SYLLABUS

ARTH 301-302. History of Exhibitions  
Spring 2009  
Dr. Suzanne Glover Lindsay

Class schedule: Thurs. 1:30-4:30 pm. JAFFE 113

Office Hours: Thurs. 10:30am -12:30pm or by appointment  
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Art exhibitions – public, temporary thematic displays of works in myriad settings– have played prominent, and often dramatic, roles in public life throughout history: as highly visible trophies of military conquest, as sites of trenchant moral commentary about modern society, and as popular entertainment and source of prestigious consumer goods. Long one of the liveliest subjects in art history, they are drawing increasing scrutiny from a variety of professional and scholarly disciplines. This seminar examines their wide-ranging forms and impact in various ways. First, through classroom lecture and group discussion of readings (all in English) to construct an historical and critical frame; second, through field trips throughout Philadelphia, a major art center (primarily the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Penn’s exhibition sites, and various commercial galleries); and third, through discussions with curators and dealers about their exhibitions and with art historians who have published on historical forms. The field trips exercise vital experiential tools introduced in the reading to address crucial questions: how, for instance, do spatial and physical factors—among them building location, building type, installation, lighting—contribute to the complex rhetoric of the exhibition? Other questions range across disciplines: economics (how does an exhibition economically affect a region?) and the cyberworld (how is the internet being used to produce new forms of exhibitions?). The instructor is a leading scholar-curator who has taught frequently at the university over twenty years while at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the National Gallery of Art. She is responsible for major exhibitions of nineteenth-century French art and is now completing a massive study for the National Gallery of the sculpture of Edgar Degas (notably the Little Dancer Aged Fourteen)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Background

Background in art history is useful but not required; diverse perspectives and interests are especially welcome here.
Course Tasks

Group discussions of readings, field trips (weekday and weekend); one informal two-page double-spaced essay on a field trip of choice; informal oral presentations in workshops; formal talk with visual images (probably 20 minutes, depending on size of the class) expanded into a formal final research paper.

Readings

Electronic copies of readings available to registered students on the Blackboard course site (www.library.upenn.edu). Hard-copy sources are on Reserve in Fisher Fine Arts Library.

Papers

One informal essay on topics drawn from field trips due the week after the field trip; final paper (fifteen to twenty double-spaced pages with notes) due no later than May 7. Purely electronic submission is preferred and, with some topics, may be the best solution.

Oral Presentations

10-15-minute informal reports (images or handouts may be needed for certain topics, such as maps for issues surrounding geographic location, for workshops, a section of a class that compares and discusses individual findings surrounding a common topic of that day drawn from a student’s chosen research topic for the semester. At the semester’s end, a formal presentation (20-30 minutes, depending on enrollment) to be converted into the final research paper with notes.

Evaluation Priorities for Grades

Collaboration and constructive participation in discussion will count equally with individual tasks.

OUTSIDE RESOURCES

In alphabetical order:

Larry Becker and Heidi Nivling, Larry Becker Contemporary Art, Philadelphia
Suzanne Glover Lindsay

John House, Annenberg Professor in the History of Art, Courtauld Institute of Art, London; currently Kress Professor, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA), National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Joseph J. Rishel, Gisela and Dennis Alter Senior Curator of European Painting and Sculpture Before 1900, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Carl B. Strehlke, Adjunct Curator of the John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art

COURSE SCHEDULE  SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Week One: Thursday January 15  Introduction to the Course: overview and visit to nearby university exhibitions.

Week Two: January 22: The Exhibition in History: Lecture and group discussion of readings.

Readings:


Week Three: January 29: Rhetoric of the Exhibition Space: Group discussion of readings.

Readings:
Suzanne Glover Lindsay


**Weekend [Sunday]:** Field trip to different exhibitions [Possibilities: Institute of Contemporary Art (purely contemporary exhibition), University Museum (archaeological and ethnographic), Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts), for in-situ discussion of issues raised by the readings. If selected, the two-page essay on a topic growing out of this field trip is due no later than February 5.

**Week Four: February 5:** The Exhibition and the Market. Auctions, dealers, city, urban design, economics of the city. Lecture and group discussion of readings: WORKSHOP: Discuss issues surrounding this topic for individual choices of exhibitions or related themes

Readings:


“ The Social and Economic Impact of the Arts on Philadelphia” (from Artslynx.org/aotl/econ.htm

[www.artsusa.org/information_services/research/services/economic_impact/default.asp](http://www.artsusa.org/information_services/research/services/economic_impact/default.asp).
**Week Five: February 12**: Presentation at the PMA by Carl Strehlke about his forthcoming exhibition of early Spanish painting and sculpture (2010). If chosen, the two-page essay on a topic growing out of this field trip is due no later than the following class, February 19.

Weekend: Field trip to Philadelphia commercial galleries (not open on Sundays) either that weekend (Saturday February 14) or the next.

**Week Six: February 19**: Gallery tour and conversation with Joseph J. Rishel in *Cézanne and Beyond*, an exhibition opening February 26. If selected, the two-page essay on a topic growing out of this field trip, if chosen, is due no later than the following class, February 26.

**Week Seven: February 26**: Larry Becker and Heidi Nivling, Larry Becker Contemporary Art, Philadelphia: Conversations with dealers of contemporary avant-garde art. Preparation: website information. If selected, the two-page essay on a topic growing out of this field trip, if chosen, is due no later than March 5.

**Week Eight: March 5**: The Exhibition and Politics: Lecture, group discussion of readings; workshop.

Readings:


**Week Nine: March 12 [SPRING BREAK] NO CLASS**

**Week Ten: March 19**: The Exhibition and Its Makers: The Artist, the Curator, and Institutional Forces; Group Discussion of readings; workshop.

Readings:
Suzanne Glover Lindsay


**Week Eleven: March 26:** John House: Informal lecture on “Exhibiting Art in the Nineteenth Century” and discussion. [may switch to April 2].

**Week Twelve: April 2** The Exhibition and the Public: lecture and group discussion of reading; workshop. March 26 and April 2 programs may be switched due to John House’s schedule.

Readings:


**Week Thirteen: April 9:** Workshop: New forms of exhibitions beyond “real” materials, space and time: virtual exhibitions. [or oral presentations]

**Week Fourteen: April 16** ORAL PRESENTATIONS

**Week Fifteen: April 23** LAST CLASS ORAL PRESENTATIONS

**Week Sixteen: April 30 [READING WEEK] NO CLASS**

**Week Seventeen: FINAL EXAM WEEK. Last day for submission of final papers: 7 May**