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Fall 2021

Art in a Democratic Society (ART 285)

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ART 285: Art in a Democratic Society

Individual & Society (Core: IS) + Community-Engaged (CENG)

Fall 2021 - 4 Credits



Visitors approach Nari Ward's "We the People" at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston. (Jesse Costa / WBUR 2017)

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Class Location: BAC 220 / 040

Day & Time: (M) Tue / Thurs: 12:00 – 1:30

Office Hours: By appointment

“I went from being an artist who makes things, to being an artist who makes things happen.”

– Jeremy Deller

Course Description

This course explores the role of art in a democratic society through a combination of individual and collaborative project development, community engagement, as well as research and reflection on a variety of related topics and concepts. Recently, an increasing number of artists, curators, critics, and arts administrators have begun to turn their energies toward a new type of participatory social practice art that seeks to bring about positive change within a contemporary society confronted by complex issues and challenges on many fronts. To thrive, democratic societies need citizens to participate in their community for the common good. This participation has many forms and manifestations. Examples of democratic participation include voting, serving in an elected office, performing community service, advocating for a cause, or protesting injustice. To understand our role as citizens in a democracy we will explore the work of artists who critically or creatively examine ideas and forms of democracy. Through a combination of readings, reflections, discussions of democratic theory, contemporary art, and art history, as well as a class community engagement component, and individual and class collaborative art projects, this course will familiarize students with the theory and practice of democracy through the emerging field of social practice art and its interdisciplinary, research-based, community-engaged methods.

Learning Goals

Students who successfully complete this course will:

1. Develop democratic group based social skills through the process of participating in a collaborative learning environment, through the community engagement learning component of the course, and through collaborative project development.
2. Investigate ways of combining original fieldwork with artistic practice in order to develop a collaborative arts-based research project.
3. Develop skills and habits of critical reflection through the course readings, project development, and the community engagement requirement of the course.
4. Learn relevant ideas and dilemmas associated with democratic theory and practice.

5. Develop tools to become a more active, knowledgeable, and critical democratic citizen, and deepen your understanding of the rights and liberties you hold and your responsibility for self-governance in a democratic society.
6. Enhance personal and civic responsibility and engagement through direct civic participation, and reflection upon democratic deliberation and ethical reasoning in action.

Assignment Descriptions

In this course there will be a variety of assignments to aid in the assessment of student learning. Assignments will be in these forms:

1. Art projects and exercises (artistic responses to course material, and exploration of ideas of democracy through artistic production.)
2. Reflection writing (reflections on readings, screenings, public lectures and events, community-engagement, etc.)
3. Collaborative project development (which will include collaborative research and production of a work determined democratically by the group.)

Community-Engagement Service Activity Description

Specific requirements, how to volunteer, and other relevant information will be discussed in class.

A Note About the Community-Engagement requirement: The community-engagement requirement of the course brings the classroom to the community and the community back to the classroom. The community service component is designed to bring an active and experiential understanding of the basic mechanisms of our democracy beyond the abstractions and conceptualizations of democratic theory explored in other aspects of this course.

Required Materials

Democracy: An Ongoing Challenge, NCCR Democracy (Editor) - ISBN-13: 978-3037783962

Evaluation Criteria

1. Attendance (10%): Attend and be on time for all class meetings. Repeated absences and habitual lateness will adversely affect your final grade.
2. Participation (10%): Participate in discussions and contribute to the ongoing dialog of the course as well as the community-engagement and collaborative project components of the course. Your ability to participate in class discussions and to articulate your ideas and observations is important. Assigned readings, reflections, and research topics have been developed to enhance your learning and understanding of the material both within and outside of class. Assignments are designed to give you the intellectual tools to understand, critique, and discuss works of art in their theoretical, social, and historical context.
3. Written work, research, and reflection exercises (20%): The criteria and deadline for written work, course research, and reflections will be discussed in class.
4. Collaborative arts-based project (20%): The criteria and deadline for the collaborative project will be discussed in class.
5. Individual art projects and exercises (40%): The criteria and deadlines for the art projects and exercises will be discussed in class.

Grading

All student work is reviewed in line with the outlined criteria in the individual assignment rubrics and will be graded according to the St. Norbert College Grading System.

St. Norbert College Grading System:

“A” (100-93)

Student work must reflect outstanding achievement, and all work must be completed as assigned. The student must display exceptional attitude in critique participation, response to criticism, and professional conduct. The student demonstrates the ability to communicate and execute ideas and exhibits outstanding achievement. The student must adhere to departmental and/or faculty attendance policy.

“AB” (92-87)

Student work must reflect superior achievement, and all work must be completed as assigned.

The student must display exceptional attitude in critique participation, response to criticism, and professional conduct. The student demonstrates the ability to communicate and execute ideas and exhibits technically refined achievement. The student must adhere to departmental and/or faculty attendance policy.

“B” (86-81)

Student work must reflect above-average achievement, and all work must be completed as assigned. The student must display a positive attitude in critique participation, response to criticism, and professional conduct. The student demonstrates the ability to communicate and execute ideas and exhibits above-average achievement. The student must adhere to departmental and/or faculty attendance policy.

“BC” (80-75)

Student work must reflect average achievement, and all work must be completed as assigned. The student must display a positive attitude in critique participation, response to criticism, and professional conduct. The student demonstrates the ability to communicate and execute ideas and exhibits above-average or good achievement. The student must adhere to departmental and/or faculty attendance policy.

“C” (74-69)

Student work must reflect an acceptable achievement, and all work must be completed as assigned. The student must display a positive attitude in critique participation, response to criticism, and professional conduct. The student demonstrates the ability to communicate and execute ideas and exhibits acceptable achievement. The student must adhere to departmental and/or faculty attendance policy.

“CD” (68-63)

Student work must reflect minimal achievement both in quantity and quality, and all work must be completed as assigned. The student must display a positive attitude in critique participation, response to criticism, and professional conduct. The student demonstrates the ability to communicate and execute ideas and exhibits minimal achievement. The student must adhere to departmental and/or faculty attendance policy.

“D” (62-57)

Student achievement is below average in quality and/or quantity. Student response to criticism, professional conduct, and participation in critique is below acceptable standards or reflects an indifferent attitude. The student’s work reflects an inability to satisfactorily communicate and execute ideas. The student’s pattern of attendance may be unsatisfactory.

“F” (56-0)

Student work and attitude reflect an unsatisfactory level of achievement both in quantity and quality. The student exhibits an unsatisfactory ability to communicate and execute ideas and a pattern of low productivity. The student attendance record may be unacceptable. Student’s lack of participation in critiques, poor responses to criticism, and inappropriate professional conduct will result in a failing grade.

Grade Appeals

The purpose of the St. Norbert College policy on the appeal of grades is twofold: to protect the student from prejudiced and capricious academic evaluation, and to protect the professional rights and academic freedom of the faculty member in assigning grades. While a procedure for grade appeals is necessary, it is anticipated that most disagreements will be resolved at the first stage of the process — the conference between the faculty member and the student. The burden of proof rests on the terms “prejudiced and capricious.” The policy is intended to uphold the faculty member’s use of professional judgment, it also acknowledges the student’s right to know the basis upon which he or she was evaluated and to challenge a perceived injustice through an orderly set of procedures. Please visit the [grade appeal page](#) to view the procedures for appealing grades.

Deadlines and Critiques

1. Students are to be prepared at the start of each class with assigned work and supplies. Students who do not participate in class critiques or individual discussions with faculty when scheduled to do so, should not expect private critiques with faculty at a later date.
2. Students who miss lectures, in-class work time, or class discussions due to absences must obtain notes for the class and assignments missed from a responsible classmate prior to the next class period. While faculty will be happy to clarify information for students who are confused, instructors cannot repeat lectures or elaborate project

descriptions on an individual basis. Students should make every attempt to obtain general information from classmates before discussing details with the faculty.

Attendance Policy

Art Department attendance policy applies to this course. Regular class attendance is required to successfully complete the course requirements. Absence from more than three classes will affect the final grade. After the third unexcused absence, the final grade goes down a half letter and with each additional absence, the grade is further reduced.

A note about tardiness: Tardiness is defined as not in the classroom when attendance is called or departing before the class has been formally dismissed by the instructor. Tardiness that exceeds one-half hour will be counted as an absence. Three late arrivals or early departures or a combination of both are counted as one absence.

COVID-related Attendance Policy: In the event of a COVID-related isolation or quarantine, students who need temporary accommodations will need to provide documentation from the Office of Academic Success, Support and Accessibility (OASSA). OASSA will be granting the temporary accommodation of **Remote Participation** with appropriate documentation from Health Services. **Remote Participation** in this course may mean:

- Email communication
- Asynchronous content delivery
- Individual phone calls or remote meetings with the student
- Moodle
- Zoom (with or without two-way interaction)

Note: This is an in-person class. It will not be offered simultaneously using Zoom or any other media. Likewise, the class will not be recorded using Zoom or any other media.

Health and Safety Statement

The college is taking a safety-first approach in its plans to return to campus, following local, regional and CDC public-health guidelines. Consistent with St. Norbert's mission and values, we share the responsibility to care for one another, with each member of our community doing their part to ensure the safety of all. Please visit the [SNC Health and Safety page](#) for vaccination recommendations and safety requirements.

Art Department Mission Statement

As a vital part of a Norbertine Catholic liberal arts institution, the art discipline at St. Norbert College values the power of the arts in pursuit of knowledge, truth, and beauty. We cultivate a love of lifelong learning, an understanding of diverse cultures, perspectives, beliefs, and collaboration to gain knowledge, to solve problems, and to engage with the world around us.

The art discipline at St. Norbert College emphasizes technical craft as well as contemporary art and design theory and practice. In the tradition of the liberal arts, our students are creative makers whose studio work exists in complement to their other classes and larger experiences. The Carol and Robert Bush Art Center contains studios, classrooms, galleries, and faculty offices for the art program. Three galleries, an exhibition series, the St. Norbert College permanent art collection, guest artists and field trips to major art museums and exhibitions all enrich the art program. We are one of the few liberal arts colleges to offer distinctive sequences in studio art, graphic design, and art education. Graduates of the art program earn a bachelor of arts degree.

Safety and the Bush Art Center (BAC)

The Art Discipline is dedicated to maintaining a safe environment conducive to learning, creating, and working at St. Norbert College and the Bush Art Center. In collaboration with the Chemical Hygiene Officer and the Campus Safety Department, the Art Discipline insists that all students act in compliance with the particular safety measures associated with the various art classes, labs, and studios. Students will be instructed in the proper and safe use of (art) materials, tools, and approved methods of the storage and disposal of chemical and solid waste materials. Safety manuals and first-aid kits are located in all studios, as are clearly marked containers, receptacles, and informational signs.

Furthermore, all students are asked to cooperate in observing the posted hours of operation of the BAC (no student will be given permission to work in the BAC during those times in which the building is closed for daily, weekend, and school holiday hours). Certain studios maintain particular hours of operation. Failure to comply with measures intended to assist and secure the safety and well-being of the students will be forwarded to the appropriate departments for immediate action.

Academic and Personal Integrity

In this course, all students are expected to adhere to the College's academic policies regarding academic integrity (please refer to the "St. Norbert College Academic Honor Code" listed in The Citizen, or see the Honor Code website for the text of the Honor Code process, procedures and penalties). For further details - or if you have any questions, see the link for The Citizen or contact the Honor Code Facilitator, Judge Marc Hammer, at 403-3936; or the Dean of Faculty Affairs and Development, Dr. Lisa VanWormer, at 403-3368.

Academic Accommodations

In keeping with the St. Norbert College mission to help students develop their full potential, and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the College provides supportive services to students with disabilities. For inquiries and further details, please choose from the following options:

- Visit the Office of Academic Success, Support, and Accessibility located in room 211, Todd Wehr Hall,
- Visit the website: <http://www.snc.edu/academicsupport/>
- Fill out the online inquiry [form](#)
- Call (920) 403-1321 for the Office of Academic Success, Support, and Accessibility.

Library Support

The library team is here to support you through one-on-one or small group research consultations, where we work with you to identify and evaluate information sources (websites, articles, books, and more). We are available to conveniently connect with you and can be reached through our website to [schedule a meeting](#), or by emailing library@snc.edu. When possible, we also welcome you to drop in to the Research Center!

The Writing Center

Please consider visiting the [Writing Center](#). There you will find peer consultants trained to help you work through every step of the writing process. The service is free, and consultants can help with written assignments from a variety of academic areas.

Tech Services

The [Tech Bar](#) is a place for student development of digital skills, competencies, and data security. The Tech Bar has both student workers and full time staff to help with things like learning to use Google products and spreadsheets, creating a website or digital maps, learning to make a video or screen-cast, or really anything in the digital world.

Student Athletes

Student-athletes are responsible for meeting all their academic obligations, even if they are engaged in college-sponsored activities (as, for example, theater, athletics, or field trips). Students participating in approved SNC sports programs are reminded to share their course schedules with their coach(es). In the event that you will miss more than three classes for practice or games, consultation with the Director of Athletics will be required.

Advising Days

Students are required to meet with their academic advisor each semester prior to registration. Each semester, there are two days that are set aside strictly for advisement, in which no classes will be held on that day. These two days can be found in the [Academic Calendar](#). Students are encouraged to confer with their advisor regularly about curriculum, career and other academic concerns.

St. Norbert College Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

St. Norbert College strives to be a community that is welcoming to all and affirms the sacred dignity of all by engaging in practices of inclusion. The college is committed to creating an environment that fosters learning and respect for diverse cultures, perspectives and beliefs; the capacity to seek mutual understanding; and the ability to create a more compassionate global community.

The college supports educational experiences that challenge students, faculty, staff and administrators to expand their awareness of factors that impede our appreciation of both the richness and complexity of diversity. Opportunities to confront, examine and renegotiate our understanding of power, privilege and inequality as they are manifested in our society will be key to these endeavors.

Our ongoing commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is demonstrated in:

- Recruitment and retention of students, faculty and staff who reflect the true diversity that exists in our local and national community.
- Ongoing review of institutional policies and practices to ensure the inclusion and participation of all persons within the St. Norbert College community.
- Campus-wide opportunities to increase awareness and knowledge of intersection of gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, religious faiths and differing political perspectives.
- Ongoing opportunities for students, faculty, staff and administrators to interact across differences in social identities, institutional structures, and roles/responsibilities on campus.
- Infusion of diversity, equity and inclusion within the curricular, co-curricular and academic programs.
- Partnerships with local, national and international organizations dedicated to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Title IX Statement

St. Norbert College is committed to an educational environment founded on respect for all individuals. As a part of this commitment and consistent with federal Title IX law and the campus sex/gender harassment/discrimination policy, if a student discloses information to a faculty member regarding sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender-based bullying, stalking, or sexual harassment, **the faculty member is required to report this information to the college**. The goal is to make individuals aware of their rights and support options. You can speak to someone confidentially by contacting: SNC Counseling and Psychological Services (920-403-3045), SNC Health and Wellness (920-403- 3266), SNC Ordained Clergy (920-403-3011), or the Brown County Sexual Assault Center Hotline (920-436-8899). You may also contact the SNC Title IX Coordinator, a reporting resource, Sarah Olejniczak (920-403-3018).

St. Norbert College Land Acknowledgement Statement

In the spirit of the Norbertine value of *stabilitas loci*, a deep commitment to the local community, we acknowledge this land as the ancestral home of the Menominee nation, which

holds historical, cultural, and sacred significance to the community. We acknowledge the living history and contributions of the indigenous communities that inhabited this land prior to the establishment of St. Norbert College, as well as the sovereign Native American Nations who continue to contribute to the flourishing of our communities.

Syllabus Disclaimer

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Any changes will be announced during class. Students are responsible to maintain an awareness of any changes.