

COURSE CONTENT

Academic Year	2025	Semester	1
Course Coordinator			
Course Code	HR3005		
Course Title	The Fantastic in Western Visual Arts		
Pre-requisites	NIL		
No of AUs	3		
Contact Hours	39		

Course Aims

This course offers an introduction to an often over-looked, or under-considered, aspect of the art world – the fantastic. As such, students engage with a wide range of art historical methodologies and art practices to examine an imagined or hoped for world. They will conduct two in-depth analyses of ‘fantastic’ works of art of their own choosing and present the findings in a peer reviewed exercise and an academic essay. By doing this students will hone their ability to communicate art historical discussions in both oral and written formats. They will also develop the intangible notions beyond the visual that drive creativity.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

Discuss and critically interpret diverse works of art and related theory.

Recognize and analyze issues, objects, performances and concepts, employing various methods of inquiry.

Write at publication level, integrating visual analysis, correct terminology, cultural context and a theoretical frameworks.

Present a substantial research paper, incorporating supporting materials.

Decode and interpret the symbolic repertoire – literary, mythical, religious, and iconographic

Course Content

The Fantastic in Western Visual Arts

This is a course about the role of the imagination, the fanciful, the remote, the utopian and the manipulative. Each lecture will tackle a theme: we ask ‘Art for whose sake?’ and ‘Is Less Really More?’, then we go on to discuss ‘belief’, ‘prescience’, ‘propaganda’, ‘memory’, ‘abstraction’, ‘protest’, ‘outsiders’, and ‘rapprochement’. We will use a variety of media to investigate these issues, including: ballet, sculpture, painting, animation, textiles, architecture, cemetery design, graffiti, poetry, musical composition and installation. In addition to the notion of the ‘unreal’ and the ‘imaginative’ we also explore the other meaning of ‘fantastic’ – ie extraordinary. The emphasis will fall on the 20th and 21st centuries, but will, when necessary, draw on examples from Medieval and Renaissance Europe and art histories globally.

We had fed the heart on fantasies,
The heart's grown brutal from the fare

W.B. Yeats.

Coursework Assignments:

Oral presentations (30%): You will make an important and substantial class presentations either as an individual or as part of a group.

Written Assignment (50%): The final assignment takes the form of an individual essay following the research methodologies and critical tools developed during the course.

Assessment (includes both continuous and summative assessment)

Component	Course LO Tested	Programme LO Attributes	Weighting	Team/ Individual	Assessment Rubrics
Continuous Assessment. Oral presentations:	1,2,3,4,5		30%	Group	Appendix 1
Continuous Assessment: Written reflections on visit	4, 5		20%	Individual	Appendix 1
Final Project Essay	1,2,3,4		50%	Group/ Individual	Appendix 1
Total			100%		

Formative feedback

You will receive feedback in groups and one-to-one (where appropriate) in the development of their seminars, presentations and written papers.

Learning and Teaching approach

Approach	How does this approach support students in achieving the learning outcomes?
Lecture	Historical and contextual knowledge is imparted and discussed as developments in fantastic art are explored and critical theories elucidated and discussed.
Group Seminars	You will be assigned a key fantastic art case study. You will research on this case study, developing their analytical and contextual skills, as well as presentational skills.
Curatorial Project	You will be tasked with developing an original curatorial approach to the fantastic arts, which is conceptually rigorous and makes insightful connections between works.

Written Paper

You will research and write a scholarly critical essay, engage with a topic in a rigorous and creative manner and present a clear argument.

Recommended Reading and References

Abstract Expressionism and the CIA <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5YSikO6JRM&t=87s>

Ackermann, Zeno. "Rocking the Culture Industry/Performing Breakdown: Pink Floyd's The Wall and the Termination of the Postwar Era." *Popular Music and Society* 35.1 (2012): 1-23.

Armitt, Lucie. *Theorising the Fantastic*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996

Bourke, Joanna. "'Remembering War.'" *Journal of Contemporary History* 39.4 (2004): 473-485.

Cavallaro, Dani. *Synesthesia and the Arts*. McFarland, 2013.

Clague, M. "This Is America": Jimi Hendrix's Star Spangled Banner Journey as Psychedelic Citizenship, *Journal of the Society for American Music* (2014), Volume 8, Number 4, pp. 435-478.

Craft, Robert. "The Rite of Spring: Genesis of a masterpiece." *Perspectives of New Music* (1966): 20-36.

Davies, Stephen. "John Cage's 4' 33 ": Is it music?." *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 75.4 (1997): 448-462.

Dissanayake, Ellen. *What Is Art for?* University of Washington Press, 1990,

Greenberg, C. 'Avant Garde and Kitsch' <http://www.sharecom.ca/greenberg/kitsch.html>

James, Pearl, ed. *Picture this: World War I posters and visual culture*. U of Nebraska Press, 2009.

Johannet, Catherine. "Moving Beyond the Disability Memoir: A Critical Study of Judith Scott's Fiber Art." (2015).

Lieven De Cauter, Ruben De Roo, Karel Vanhaesebrouck, eds., *Art and Activism in the Age of Globalization* (Rotterdam: NAI, 2011).

Muzaini, Hamzah, and Brenda Yeoh. "Memory-making 'from below': rescaling remembrance at the Kranji War Memorial and Cemetery, Singapore." *Environment and Planning A* 39.6 (2007): 1288-1305.

Prinz, Jesse. "Against Outsider Art." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 48.3 (2017).

Read <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/the-conscription-of-the-arts-during-the-cold-war/>

Rieff, David. *Against remembrance*. Melbourne Univ. Publishing, 2011.

Rieff, David. *In praise of forgetting: Historical memory and its ironies*. Yale University Press, 2016.

Schlobin, Roger C. (Ed.) *The Aesthetics of Fantasy Literature and Art*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982

Hajali, Sahar. "Abstract Expressionism: A Case Study on Jackson Pollock's Works." *Journal of History Culture and Art Research* 5.4 (2016): 311-320.

Schurian, Walter and Uta Grosenick (Eds.). *Fantastic Art*, Köln and London: Taschen, 2005

Shan, Chan Li. *Searching for Lee Wen: A Life in 135 Parts*. Epigram Books, 2022.

Sturken, Marita. "The wall, the screen, and the image: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial." *Representations* 35 (1991): 118-142.

Todorov, Tzvetan. *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, New York: Cornell University Press, 1975

Tomaszewski Ramses, Veronique. *Aesthetic heaven and artistic hell: an intellectual journey*. National Library of Canada, Ottawa, 2001.

Walsh, Michael JK. "Eric Bogle's No Man's Land and the grave of Willie McBride at the Somme." *Popular Culture and Its Relationship to Conflict in the UK and Australia since the Great War*. Routledge, 2022. 117-130.

Walsh, Michael JK. "Mama's Boys, Celtus, and the Troubles in Northern Ireland." *Rock Music Studies* 2.1 (2015): 46-60.

Walsh, Michael JK. *Eric Bogle, Music and the Great War: 'An Old Man's Tears'*. Routledge, 2018.

Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

(1) General

You are expected to complete all assigned readings, activities, assignments, attend all classes punctually and complete all scheduled assignments by due dates. You are expected to take responsibility to follow up with assignments and course related announcements. You are expected to participate in all project critiques, class discussions and activities.

(2) Punctuality

You are expected to be punctual for all classes. If you are more than 30 minutes late, you will be deemed as absent and will not be able to sign in to the attendance register.

(3) Absenteeism

In-class activities make up a significant portion of your course grade. Absence from class without a valid reason will affect your participation grade. Valid reasons include falling sick supported by a medical certificate and participation in NTU's approved activities supported by an excuse letter from the relevant bodies. There will be no make-up opportunities for in-class activities.

Academic Integrity

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU's shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the [academic integrity website](#) for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

Course Instructors

Instructor	Office Location	Phone	Email
Michael J k Walsh	SHHK-03-47	TBA	mw Walsh@ntu.edu.sg

Planned Weekly Schedule

Subject to adjustment by instructor according to the teaching situation, students' progress, public holidays and unforeseeable circumstances. A revised schedule will be issued to you at the start of the semester.

Week	Topic	Cours e LO	Readings/ Activities
1.	<p>Lecture 1: Fantasy and Fantastic: An Introduction</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why create / destroy a work of art? 2. Art for whose sake? 3. Can anything be art? 4. What is art worth? <p>Discussion: Is Education Killing Creativity</p>	1,3,5	<p>Azzam, Amy M. "Why creativity now? A conversation with Sir Ken Robinson." <i>Educational Leadership</i> 67.1 (2009): 22-26.</p> <p>Eager, Gerald. "The fantastic in art." <i>The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism</i> 30.2 (1971): 151-157.</p> <p>Dissanayake, Ellen. <i>What Is Art for?</i> University of Washington Press, 1990,</p> <p>Galenson, David. "Artists and the market: from Leonardo and Titian to Andy Warhol and Damien Hirst." (2007).</p>
2.	<p>Lecture 2: Myth History, Heaven and Hell...and a little fish in Japan</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bayeux Tapestry 2. Medieval Stained Glass 3. Colour, Light and Sound <p>Essay Preparation</p>	1,3,5	<p>Walls, Jerry L. "Heaven and hell." <i>Routledge Companion to Philosophy of Religion</i>. Routledge, 2013. 645-654.</p> <p>Tomaszewski Ramsse, V. <i>Aesthetic heaven and artistic hell: an intellectual journey</i>. National Library of Canada, Ottawa, 2001.</p> <p>Ehrman, Bart D. <i>Heaven and hell: A history of the afterlife</i>. Simon and Schuster, 2021.</p> <p>Jung, Jacqueline E. 'Walking to heaven in gothic sculpture.' <i>Kunstgeschichte: Festschrift für Stephan Albrecht</i> (2023).</p>
3.	<p>Lecture 3: Prescience</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ballet: <i>The Rite of Spring</i> 2. Poster, Propaganda and Public 	1,3,5	<p>Chua, Daniel K. L. "Rioting with Stravinsky: a particular analysis of the Rite of Spring." <i>Music Analysis</i> 26.1-2 (2007): 59-109.</p> <p>Craft, Robert. "The Rite of Spring: Genesis of a masterpiece." <i>Perspectives of New Music</i> (1966): 20-36.</p>

			<p>James, Pearl, ed. <i>Picture this: World War I posters and visual culture</i>. U of Nebraska Press, 2009.</p> <p>Thompson, James. "Posters, advertising and the First World War in Britain." <i>The Edinburgh companion to the First World War and the arts</i>. Edinburgh University Press, 2017. 166-182.</p>
4.	<p>Lecture 4: Memory:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why remember? 2. Aftermath or Aftermyth 3. Re-ordering History <p>Film Screening: <i>Eric Bogle: No Man's Land</i></p>	1,3,5	<p>Winter, Jay. <i>Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century</i>. Yale University Press, 2006.</p> <p>Bourke, Joanna. "'Remembering War.'" <i>Journal of Contemporary History</i> 39.4 (2004): 473-485.</p> <p>Rieff, David. <i>Against remembrance</i>. Melbourne Univ. Publishing, 2011.</p> <p>Rieff, David. <i>In praise of forgetting: Historical memory and its ironies</i>. Yale University Press, 2016.</p> <p>Walsh, Michael JK. "Eric Bogle's No Man's Land and the grave of Willie McBride at the Somme." <i>Popular Culture and Its Relationship to Conflict in the UK and Australia since the Great War</i>. Routledge, 2022. 117-130.</p>
5.	<p>Lecture 5: Ritual Class visit</p> <p>Grading opportunity – notes and reflections from the field [20%]</p> <p>Preparation for Presentations</p>		<p>Muzaini, Hamzah, and Brenda Yeoh. "Memory-making 'from below': rescaling remembrance at the Kranji War Memorial and Cemetery, Singapore." <i>Environment and Planning A</i> 39.6 (2007): 1288-1305.</p> <p>Tsakonas, Athanasios. <i>In Honour of War Heroes: Colin St Clair Oakes and the Design of Kranji War Memorial</i>. Marshall Cavendish International Asia Pte Ltd, 2020.</p>
6.	<p>Lecture 6: Is Less Really More? Reductio ad absurdum: le Corbusier – Villa Savoye John Cage 4'33" Agnes Denes Olafur Eliasson Vegan Punk</p>	1,2,3,4,5	<p>Pritchett, James. "What silence taught John Cage: The story of 4'33'." <i>The anarchy of silence: John Cage and experimental art</i> (2009): 166-177.</p> <p>Davies, Stephen. "John Cage's 4' 33 '' : Is it music?." <i>Australasian Journal of</i></p>

	<p>Richard Hamilton's Pop</p> <p>Discussion: Salvatore Garau</p> <p>Semester Break & Essay Submission</p>		<p><i>Philosophy</i> 75.4 (1997): 448-462.</p> <p>Stonard, John-Paul. "Pop in the Age of Boom: Richard Hamilton's' Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?'" <i>The Burlington Magazine</i> 149.1254 (2007): 607-620.</p>
7.	<p>Lecture 7: A Third Space (Music)</p> <p>Jimi Hendrix in the 1960s Rock Music in Northern Ireland 1980s A composition from a Greek Island (2025)</p>	1,2,3,4,5	<p>Mark Clague, "This Is America": Jimi Hendrix's Star Spangled Banner Journey as Psychedelic Citizenship, <i>Journal of the Society for American Music</i> (2014), Volume 8, Number 4, pp. 435-478.</p> <p>https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20240524-you-have-to-destroy-in-order-to-create---how-the-sex-pistols-sparked-outrage</p> <p>Walsh, Michael JK. "Mama's Boys, Celtus, and the Troubles in Northern Ireland." <i>Rock Music Studies</i> 2.1 (2015): 46-60.</p>
8.	<p>Lecture 8: Visual Music From Dripscapes to Colour fields</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kandinsky 2. Pollock - Dripscapes 3. Colour Fields - Rothko 4. Synesthesia 5. Coldplay 	1,2,3,4,5	<p>Abstract Expressionism and the CIA https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5YSiKO6JRM&t=87s</p> <p>Van Campen, Cretien. <i>The hidden sense: Synesthesia in art and science</i>. Mit Press, 2010.</p> <p>Clark, Timothy J. "In Defense of Abstract Expressionism." <i>October</i> 69 (1994): 23-48.</p> <p>Hajali, Sahar. "Abstract Expressionism: A Case Study on Jackson Pollock's Works." <i>Journal of History Culture and Art Research</i> 5.4 (2016): 311-320.</p> <p>Cavallaro, Dani. <i>Synesthesia and the Arts</i>. McFarland, 2013.</p>
9.	<p>Lecture 9: Outsiders and Activists</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Judith Scott 2. Henry Darger 3. Lee Wen 4. Ai Wei Wei 	1,2,3,4,5	<p>Wojcik, Daniel. <i>Outsider art: Visionary worlds and trauma</i>. Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2016.</p> <p>Johannet, Catherine. "Moving Beyond the Disability Memoir: A Critical Study of Judith Scott's Fiber Art." (2015).</p>

			<p>Prinz, Jesse. "Against Outsider Art." <i>Journal of Social Philosophy</i> 48.3 (2017).</p> <p>Harris, James C. "In the realms of the unreal: Henry Darger." <i>JAMA psychiatry</i> 70.11 (2013): 1125-1126.</p> <p>Lee Wen, <i>Untitled (Raffles)</i> https://www.nationalgallery.sg/see-do/highlights/artist-and-empire https://www.lifestyleasia.com/sg/culture/the-arts/lee-wen-singapore-artist/ https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/24/art/s/ai-weiwei-refugee-project-qatar-china.html</p> <p>Shan, Chan Li. <i>Searching for Lee Wen: A Life in 135 Parts</i>. Epigram Books, 2022.</p> <p>Lieven De Cauter, Ruben De Roo, Karel Vanhaesebrouck, eds., <i>Art and Activism in the Age of Globalization</i> (Rotterdam: NAI, 2011).</p>
10.	Online Lecture: Digital Futures Presentation Preparation	1,2,3, 4,5	<p>Cameron, Fiona. "Digital Futures I: Museum collections, digital technologies, and the cultural construction of knowledge." <i>Curator: The Museum Journal</i> 46.3 (2003): 325-340.</p> <p>Jiang, Harry H., et al. "AI Art and its Impact on Artists." <i>Proceedings of the 2023 AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics, and Society</i>. 2023.</p> <p>Min, Wee. "Put on the Spot: Damien Hirst's the Currency and the Future of NFTs." <i>Va. JL & Tech</i>. 26 (2022): 1.</p>
11.	Student Presentations I [40%]	1,2,3, 4,5	Lecture & Discussion Student Seminar
12.	Student Presentations II [40%]	1, 2, 3,5	Presentation & Discussion Student Seminar
13.	Rapprochement: Case Study: Famagusta, Cyprus Screening: <i>In the Village of Poets</i>	1, 2, 3,5	Ting, Julie Heather Liew Shan, Michael John Kirk Walsh, and Gül İnanc. "Heritage Conservation in Famagusta: Global Youth Cultures." <i>Proceedings of the URECA@ NTU</i> 2013: 14.

Provisional

Appendix 1

Continuous Assessment: Oral Presentations: Seminar Curatorial proposal LOs 1,2,3,4,5	40%
Final Project: LOs 1,2,3,4	40%
Continuous Assessment: Participation LOs 4,5	20%

Assessment Rubrics

	Research: LO1 Describe the historical, cultural and esthetical function and development of the fantastic in Western Art History from the historical to the contemporary. Able to conduct rigorous and relevant research into a series of topics. Able to clearly and logically analyse the findings.	Develop: LO2 Decode and interpret the symbolic repertoire – literary, mythical, religious, and iconographic – used by fantastic art. Able to apply the analytical tools learned in class to past and present objects and situations within fantastic arts.	Apply: LO3 Apply the conceptual framework of the notion of fantasy to analyze and to discuss it as an essential factor within the creative-artistic process. Able to develop clear and logical arguments backed up with key, relevant examples. Able to construct verbal and written visual analysis whereby methodological articulations between issues and case studies would result in effective understanding of complex and relevant artistic events.	Present: LO4 Organise and present research and the development of new ideas through analysis between different case studies from fantastic art. Able to present findings and research about fantastic art in a scholarly manner. Able to identify key issues and themes relating to fantastic art and properly contextualise them.	Participate: LO5 Articulate constructive discussions with peers where issues related to fantastic art are debated in a logical, well informed, and creative manner. Able to make significant valuable and insightful contributions in class during lectures and other students presentations
A+ 85-100	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding	Outstanding
A 80-84	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

A- 75-79	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good
B+ 70-74	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good
B 65-69	Competent	Competent	Competent	Competent	Competent
B- 60-64	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate	Adequate
C+ 55-59	Mediocre	Mediocre	Mediocre	Mediocre	Mediocre
C 50-54	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal	Minimal
D+ 45-49	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient
D 40-44	Deficient	Deficient	Deficient	Deficient	Deficient
F 0-39	No evidence	No evidence	No evidence	No presentation	No participation