CORCORAN ARTS AND HUMANITIES (CAS)

CAS 2590. Cultural Resources of Washington, DC. 3 Credits.
The artistic field is a universe of belief. Cultural production distinguishes itself from the production of the most common objects in that it must produce not only the object of its materiality, but also the value of this object, that is, the recognition of artistic legitimacy. This is inseparable from the production of the artist or the writer as artist or writer, in other words, as a creator of value. (Pierre Bourdieu) As the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has observed: artists are made, not born. In this seminar, first-year students will be introduced to the diverse cultural resources within the major metropolitan area of Washington, DC, that lead to the making of artists. Students will investigate the web of institutions that make up the experience of art, culture, and society; these institutions generate, motivate, activate, foster, and disseminate change and sometimes stand in its way. Although this course is reading and writing intensive, we will move from the classroom to the locations of culture and the various institutions unique to Washington, DC, that form the experience of art, the creation of culture, and a vision of society. For example, students may choose to explore the changes and shifts in cultural capital for black and African Americans as seen through the locations of former slave Frederick Douglass’ house in Anacostia, the Black Renaissance whose music lit up the Lincoln Theatre on U Street (next door to Ben’s Chili Bowl, the iconic restaurant that withstood the 1968 race riots after MLK’s assassination), local café and bookstore chain Busboy and Poets named after poet Langston Hughes, the White House that now is home to the first black President of America, and the Corcoran, whose most recent successful art show highlighted 30 African American artists in 2012. As cultural institutions in Washington, DC, including the Corcoran, continue to re-examine and re-negotiate their purpose and relevance, we will not only ask, “How have these cultural resources and tools transformed and influenced art and the world,” but also ask, “How will these cultural resources and tools transform and influence my art and my world?"

CAS 3091. Art Studies Seminar: Critical Approaches to Modern and Contemporary Art. 3 Credits.
In this seminar course students develop skills in critical analysis of primary and secondary sources, as well as research and communication skills. Students learn how to formulate a thesis statement and provide visual and textual evidence to support an argument. The seminar includes peer evaluation in response to written work and oral presentations. This course is offered in the spring semester. It is required for BA students, and is an elective for BFA students with permission by the instructor. Topics, which vary each semester it is offered, focus on one or more of the following: visual arts, including time-based media, such as video, television, and film, performing arts, and literary arts.

CAS 3120. Principles and Theory of Interior Design. 3 Credits.
Through a seminar format, this course explores the underlying principles and themes of the design of the built interior environment. Major developments in the field and contemporary methodology are placed within a social as well as historical context. In-depth research on selected topics provides each student an opportunity to focus on areas of particular interest under the guidance of the instructor. At times this course may be cross-tallied at the graduate level as CAS 6120. Additional work required for graduate level credit is outlined in the course syllabus.

CAS 3205. Baudelaire to Blogs: The Art of Writing About Art. 3 Credits.
Much writing about art occurs not in books or long scholarly articles but in short formats such as critical reviews, written introductions to exhibits, statements, interviews, opinion pieces, and more recently, blog entries. This class looks both at examples of such art-writing (from the early modern era to the present), and undertakes the practice of writing short descriptive and critical pieces of the types mentioned above in a workshop setting, making use of area exhibits and resources. The goal is for students to develop skill and enjoyment in the diverse possibilities for writing about visual art (including one's own), leading to potential publication (online or in print).

CAS 3216. Art as Social Practice. 3 Credits.
Social practice is a genre of artistic production that utilizes a range of strategies to engage diverse audiences within the public sphere: urban interventions; collaborative and participatory art; service dispersal and generosity art; public performance; and Social Media and new media applications. In this course, we investigate how artists working within the field of Social Practice access the public sphere to shape and develop relations with a range of audiences and publics. What does it mean for artists to create work outside of the gallery and within public space? How might participatory strategies work to change notions of authorship and blur the line between artist and audience? What is the potential of Internet-based protocols as venues for publicly engaged art? To answer these questions, we’ll explore the various strategies that characterize Social Practice as well as the theoretical concerns that inform the genre (social theory, relational aesthetics, pluralism) through critical readings, artist projects, guest lectures and classroom experiments.
CAS 3330. Body and/as Image. 3 Credits.
Twentieth-century art has increasingly seen the artist’s body used as both the subject and object of artists’ work. Expanding and renewing the age-old tradition of self-portraiture, body and performance artists are part of the tradition of artists moving art out of the gallery, into unexpected spaces and media. Beginning with key artists such as Marcel Duchamp and Jackson Pollock, we examine the work of artists who have used their bodies to create their art, including Carolee Schneemann, Yoko Ono, Chris Burden, Ana Mendieta, Vito Acconci, Marina Abramovic, Matthew Barney, Yasumasa Morimura, and Mona Hatoum. Representations of the artist’s body in a wide range of media, including painting, photography, video, and performance, are analyzed in relation to the social historical context as well as critical writing by philosophers and thinkers such as Georges Bataille and Gilles Deleuze. This course is designed for students whose work involves the human body. Students research artists or art movements for a paper and project. In some terms this course may be cross-tailed at the undergraduate level as CAS 3330 and at the graduate level as CAS 6330. Additional work is required to earn graduate credit.

CAS 3360. Psychology of Creativity. 3 Credits.
How can we define creativity? Do we always recognize it when we see it? How can we make access to our own creativity more reliable? Artists, designers, and innovative thinkers have always pursued these questions. In the rapidly changing age of information, they have become crucial in all fields. In this course, the psychological and biological foundations of perception through problem-solving and creative work are studied as a means of exploring and developing creativity through readings, practical exercises, and student projects.

CAS 3381. The Uncanny in Literature, Film, and Art. 3 Credits.
The sensation of the Uncanny has been the subject of debates in criticism since the early days of Romanticism: Is it just a physical response to something creepy, unexpected, or inexplicable? Is it something more exalted, a variation on the Sublime, or the artistic trace of an attempt to represent what can never be represented? To understand how these questions moved from the periphery to the center of ideas about modern art, we explore Freud’s influential theory of the Uncanny, as well as accounts of the fantastic and supernatural in art. To trace some of the forms of the Uncanny, we look into haunted houses, monsters, doubles, vampires, and ghosts in examples from fiction and film such as: Edgar Allan Poe, The Fall of the House of Usher and The Black Cat; E. T. A. Hoffmann, The Sandman; Henry James, The Turn of the Screw; Bram Stoker, Dracula; Carl Dreyer, Vampyr; Michal Waszynski, The Dybbuk; Jacques Tournier, Cat People; Peter Greenaway, A Zed and Two Noughts.

CAS 3400. Introduction to Documentary Film. 3 Credits.
Following John Grierson’s definition of the documentary as “the creative treatment of reality,” this course considers documentary as a special type of non-fiction film that is primarily marked by its desire to give a subjective account of the world as opposed to an objective report. In the first half of the semester, we examine some key theoretical and formal issues surrounding the documentary form. In the second half of the semester, we pay special attention to the history of documentary film from the1960s as an alternative film practice and consider documentary’s special relationship to reality, experience, expression, and social commentary/change. In particular, we are interested in attempts by filmmakers to explore the limits of non-fiction.

CAS 3421. The Birth of Cinema. 3 Credits.
The global history of the silent cinema; aesthetic and social issues, with particular emphasis on the development of Hollywood and production; the proto-cinema of zoopraxiscopes and nickelodeons; the parallels between early cinema and the emerging media of representation in the contemporary world. Credit cannot be earned for both this course and CAS 6421.

CAS 4090. BA Senior Thesis Workshop. 3 Credits.
Offered only in the fall semester, this course prepares BA students in their final year with the conceptual and methodological framework necessary for successful completion of the senior thesis project in the spring semester. The emphasis is on developing higher-level academic research and writing skills. Students make a number of off-site visits to the Library of Congress and other archives in the Washington DC region. Coursework consists of frequent short writing assignments and preliminary work on the senior written thesis project: proposals, outlines, bibliographies, etc. Open only to BA majors in their final year.

CAS 4091. BA Thesis Directed Study. 3 Credits.
Reserved for B.A. requirement.

CAS 4105. Interior Design Professional Practices. 3 Credits.
This course explores the everyday business, legal and financial considerations of the practicing interior designer. Topics include the formation and operation of an interior design business, and designer/client relationships. Students are also introduced to portfolio preparation and business writing skills. This course is only offered during the Spring semester. At times this course may be cross-tailed at the graduate level as CAS 7100. Additional work is required for graduate credit. Prerequisites: CID 3091 Interior Design Studio IV.
CAS 4200. Business Communications for Designers. 3 Credits.
This course focuses on building business communication skills and materials necessary for success in the field of design. Written, oral, and visual communications skills and best practices are covered. Designers brand themselves as creative professionals through presentation of projects in a professional and compelling manner. Projects include writing content for resumes, cover letters, introduction and thank you letters, emails, proposals/cost estimates, websites and marketing materials; role playing for phone and in-person interviews; presentations of design work to potential clients; and establishing (or enhancing) a presence on various professional community networking sites. Please note that this is not a studio course, nor are studio-based projects part of the syllabus.

CAS 4290. The Object in its Public Space. 3 Credits.
Objects exist in ritual, exhibitionary, civic, and domestic spaces. Drawing on theories of space developed in anthropology, semiotics, performance studies, urban studies, and museum studies, this course explores how spaces shape the meaning, value, and power of objects and how objects transform the spaces which they inhabit. Roland Barthes’ ground-breaking semiotic analyses of objects, Carol Duncan’s Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums, and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s extensive writings on display as performance provide key readings. At times this course may be cross-tallied at the graduate level as CAS 4290. Additional work required for graduate level credit is outlined in the course syllabus.

CAS 4430. The Dream Screen: Cinematic Fantasy from The Wizard of Oz to Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind. 3 Credits.
From the earliest era of cinema, the ability of the medium to replicate the hallucinatory experience of dreaming has been exploited in some genres, but the prevailing mode has been realism. Now the paradigm is shifting: motion pictures that explore the interior space of the mind and portray imaginary worlds are popular successes and win critical esteem. This course investigates the artist’s ability to invoke worlds that have never existed in waking reality through the use of photographic illusion and explores outstanding cinematic representations of the dream. The larger purpose of the course is to investigate the foundation of psychoanalytic criticism in the analogy of dream and art. To deepen the student’s experience, the course also offers training in keeping a dream journal and exploring your own nightly theater of dreams. Readings in Freud, Jung, Rank, Klein, Kristeva, and film theory; films screened include Surrealist classics Un chien andalou and Dreams That Money Can Buy; the experimental films of Maya Deren, Kenneth Anger, Stan Brakhage, and Phil Solomon; Hitchcock’s Spellbound; Ingmar Bergman’s Wild Strawberries; Richard Linklater’s Waking Life.

CAS 4440. Sex in American Cinema. 3 Credits.
From silent-screen sirens to contemporary bromance, the movies have not only reflected Americans’ sexual mores, but taught the public what to believe, denounce, and accept. This course examines the historical capacity of American cinema both to represent sexual norms and to subvert the idea of the normal, with particular emphasis on the profound historical and cultural influence of the Hollywood Production Code. Examples for study are screened in the Corcoran auditorium and include representative works from genres such as melodrama, farce, film noir, horror and the western, as well as experimental, independent and adult film. Students undertake a critical paper on an American film as their semester project. In some terms this course may be offered at the undergraduate level as CAS 4440 and at the graduate level as CAS 7440. Additional work is required to earn graduate credit.

CAS 4540. Curatorial Seminar. 3 Credits.
Students in this course research and prepare for an exhibition on selected topic in photography, scheduled to open at the Corcoran Gallery of Art at the end of the spring semester. Students research the history of the specific topic and particular photographer(s) who may be in the show. Working in teams, they also learn the hands-on elements of exhibition preparation, and prepare checklists, wall labels, object labels, sample catalogue entries, press releases, work on exhibition design and layout. They also learn the basics of museum techniques for gallery design, shipping costs and planning, condition reports, exhibition installation and preparation, shipping, budgeting, public relations, and catalogue publications.

CAS 6120. Principles and Theory of Interior Design. 3 Credits.
Through a seminar format, this course explores the underlying principles and themes of the design of the build interior environment. Major developments in the field and contemporary methodology are placed within a social as well as historical context. In-depth research on selected topics provide each student and opportunity to focus on areas of particular interest under the guidance of the instructor. This course is open to students enrolled in the Master of Interior Design program; or by permission from the Department Chair. At times this course may be cross-tallied at the undergraduate level as CAS 3120.
CAS 6330. Body and/as Image. 3 Credits.
Twentieth-century art has increasingly seen the artist’s body used as both the subject and object of artists’ work. Expanding and renewing the age-old tradition of self-portraiture, body and performance artists are part of the tradition of artists moving art out of the gallery, into unexpected spaces and media. Beginning with key artists such as Marcel Duchamp and Jackson Pollock, we examine the work of artists who have used their bodies to create their art, including Carolee Schneemann, Yoko Ono, Chris Burden, Ana Mendieta, Vito Acconci, Marina Abramovic, Matthew Barney, Yasumasa Morimura, and Mona Hatoum. Representations of the artist’s body in a wide range of media, including painting, photography, video, and performance, are analyzed in relation to the social historical context as well as critical writing by philosophers and thinkers such as Georges Bataille and Gilles Deleuze. This course is designed for students whose work involves the human body. Students research artists or art movements for a paper and project. In some terms this course may be cross-tallied at the undergraduate level as CAS 3330 and at the graduate level as CAS 6330. Additional work is required to earn graduate credit.

CAS 6400. Introduction to Documentary Film. 3 Credits.
Following John Grierson’s definition of the documentary as “the creative treatment of reality,” this course considers documentary as a special type of non-fiction film that is primarily marked by its desire to give a subjective account of the world as opposed to an objective report. In the first half of the semester, we examine some key theoretical and formal issues surrounding the documentary form. In the second half of the semester, we pay special attention to the history of documentary film from the 1960s as an alternative film practice and consider documentary’s special relationship to reality, experience, expression, and social commentary/change. In particular, we are interested in attempts by filmmakers to explore the limits of non-fiction.

CAS 6421. The Birth of Cinema. 3 Credits.
Between the 1890s and the 1920s, moving pictures evolved from a children’s diversion to a force that transformed modern life at all levels. As new technology, as industry, and as a medium of mass art, the cinema contributed significantly to the United States’ economic and cultural domination of the twentieth century. In this course, we examine the global history of the silent cinema through outstanding examples, focusing on aesthetic as well as social issues, with particular emphasis on the development of Hollywood and production. We begin with the proto-cinema of zoopraxiscopes and nickelodeons, and conclude with a consideration of the parallels between early cinema and the emerging media of representation in the contemporary world.

CAS 7100. Interior Design Professional Practice. 3 Credits.
This course explores the everyday business, legal and financial considerations of the practicing interior designer. Topics include the formation and operation of an interior design business, and designer/client relationships. Students are also introduced to portfolio preparation and business writing skills. This course is only offered during the Spring semester. At times this course may be cross-tallied at the undergraduate level as CAS 4105. Additional work is required for graduate credit.