CONTEMPORARY SPANISH ART
UPF/HESP Spring Semester 2014
Course Syllabus
Eloy Fernández Porta, Ph.D

Language of Instruction: English
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Course prerequisites: There are no prerequisites for this course
Course language requirements: None

Course description
This course provides a dynamic, multi-disciplinary introduction to Contemporary Art in Spain. A background on this specified field is not required. For this reason not only the main artistic events will be covered, but also some political, historical and cultural issues that might be relevant. Although this course is mainly based on lectures and class debate, four visits to art centers and exhibitions will be also part of the course requirements. These visits will be made during the class time, and are equivalent to a usual in-class lecture. We will discuss recent classics as well as emerging artists, and we will cover a wide range of artistic practices, from photography to afterpop music, including installation art, performance art and comic art. Although the course offers several relevant clues to understand the historical context and particular conditions in Spain, it is also intended as a more general insight into contemporary artistic strategies and topics.

Learning objectives
At the end of the course students will be able to identify and discuss some of the masterworks and most important currents of change-of-the-century culture in Spain. They will also be capable to understand and relate to key notions regarding visual and media culture. They will develop a contemporary artistic sensibility, and they will acquire several notions and ideas that will be useful for them in order to understand and analyze globalized pop culture. Significant analogies between peninsular artistic production and North American art will be frequent.

Course workload
Students will be required to read short, informative articles (provided in the Courspack) on a daily basis. The articles in question will serve as a basis for class discussion and they will offer the conceptual framework for every session of the course. There will also be two tests (Midterm and Final); each exam will cover 50% of the course. Students will also be asked to write a 10-page, informed paper about an artist of their choice that we haven’t dealt with in class. The paper will be presented to the class in a 10-minute, collective powerpoint-style, in which students will collaborate in groups of 2 to 4, with other students whose papers deal with related issues.
Methods of instruction
Every class will begin with a group of two students giving a short, 7-minutes summary of required reading. Thursday’s sessions will consist of a guided field trip to a local art center, gallery or museum. Proper indications will be given in advance. Part of the session will be lecture-based, but participation and debate is required. When going on a field trip students will be asked to comment and discuss the artworks on display. A Zap paper on one of the field trips is also required.

Method of assessment
Class participation: 10%
Midterm Exam: 25%
Zap Paper: 10%
Oral Presentation of Final Paper (collective): 15%
Final Paper: 15%
Final Exam: 25%

Absence policy
3 absences: -10% grade
4 absences: -20% grade
5 absences: Incomplete
Health problems can be considered as cause of justified absence when explained with a doctor’s note. Missing a plane or going on a personal trip on a lecture day are not considered causes of justified absence.

Class protocols
There is no dress code for this course. Students are allowed to drink in class, and they can use their laptops for educational purposes.

Bibliography
- Coursepack (contains all articles that should be read during the course).
- CONGOST, Carles, Say I'm Your Number One, León: MUSAC, 2007.
- MILLÁN, Fernando y Jesús García Sánchez (Eds.), La escritura en libertad, Madrid: Alianza, 1975. [Visual poetry anthology]
CSA DAILY OUTLINE


TUE: Landscape Art 3: Nature® reloaded. Modern essentialism vs. postmodern relativism. Soundscapes, sound installations and the evocation of the jungle. Indications for the Self-Guided Field Trip to Fontcuberta’s public intervention With Every Kiss the World is Born @ Isidre Nonell Square + Zap Paper. Read: Marianna Torgovnick, “Defining the Primitive”.


TUE: Field Trip 2: MACBA. A visit to the permanent collection. Read: Guy Davenport, “Objects on a Table”.

THU: Objects! 1: The avant-gardes, or the silent revolution. Salvador Dali’s objects of symbolic functioning. The avant-garde tradition, or, the revolution goes textual. Visual poetry from Joan Brossa to Chema Madoz. Read: Jorge Luis Marzo, “Objects and Their Cases”.


THU: Midterm Exam.
Read: Fredric Jameson, “The Brick and the Balloon”.


TUE: Oral Presentations.


TUE: Final Exam.