

## ARTH 407: READING ARTISTS' WRITING



Joan Miró, *The Body of My Brunette* (*Le corps de ma brune . . .*), 1925. Oil on canvas, 130 x 96 cm

### ART HISTORY

School of Art History, Classics & Religious Studies

Victoria University of Wellington

Trimester 1 & 2

5 March – 17 November 2012

---

## KEY DATES

---

### **TRIMESTER DATES**

Teaching dates: 5 March to 19 October 2012

**Trimester 1:** 5 March to 8 June 2012

Mid-trimester break: 6–22 April 2012

**Mid-year break: 11 June – 15 July**

**Trimester 2:** 16 July-19 October 2012

Mid-trimester break: 27 August to 9 September 2012

Study week: 22–26 October 2012

Assessment Period: 26 October to 17 November 2012

### **Withdrawal dates**

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

---

**ARTH 407 READING ARTISTS WRITING**

---

**Course coordinator:** Raymond Spiteri  
**Office Location:** OK 316,  
**Telephone:** 463 6769  
**Email:** raymond.spiteri@vuw.ac.nz

**Office Hours:** Monday 2.00 – 3.00 pm.

**Seminar Time:** Tuesday 1.10–3.00 pm, in OK 301

**Trimester Dates:** T1: 5 March–8 June, 2012  
T2: 16 July–19 October, 2012

---

**COURSE OUTLINE**

---

**COURSE PRESCRIPTION**

How do we, as art historians, read writings by artists? This course focuses on what takes place when artists engage with the process of writing to consider the relation between image and text, figure and discourse, from the perspective of someone actively engaged in artistic endeavour. Each session will consider a selection of writings by an artist or group of artists (principally from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), plus relevant secondary texts, to discuss the way artists describe the specific nature of their practices, particularly the way that language may resist articulating aspects of the creative process. Apart from the writings by artists covered, this course will also address problems encountered while conducting advanced research in art history.

**COURSE CONTENT**

How do we, as art historians, read writings by artists? ARTH 407 addresses this question by focusing on artists as writers. It considers the relation between image and text, figure and discourse, from the artist's perspective, that is, of someone who is actively engaged in the process of fashioning artworks.

Each session will consider a selection of writings by an artist or group of artists, plus relevant secondary texts, to discuss the way artists describe the specific nature of their practices, particularly the way that language may resist articulating certain aspects of the creative process. In 2010 the course focuses on artists and writers associated with the surrealist movement.

Given the nature of artists' writings, the emphasis of this course is not on content, but rather the process of interpretation and its limits. It is about how we read written texts and visual images. Special attention will be paid to the tension between the discursive and figurative as a fundamental element of artistic endeavour.

For the purpose of this course, the term ‘writing’ is defined rather loosely. We shall look at a number of different genres of writing, from the personal journal, letters and correspondence, published statements and interviews, to more experimental approaches based on collaboration, collage and more creative forms of writing.

The course also addresses problems encountered while conducting advanced research in art history, which often involves the interpretation of artworks in the context of written texts.

The first two seminars look at case-studies of the way artists’ writing can be read. The purpose here is to focus your attention on the process of close reading, particularly the way it can lead to surprising results. The next nine seminars focus on selections of writings by artists associated with the surrealist movement. Each week will also include a student presentation on an aspect of the week’s material. Seminars thirteen and fourteen look at a number of later artists who can be related to the legacy of surrealism. The final two seminars are dedicated to student presentations of research essays.

More information on the course content can be found in the section on seminar readings.

### **COURSE DELIVERY**

This course is taught as a series of 16 2-hour seminars. Students are expected to prepare for each seminar by doing the reading, and to participate in the seminar discussion.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This course has the following objectives:

- to encourage you to think critically about the nature of artistic endeavour and its relation to art historical scholarship;
- to encourage you to apply your skills of analysis to critically examine visual and textual material;
- to develop your capacity for independent work, including the formulation, analysis and refinement of topics;
- to ensure the consistent application of the conventions of academic writing and research;
- to refine your skills in seminar presentation and debate;
- to prepare you for further postgraduate study in art history;
- to introduce you to the standards required of scholarly articles and papers.

### **EXPECTED WORKLOAD**

The University recommends that approximately 300 hours per course, inclusive of seminars, be given to a full-year, 4-course graduate programme in order to maintain satisfactory progress.

### **ESSENTIAL TEXTS**

The **essential reading** for ARTH is available on Blackboard.

There is no textbook for ARTH 407.

**GENERAL UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS**

Information about the University's general requirements can be found at the end of this course outline. This includes information about the University's policy on plagiarism, grievance procedures and facilities to assist students.

**CLASS REPRESENTATIVE**

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students. Contact details for the class representative will be available from Pippa in the ARTH office.

**COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Art History is on level 3 (ground floor) of the Old Kirk building. Pippa Wisheart, Art History's Administrator, has her office in OK 306 (463-5800). Notices regarding the course will be posted on the board adjacent to her office.

---

## ASSESSMENT

---

ARTH 407 is internally assessed. There are three components to the assessment:

1. Seminar presentation	30 %
2. Reading journal	20 %
3. Research essay (5000 words)	50 %

Information about the specific requirement for each piece of assessment follows.

Students are encouraged to discuss their research plans with the course coordinator, who can advise on the suitability of a topic and indicate possible problems.

### MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Mandatory course requirements are defined in the University Calendar. You are expected to come to all seminar sessions and you should notify the course coordinator if you cannot attend (due to illness or other pressing reasons). In addition:

- Each student must give a seminar presentation, followed by a written paper, responding to an assigned question.
- Regularly keep a reading journal on the assigned readings for ARTH 407.
- Complete a research essay. As part of the research essay, you also have to submit a proposal with bibliography, and give a brief presentation on your research to the class.

### MARKING

The course coordinator is responsible for marking assignments. You may request a second opinion of the assessment of any piece of written work, from another lecturer in Art History. Coursework will be reviewed by an external assessor in order to ensure that academic standards at honours level are met. Your final grade for the course may be adjusted both to reflect your overall contribution to and achievement in the course and in response to the feedback from the external assessor.

### AEGROTAT PASS

There are limited aegrotat provisions for internally assessed courses. If you are in any doubt about your ability to complete any assessment on time, you must see the course coordinator immediately. Extensions are not generally granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

### PENALTIES

If you require an extension you must contact the course coordinator before the due date. Late assignments may be penalized by 2% per day. All work must be submitted before October 19, 2012.

---



---

**SEMINAR SCHEDULE**


---



---

**TRIMESTER ONE** (March 5–June 8)

<b>SEMINAR</b>	<b>WEEK</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>DATE</b>
	1	No seminar	
1	2	<b>Cézanne's Truth</b>	March 13
2	3	<b>Baudelaire and Clark on Delacroix</b>	March 20
3	4	<b>Thought Images</b>	March 27
4	5	<b>The Thought of a Painter</b>	April 3
		<i>Mid-Trimester break</i>	
5	6	<b>Surrealism, Automatism and Painting</b>	April 24
6	7	<b>Nadja</b>	May 1
7	8	<b>Max Ernst and Surrealism</b>	May 8
8	9	<b>Artaud and the Limits of Surrealism</b>	May 15
9	10	<b>Bataille and Surrealism I</b>	May 22
10	11	<b>Bataille and Surrealism II</b>	May 29

Research proposal due Friday, June 22

**TRIMESTER TWO** (July 16–October 19)

<b>SEMINAR</b>	<b>WEEK</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>DATE</b>
11	3	<b>Women and Surrealism</b>	July 31
12	4	<b>McCahon and Lye</b>	August 7
13	5	<b>Graham and Wall</b>	August 14
14	6	<b>Towers Open Fire</b>	August 21
		<i>Mid-Trimester break</i>	
15	9	<b>Research Presentations I</b>	September 25
16	10	<b>Research Presentations II</b>	October 2

Reading journal due Friday, August 24

Research essays due Friday, October 19

---

## SEMINAR TOPICS AND READINGS

---

You will find the topics and readings for the seminars below.

The readings are divided into two sections: the *essential readings* cover the texts that everyone is expected to read before each seminar. The *essential readings* can be found in the *ARTH 407 Handbook of Readings*, available from Student Notes.

The *further readings* are secondary readings that amplify aspects of the week's reading. These books are available in the library or in the Art History department.

---

<b>SEMINAR 1</b>	<b>Cézanne's Truth</b>	March 13
------------------	------------------------	----------

---

<b>SEMINAR 2</b>	<b>Baudelaire and Clark on Delacroix</b>	March 20
------------------	------------------------------------------	----------

---

<b>SEMINAR 3</b>	<b>Thought Images</b>	March 27
------------------	-----------------------	----------

---

<b>SEMINAR 4</b>	<b>The Thought of a Painter</b>	April 3
------------------	---------------------------------	---------

---

<b>SEMINAR 5</b>	<b>Surrealism, Automatism and Painting</b>	April 24
------------------	--------------------------------------------	----------

---

<b>SEMINAR 6</b>	<i>Nadja</i>	May 1
------------------	--------------	-------

---

<b>SEMINAR 7</b>	<b>Max Ernst and Surrealism</b>	May 8
------------------	---------------------------------	-------

---

<b>SEMINAR 8</b>	<b>Artaud and the Limits of Surrealism</b>	May 15
------------------	--------------------------------------------	--------

---



### Further Reading

- Artaud, Antonin, *Selected Writings*, edited by Susan Sontag, translated by Helen Weaver (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
- Derrida, Jacques, “The Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation,” in *Writing and Difference*, translated by Anan Bass (London: RKP, 1978), 232-50.
- Esslin, Martin, *Artaud* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1976).
- Antonin Artaud*, exh. cat., curated by Guillaume Fau (Paris: Gallimard, 2006).
- Nadeau, Maurice. *The History of Surrealism*, translated by Richard Howard (New York: Macmillan, 1965).
- Rowell, Margit, “Cruelty as Purity: The Drawings of Artaud,” *MoMA* 23 (Autumn 1996): 13-17.

---

## SEMINAR 9

## Bataille and Surrealism I

May 22

---

### Essential Reading

- ❖ Georges Bataille, “Architecture,” in *Encyclopaedia Acephalica* (London: Atlas Press, 1995), 35–36.
- ❖ Georges Bataille, “The Language of Flowers,” in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, edited by Allan Stoekl (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 10–14.
- ❖ Georges Bataille, “Materialism,” in *Encyclopaedia Acephalica* (London: Atlas Press, 1995), 58.
- ❖ Georges Bataille, “Human Face,” in *The Sources of Surrealism*, edited by Neil Matheson (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2006), 573–76.
- ❖ Georges Bataille, “The Big Toe,” in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, edited by Allan Stoekl (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 20–23.
- ❖ Georges Bataille, “Slaughterhouse,” in *October* 36 (Spring 1986): 10–13.

### Further Reading

- Ades, Dawn, and Simon Baker (eds), *Undercover Surrealism: Georges Bataille and Documents* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006).
- Bataille, Georges, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, edited by Allan Stoekl (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985).
- Derrida, Jacques, “From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve,” in *Writing and Difference*, translated by Anan Bass (London: RKP, 1978), 251-77.
- Hollier, Denis, *Against Architecture: The Writings of Georges Bataille*, translated by Betsy Wing (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).
- Hussey, Andrew (ed.), *The Beast at Heaven’s Gate: Georges Bataille and the Art of Transgression* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006).
- Nadeau, Maurice, “The Crisis of 1929,” in *The History of Surrealism*, translated by Richard Howard (Cambridge: Belknap/Harvard University Press, 1989), 154-65.
- Richman, Michele H., *Reading Georges Bataille: Beyond the Gift* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).
- French, Patrick, “Documents in the 1970s: Bataille, Barthes and ‘Le gros orteil’,” *Papers of Surrealism* 7 (2007): The Use-Value of Documents.  
[<http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/index.html>]

**Essential Reading**

- ❖ Georges Bataille, “Eye,” in *The Sources of Surrealism*, edited by Neil Matheson (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2006), 570–72.
- ❖ André Breton, “The First Dalí Exhibit,” in *Break of Day*, translated by Mark Polizzotti and Mary Ann Caws (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 51–53.
- ❖ Georges Bataille, “The ‘Lugubrious Game,’” and “Formless,” in *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings, 1927–1939*, edited by Allan Stoekl (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 24–31.
- ❖ André Breton, “Second Manifesto of Surrealism,” in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, translated by Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1972), 176–87.
- ❖ Georges Bataille, “The Castrated Lion,” in *The Absence of Myth: Writings on Surrealism*, edited by Michael Richardson (London: Verso, 1994), 28–29.
- ❖ Salvador Dalí, “The Rotting Donkey,” and “The Grand Masturbator,” in *Oui: The Paranoid-Critical Revolution: Writings, 1927–1933*, edited by Robert Descharnes, translated by Yvonne Sharif (Boston: Exact Change, 1998) 115–33.
- ❖ Georges Bataille, “On the Subject of Slumbers,” in *The Absence of Myth: Writings on Surrealism*, edited by Michael Richardson (London: Verso, 1994), 49–51.

**Further Reading**

Finkelstein, Haim, *Salvador Dalí’s Art and Writing, 1927–1942: The Metamorphoses of Narcissus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

Jenny, Laurent, “From Breton to Dalí: The Adventures of Automatism,” *October* 51 (Winter, 1989): 105-114.

---

<b>SEMINAR 11</b>	<b>Women and Surrealism</b>	July 31
-------------------	-----------------------------	---------

---

---

<b>SEMINAR 12</b>	<b>McCahon and Lye</b>	August 7
-------------------	------------------------	----------

---

---

<b>SEMINAR 13</b>	<b>Graham and Wall</b>	August 14
-------------------	------------------------	-----------

---

---

<b>SEMINAR 14</b>	<b>Towers Open Fire</b>	August 21
-------------------	-------------------------	-----------

---

---

<b>SEMINARS 15-16</b>	<b>Research Presentations</b>	September 25 & October 2
-----------------------	-------------------------------	--------------------------

---

**Research presentations**

---

**Research essays due Friday, October 19**

---

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

### WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study). Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress). Most statutes and policies are available at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy), except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx) (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcacademic](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic).

### Taping of Lectures

All students in the School of Art History, Classics and Religious Studies are welcome to use their own audio-tapes to record lectures. If you want to do this, please see your lecturer, tutor or the relevant programme administrator and complete a disclaimer form, which advises of copyright and other relevant issues.

# WIN \$500

## THE CHARTWELL TRUST STUDENT ART WRITING PRIZE 2012

The Adam Art Gallery is calling for entries for the Chartwell Trust Student Art Writing Prize—an annual writing initiative focusing on visual art and culture.

### ELIGIBILITY

The prize is open to Victoria University of Wellington students from any of the following programmes:

Art History, Classics, Religious Studies, Museum and Heritage Studies, English, Film, Theatre, Media Studies and Music.

### PRIZE

The winning entry will receive a cash prize of **\$500** and have their essay published on the Adam Art Gallery website [www.adamartgallery.org.nz](http://www.adamartgallery.org.nz)

### GUIDELINES/CRITERIA

- Entries should be in the form of a review or essay addressing an exhibition at the Adam Art Gallery or a work from the Victoria University of Wellington Art Collection
- Submissions should be no more than 1,500 words
- Texts should be clearly labelled with author's name, contact details, course of study and student ID
- Texts must be submitted in both hard copy form and in Microsoft Word format (A4, single sided and 1.5 spaced)
- Check [www.adamartgallery.org.nz/learning-opportunities/chartwell-trust-student-writing-prize](http://www.adamartgallery.org.nz/learning-opportunities/chartwell-trust-student-writing-prize) for previous winning entries.

### DEADLINE

Entries are **now open** and can be submitted anytime until the closing date.  
The closing date for submissions is **Friday 28 September 2012**.

Entries should be sent to:  
The Chartwell Trust Student Art Writing Prize  
c/- Adam Art Gallery  
Victoria University of Wellington  
PO Box 600  
Wellington 6140  
or via email [adamartgallery@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:adamartgallery@vuw.ac.nz)

**GOOD LUCK!**