Just Kids* pgs. 116-131

Currid, Elizabeth *The Warhol Economy* (Preface (xiii-xv), Chapter 1: Art, Culture and New York City

Currid, Elizabeth (2007) *The Warhol Economy*, Chapter 4 “The Social Life of Creativity”

Sanneh, Kelefa (2011) “Fish Tales” <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/03/07/fish-tales>

Asynchronous

1. Based on the readings, find your own example of how the city enables creative expression, bring to class and explain your choice. This can be an historical example (the Greek theatre of Athens!) or present day (the Oscars ceremony).

Synchronous

1. In class lecture
2. Discussion of choices
3. **Students lead the discussion**

Week Eight

March 8: *Social Justice and Art Presentations*

Asynchronous

Work on your social justice and art assignment

Synchronous

The Role of Art in Social Justice Assignment due: Be prepared to discuss and present social justice project in class; 5-10 minutes per student

Week Nine

March 15: Art, the Economy and COVID: Questions of impact and measurement

Read:

Economic Impact of the Arts:

Currid, Elizabeth, *The Warhol Economy*, Chapter 3: Becoming Creative

OTIS LA Creative Economy Report <https://www.otis.edu/creative-economy>

Molotch, Harvey (2002). Place in Product. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (BB)

Impact of COVID on the Arts:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/13/arts/design/arts-stimulus-biden.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/13/arts/coronavirus-pandemic-arts-support.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage>

Asynchronous

1. Watch online lecture videos
2. Find an article or other medium that explains a way in which the art world has adapted to the global pandemic

Synchronous

1. Students share their articles
2. **Discussion of final project, assign pairs**
3. **Students lead the discussion**

Week Ten

March 22: Art and Real Estate: Tensions between Gentrification and Development

Lloyd, R. (2016) "Neo-bohemia: Art and Neighborhood Development in Chicago" *Journal of Urban Affairs*

Currid-Halkett, E. (2011). "Where Does Bohemia Come From?" *New York Times*

<https://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/16/opinion/sunday/where-do-bohemians-come-from.html>

Currid, E. (2010) *Art and Economic Development – New Directions for the Growth of Cities and Regions*. [Volume: 29 issue: 3](#), page(s): 257-261 (on BB)

Asynchronous

1. Watch online lecture on Art and gentrification
2. Find a newsworthy article, podcast, video etc on art and its relationship to the city, any city!

Synchronous

1. Discussion and presentation of art in the news: podcasts, videos, articles, your choice!
2. Work on projects in groups

Week Eleven

March 29: Art in the Streets, Triumphs and Trauma

Read:

Lachmann, Richard "Graffiti as Career and Ideology" *Journal of American Sociology*

Hill, Mark Lamont "Using Jay-Z to Reflect on Post 9/11 Race Relations"

Asynchronous

1. Watch *StyleWars*

Synchronous

1. Look at public street art using this website: <https://streetart.withgoogle.com/en/world-collection>. Each student will explore a particular artist and his/her link to the places where their graffiti is found and discuss in class.
2. Discussion of *StyleWars* and its relation to the reading. (review clips)
3. **Students lead the discussion**

Week Twelve

April 5: The Commodification of Culture

Read:

Frank, Thomas (1998). *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counter Culture and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (ARES)

Sontag, Susan (1964) "On Camp" <https://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Sontag-NotesOnCamp-1964.html>

Currid, Elizabeth and Williams, Sarah (2009) "The Geography of Buzz". *Journal of Economic Geography*. Volume 10, Issue 3, 1 May 2010, Pages 423–451, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jeg/lbp032>

Currid, Elizabeth, *The Warhol Economy*, Chapter 6

Walker, Rob (2004). The Hidden (in Plain Sight) Persuaders. *New York Times magazine*, Dec 5. <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/12/05/magazine/the-hidden-in-plain-sight-persuaders.html>

Asynchronous

1. Watch online lecture
2. Find an example of a commodity that captures one of the themes in the reading – the economics of celebrity, the commodification of cool, the use of persuaders or influencers.

Synchronous

1. Discussion of Asynchronous activity
2. **Students lead the discussion**

Week Twelve

April 12: Art meets social science

Read:

Crisman, Jonathan and Kim, Annette (2019) Property Outlaws in the Southland: The Potential and Limits of Guerrilla Urbanism in the Cases of Arts Gentrification in Boyle Heights and Street Vending Decriminalization in Los Angeles (on BB)

<http://sustainablelittletokyo.org/projects/protecting-ibasho>

Asynchronous

Work on your projects!

Synchronous

1. Guest speaker, Jonathan Crisman
2. **Students lead the discussion**
3. Time to work on projects (hopefully)

Week Thirteen

April 19: Class Presentations

Week Fourteen

April 26: Class Presentations

Final Project due on Blackboard April 30th