Exhibitions: A History, A Theory, An Exploration

Class code
IDSEM-UG 9151-001, ARTH-UA 9850-001

Instructor Details
Dr. Florencia Malbrán
fmm234@nyu.edu

Class Details
Fall 2017
Location Aula Piazzola

Thursdays, 3:30 PM - 6:45 PM

Prerequisites

Class Description
Exhibitions are spaces of knowledge, experience, and entertainment. This course studies the methods, functions, and conditions of exhibition practice, through visual and textual analysis as well as exhibition visits. Although the history of exhibitions and museums, from the 18th to 21st century, will provide an underlying basis for this course, special attention will be paid to the present. Through the lens of curatorial studies, the changing conceptions of the work of art, art’s origin, and its functions in Latin America will also be charted. We will visit a variety of exhibitions on view in the city of Buenos Aires when class will be on-site in order to develop critical skills and address the following questions: What are the major theoretical and practical issues at stake in different kinds of exhibitions, and how can we perceive their significance? What is the relationship between the curator and artist/s? What role does museum architecture play in creating a context for experiencing exhibitions? What are some illuminating interactions between exhibitions and contemporary thought? Finally, what is an exhibition? Readings will include essays by curators, writers, and critics such as Walter Benjamin, Jorge Luis Borges, Michael Brenson, Brian O’Doherty and Mari Carmen Ramírez.
Desired Outcomes

• Students will learn about the ways in which artworks are presented and framed. Since exhibitions are the medium through which most art becomes known, students will moreover engage with contemporary art in its own right. First examining what is an exhibition, the course will go on to ask what is art, how it is related to our cultural history, and how it can configure possible futures.

• Students will also learn how to analyze and interpret significant exhibitions, works of art, and texts. Overall, students will be asked to be open by being receptive to new ideas, that is, new art (and new exhibitions) introducing different views, voices and perspectives on our present.

• In placing emphasis on Latin American contemporary art, students will learn to reflect on their own assumptions and ideas about geographically or culturally unfamiliar societies.

Students will read and write about exhibitions with a critical point of view that displays depth of thought, is mindful of theoretical traditions, and demonstrates personal engagement. Debate will be encouraged through the unique lens of theoretical discussions (ensuring that scholarship and research are part of the fabric of the course) combined with on-site observations and case studies.

Assessment Components

Participation and preparation: 22% (throughout)
Written responses: 38% (varies)
Final Paper: 40% (December 15)

Students must come to each class having read the material carefully, and be prepared to speak intelligently. Participation in class discussion is essential and only possible if students do the readings.

A student who is late or not in class cannot take an active part in learning; lateness or unexcused absences will reduce their grades.

This course involves exhibition visits so as to reflexively consider the components that together configure an art show and its impact. After each visit, students must write brief responses (9 visits; 9 two-page responses; plus a two-page response paper on the story “The Aleph”). Each response is due on the next Monday following the visit (September 11; September 18; September 25; October 2; October 9; November 6; November 13; November 20; December 4; December 11). Further details on the written responses can be found on NYUClasses.

There will also be a final paper (8-10 pages) in which students will examine an exhibition of their choosing currently on view in the city and develop a critical interpretation based on that specific case study. Students will be encouraged to put all of their intellectual and creative energy into this longer paper, drawing on some of the things they will have learned during the course about problems of interpretation, aesthetics, politics, and context. On December 2, students will do a brief individual oral presentation on their chosen exhibition as part of an open forum discussion.

Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.
Assessment Expectations

**Grade A:** The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well structured arguments in his/her work. The student writes comprehensive essays / exam questions and his/her work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

**Grade B:** The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

**Grade C:** Work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

**Grade D:** The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

**Grade F:** The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

### Grade conversion

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### Exams and Submission of work

Final Exam dates cannot be changed under any circumstance.

Mid term exam dates will be scheduled with each professor and it must be before the break. Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam. If you are granted an excused absence from examination (with authorization, as above), your lecturer will decide how you will make-up the assessment component, if at all (by make-up examination, extra coursework, or an increased weighting on an alternate assessment component, etc.).

Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.

**Final essays must be submitted to the professor in print and electronic copy.** If the student is not in Buenos Aires, he / she must send a printed copy via express postal mail (i.e. FeDEX, DHL, UPS, etc) to the NYU Center in Buenos Aires – Anchorena 1314 – (C1425ELF) Argentina. This copy must arrive before or on the date of established deadline.
Attendance Policy

- NYU’s Global Programs (including NYU Buenos Aires) must adhere to a strict policy regarding course attendance. No unexcused absences are permitted.
- Each unexcused absence will be penalized by deducting 2% from the student’s final course grade.
- Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies.
- Absences due to illness or mental health issues must be discussed with the Assistant Director for Academics Programs, Moira Pérez within one week of your return to class.
- A doctor’s note excusing your absence is mandatory.
- The date on the doctor’s note must be the date of the missed class or exam
- Being absent to any kind of examination must be informed at or before the time of said examination via email to the Assistant Director for Academic Programs, Moira Pérez (moira.perez@nyu.edu).
- Requests to be excused for non-illness purposes must be discussed with your professors prior to the date(s) in question. (If you want the reasons of your absence to be treated confidentially and not shared with your professor, please contact the Assistant Director for Academic Programs, Moira Pérez (moira.perez@nyu.edu).
- If students have more than four unexcused absences, they will fail the course.
- Each class lasts one hour and half or two hours. Missing one class represents one absence. For those courses that meet once a week (three-hour block), missing one class represents two absences.
- Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence.
- NYU BA also expects students to arrive to class promptly (both at the beginning and after any breaks) and to remain for the duration of the class. Three late arrivals or early departures (10 minutes after the starting time or before the ending time) will be considered one absence. Missing more than 20 minutes of a class will count as a full absence.
- Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at an agreed meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.
- Make-up classes for Holidays are mandatory as regular scheduled classes.
- Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their professor and the Office of Academic Support in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.

Academic Accommodations

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website (http://www.nyu.edu/life/safety-health-andwellness/students-with-disabilities.html) for further information. Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, see Study Away and Disability.
Late work should be submitted in person to the Assistant Director for Academics Programs during office hours (Mon – Fri, 9.30 am to 5 pm), who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff can accept the work, in person, in the absence of the Assistant Director for Academics Programs and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.

Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.

Written work submitted after 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

Please note end of semester essays must be submitted on time.

Plagiarism Policy

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is intimately related to the teaching and learning process. When writing research papers, you need to keep in mind that plagiarism includes the use of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally. It also includes presenting and/or paraphrasing discourse or ideas from a published work (in print or on internet) without quotation marks and clear without acknowledgment of the original source.

For formatting in your papers, refer to MLA guidelines. On matters regarding academic integrity, refer to the section “Academic Standards and Discipline” in the College of Arts and Science Bulletin http://bulletin.cas.nyu.edu/page/academic.policies#STANDARDS and to “Statement on Academic Integrity” in NYU Expository Writing Program: Policies and Procedures: http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/policies___procedures.html#statementacademicintegrity

All your written work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form to the instructor.

It is expected that the student follow the rules on academic honesty and intellectual integrity established by NYU University.

Required Text(s)

The instructor will provide you with copies of required book chapters, as permitted by relevant copyright law, as well as links to electronically available journal articles and other material.

Supplemental Texts(s)

Internet Research Guidelines
Additional Required Equipment

Week 1
31 Aug.

Course Introduction I

Week 2
7 Sept.

Course Introduction II
3:30 - 4:55:
4:55 - 5:30: Class will travel to the National Museum of Fine Arts, MNBA
5:30 - 6:35: Exhibition discussion on site

RESPONSE DUE SEPT 11

Week 3
14 Sept.

The Roles of the Curator
3:30 - 4:55:
4:55 - 5:30: Class will travel to Móvil
5:30 - 6:35: Exhibition discussion on site

RESPONSE DUE SEPT 18
**Exhibiting Latin American Art II**

(Mexican muralism. The Mexican Revolution and José Vasconcelos’ new educational program (1920-1924). Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, David Alfaro Siqueiros)

21 Sept.

3:30 - 4:55:

4:55 - 5:30: Class will travel to Museo del Bicentenario to visit the mural Plastic Exercise in Buenos Aires, by David Alfaro Siqueiros, Antonio Berni, Lino Oneas Spilimbergo, and others

[ Ejercicio plástico ]

5:30 - 6:35: Exhibition discussion on site

RESPONSE DUE SEPT 25

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**Exhibiting Latin American Art II**


28 Sept.

3:30 - 5:00:

5:00-6:45: Visit to Museo Xul Solar

RESPONSE DUE OCT 2
**Week 6**

5 Oct.

**Collections and Chronologies**

3:30 - 4:55:


4:55 - 5:30: Class will travel to Malba (Museo de Arte Latinoméricano de Buenos Aires - Fundación Costantini).

5:30 - 6:35: Exhibition discussion on site

**RESPONSE DUE OCT 9**

**Week 7**

19 Oct.

**Challenging the White Cube. From Art to Life and Back I**


**Week 8**

26 Oct.

**Dr. Malbrán will be unavailable. Make-up session Monday Nov, 1rd.**

Week 9
Challenging the White Cube. From Art to Life and Back II
3:30 - 4:55:
4:55-6:35: Exhibition discussion on site (Usina del Arte)

Please note that make up session for 26 Oct will take place on Monday, Nov 1, at NYUBA with Prof. Miriam Basilio’s special lecture.

RESPONSE DUE NOV 6

Week 10
Museums by Artists. Reinventing the Museum
3:30 - 4:55:
4:55-6:35: Exhibition visit TBA (Centro Cultural Kirchner/CCK).

RESPONSE DUE NOV 13

Week 11
Exhibitions and Socioeconomic Contexts
3:30 - 4:55:
4:55-6:35: Exhibition visit TBA (Barro Gallery or Ruth Benzacar Gallery or Nora Fisch Gallery).

RESPONSE DUE NOV 20

Week 12
Exhibiting Latin American Art III
23 Nov.
**Week 13**

**Audience development, planning, sustainability**
(How are curators responsible for interpretation and learning programs? What are the financial constraints of exhibitions and how to seek economic support?)


Exhibition visit TBA

**RESPONSE DUE DEC 4**

**Week 14**

**Curating and Brokering Identities**


Open forum discussion on final paper.

**RESPONSE DUE DEC 11**

**Week 15**

Final paper due.

14 Dec.

**Classroom Etiquette**

Please refrain from using your cell phone in class, and restrict laptop usage to course-related purposes.
Florencia Malbrán is a faculty member at New York University in Buenos Aires, and was Craig M. Cogut Visiting Professor in Latin American and Caribbean Studies at Brown University in Spring 2017. She holds a Ph.D. from Rosario National University, Argentina, and a M.A. from the Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College, New York, where she was a Bruce T. Halle Family Foundation Fellow. Specializing in Latin American art history, contemporary art, curatorial studies, and critical theory, Malbrán has served on the faculties of NYU’s Gallatin School of Individualized Study in New York City and Universidad de San Andrés in Buenos Aires.

Also a curator, she has organized exhibitions in Argentina, the United States, Canada, Brazil, Colombia, and Paraguay. She has been in residence in France, Switzerland, and Spain, and was the Hilla Rebay International Fellow at the Guggenheim Museums in New York, Bilbao, and Venice. She has held curatorial positions at the Museum of Modern Art in Buenos Aires and the Pinacoteca do Estado in São Paulo.

Her shows have been reviewed in Clarín and La Nación in Argentina, O Globo in Brazil, El Tiempo in Colombia, and Artforum in the United States. Selected catalog writing includes essays on Guillermo Kuitca and on Pablo Siquier for Argentina’s La Nación book series on seminal national artists, on Ernesto Neto for the Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art, and on Ragnar Kjartansson for the Icelandic Pavilion at the 53rd Venice Biennale.