

Department: CLCS

Course No.: 1002

Credits: 3

Title: Reading Between the Arts

Contact: Anke K Finger

Content Area: CA1 Art and Humanities

Catalog Copy: CLCS 1002 Reading Between the Arts. Either Semester. Three credits. Interrelations between literature, music, and the visual arts, including multi-media. Introduction to Interart Studies

Course Information: The course aims to provide a basic understanding of the semiotics and experimental aesthetics of interart relations by teaching students how to read certain codes in individual arts and to ably decode them in others – making their reading skills transferable and training them to become readers of multi-media products in the 21st century. This skill and the accompanying ability to interpret and discuss layers of (historical) signs and codes in different artistic and media products can be applied to and heighten creativity in a variety of professional areas, often bridging the natural sciences and the humanities.

This course will expose students to the network of knowledge and ideas across disciplines, especially literature, the visual arts, and music; it aims to encourage the development of critical thinking between literature and other arts and new media; it contributes to an intellectually exciting curriculum that reflects the expertise and vision of the UConn faculty (the instructor is an expert in interart studies); it provides a meaningful framework within which students can pursue future studies and better apply their education to complex problems of the twenty-first century, especially regarding interdisciplinary communication; and it nurtures students' intellectual curiosity and drive towards excellence, especially with dialoguing about and commenting on human creativity and cultural expression. Furthermore, the kind of semiotic and cross- and trans-disciplinary reading skills explored in this class are considered essential in a fast-changing world that has created many interdisciplinary and hybrid fields where methods and epistemologies established in one area float into others, challenging any professional to negotiate different traditions of interpretation and meaning. UConn, at this point, does not offer any programs specifically focusing on the intersection of comparative arts and media studies, and this course presents a beginning of inquiry for UConn students.

Questions that inform our work in this course are: Are there similarities connecting the diversity of expression in the various arts? Can we characterize the arts as an area of research comparable and equal to scientific inquiries? Does art, as a diverse world of signs, help us recognize and understand reality? And what can we learn about our individual approaches to experiencing art?

Examples of assignments:

- individual work includes analyzing and presenting course reading(s), sometimes by using a particular art form; writing descriptive and analytical papers; responding to prepared questions on texts or topics; cross-art production of artwork (documentation of process and work to go into e-portfolio); interviewing students and/or faculty at UConn on class topics/questions
- group work includes analyzing, discussing, and presenting course reading(s), sometimes by using a particular art form; play-acting dialogue between the arts (each member embodying and visualizing methods and codes within individual arts); self-selected groups, depending on student talents and education in the various arts, to produce a traditional artwork in class; producing a short film on a topic discussed in class (as a collaborative project)
- traditional exam formats will be maintained for the final

CA1 Criteria: -The course focuses on “investigations and historical/critical analyses of human experience,” “investigations into the modes of symbolic representation,” and “comprehension and appreciation of written, graphic and/or performance art forms” (Arts and Humanities, CA1)

The course will include Western and non-western materials, art, and texts from around the world, and students will take discussions into an international arena with the help of technology.