

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY  
FALL SEMESTER 2008**

**EDUC 456-4  
MODELS OF THE CONTEMPORARY ARTS IN  
EDUCATION  
(E100)**

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TUESDAY 4:30-8:20 EDB 7600F

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**PREREQUISITE:** 60 hours of credit

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines the forms, processes, values and conceptions of the contemporary visual arts and relates these ideas to more traditional perspectives and to the development and practice of art education in schools. We will look at the main ideas, themes, approaches, media and guiding assumptions of contemporary art.

Contemporary art involves ways of working that are frequently conceptual, improvisational, exploratory, and interdisciplinary. Such art is often personal, process-oriented, relativist, reflective and collaborative. It tends to focus on meaning rather than form or beauty; uses a wide variety of materials and skills, and can employ found materials and objects, assemblage, mixed media, performance, photography, as well as traditional media such as drawing and painting. Such art often deconstructs the grand narratives of modernism (truth, beauty, the fine arts, artist as creative genius, judgments of taste), and explores social and aesthetic issues such as the nature of art, aesthetic quality, uniqueness, consumerism, politics, ecology, gender, sexuality, the market, technology, culture, language, the media, identity, etc. The course examines modern and postmodern approaches to art with a view to providing a balanced understanding that is of value to education. Through readings, discussions, and art activities, students explore the range, meaning and value of art today, and ways in which it can be developed in the school curriculum. Various perspectives and backgrounds are welcome to be brought forth, as we explore how engaging in the arts, both as responders to works and as active makers, can open up and enrich the realms of learning and teaching. Participation in class activities is essential. Some basic art materials required.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- To become familiar with the work of contemporary visual artists.
- To learn about and respond to theoretical issues in art today, as well as to meaning-oriented approaches to the teaching of art.
- To engage in the practice of art-making in a reflective way.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Art activities and projects, 40%
2. Reading Logs and in-class discussion, 30%
3. Term paper, 30%

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Freeland, Cynthia (2002). *But is it Art?* New York: Oxford University Press.  
ISBN 0 19 210055 6 pbk

Walker, Sydney, R. (2001) *Teaching Meaning in Artmaking*. Worcester: Davis Publications. ISBN  
87192 583 4 pbk

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