**Syllabus** ART 6810-1 Fall 2017 Course #5956
MFA Seminar
3 hours credit
Tuesdays, 9:10-12:05 ART 170 (or as announced)
Maureen O'Hara Ure
Professor (Lecturer)
Office: ART 366
Office hour: Thurs 3:30-4:30 pm for drop-ins. Otherwise, By Appointment
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**Course Description:** Awaiting approved TEXT from Prof. Kim Martinez/ CFA. Description has not yet been composed for catalogue

**Course Objectives:** To improve the quality of studio graduate students’ thinking and writing about contemporary art practice (with Creative Process as the centering topic for the semester.) To address practical concerns for the professional studio artist. To direct students to resources for teaching their first University courses. To begin consideration of whether to (and how to) pursue teaching opportunities in higher education after graduation.

**Teaching & Learning Methods:** Art 6810 will be conducted as a Seminar requiring excellent, on-time attendance and active participation in all discussions. Arrive each session well-prepared to tackle the assigned readings, having marked any passages of interest, as you will be expected to contribute your insights in class.

Some weeks I will start off by having you respond briefly to a written prompt on assigned reading(s) or topics. I will use those Quick Response sheets as one way to assess your out-of-class preparation & engagement with course content. After reviewing the outline for Seminar I propose the first meeting, I encourage you to suggest other topics of interest you wish us to address this term.

Please maintain the folder provided for this class, saving all handouts, drafts of your written work, etc. and bring folder each week in case our discussion returns to a previous topic.

Late work will neither receive edits nor full credit, but skipping any assignment will lower your grade in Seminar. (I may move a given deadline back — e.g. a topic I expected to tackle in mid-October may move to November — but I will not make deadlines on this syllabus or announced in class any earlier than stated.) If you are absent from class, written assignments are still due (emailed to me in doc or docx format) at regular class time, and are to be handed in later to my mailbox or Messages envelope on my studio door in hard copy.

There will be many handouts throughout the term. In addition, several assigned readings will be available via Marriott Library Course Reserves (accessed through CIS login, O’Hara Ure, ART 6810.) When preparing for a next Seminar’s discussion, please
either print a copy or bring to class on a device. Some docs may be too complex for small screens.

**Participation/ Attendance**

Excellent attendance, participation, & engagement with discussions are required in this graduate-level course.

**Faculty & Student Responsibilities**

To provide the best situation to foster learning & to facilitate the exchange of ideas, we will maintain a respectful, collegial environment in class & studio. Kindly turn off cell phones and other electronic devices during Seminar. (Exception: e-readers in lieu of paper texts.)

Check email frequently throughout the week, as I will forward notices of opportunities as I receive them, and may answer queries about assignments etc. through email.

After each Seminar, I will email you updates on upcoming assignments & opportunities which I announced in class.

As your schedules allow, I will expect each of you to make maximum use of opportunities with any Department visitors this semester. (There will be several formal talks as well as lunches and studio visits offered to you throughout the year. Sign up for all or most of these offerings.)

**Calendar**

Aug 22  Intro to course (and handout outlining basics.) Questionnaire on your background & on interests you would like to see addressed to help me design semester’s content. For next Seminar, read Lamott, Bird by Bird, Intro through p.27 and prepare to respond next session. Quick Response #1 due tomorrow, 1-hour effort to this prompt: *In your choice of 1st or 3rd person, provide the College with a 2-paragraph introduction to you and your work.*

Hand in your most recent artist’s statement (without edits) next Seminar. I will use this as a starting point in determining the level of writing in this group.

Aug 29  Extended metaphor, a statement by poet Katharine Coles read aloud. First reading of Lamott discussed. Gittins Gallery visit as a group to consider problems posed by this space for January MFA Interim Show & for solo thesis shows. Communication in art introduced as a topic to be developed further next Seminar. Current UMoCA and UMFA shows assigned for discussions future Seminars. (At assigned exhibits, always consider not only the work but its presentation: placement, lighting, signage etc.) David Salle chapter from How to See assigned for next class.

Sep 5  Lamott, cont’d, including her praise of the “Shitty 1st Draft.” (Discussion of vulgar speech in your written work eg artist’s statements & when justified.) Doctorow metaphor
explored. Issue of the Artist’s Voice. Salle reading discussed. Quick Response #2. Upcoming
guest artist dates.
Urgency: having something to say & need to say it. (Compare Coles’s statement with
one of our own.)
Obscenity: when can it be a good thing (eg privacy, giving artist time & space to work out
personal issues) & when does it risk lack of engagement of audience & artist?
Communication: who is or is not motivated by this in his/her art? Come prepared to offer a
contemp. artist whose work you respect who does seem to have something to communicate
(beyond the merely aesthetic).
FAF application due in Oct. Seminar can be a clearing house for process.
Prepare to present some Shitty 1st Draft (likely small, likely confused new studio piece)
after break.

Sep 12  Your response to UMFA Spencer Finch & Las Hermanas Iglesias?
Productivity: anything happening yet in your studio? And if not, why not?
Continue Lamott to 171. Handouts: WS DiPiero & David Shields on the artist’s
temperament & life.
Clarification on how to use me as TA Mentor, especially Fall term. Do the classroom
assistant TAs have any issues to present to group (or in private to me)? Be more proactive
coming up with ways for your prof to use you so this is meaningful preparation for your own
future teaching. Set Oct. appointment to view TAs with their own courses in the classroom.
Guest YAN Xing speaks tomorrow at 4 30. All should try to attend & sign up for studio
visit & lunch. When you go to talk, imagine you are the one giving such a talk in the near future.

Sep 19  Response to YAN Xing? Report from Saltgrass event & new studio facility.
Feedback on your performance so far in Seminar.
Discussion, Lamott, handouts, etc. Topic of Qualities in Artists You Admire introduced.
Clock Your Week exercise introduced. (Keep contemporaneous notes of how you use the next 6
days & bring sheet filled in to discuss next Seminar.) Topic of The Sublime introduced by student.
Look it up & come ready to discuss next Seminar.
For 11/14, screen 55 min. Kentridge video, Anything is Possible

Sep 26  Guest Lori Nelson for casual chat, including her use of social media. She speaks
tomorrow, UMFA 4:30. Lori is part of the NYC Governor’s Is. Residency staff & shows in
Brooklyn, LA etc.
Etsuko’s show opens tonight, & she speaks 10/20 at 6 pm
Postponed to next week due to lack of preparation & contemporaneous notes: how you
are using your time. Also postponed, your understanding of term the sublime. Prepare Lamott to
237.
Handout, Influences. Your less-than-one-page typed response due 10/3. Spend as much
time thinking about exercise as writing.
Comments from J. Diggle re need to talk with him ASAP about 2nd yr students’ shows.
Thank you notes to all guests encouraged. Email is better than nothing, but....
See before next week: Cities of Conviction, UMOCA. Director Anderson will be a guest in
October.
Prepare for 10/31: your stance on Cultural Appropriation in the Visual Arts. Research
Dana Schutz/ Whitney Biennial controversy.
Oct 3  Hand in your response to Influences query. Quick Response #3 to UMOCA show & your understanding of _The Sublime_.

   Time: are you the grad student who better use break to get serious, or the grind who would be wise to take some time off? Or would break be a good time to try something new & scary in the studio?

   Qualities in Artists You Admire, contd.

   An argument for sketchbooks: examples from prof. & some grads

   Last discussion Lamott. Start _7 Days in the Art World_ for 10/24.

   Floorplan of Gittins dispensed. (The Interim Show in January)

   Reactions to Lori Nelson visit & presentation? Comments on growth of MFA programs since the late 60s and expectation the artist is articulate, a good talker & thinker. Art world can be small, even generous at times...Start building your mailing list with addresses I give you for guests.

   Handouts: 1st year project, a creative writing exercise, and 2nd yr project, a proposal for how to use Gittins Gallery, as though applying for a show there. Due date 11/28.

   Next Seminar, bring your new raw idea (Shitty 1st Draft) to present.

Oct 17 New raw works-in-progress presented by each of you.

   Handout, Eugene Tachinni’s response to the Influences question (from Grad Crit several years ago). Compare his urgency with your own. Comment on copyrighted material, to be further explored in November. Keep reading _7 Days..._ to p 73 for 10/24.

   Annette Mehr opening Thurs. Her talk is at 5:30 & most should try to attend. Recent history of less-than-stellar attendance by peers at grads’ shows. (Note relatively new requirement MFA students do a presentation, terrific preparation for academic job & other interview situations.)

   Recommended: Prof. Ed Bateman speaks 10:30 Fri, JTB 310

Oct 24 Quick Response #4, your take on Annette Mehr’s talk. Discussion. Voted yes on whether to share these written comments with her.

   Hand in your TA Hours Worked sheet filled in and totaled. Reminder: contract is for 10 hrs/wk for at least 15 weeks.

   Open Studios tomorrow night. Strategies for getting the most out of experience.

   Suggested again you mention to your professors & others to increase attendance.

   Proposal Writing. Many samples introduced. Related Issue: Resumes and CVs.

   Folder of dozens of examples, good bad and the ugly, collected over the years. Record-keeping: have some way to track all these credits & update resume regularly.

   Comment on resume-padding (in the sometimes very small art world.)

   Today, discussion of _7 Days..._ to p 73.

   Prepare for next week: comments for UMOCA Director & your take on Cultural Appropriation controversy. Start with researching controversy re Dana Schutz entry to Whitney Biennial.

   Postponed to November, discussion of teaching on the college level (including the current job market). Reports from Will & Natalie on their first semester.

   Recommended: Prof. Wendy Wischer speaks 9:40 Fri, JTB 310

Oct 31 (Postponed to November: today’s class topics & guest due to campus emergency, including guest, Kristian Anderson, UMOCA Director. Investigate the AiR program, a good transition from grad school. (Justin Watson & Shawn Porter 2 recent participants.)
Your experiences at Open Studios last week?
Cultural Appropriation, discussion/ defense of your position
Due 11/7 from lst year students: your brief (handwritten ok, phrases ok) description of your general plans for how to approach final project.
Recommended: Prof. Al Denyer presents at 10:35 am Fri in JTB 310.

NOTE LESS DETAIL from this point forward as sending this at end of October & I don’t fill in a full calendar ahead of time, preferring to develop it in concert with students as term progresses.

Nov 7 Change of venue to studio of David Brothers (recent Joan Mitchell awardee & one-person show at UMOCA.)
  Catching up on course content: Prepare responses to topics of past weeks for remaining November Seminars. We will vote on whether to omit William Kentridge video requirement due to end-of-semester busy-ness.
  Recommended today, Saturday: Illuminate Salt Lake! Multiple downtown venues including Gateway (Wischer Fri 5 to 10 pm), UMOCA, Eccles Theatre Plaza.

Nov 14 Quick Response #5 to some of recent assigned readings & to Kentridge video before discussion. (As time allows, I may show some images from 2 of his recent NYC shows.) Return to topics postponed from previous 3 weeks.
  Titles considered. (Have you ever had a just-right and smart title for a piece? Strategies.)
  Rejection. (Anyone rejected from Utah ‘17 show?)

Nov 21 Guest, Prof. Kelsey Harrison
  Legal concerns for the studio artist: contracts, copyright, censorship. In addition, a few tax basics for those (likely not all of you) who will become a small business.

Nov 28 1st year students: hand in 7 copies of your Creative Writing exercise. 2nd year students: provide hard copy and pdf of your proposal for how to use space of Gittins Gallery for a solo show. All Seminar students will receive a copy of 1 Creative Writing exercise & mark up copy with responses & hand in next Seminar.
  Quick Response #6 to end-of-semester readings, topics.
  Sign up for potluck brunch, 25 R Street, last Seminar. Bring Seminar folders & text & prepare as per usual for discussion.

Dec 5 Change of venue, potluck. Last discussion.

Course fees: $10 (For lecture supplies, handouts & guests’ expenses)

Required Texts (in addition to dozens of short-format assigned readings)
A. Bird by Bird, any edition ok
Lamott, Anchor, NYC
Evaluation methods & criteria
I will note your attendance, and the level of your preparation for & participation each week. I will consider how you performed in brief written responses to readings or other assigned discussion topics, and factor that evidence of your overall preparation into your final grade. Your performance on the final written project (due November 28) will be a major contributor to your letter grade.

In this graduate-level course, it is my expectation that the quality of preparation, contributions in class, and written material of all or most students will earn final grades of A or A-; B-range grades will indicate a lower-than-expected level of engagement with Seminar and/or lower-than-graduate-school-level written work, but will be adequate to receive graduate credit for this course.

ADA Statement: The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services & activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disabilities Services, 162 Olpin Union Bldg., 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you & instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All information in this course can made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Wellness Statement
Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc, can interfere with a student’s ability to succeed & thrive. For helpful resources, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 801 581-7776

Addressing Sexual Misconduct
Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran’s status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677(COPS).

NOTE: Any items on this syllabus may be amended by announcement in class & on the regularly updated calendar to be emailed to you and posted on my studio door, ART 366.