



UiO • University of Oslo

Art and Criticism in the Anthropocene

KUN2500/4500: Current Topics in Art History
Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas, University of Oslo,
Norway
A course by Ingrid Halland

Art and Criticism in the Anthropocene (10 ECTS, BA & MA students)

An interdisciplinary BA/MA course relevant to various disciplines in the humanities: art history, architecture & design history, aesthetics, literary studies, environmental history, architecture, and European culture studies.

Course description

This course explores how contemporary art, architecture, or design can function as eco criticism. How can we think about, write about, and question the role of visual arts in a world of climate change, global capitalism, and blurry truths? What can art and criticism *do* in the age of the Anthropocene? We will engage as a group in discussions of theoretical, philosophical, and political issues, ensuring an extensive introduction to timely questions in contemporary art, the humanities, and related fields.

The course addresses practical and theoretical aspects of critical activities. Through exploring different formats of art writing (e.g. interviews, exhibition reviews, research synopsis, or book reviews) students will learn to engage critically with the field of contemporary art, architecture, and design and to think creatively regarding crucial questions of what the arts can do in and for our time.

During the course, the group (in collaboration) will curate, develop, and launch a purpose-created research website where texts, interviews, and criticism will be published. For those who may be interested, there will be opportunities for publishing in a major Norwegian art journal.

Learning outcome

- Understand how the geological concept of the Anthropocene raises new questions within humanities and the arts.
- Discuss these questions in relation to contemporary arts (visual art, architecture or design).
- Develop skills in creating writing.
- Improving academic English.
- Through various writing activities, students will practice different genres of art writing (exhibition review, interview, press release, introduction to a theoretical concept), and prepare the texts for publishing.
- Communicate advanced knowledge about art to a wider audience.
- Critically discuss the topic/period of your MA thesis to contemporary issues related to the Anthropocene.

Teaching

This course will be conducted primarily as a seminar with class discussion (one to two sessions per week), 20 hours. We expect that you will engage in some activities outside the University (e.g. exhibition visits).

We also expect you to meet prepared for classes, actively participate in discussions, and read and comment on texts written by your co-students.

In order to qualify to the final exam, you must complete these compulsory assignments:

- Compulsory attendance at class. You have to attend class, at least 7 out of 10 classes.
- One oral presentation on one of your website entries.

Additional absence must be justified with documentation to the exam coordinator. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every seminar.

Exam

The final exam is a portfolio submission (mappeeksamen) consisting of writing exercises and entries published on the website. The portfolio must consist of approx. 10-12 pages (each page à 2300 characters without spaces, not including illustrations, notes and reference).

You will submit your portfolio in English.

Sample Reading List

- *Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence* by Timothy Morton (2016)
- *700-årsflommen. 13 innlegg om klimaendringer, poesi og politikk* by Espen Stueland (2016)
- *The Shock of the Anthropocene: The Earth, History and Us* by Christophe Bonneuil and Jean-Baptiste Fressoz (2016)
- *Climates: Architecture and the Planetary Imaginary* edited by James Graham, Caitlin Blanchfield, Alissa Anderson, Jordan Carver, Jacob Moore (2017)
- *Art in the Anthropocene: Encounters Among Aesthetics, Politics, Environments and Epistemologies* edited by Heather Davis and Etienne Turpin (2015)