Art writing isn't only a forum for one's ideas, it's also a process for discovering them.

Mel Bochner
ART 906 – Workshop: Writing in/as/for the Arts

Semester: Fall 2019
Dates: 09/03-12/10
Days: Tuesday
Hours: 12:00-4:40
Venue: Mitchell 363
Lecturer: Nicole Ridgway
Contact: ridgwayn@uwm.edu
Office Hours: By appointment.

Workshop Description and Learning Objectives:

In this workshop participants will be introduced to writing as a key component of visual arts practice. This workshop is premised on the understanding that writing is a mode of thinking, and that writing is fundamental to creativity, as well as that it is an essential part of the material, conceptual and professional practice of artists today. Writing enables us to deepen our perceptual acuity; to engage with and internalize ideas; to immerse ourselves in process; to facilitate problem solving; it helps engender critical reflection and an awareness of audience; it attunes us to context, style and address; and, it hones our skills of selection, ordering and structuring.

This workshop will introduce participants to a number of games, exercises and activities geared to getting words on paper and to becoming more comfortable with textual expression; to using writing to access creativity and deepen the discipline of attentiveness; to developing descriptive writing skills; to refining drafts; to becoming better readers of our own and other’s work; to expanding our vocabulary for critique; to incorporating feedback and critically reflecting on process and product; and, to broadly exploring writing as part of visual arts practice.

The workshop will focus on writing as a process; on creating surprises and taking risks; on increasing range and flexibility; on focusing our seeing and engaging sense, memory, and research to generate new possibilities; and to crafting, refining and writing for specific audiences. While the exercises and forms that we will explore will be focused on creative and professional practice, the skills acquired should provide a good foundation for other writing, such as, critical and scholarly writing.

Each week we will write together as a group, we will share writing, reading and research done at home, and we will respond to and comment on short assignments posted on D2L. Participation and peer review both in-class and online are a key component of the class. In addition to the writing we share, participants are encouraged to write everyday and these writings, as well as those done in or for class, will form the basis of the "portfolio" to be submitted later in the semester with a “metatext.” This text, that stands back from the writing you have done and reflects on the pieces you have chosen to submit, will address the process of your writing over the semester: what you have learnt, what blocks you have encountered, what experiments you have undertaken, what risks you have taken, and where you think you need/want to explore further.

Each participant will also undertake a “final project.” While the exercises and assignments for the portfolio are directed or guided writings, the final project will be a self-directed work-in-progress in any genre, format or medium that includes writing, words or text. This may be a “think piece” towards a creative or scholarly project, or an artist book, a video poem, a graphic novel, an installation with a statement, or a substantial grant proposal, for example. These will be discussed in both proposal and draft form prior to submission. Along with the final project, all participants will submit a letter in which they evaluate their final project and provide a global assessment of their work through this workshop.

In order to promote risk-taking and experimentation, the grading structure for this class attempts to recognize that we all start the course and finish at different places, while ensuring that the key learning outcomes are met as well. The details for weekly assignments, the portfolio, and final project will be discussed in class and will be posted online, and examples will be provided where relevant.

Catalogue Description:

906 Graduate Workshop: (Subtitled). 3 cr. G.
A special topic workshop for graduate students including reading, research, writing and studio practice. Retakable w/ chg in topic to 9 cr max. Prereq: grad st.
Workload Statement:

This class meets once a week for 175 minutes for a total of 43.75 hours of required lecture time. You should expect to take at least 30 hours over the course of the semester reading the required texts and your peers submissions. There are weekly assignments which you should expect to require at least 35 hours over the semester, and two large assignments that you should expect to require between 15-20 hours each. All told, this class is likely to take 143.5 hours of your time.

Attendance:

All students are expected to come to class on time and having done their assignments/readings, and they are expected to participate both in-class and in the online discussion threads. If for any reason you are not able to attend class, please be sure to contact me. If you will be missing more than two classes it is vital that you contact the department and myself in a timely manner.

Grading:

Graduate students are required to earn a grade of B or higher for any graduate level course to count towards their MA or MFA. Student’s grades will be based on the completion of assignments; their meeting of the expectations laid out for class assignments and peer review, as well as the quality of the work submitted.

Grading Scale:

The alpha-numerical scale I am working with is as follows:

A (95-100); A- (90-94); B+ (85-89); B (80-84); B- (75-79); C+ (70-74); C (65-79); C- (60-64); D+ (55-59); D (50-54); D- (45-49); F (0-44).

Mark Breakdown:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark Breakdown</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and Short Assignments</td>
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<td>Participation and Short Assignments</td>
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<td>Portfolio and Meta-Text</td>
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<td>Final Project</td>
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<td>Self-Assessment</td>
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Consultations:

I will be available every week for individual consultations or studio visits. I ask that you email me at least 24 hours in advance to make an appointment, or grab me before/after class to schedule a time for the following week.

UWM Policies and Procedures:

1. Students with disabilities. The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the Accessibility Resource Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. http://uwm.edu/arc/

2. Religious observances. Accommodations for absences due to religious observance should be noted. http://www4.uwm.edu/secure/docs/other/S1.5.htm

3. Students called to active military duty. Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty should be noted http://uwm.edu/active-duty-military/

4. Incompletes. A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond
the student’s control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of
term work. https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_31_INCOMPLETE_GRADES.pdf

5. Discriminatory conduct. Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning
environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and
staff. https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discriminatory_Conduct_Policy.pdf

6. Title IX/Sexual Violence. Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education program or activities,
and UWM policy prohibits such conduct (see Discriminatory Conduct, above). This includes sexual violence, which may
include sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, and/or stalking in all educational programs and
education-related areas. UWM strongly encourages its students to report any instance of sex discrimination to UWM’s
Title IX Coordinator (titleix@uwm.edu). Whether or not a student wishes to report an incident of sexual violence, the Title
IX Coordinator can connect students to resources at UWM and/or in the community including, but not limited to, victim
advocacy, medical and counseling services, and/or law enforcement. For more information, please visit: https://uwm.edu/
sexual-assault/

7. Academic misconduct. Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe
sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. http://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/
facultyaff/academic-misconduct/

8. Complaint procedures. Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the
complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the
department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for
enforcing the policy. https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S_47_Discriminatory_Conduct_Policy.pdf

9. Grade appeal procedures. A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary
decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department,
college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These
procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/

10. LGBT+ resources. Faculty and staff can find resources to support inclusivity of students who identify as LGBT+ in the
learning environment. http://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/

11. Other. The final exam requirement, the final exam date requirement, etc. http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/
S22.htm

Health Insurance:

It is strongly recommended that all students have health insurance that includes emergency room and hospitalization
coverage. The UWM Student Association offers a Student Health Insurance Plan http://www4.uwm.edu/studentorg/sa/
executive/student_health_insurance.cfm which covers most major medical illnesses or injuries. The University does not
provide blanket medical coverage to students. Students are strongly encouraged to secure their own health insurance,
either through their parents, the Student Health Insurance Plan or some other program.

Copyright:

Copyright is a form of protection provided by the laws of the United States (title 17, U.S. Code) to the authors of “original
works of authorship,” including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic, and
certain other intellectual works. This protection is available to both published and unpublished works. Section 106 of the
1976 Copyright Act generally gives the owner of copyright the exclusive right to do and to authorize others to use their
materials. You must get permission to use copyrighted original works of authorship if you plan to make your project
available to the public in any way. For more on gaining permission see: http://www4.uwm.edu/ltc/copyright/getting-
permission.cfm

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Information on plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct can be found at
http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm

Drops:

Please see the Registrar’s Calendar for deadlines for drops: http://uwm.edu/registrar/students/dates-deadlines/adddrop-
deadlines-chart/.

Special Needs and Questions:
If you need accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements for this course, please contact me as soon as possible. Feel free to visit me during my office hours to discuss assignments or any questions or comments you have.

Readings:

All required readings will be made available via D2L. As a good resource, I recommend, *Writing for the Visual Arts*, Mashey Bernstein and George Yatchcisin (2001, Prentice Hall).

Resources for Artist-Writers/Residencies/Grant Writing

http://www.chicagoartistsresource.org/home
https://students.colum.edu/learning-studio/Writing/writing-center-resources.php
https://blog.creative-capital.org/category/tips-tools/
https://hmwa.org/advocate/your-region/artist-resources
http://www.artistcommunities.org/residencies/tipsforartists
https://www.amazon.com/Artists-Guide-Grant-Writing-Performing/dp/08230000702
https://www.amazon.com/Only-Grant-Writing-Book-Youll-Ever/dp/0465018696/ref=pd_sim_b_8

Help with Teaching Statements (More on this and Artist Statements to Follow)
http://www.crt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpts

Class and Deadline Schedule:

*Try again. Fail again. Fail better.* Samuel Beckett

*One doesn’t arrive — in words or in art — by necessarily knowing where one is going.* Ann Hamilton

**Tuesday 3 September**  
Introductions, Workshop Overview, Expectations  
(Bad Writing Workshop)

*Writing is about learning to pay attention and to communicate what is going on. There is ecstasy in both.* Anne Lamott

*Here [in poetry], as elsewhere in life, attentiveness only deepens what it regards.* Jane Hirshfield

**Monday 9 September**  
DUE: Inanimate Portraits (9:00am, D2L)

**Tuesday 10 September**  
Animating Objects

*One does not discover new lands without consenting to lose sight of the shore for a very long time.* Andre Gide

*The moment an object appears in a narrative, it is charged with a special force and becomes like the pole of a magnetic field, a knot in the network of invisible relationships. The symbolism of an object may be more or less explicit, but it is always there. We might even say that in a narrative any object is always magic.* Italo Calvino

(https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/a-sort-of-a-song/) and  
(https://www.chesterton.org/a-piece-of-chalk/)

Assignments: All assignments due for the week in class are posted on D2L under the name of the class. Finders Keepers; Inanimate Portrait; Comments Online

**Tuesday 17 September**  
Seeing Again

*The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.* Marcel Proust

Readings: “Seeing,” Annie Dillard; “The Blue of Distance,” Rebecca Solnit, Two Ways to See a River,” Mark Twain;  
“Phillip Guston Talking,” Phillip Guston

Assignments: Williams Burroughs Walk; From the Inside Out, Comments Online
Tuesday 24 September  Engaging the Senses/Engaging Memory

Nobody sees a flower – really – it is so small – we haven’t time – and to see takes time, like to have friend takes time. Georgia O’Keeffe

Before writers are writers they are readers, living in books, through books, in the lives of others that are also the heads of others, in that act that is so intimate and yet so alone. Rebecca Solnit

Readings: Opening from “Cider with Rosie,” Laurie Lee; Selections from The Devil’s Larder, Jim Crace; “Grauballe Man,” Seamus Heaney (if possible also look at “Punishment,” “The Tollund Man,” and “Bog Queen” all from North); “No Name Woman,” Maxine Hong Kingston; “My Struggle,” Art Speigelman

Assignments: Seeing Anew; Silence; Family Stories: Comment Online

Tuesday 1 October  Visualizing Text

I don’t try to be inspired; I just try to work very regularly … I think most artists feel that being inspired is a myth. Simply put, out of the work, comes the work. John Cage

Reading: Joanna Drucker, Chose a selection from sections provided from The Century of Artist’s Books

Assignments: Short Presentation; Artist Statement Research; Please Read Ahead to Counter-Narratives Assignment

Tuesday 7 October  Ekphrasis

To be surprised, to wonder, is to begin to understand. Jose Ortega Y Gasset

We’re only here for a short while. And I think it’s such a lucky accident, having been born, that we’re almost obliged to pay attention. Mark Strand

Readings: Handout on Ekphrasis; Hirsch on Hopper

Assignments: Be the Tree/Indulge the Sense/Tasty Tales; Comments on and Examples of Ekphrasis on D2L; Images for Class Today

Monday 14 October  DUE: Artist Statements on D2L, 9:00 am

Tuesday 15 October Statements/Proposals Workshop

We learn to do something by doing it. There is no other way. John Holt

Perfectionism is the voice of the oppressor, the enemy of the people. It will keep you cramped and insane your whole life, and it is the main obstacle between you and a shitty first draft. Anne Lamott

Assignments: Artist Statement; Read Statements; Research Statements, Grants, Residencies etc.

Tuesday 22 October Manifestoes

I merely took the energy it takes to pout and wrote some blues. Duke Ellington

Readings: Various Manifestoes in D2L folder.

Assignments: Post Examples Online; Draft a Manifesto; In-Depth Research

Writing Groups Formed (please read ahead for the Revising Assignments Handout)
Tuesday 29 October Writing in the Margins

Artists who seek perfection in everything are those who cannot attain it in anything. Eugene Delacroix


Assignments: The Dark Side of Childhood Tales

Tuesday 5 November Counter-Narratives

Creativity oscillates between what is given and what can be discovered. Deena Metzger

Readings: Reading and Critiquing Works in Progress Handout; Counter Narrative/Ur Narrative Handout

Assignment: A Counter Narrative of Your Own

Portfolio and Metatext Discussion
Tuesday 12 November  Re-Envisioning and Revising 1

The essential gift for a good writer is a built-in, shock-proof shit detector. Ernest Hemingway
Remember: when people tell you something’s wrong or doesn’t work for them, they are almost always right. When they
tell you exactly what they think is wrong and how to fix it, they are almost always wrong. Neil Gaiman

Assignments: Revised Piece and Feedback to Writing Group

Sign Up for Work-in-Progress Presentations

Monday 18 November: DUE: Revised Statement or Teaching Statement etc; 9:00 am.
Tuesday 19 November Re-Envisioning and Revising 2

I think I did pretty well, considering I started out with nothing but a bunch of blank paper. Steve Martin

Assignments: Revised Statement/Teaching Statement and Feedback to Group etc.

Tuesday 26 November DUE: Portfolio and Metatext, 9:00 am.
Independent Research and Writing, Consultations for Final Project — No Class

27 November-1 December THANKSGIVING RECESS

Monday 2 December DUE: Draft/Outline/Mock Up of Final Project Posted to D2L
Tuesday 3 December Final Project: Work-in-Progress Draft Discussion
Tuesday 10 December Final Project: Work-in-Progress Presentation/Studio Visits
Monday 16 December DUE: Self-Grade Letter, 12:30 pm.