



ARTH 2313: Twentieth-Century Art II The University of Texas at El Paso Spring 2026

CRN: 20973

Class Meeting Times: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, 12:30 to 1:20 pm. This class meets in person.

Location: Fox Fine Arts A458 (fourth floor of the Art wing)

Professor: Dr. Melissa Warak (she/her; please call me Dr. or Professor)

Email: mcwarak@utep.edu

Office: Fox Fine Arts A454

Office Phone: (915) 747-7849 (during office hours)

Student/office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:00-3:30 pm. Sign up for office hour meetings here: <https://calendly.com/warakofficehours/15min>.

COURSE MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY

All materials for the course, including PowerPoints and PDFs of course texts, will be uploaded to the course Blackboard page. Students will need a strong internet connection and a computer (either a laptop or a desktop) in order to study the images on a larger screen. Google Chrome is the recommended browser for Blackboard. UTEP students may check out laptops and wifi hot spots from the UTEP library.

ABOUT YOUR PROFESSOR

Dr. Melissa Warak is an Associate Professor of Art History and specializes in the relationship of music and sound to art of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Dr. Warak is a proud Texan and a native of Houston. She earned a B.A. in English literature and art history from Vanderbilt University, and her M.A. and Ph.D. in art history from the University of Texas at Austin. Her current research focuses on the ways that visual artists from the mid-fifties to late sixties employed musical models in their work. She is the author of *Sonic Sculpture and the Performative Impulse: Sounding Things Out* (Routledge, 2025) and is working on a new book on the sung voice in contemporary art. Other research interests include the history of abstraction, spirituality in modern and contemporary art, science and technology in modern and contemporary art, and disability representation in art. Her research has been supported by grants and fellowships from the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, the Getty Research Institute, the Royal Music Association of the United Kingdom, The Menil Collection in Houston, the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the Yale University Art Galleries, the Tate Modern, the Grand Palais in Paris, the Kress Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, and the National Science Foundation, among others.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an intermediate (2000-level) history of art after 1945, periods generally referred to as postwar, postmodern, and contemporary art. Media to be studied include photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, performance, lands arts, video, installation, ceramics, fiber, and new media. We will study art in a roughly chronological manner, but with themes in mind, particularly as we approach art made in a globalized context. As a content advisory, students should be aware that some of the images we will discuss in class deal frankly with racism, sexism, politics, violence, war, religion, the AIDS epidemic, and sexual trauma, among other difficult themes. They are not shown for shock value. These works are intended to challenge the comfort level of the viewer and discussion about them is important. Speaking to how such images make you feel is vital, as this deepens our understanding of their power. If you have concerns about certain content, email Dr. Warak or visit office hours so we can discuss how to approach it in your studies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

During this course, students will develop their understanding of the history of art after 1945 and acquire skills essential to the professional art historian. These include the following:

1. Conducting visual analysis, scholarly writing, research in primary and secondary texts, understanding multidisciplinary research methodologies, and writing formal analysis and interpretive texts.
2. Analyzing and critically evaluating ideas and arguments.
3. Gaining knowledge of the terminology, trends, and methodologies used to study postwar, postmodern, and contemporary art.
4. Applying course material in terms of improving aesthetic appreciation, problem solving, broader cultural literacy, and facilitating further coursework in the arts and humanities.

COURSE STRUCTURE

1) LECTURE AND DISCUSSION. The class will meet in person but may have some online learning days. Plan to use the full class time each day. The course is a mix of lecture and discussion, so expect to take part in the class discussions.

2) QUIZZES. We will have one practice comparison quiz and six reading quizzes throughout the semester. See the quiz policy below for details.

3) WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS. This course has two short writing assignments and one longer one. The small assignments include a visual analysis worksheet to help prepare for exams and a worksheet based on a visit to the El Paso Museum of Art. We will also have some in-class writing exercises. Students will write one research paper of about five+ pages in length. The assignments and other materials are compiled in a Blackboard tab labeled "Written Assignments."

5) EMAIL. Dr. Warak will email the class regularly using the UTEP email addresses on file and will try to respond to student emails within twenty-four hours. Please remember to treat emails as professional correspondence. Any course announcements on Blackboard will also be emailed to students.

7) GRADEBOOK. All course grades will be updated on the Gradebook on Blackboard. Students should keep track of their progress through the semester.

8) STUDENT HOURS. Student hours (also called **office hours**) are a time for students to get to know their professor, talk about the course content in further depth, discuss concerns or grades, or to learn more about their field of study or graduate study. Office hours are for you, so take advantage

whenever you need these kinds of interactions. Dr. Warak will hold office hours from 2:00 to 3:30 pm on Mondays and Wednesdays via Zoom conferencing, in person, or on the telephone. To make an appointment for office hours, go [here](#). Sign up for as many fifteen-minute time slots as you need. This will send an email to both of us to confirm, as well as a Zoom meeting link if you choose to meet online. Email Dr. Warak if you would like to create an appointment outside of office hours.

GRADING POLICY

This course will be graded on a **scale of 500 points**.

Syllabus Quiz	5 points
Visual Analysis Worksheet:	12 points
Practice Comparison Quiz:	23 points
Quizzes (6):	50 points (lowest quiz free)
EPMA Worksheet:	10 points
In-class Writing 1:	10 points
In-class Writing 2:	10 points
In-class Writing 3:	10 points
Exam 1:	80 points
Exam 2:	90 points
Exam 3:	90 points
Paper Prospectus:	10 points
Paper:	100 points

There will be extra credit opportunities available during the semester.

Note: You will see that the Blackboard page allows for 510+ points, but this accounts for the free quiz grade and any extra credit. You are graded only out of 500 points. Thus, this is the point breakdown for grades:

450 – 500 points:	A
400 – 449 points:	B
350 – 399 points:	C
300 – 349 points:	D
000 – 299 points:	F

TEXTS / COURSE READINGS

There is no textbook to purchase for the course. Selected articles and essays will be posted as PDFs to Blackboard under the “Readings” tab and are designated with a (PDF) in the course schedule. Readings for each day should be completed *before* class begins. All readings are eligible for the exams, even if students are not quizzed over them.

TAKING NOTES IN CLASS

It is critical that students take detailed notes in class. Exam material will come from ideas discussed in class; use the readings as supplements to the lectures and discussions. Completing the readings will

not take the place of attendance and participation in class. I recommend bringing a notebook designated just for this course if you hand-write your notes, but you may use a laptop to type them if you wish. Taking notes by hand is still the recommended format and many studies show that the act of writing by hand helps one retain information and ideas. It is important that your laptop use does not distract other students and Dr. Warak may ask you to hand-write notes if laptop use presents a problem. Using bullet points will help you write down more information. Students will find basic identifying information for each work shown (artist name, title, date) and vocabulary terms on the PowerPoint presentation slides. Write the date at the beginning of your notes so you know what we covered each day. PowerPoints will be uploaded to Blackboard after each class day. Students are responsible for acquiring notes and announcements made during missed classes, so make a friend and exchange contact information. Dr. Warak will not provide class notes to students. See Dr. Warak for help taking notes.

EXAM POLICY AND STRUCTURE

Exams are not open note or open book, so there is some memorization of the slide list involved. Think of the exams as a way to show off what you have learned. Exams will be taken in class (with paper provided) and are based primarily on lecture content but may ask students to discuss how a particular reading (or readings) illuminate an artwork. Question types may include any of the following: fill-in-the-blank, single slide discussions, compare/contrast between two works of art, long answer (2 paragraphs). Works on the slide list are the only ones required for identification on the exams. We will review for each exam in class for optional bonus points. The exams are not cumulative. Makeup exams will be allowed only with documentation of an emergency from the Dean of Students. Contact Dr. Warak ASAP if you will miss an exam.

READING QUIZZES

Our reading quizzes are worth 10 points each and are **not open note**. Quizzes are timed at ten minutes each and will be taken at the beginning of the class period, so make sure you are on time to class. Quizzes will cover only the reading(s) listed for the specific quiz day. See the schedule for quiz days and the quiz study guide (on Blackboard under the Readings tab) for help in thinking through what you should study for each quiz. The quizzes will likely include a combination of short answer, fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, and true/false questions. To prepare for these, you should make sure to read the texts carefully and take notes on them (this will also help with studying for the exams). You may find it useful to skim the readings once for the larger issues at stake and then take notes during a second and more careful reading. Be sure that you can identify the author's arguments and the primary evidence used to support them. As you read, think critically about what might be useful about the texts for that day's topics. If you know in advance that you will be absent on a quiz day, email Dr. Warak to take it before that class day. There are no makeup quizzes, but every student will get one free quiz grade (no points removed).

IN-CLASS WRITING

We will have several short writing exercises in class to help with the paper project. Students need to purchase one basic composition book only for in-class writing, though it may also be used to organize ideas for the paper assignment. Students who cannot write by hand should receive CASS

accommodations to complete the work. Students who miss class in-class writing due to absence should email Dr. Warak by 5:00 pm on the missed day if they would like an opportunity to make up the assignment.

LATE WORK POLICY

Every assignment explains the corresponding late work policy.

*****COURSE POLICIES*****

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy in short:

Attendance is required and will be taken daily.

DO NOT COME TO CLASS IF YOU ARE SICK. Wear a mask if you are recovering from an illness.

Allowed absences without penalty (no documentation needed) = **4 absences**

Tardies or leaving early = **½ absence**

Automatic drop = **7 absences total or 3 absences before the course census date (Feb. 4)**

There are **no excused or unexcused absences**; you just get the four for free. See [here](#) for info about UTEP COVID-19 testing.

Policy in detail:

Class attendance is a requirement and use of the full class period is expected. Make sure you (and only you) sign the attendance sheet at the beginning of class every day. Do not sign the attendance sheet for anyone else or ask anyone to sign for you.

You are allowed **four absences** for *any reason* without grading consequences. There are no “excused” or “unexcused” absences. It is up to your discretion how you use your free absences, including for illness. You do not need to show documentation or doctor’s notes unless requested. You do not need to notify Dr. Warak in advance except in the case of a religious holy day (see below). **More than four absences from class will result in a lowering of your overall grade by fifteen points per absence** (remember that this class is graded on a scale of 500 points). In the case of an illness or emergency that causes you to miss more than three consecutive class days, email Dr. Warak ASAP. Students who are more than **ten minutes late or leave early** without permission will be given half credit for attendance. **Tardies (half credits)** will figure into the absence count. The absences column on the Gradebook section of Blackboard keeps a running tally. You can access the attendance record on Blackboard to see which days you have missed or were late/left early.

COURSE DROP POLICY

Seven absences will result in an automatic drop from the course; this includes tardies and excused absences from COVID. Students with three or more absences by the census date (Feb. 4) will be dropped.

COPYRIGHT OF THIS COURSE

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the

use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated or shared with other students or websites.

FERPA AND EMAIL POLICY

This course adheres to [Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act](#) (FERPA) regulations. I will always email the entire class through Blackboard. I will never post identifiable information about students, and I will not discuss specifics of your student performance with anyone without a FERPA waiver signed by you. FERPA regulations forbid faculty from exchanging emails with students about grade numbers specifically. This is because email is considered an insecure medium and may be hacked. Make an office hours appointment if you have a question or concern about letter grades or numbers. However, you may email more generally about improving in the course.

LAPTOPS, TABLETS, AND PHONES

Students may use computers and tablets to take notes during class, but please keep phones out of sight. Please use electronics professionally. If you need to use your phone during class (even to text), please step out of the classroom briefly. There are power outlets all along the walls. Lectures may not be recorded without permission from Dr. Warak and/or CASS accommodations.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

Please be respectful of other students in the classroom. The classroom door will be open for about five minutes after class begins; after ten minutes, tardies will be given. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom may result in a directive to leave class or being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with UTEP policy. You may bring a drink only (no food), and it must have sealable lid. If you need to use your phone for any reason, please step outside of the classroom. We have shelves in the classroom for items that will not fit under your desk.

SAFEASSIGN

Most written documents will be submitted through SafeAssign links on Blackboard. Students should submit the file type indicated in the assignments (.docx or .pdf). Uploading a document to SafeAssign sometimes takes several minutes, so give yourself some buffer time in case there is an upload error. SafeAssign is also a plagiarism detection tool, and you can use this to your advantage by pulling an Originality Report for work that you upload. SafeAssign provides UTEP faculty with a time stamp for each submission, as well as an Originality Report.

AI POLICY

UTEP officially considers the use of generative AI (artificial intelligence) as a form of plagiarism unless otherwise directed by the professor. The use of AI programs for any assignment is prohibited in this class. All written work will be run through AI detection software; any assignment suspected to have used AI will be sent to the Office of Community Standards (<https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/standards/>) and assessed for academic dishonesty at the university level. At the minimum, this would result in a zero for any assignment on which UTEP has determined that AI was used.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic dishonesty – including the use of AI on assignments – or cheating will result in referral to the Office of Community Standards and will incur harsh penalties, including failure of the assignment, of the course, or further disciplinary action determined by the university. Please do not waste your time trying it; expend your energy on doing the work instead. Any student who must cheat in order to pass a class does not deserve a degree from UTEP because it has not been earned honestly. All students are expected to engage in their academic pursuits in a professional manner and to maintain honesty and integrity. Sometimes, students commit academic dishonesty without knowing it, but ignorance is not an excuse. All students are responsible for knowing the requirements of academic honesty set forth by UTEP. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty. See the UTEP policy on academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/standards/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html>.

POLICY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, PREGNANT STUDENTS, AND STUDENT-PARENTS

Accommodations will be made for students with limitations due to disabilities if they are registered with the [Center for Accommodations and Support Services \(CASS\)](#) and procure the proper documentation: (telephone: (915) 747-5148). Students with documented disabilities should make sure that the professor receives the appropriate paperwork from CASS within the first week of class. Please note that CASS is available to help students with any disabilities, documented illness (including anxiety, depression, and PTS), and in the case of short-term disability (broken bones, etc.). UTEP has a [Student Pregnancy and Parenting Nondiscrimination Policy](#), which may allow for some accommodations through CASS. Please note that I use the Atkinson Hyperlegible or Calibri fonts on course documents because these are the most accessible for students with learning and vision disabilities.

POLICY FOR STUDENT ABSENCES ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Section 51.911(a)(2) defines a religious holy day as “a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20 ...”. See your professor at least a week in advance if you intend to miss class in observance of a religious holy day.