

Color Seminar

Spring 2011

W *** 1:20-4:10 *** ROB 203

Subject to change ** come to class and check Sakai for updates **

Instructor Information

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Office Hours: Mon - 5-6pm; Wed 4:20-5:20 and by appt.

Course Overview

What is color? How do humans perceive color? How do our brains represent color? How does color affect our emotions? How does the use of color in literature and film affect our responses to art? This course is all about understanding color: We will learn how light entering the eye is processed and represented by the visual system and the extent to which perceived color can be explained by that process; we will ask such philosophical questions as whether color is a property of objects or a property of the mind; we will investigate whether color perception is a human universal or culturally dependent; and we will examine how our responses to color in literature and film is related to the psychological and philosophical topics of the course. The course will be highly interactive and discussion based, and grades will be calculated from class participation and writing assignments. Although the early part of the course is based on physiology and natural science, no prior background in these areas is required. We will emphasize big picture ideas rather than details.

Required Readings

1. Chapter 9 from Goldstein's *Sensation and Perception*, Eighth Edition (2009). Wadsworth publishing. If you want to buy the entire book, you may. This is available at many online book sellers. You can also purchase Chapter 9 alone in an electronic version from www.cengagebrain.com, at URL: <http://www.cengagebrain.com/shop/isbn/9780495601494>.
2. Readings will come from a variety of sources and will be made available as needed on Sakai (electronic versions) or in class (paper versions).

Course Rules

Phones

No cell phone use during class. No talking, texting, googling. This disrupts the course for me, your classmates, and decreases your ability to pay attention in class. If I notice you using your phone in class, I will ask you to stop; if use continues, your attendance / class participation grade will be decreased (see below).

Course Etiquette

This class is based on participation in discussion and art. All students should feel comfortable expressing their ideas and creating art. I expect you to be respectful to each other in expressing your views.

Grading

There will be 400 points possible in this class. Points are distributed as follows

Attendance and participation	100 points, 25%
Exam 1	80 points, 20%
Final exam	80 points, 20%
Color project	80 points, 20%
Assignments	60 points, 15%

Course Requirements

1. **Attendance and class participation:** You are expected to attend class and participate in class discussions. This will be an interactive course with a lot of discussion and hands-on projects. Your attendance will be noted each day, as will your participation in class and your involvement with the in-class activities. In almost every class, you will be asked to write and turn in brief responses to reflection questions. You will receive credit for turning these in.
2. **Exams:** There are two exams in this course, one mid-term and a final. The mid-term will consist of multiple choice and short-answer questions. You will be permitted to bring one 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper to the mid-term. This sheet of paper can contain any written material that you wish to include.

The final exam will consist primarily of short answer and essay questions. It will aim to address your understanding of the principles of color covered in class. This exam will be somewhat unusual. I will hand out the exam at the beginning of the final exam time. At the end of the 3 hours, you need to turn in your completed exam. As with the previous exam, each student can bring one 8.5 x 11 sheet of notes. Unlike the previous exam, you may consult each other on answers. You may also use any of the art supplies present to answer your questions. I will also have in class several books of art reproductions. Your answers may take several forms: (1) Your answers can be standard written responses. (2) If appropriate, your answers can reference art in the art books. (3) If appropriate, your answer could also take the form of an art project.

You may work alone or together on some or all of your questions. Each student must turn in his/her own written exam. If you collaborate on the production of a work of art to answer one or more questions, multiple students may reference one work of art. If you want to collaborate before the exam in terms of what to bring on your sheet of notes, you may do so.

3. **Color project:** A major part of your grade will be a color project that you will complete and present to the class. In this project, you will focus on one of the topics of the course. The topic could be psychological, physiological, philosophical or physical. You may work alone or with a partner. You will find 3 examples of this topic in art: your examples can come from paintings, literature, film, music, or any other art form you wish. Be creative! You cannot use examples that I used in class. On your assigned day, you describe what topic you chose and then explain your three examples to the class. You need to tell me whether you are working alone or with a partner by *February 23rd*, your choice of topics by *March 23rd*, and your specific examples by *April 6th*. You will be graded on your presentation of the class; you do not need to turn in any written documentation.
4. **Assignments:** Periodically I will give homework assignments. These homework assignments will be described in class and will usually be related to the completion of one of our projects.