

# CONTEMPORARY CONTEMPLATIVE SPIRITUAL ART: RA 1830

F 12:40-3:30

Fall 2014

Room: Mudd 101

Center for Art, Religion, and Education

## INSTRUCTOR CONTACT:

Instructor: Rondall Reynoso

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Office Hours: Available the hour after class or by appointment

## FOUNDATIONAL QUOTES:

Art must not imitate physical life. Art must have a life of its own—a spiritual life

- HANS HOFFMAN

Art is spiritual by its nature in the same way that water by its nature is wet.

- Edward Knippers

Painting is easy when you don't know how, but very difficult when you do.

- Edgar Degas

People err who think my art comes easily to me. I assure you, dear friend, nobody has devoted so much time and thought to composition as I.

- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

The artist must prophesy not in the sense that he foretells things to come, but in the sense that he tells his audience, at the risk of their displeasure, the secrets of their own hearts.

- R.G. Collingwood

There are two kinds of people in the world. There are philosophers and drug addicts. And, Christianity is the drug of choice for a lot of people.

- Jack Crabtree

## COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

Intended for all levels, this course is an art practicum with an integration of readings. Contemplative art takes on many forms and has a long history of spiritual use from writing icons to the works of abstract expressionists such as Mark Rothko. Contemporary artists likewise produce works that are both acts of contemplation for the artists themselves and objects which the viewer's contemplate. For many artists, their studio time is a part of their prayer life. This course engages students with the process of making contemporary art as a contemplative act.

#### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Familiarity with the basics of visual language such as the elements and principles of design. (See Elements and Principles of design below)
- 2) Differentiate between good and bad skills through an awareness of aesthetic principles.
- 3) Develop a personal approach to the art making process.
- 4) Familiarity with work produced by modern and contemporary artists that is for the purpose of spiritual contemplation.
- 5) Familiarity with the various strategies employed by artists to navigate relevant issues.
- 6) In-depth knowledge of one artist and that artists approach to artistic production in light of the issues explored in this course.
- 7) The ability to construct an engaging presentation

#### REQUIRED TEXT:

Readings will be drawn from a wide array of texts and will be made available to students either electronically or in a reader. Additionally, students will be required to select contemplative readings from their tradition.

#### ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Class attendance is mandatory. Due to the rigorous pace of studio classes, it is important you are on time and work for the entire time each class period. Failure to do so is evident in the quality of work produced. Therefore, unexcused absences, tardies and early departures will count against you, since these represent a lack of motivation and work accomplished. A significant portion of each studio assignment should be completed in class allowing the instructor to observe and discuss with the student at different stages of progress, thus allowing for optimal instruction and student development.

- Each unexcused absence beyond one will lower the final grade by 70 points.
- Two unexcused tardies or early departures will be considered an absence.

#### PLAGIARISM POLICY:

Although the research of pertinent visual images and techniques is essential to the creation of artwork, blatant copying of ideas or images will not be tolerated, except as assigned. The complexities of plagiarism as it applies to artwork will be discussed in class. Please consult with the instructor with any questions about or clarifications of this policy.

#### COURSE STRUCTURE:

The semester will consist of four art projects, a PowerPoint presentation, assigned readings, discussion, and a final review.

This studio course meets three hours each week. In addition to the studio sessions, the student is expected to work a great deal outside of class to maximize each assignment.

EVALUATION:

Each art project's grade will be determined by assessing the progress of learning based on the quality of idea, execution, process, and by comparison with the work of peers and professional standards. The projects quality rather than accumulated hours will determine the grade. Projects for critique are due at the beginning of class and must be complete at that time or they will be considered late. Late projects automatically receive a 10% deduction. Projects accepted a week late or more will receive a 50% deduction.

Art Projects- Holistic Rubric

A	Demonstrates excellence in the employment of composition, craft, and concept. There will likely be small issues which could use improvement but no significant failings exist.
B	Demonstrates excellence in the employment of composition, craft, and concept. There are areas which could be improved but not are extremely distracting to the work.
C	Unequal or mediocre employment of composition, craft, and concept. Either all areas are competent but unspectacular or the piece is uneven but holds together minimally.
D	The project is largely problematic. There are some positive elements but by-and-large the project is not successful.
F	The project is unsuccessful compositionally, in craft, and concept.

The final grade will be determined by the total number of points accumulated in the course. Points will be awarded using the following information:

- 400 points from art projects, each project is worth 100 points
- 100 Final Critique- Students are expected to be able to intelligently and critically discuss their work and their development.
- 100 points for power point presentation. The presentation must be at least 15 minutes and on a subject within the scope of this course which has been previously approved by the instructor.
- 100 points from participation.
- The dedicated student may be able to earn additional points by producing more work than is required in the class. Not all work will merit additional points but quality additional work can earn up to 25 points per drawing with a course limit of 75 additional points.

The following scale will be used to determine the final grade:

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Points</b>
<b>A</b>	650-700
<b>A-</b>	630-649
<b>B+</b>	610-629
<b>B</b>	580-609
<b>B-</b>	560-579
<b>C+</b>	540-559
<b>C</b>	510-539
<b>C-</b>	490-509
<b>D+</b>	470-489
<b>D</b>	430-469
<b>D-</b>	410-429
<b>F</b>	0-409

### **Requirements:**

- Completion of all assignments, including studio and outside assignments.
- Having supplies available for use during each class. Not having the appropriate materials to begin working when class starts on the first day of an assignment is an automatic 10 point deduction on the assignment.
- A good attitude. Students who continually complain and disrupt the class may be asked to leave the class and or receive a 20 point deduction for poor behavior.

### SKILL LEVEL AND GOALS

This is a class geared toward non-artists and is introductory in many ways. Therefore, it is an appropriate course for students who are just learning to explore visual language. However, students with more advanced skill will be equally challenged and expected to grow beyond their comfort zone. Whether the student comes to class completely new to art or with years of experience I will seek to work with the student at the student's current level to develop the student's skill and artistic voice.

### CRITIQUES

Critiques are an integral part of studying art. Students typically want honest and helpful feedback on their work. A critique is, in some ways, both an examination and a review. In a studio course, students are presented with problems which they seek to solve in the allotted time. During a critique the professor and the class will discuss the successes and failures in

that effort. Critiques are a necessary component in a student's growth. The critique is about the art work and its relationship to the viewer not the artist. Learning to speak about and analyze art are important skills. Articulating observations about artworks helps students to develop their visual vocabulary.

Understanding how others perceive an artwork is helpful to students and helps students grow in their work. To hear how others perceive one's work helps artists to evaluate if they are communicating effectively. All members of the class are expected to participate enthusiastically in critiques.

#### STUDIO ETIQUETTE

The studio atmosphere should be relaxed and comfortable. The setting is informal because students will be wearing work clothes and they will often be working on their own for large periods of time. However, the room should not be noisy or disruptive. Students will be engaging in dedicated work and in deep concentration. Quiet is the general byproduct of such an environment.

Students should:

- Participate in room set-up and breakdown.
- Clean table, drawing horse, easel, floor, or any other work surface before leaving class. Spray cleaner and paper towels are available.
- Chatting and side conversations should be limited to a volume and frequency that does not distract other students.
- Turn off cell phones during the duration of the class. Please no texting, calling, Facebook, games, etc. during class.
- If you arrive after class begins, enter the room quietly and slip into a work station.
- Please do not leave the room during instruction or critiques.

#### DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

All artists need a good record of their best work. In today's technological world, a digital record can be used in numerous self-promoting arenas. Students in this course should keep a digital record of their work.

#### SUPPLIES:

Each student is expected to furnish their own supplies and tools, and is responsible for securing materials necessary to complete their drawings. The nature of this course leaves a great deal of latitude in the hands of the student as to the nature of the individual art projects. Below are a list of supplies that are often used in introductory studio courses. These supplies are not required but are listed as a guide of possible supplies to consider.

Suggested supplies:

Drawing Pencils (6B, etc)

Erasers (Pink Pearl & kneaded)

Compressed Charcoal

Vine Charcoal  
Charcoal Pencils  
India Ink  
Bamboo Brush/ Ink Brush  
Chalk Pastel  
Oil Pastel  
Water Soluble Wax Pastel  
Citrus (or odorless) Thinner  
1-2" Chip Brush  
Rag  
18" Ruler  
Sketch Pads (minimum 8" x 10")  
Drawing Board  
18" x 24" News Print- Likely will need two or more pads  
18" x 24" Drawing Pad  
Several single sheets of quality drawing paper

## Elements of Design

1. Line- Line is the basic element that refers to the continuous movement of a point along a surface, such as by a pencil or brush. The edges of shapes, forms, and colors also create lines. Lines are the basic building blocks of two dimensional shapes. Every line has length, thickness, and direction. There are curved, horizontal, vertical, diagonal, zigzag, wavy, parallel, dash, and dotted lines.
2. Shape- A shape is an area that stands out from the space next to or around it due to a defined or implied boundary, or because of differences of value, color, or texture. Shapes may show perspective by overlapping. They can be geometric or organic.
3. Value- Value is an element of art that refers to the relationship between light and dark on a surface or object and also helps with Form. It gives objects depth and perception. Value is also referred to as tone.
4. Color- Color is seen either by the way light reflects off a surface. Color and particularly contrasting color is also used to draw the attention to a particular part of the image.
5. Space- Space is the area provided for a particular purpose. Space includes the background, foreground and middle ground. Space refers to the distances or areas around, between or within components of a piece. There are two types of space: positive and negative space. Positive space refers to the space of a shape representing the subject matter. Negative space refers to the space around and between the subject matter.
6. Texture- Texture is perceived surface quality. In art, there are two types of texture: tactile and implied. Tactile texture (real texture) is the way the surface of an object

actually feels. Examples of this include sandpaper, cotton balls, tree bark, puppy fur, etc. Implied texture is the way the surface of an object looks like it feels. This type of texture is typically used by artists when drawing or painting.

7. Form- Form is any three dimensional object. Form can be measured, from top to bottom (height), side to side (width), and from back to front (depth). Form is also defined by light and dark. There are two types of form, geometric (man-made) and natural (organic form). Form defines what 3-D art is. It is that which occupies 3-D space. The actual physical contour of a work, the volume of mass. Form is the complete state of the work.
8. Time- Movement or change through time on the part of the viewer- kinetic, film or sound elements.

### Organizing Principles of Design

1. Unity- *Coherence of the whole*, the sense that all of the parts are working together to achieve a common result; a harmony of all the parts.
  - Repetition- The use of similar design features again and again; pattern.
  - Variety- Variations on a theme.
  - Concept- The elements and principles can be selected to support the intended function of the designed object; the purpose, message, or philosophical point of the object unifies the design.
2. Rhythm- Movements in and out, up and down, flowing and pausing, and sudden changes in size, value or complexity create visual effects that can be compared to music.
  - Linear rhythm- The characteristic flow of the individual line; artists can have a recognizable manner of putting down the lines of their drawings that is a direct result of the characteristic gesture used to make those lines, which, if observed, can be seen to have a rhythm of its own. Linear rhythm is not as dependent on pattern, but is more dependent on timed movement of the viewer's eye.
  - Repetition- The use of patterning to achieve timed movement and a visual "beat". This repetition may be a clear repetition of elements in a composition, or it may be a more subtle kind of repetition that can be observed in the underlying structure of the image.
  - Alternation- A specific instance of patterning in which a sequence of repeating motifs are presented in turn; (short/long; fat/thin; round/square; dark/light).
3. Balance- Visual weight- suggests a degree of lightness or heaviness. To balance a work is to distribute the visual weight of its parts so that the viewer is satisfied the piece is not about to fall over.
  - Symmetrical- Identical parts on each side of the imaginary fulcrum.
  - Approximate- Equivalent but identical forms arranged around the fulcrum line.
  - Asymmetrical- Areas are not identical in either side of a certain vertical axis, but appear to have a balance in visual weight.

Radial- Elements arranged equally around a central point.

All over Pattern- Elements are patterned over the entire surface of the work.

4. Emphasis- Stressing a particular area; make one area dominant. That area may be the largest, brightest, darkest, or the most complex part of the whole.
  - Contrast- Emphasis is established by contrasting an element(s) with the rest of the composition.
  - Isolation- The isolation of a particular element within the composition is used to establish emphasis.
  - Placement- prominent placement of an element establishes emphasis.
  - Absence of focal point- Some work lacks a focal point and thus creates a different sort of emphasis.
5. Proportion- Proportion refers to the relative size and scale of the various elements in a design. The issue is the relationship between objects, or parts, of a whole. When proportions are correct they “feel right” the work as a whole will tend to fall into place.
6. Movement- The eye is moved again and again through the work in a way that does not distract from other principles of design.
7. Economy- The removal of nonessentials to reveal the essence of a visual idea; to reduce a form to its simplest components.

## PAINTING PROJECTS:

### ART PROJECTS

THESE PROJECTS ARE LARGELY OPEN FOR INTERPRETATION. EACH ASSIGNMENT CAN BE SOLVED IN A VARIETY OF WAYS. PART OF THE PROJECT OF THIS COURSE IS TO HELP THE STUDENT THINK THROUGH HOW THE SUBJECTS BELOW CAN BE APPROACHED IN A VISUAL MEDIUM. THE STUDENT'S SOLUTIONS CAN BE REPRESENTATIVE, ABSTRACT, CONCEPTUAL, ETC.

- 1) REPETITION- THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO APPROACH THIS ISSUE FROM REPEATING OBJECTS OR IMAGES TO REPEATING BRUSH STROKES OR PENCIL MARKS. THE IDEA IS TO ALLOW THE REPETITION LEAD TO CONTEMPLATION.
- 2) DEVOTION- DEVOTIONAL OBJECTS ARE TRADITIONALLY SMALL AND PERSONAL. THIS ASSIGNMENT CAN CREATE A DEVOTIONAL OBJECT OR BE A DEVOTIONAL OBJECT IN ITS CREATION OR BOTH.
- 3) GLORY/AWE- THIS ASSIGNMENT EXPLORES THE IDEA OF GLORY, AS IN GOD'S GLORY, AND/OR AWE AND IN THE SUBLIME AWE OF NATURE... OR IT CAN BE INTERPRETED DIFFERENTLY.
- 4) PERSONAL/INTERIORITY- CONTEMPLATION IS BY DEFINITION A PERSONAL AND INTERIOR ACTIVITY. THIS ASSIGNMENT EXPLORES THE REALITIES OF THAT CONNECTION.

PARTICIPATION- EACH STUDENT IS REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE REQUIRED READING AND BRING IN ONE QUESTION OR OBSERVATION FOR DISCUSSION.

POWER POINT- THE STUDENT IS REQUIRED TO DO A 15 MINUTE POWER POINT PRESENTATION ON AN ARTIST WHO ENGAGES IN SPIRITUAL REFLECTION IN THEIR ARTISTIC PRODUCTION.

FINAL CRITIQUE- THE STUDENT MUST BRING TO THE FINAL CRITIQUE THREE WORKS OF ART PRODUCED DURING THE SEMESTER. THE STUDENT WILL DISCUSS THE JOURNEY THEY UNDERTOOK IN THE COURSE AND HOW IT IS REFLECTED IN THE WORK IN WAYS THAT ARE BOTH SUCCESSFUL AND WAYS THAT NEED CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT.

COURSE OUTLINE/ CALENDAR:

Below is a tentative course schedule which may be deviated from somewhat as necessary.

9/5:

Introduction to the course

9/12:

Reading #1, Work in Class

9/19:

Reading #2, Work in Class

9/26:

No Class

10/3:

Critique #1, Readings #3, Work in Class

10/10:

Readings #4, Work in Class

10/17:

Critique #2, Work in Class

10/31:

Readings #5, Work in Class

11/7:

Critique #3

11/14:

Readings #6, Work in Class

11/21:

Critique #4

12/5:

Student Presentations

12/12:

Final Critique

About your Professor:

Rondall Reynoso studied art and art history at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY where he received his M.F.A. in painting and a Masters in art history. Currently, he is in the PhD program in Art & Religion, studying art history and aesthetics, at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, CA. His work has been exhibited in seventy solo and group exhibitions across North America. The venues have been as varied as commercial galleries from Manhattan to California, art centers, churches, museums, colleges, and universities. Also, he has been profiled and his work reviewed across the nation in regional media, including journals, newspapers, television, and radio. Reynoso's formal abstraction deals heavily with metaphors, both sociological and spiritual, including the exploration the boundaries between 2-D and 3-D as a metaphor for the relationship of the corporeal and the spiritual. In 2008, Reynoso was one of seven North American artists selected by the Nagel Institute to take part in a cross cultural seminar in Indonesia from which an international traveling exhibition emerged. From 2007-2012, Reynoso lived in Louisiana where for four years he was the head of the art department at Louisiana College followed by a year teaching at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana. Presently, he teaches at the California College of the Arts; the Graduate Theological Union's Center for the Arts, Religion, and Education; and in the Creative Arts program at William Jessup University.

Website: [www.rondall-reynoso.com](http://www.rondall-reynoso.com)

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