

Performance: Writing and Research

Queerealia: Archives and the Pleasures of Objecthood

Loo, Zihan – *he / him pronouns*, First Name: Tze Han (子涵)

Fall 2024, 90-minute class, twice a week, 17 students.

Course Description

If you were to create a time capsule of objects that marks your existence, what would you include and why? How far can you break down each object in this time capsule before you reach an irreducible unit, and what are the legacies of the past that continue to haunt these constituent parts?

Queerealia: Archives and the Pleasures of Objecthood asks these questions in order to consider the intimacies of archives that bridge spatial, temporal, and conceptual gaps. Students will build a personal archive of objects through various writing exercises. These objects will then coalesce into a larger assemblage, creating a temporary material archive for the class that we will refer to throughout the semester.

Beyond the sensing of personal archives, this course examines contemporary performance and artistic practices that explore different strategies of interrogating materiality and memory. We will engage in recent critical conversations about the colonial archive, the queer archive, objecthood and subjectivity.

The course supports students in developing college-level analytical writing and strategies for approaching critical theory and objects of study. Object descriptions are developed into a final essay through a scaffolded writing process, with consistent feedback from the instructor and fellow students.

Learning Objectives

1. To familiarize yourself with the format, standards, and practices of academic writing for the humanities.
2. To practice reading, understanding, and processing dense or difficult academic writing.
3. To be in conversation with critical theoretical writing and the in-depth analysis of objects of study / archival objects.
4. To engage with your peers in a supportive manner and to understand the dynamics and intricacies of holding pedagogical space.
5. To develop strategies for the process of writing over an extended duration, scaffolded by a peer-review and consistent feedback process.
6. To pen a paper with a well-considered argument supported by evidence and in productive dialogue with other writers and intellectuals.

Reading List

- Arondekar, Anjali. "Introduction: Without a Trace." *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India*, Duke UP, 2009.
- Bennett, Jane. "Preface" and "The Force of Things." *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Duke UP, 2010.
- Chen, Mel Y. "Introduction: Animating Animacy." *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*, Duke UP, 2012.
- Cheng, Anne Anlin. "Preface: A Feminist Theory of the Yellow Woman" and "Introduction," *Ornamentality*, Oxford UP, 2019.
- Freeman, Elizabeth. "Introduction: Queer and Not Now." *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, Duke UP, 2010.
- Huang, Vivian L. "Conclusion: Something Is Missing." *Surface Relations: Queer Forms of Asian American Inscrutability*, Duke UP, 2022.
- Loo, Zihan. "Queer Objects: An Archive for the Future." *Queer Asia: Decolonising and Reimagining Sexuality and Gender*, Zed Books, 2019.
- Muñoz, José Esteban. "Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts." *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1996, pp. 5–16.
- Schneider, Rebecca. "Slough Media." *Remain*, U of Minnesota P and Meson Press, 2019, pp. 49–107.
- Schneider, Rebecca. "New Materialisms and Performance Studies." *TDR: The Drama Review*, vol. 59, no. 4, 2015, pp. 7–17.
- Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. 4th ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2018.

Grading Criteria

Attendance and Participation – 25%

Attendance – 5%; Participation – 5%; Weekly Discussion Posts – 5%; Show and Tell Presentation – 10%.

Reading and Interpretation of Objects – 20%

Personal Archival Object – 4%; Responses to Two Posts – 1%; Ekphrasis – 7%; 4-page Summary and Quote Explication – 8%.

Writing and Composition – 55%

300-word Abstract – 3%; Office Hour Appointment – 2%; 7–8-page Work-in-Progress Essay – 20%; Peer Review of Two Papers – 6%; In-class Symposium and Presentation – 4%; 10-page Final Essay – 20%.

Shared Assessment Criteria

Across written assignments and presentations, work is evaluated for clear and sustained argument, close engagement with objects and course readings, thoughtful use of evidence and citation, organization and development, attention to the writing and revision process, and constructive participation in our shared pedagogical space.

A = 94 to 100%	A- = 90 to 93%	B+ = 87 to 89%	B = 83 to 86%
B- = 80 to 82%	C+ = 77 to 79%	C = 73 to 76%	C- = 70 to 72%
D+ = 67 to 69%	D = 63 to 66%	D- = 60 to 62%	F = 0 to 59%

Weekly Outline

Please note that you are expected to have done the assigned readings BEFORE class.

Come prepared with a list of questions, keywords or comments you have regarding the reading.

Wk 1	Aug 29 - Thu	Introduction. Distribution of course syllabus. Review of grading criteria, course expectations, assignments, and policies. Reviewing <i>Annex A - Terms of Engagement</i> and discussing terms of engagement.	
Wk 2	Sep 3 - Tue	Read: Loo, Zihan. "Queer Objects: An Archive for the Future." <i>Queer Asia: Decolonising and Reimagining Sexuality and Gender</i> , Zed Books, 2019.	
	Sep 5 - Thu	Reviewing <i>Annex B - Reading Theory</i>	
Wk 3	Sep 10 - Tue	Reviewing <i>Annex C - Approaching Objects</i> and class exercise with online resources from the GLBT Historical Society. https://www.glbthistory.org/digital-collections	
	Sep 12 - Thu	Assembling a collective temporary archive	Finalize "Show and Tell" presentation pairing and decide your presentation week.
Unit A: Materialism and Mattering			
Wk 4	Sep 17 - Tue	Read: Schneider, Rebecca. "Slough Media." <i>Remain</i> , U of Minnesota P and Meson Press, 2019,	

		pp. 49–107.	
	Sep 19 - Thu	Visit to Bancroft Library	Meeting at the Bancroft Library. Personal Archival Object writing, submitted as a discussion post, due Sep 19, 11:59 p.m.
Wk 5	Sep 24 - Tue	Read: Bennett, Jane. “Preface” and “The Force of Things.” <i>Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things</i> , Duke UP, 2010. Discussion and in-class review of Personal Archival Object writing and the temporary archive of objects and texts we have assembled.	Respond to two of your classmates’ Personal Archival Object writing in the discussion thread due Sep 24, 11:59 p.m.
	Sep 26 - Thu	Group A Presentation	
Wk 6	Oct 1 - Tue	Read: Schneider, Rebecca. “New Materialisms and Performance Studies.” <i>TDR: The Drama Review</i> , vol. 59, no. 4, 2015, pp. 7–17. In-class exercise with draft of Ekphrasis.	
	Oct 3 - Thu	Group B Presentation	
Unit B: Queer Archives and Acts			
Wk 7	Oct 8 - Tue	Read: Freeman, Elizabeth. “Introduction: Queer and Not Now.” <i>Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories</i> , Duke UP, 2010.	4-page Ekphrasis due Oct 8, 11:59 p.m.
	Oct 10 - Thu	Group C Presentation In-class exercise to reverse engineer an abstract from the readings we have engaged with.	
Wk 8	Oct 15 - Tue	Read: Arondekar, Anjali. “Introduction: Without a Trace.” <i>For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India</i> , Duke UP, 2009.	

	Oct 17 - Thu	Group D Presentation	300-word Abstract due Oct 17, 11:59 p.m.
Wk 9	Oct 22 - Tue	Read: Muñoz, José Esteban. "Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts." <i>Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory</i> , vol. 8, no. 2, 1996, pp. 5–16.	
	Oct 24 - Thu	Guest Speaker: Isaac Fellman, Reference Archivist, GLBT Historical Society	
Unit C: Racial Mattering			
Wk 10	Oct 29 - Tue	Read: Chen, Mel Y. "Introduction: Animating Animacy." <i>Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect</i> , Duke UP, 2012.	
	Oct 31 - Thu	Group E Presentation	4-page Summary due Nov 1, 11:59 p.m.
Wk 11	Nov 5 - Tue	Read: Cheng, Anne Anlin. "Preface: A Feminist Theory of the Yellow Woman" and "Introduction," <i>Ornamentationism</i> , Oxford UP, 2019.	
	Nov 7 - Thu	Group F Presentation	
Wk 12	Nov 12 - Tue	Read: Huang, Vivian L. "Conclusion: Something Is Missing." <i>Surface Relations: Queer Forms of Asian American Inscrutability</i> , Duke UP, 2022.	
	Nov 14 - Thu	Group G Presentation	7–8-page Work-in-Progress Essay due Nov 14, 11:59 p.m.
Peer-review, Consolidation, Presentation			
Wk 13	Nov 19 - Tue	Read: Graff, Gerald, and Cathy Birkenstein. <i>They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing</i> . 4th ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2018.	
	Nov 21 - Thu	Group H Presentation	
Wk 14	Nov 26 - Tue	In-class peer review essay workshop	Submit your 300-word comment

			for your two papers due Nov 26, 11:59 p.m.
	Nov 28 - Thu	Thanksgiving Break - no class	
Wk 15	Dec 3 - Tue	In-class symposium and presentation (9 people)	
	Dec 5 - Thu	In-class symposium and presentation (8 people)	
Final 10-page essay due Dec 13, 11:59 p.m.			

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is assessed as part of the shared pedagogical space. The course depends on sustained presence and engagement. Participation is thoughtful engagement with the material we are working through as a class, active listening, and responding to each other respectfully. Participation is paying attention to the shared pedagogical space. I value qualitative engagement over quantitative frequency. Refer to *Annex A - Terms of Engagement* for additional elaboration.

Weekly Discussion Posts

In Week 2 and Weeks 4 through 12 you are expected to post a short response to the assigned reading on Monday by 11:59 p.m. This is graded for completion; each posting carries a weight of 0.5%.

These posts should highlight any questions you might have regarding the reading, or specific quotes or ideas that you find relevant. *Do not summarize the text.* I prefer to hear how you relate the text to discussions we have had in class, or other readings in the semester.

Show and Tell Presentation

From week 5 onwards the class each Thursday will begin with peer-led class discussion of the reading material for the week in dialogue **with a “Queerealia” of your choice.** This can be:

- Any artifacts from the online archives of the GLBT Historical Society’s digital collections. <https://www.glbthistory.org/digital-collections>
- Any artifact or object from the items in the Bancroft Library collections that we are engaging with during our site visit on September 19.
- Any other object that you might define as “Queerealia” and of cultural, historical, or political significance. If you take this option please check with me on the significance of the object before you embark on the presentation.

This is **group work performed in pairs**. Both members receive the same grade, and you can present on the same object or on two different objects. Your group should present for at least 20 minutes, and for no longer than 30 minutes (around 8 to 10 slides).

A sign-up sheet will be circulated in week 3 for you to select the week for your presentation. Please do not think of this as an elaborate presentation – keep it simple. Please bring your own laptop / mobile device that you can connect to the projector to present slides. The objectives of this responsibility are as follows:

1. To get an understanding of some of the readings in this course, with the aim of preparing you for your writing assignments.
2. To be in conversation with each other and have the opportunity to learn from your presentation partner outside of class time.
3. To learn how to facilitate in-class conversations and how to form and ask questions.
4. To ensure that everyone gets the opportunity to lead the class time.

Think of this as an opportunity to focus on one particular section of the text, or connections across various texts we have encountered throughout the semester. Provide biographical information on the author or historical context for the reading only if relevant to the discussion you are facilitating. What are some key observations about these readings? How are these readings relevant to the key terms of this course – “archives,” “objecthood,” “queer,” and “materialism.”

The recommended structure of your presentation should be as follows:

- Brief summary of key ideas of the week’s readings.
- Introduce your object(s) of study and provide a brief description of it.
- Demonstrate how the ideas and specific passages from the reading help you approach the object(s).
- Pose insightful observations and ask questions that will facilitate debate and conversation.

Prioritize opening up conversation and asking questions. How do you find ways to make these readings and your object of study relevant and engaging to your peers? Do email me if you have any questions about leading discussions. You can also make a group office hour appointment with me the week before to discuss your approach and objects, and to clarify any doubts. **You are encouraged to circulate discussion questions before class convenes.**

Please upload your presentation slides / images after your Show and Tell presentation for archiving and reference.

Reading and Interpretation of Objects

These brief pieces of writing prepare you for your final essay. They will be consolidated and visible to the rest of the class as a form of collective learning.

Personal Archival Object

After class on week 3 you should have a couple of pieces of writings generated in class about an object in your personal possession. Please consolidate and develop these fragments of writing into a longer piece of creative writing approximately 800 words in length. Please include an image of the object in your discussion post. Think of this as an opportunity to introduce yourself via your object to the class.

Responses to Two Posts

Post a brief response to two of your classmates' writings. These can be resonances, or critical but thoughtful commentary. Reflect on what you have learned from this exercise and the collective temporary archive that we have assembled. Please note that these responses are graded for completion.

Ekphrasis - a thick description of your aesthetic object of study

"Ekphrasis" comes from a Greek word that refers to a descriptive passage of text that represents a work of art. This is an exercise where you should consider some points raised in *Annex C - Approaching Objects*. This exercise is also referred to as "thick description" in writing. I usually start by thinking about an object through this exercise, by exhausting the possibilities of the object through language and trying to describe it for someone who has not seen the object. I find that this process clarifies the stakes of why this object exists, and who it exists for.

For a good example of a writer that starts with a thick description of an art object and weaves it into the construction of her argument, refer to the first few pages of *Time Binds* by Elizabeth Freeman and her analysis of Nguyen Tan Hoang's *K.I.P.*

Choose:

1. Any artifacts from the online archives of the GLBT Historical Society's digital collections. <https://www.glbthistory.org/digital-collections>
2. Any artifact or object from the items in the Bancroft Library collections that we are engaging with during our site visit on September 19.
3. Any other object that you might define as "Queerealia" and of cultural, historical, or political significance. If you take this option please check with me on the significance of the object before you embark on your writing.

Provide an ekphrasis for your chosen object. Try to be as specific as possible with this object. The more focused you are with your description, the more depth there will be to your analysis. You should consider your selection of the object for analysis in tandem with your final essay and/or your presentation in class. This is a **4-page** piece of writing that should adhere to the MLA format

(double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, 1-inch margins etc.). Submit in PDF format with the file title in this format - *LastName_Ekphrasis.pdf*

4-page Summary and Quote Explication

For this assignment, select one reading from the list below that you find interesting and relevant to either the object you have chosen for your project or your own academic interests.

You will write a 4-page, double-spaced summary that thoroughly engages with the text by analyzing its central arguments, stakes, and methods of analysis.

1. Arondekar, Anjali. "Introduction: Without a Trace." *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India*, Duke UP, 2009.
2. Bennett, Jane. "Preface" and "The Force of Things." *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, Duke UP, 2010.
3. Chen, Mel Y. "Introduction: Animating Animacy." *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect*, Duke UP, 2012.
4. Cheng, Anne Anlin. "Preface: A Feminist Theory of the Yellow Woman" and "Introduction," *Ornamentation*, Oxford UP, 2019.
5. Freeman, Elizabeth. "Introduction: Queer and Not Now." *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, Duke UP, 2010.
6. Huang, Vivian L. "Conclusion: Something Is Missing." *Surface Relations: Queer Forms of Asian American Inscrutability*, Duke UP, 2022.
7. Muñoz, José Esteban. "Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts." *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*, vol. 8, no. 2, 1996, pp. 5–16.
8. Schneider, Rebecca. "Slough Media." *Remain*, U of Minnesota P and Meson Press, 2019, pp. 49–107.
9. Schneider, Rebecca. "New Materialisms and Performance Studies." *TDR: The Drama Review*, vol. 59, no. 4, 2015, pp. 7–17.

Your summary should include:

- **Central Claim.** Begin by clearly identifying the central claim or thesis of the reading. This should address:
 - What is the author arguing? What is the core idea or claim they are making in the text?
 - What are the research questions the author is investigating? What do they want to explore or understand more deeply?
 - What is the significance of this argument? Why is this an important issue for the field or broader society?
- **Stakes.** Clarify the stakes of the scholarship by answering:
 - Why is this reading important? Consider both personal and professional motivations behind the writing.

- What is the author responding to? Are they addressing a gap in existing scholarship, challenging dominant perspectives, or contributing something new to the conversation?
- **Method of Analysis.** Explore how the author builds their argument:
 - How does the author approach their research? What methodologies, frameworks, or theoretical approaches do they use?
 - What kinds of evidence or examples do they draw from? Be specific about the objects of study, case studies, or data the author uses to support their claim.
- **Key Concepts and Terms.** Identify and explain any key terms or concepts that are central to the reading. Consider:
 - What new ideas or terms does the author introduce? How are these ideas developed throughout the text?
 - How do these terms connect to the broader themes of the course? For example, how do concepts like “archives,” “objecthood,” “queer,” “materialism,” etc., surface in this reading?
- **Relation to Other Readings.** Consider how this text fits into the broader conversation we’ve been having in the course:
 - How does this reading relate to other texts we’ve discussed? Are there any clear connections, contradictions, or points of dialogue between this reading and others from the course?
 - If the reading is part of a larger book or chapter, discuss any key ideas introduced in the broader text that are important to understanding this excerpt.
- **Quote Explication.** Choose a significant quote or passage from the reading that you find particularly interesting or thought-provoking. Include this quote in your summary and provide a detailed analysis of it. In your explication, address:
 - Why did you choose this quote? What stood out to you about this passage?
 - How does this quote illustrate the central argument of the reading? Think about how the passage relates to the author’s overall claims, stakes, or method.
 - How does this quote connect to other ideas discussed in class? Does it resonate with or challenge key concepts or readings we’ve covered?

You should refer to Chapter 2 (Summary) and Chapter 3 (Quoting) of Graff and Birkenstein’s *They Say / I Say* as you write for further advice.
- **Formatting and Submission Requirements:**
 - Length: 4 pages (approximately 1,200 to 1,500 words), double-spaced.
 - Format: Times New Roman, 12-point font, 1-inch margins.
 - Citation: Use MLA format for in-text citations and the Works Cited page.
 - Remember that this summary will be circulated among the class as a common resource, so think about clarifying the reading for yourself and also your peers.

Writing and Composition

In the latter half of the semester we will be developing a piece of academic writing that engages with an object of study in relation to the readings and key ideas we have encountered throughout this course.

300-word Abstract

An “abstract” is a term in academia used to refer to a short paragraph that provides a summary of the paper. Some journals include abstracts at the beginning of the paper, some writers use this abstract as the first paragraph of their essay. In brief, this is the “pitch” for your paper. It also refers to the other commonly known definition of “abstract” – something that exists in thought, but has yet to take on a concrete form. This abstract should be a proposal that promises the potential of your final paper, but can be subject to change and shifts as it is concretized in writing.

Your abstract should answer these questions:

- What is the main thesis or claim of your paper? What are the stakes of your scholarship? Why does this paper need to exist? Why are you writing this paper?
- What objects are you engaging with? What evidence are you using to support your argument / claim? You should consider using the object in your Ekphrasis.
- How are you going to argue your paper? Who are you in conversation with? What writers are you referencing and how are you extending their existing research? What key ideas are you taking and applying to your paper? You should consider engaging with **two or more** readings that are assigned in this class and clarify what key ideas you are putting in conversation with each other.

This is a **300-word** piece of writing that should adhere to the MLA format (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, 1-inch margins etc.). Submit in PDF format with the file title in this format – *LastName_Abstract.pdf*

Office Hour Appointment

Office hours can be intimidating, but they can also be highly effective for one-on-one advice on how to develop your paper. You are required to make at least one office hour appointment with me before the final submission deadline on December 13 to discuss your paper at any stage of its development. This 2% is graded for completion. Please send any material you would like me to review during the appointment in advance when possible. Please try to meet with me earlier in the semester, as appointment slots might fill up as the final submission deadline approaches.

7–8-page Work-in-Progress Essay

Now that you have written your abstract (the central idea of your paper), it is time to draft the body of your paper. This draft should be about 75% complete and ready for peer review during class. Here is what your submission should include at this stage:

- **Introduction and Conclusion**

Write a clear introduction that presents your thesis or central claim. Your introduction should also address the key questions you posed in your abstract. Similarly, write a clear conclusion that ties everything together.

- **Thesis, Evidence, and Method**

Ensure your paper has a clear thesis, backed by evidence and analysis. Explain why your argument matters (the stakes) and describe how you are supporting it (your method of analysis). This should incorporate feedback given to your abstract.

- **Works Cited Page**

Include a “Works Cited” page that lists all the sources you are engaging with in your paper. Be sure to follow MLA format for your citations.

- **Developed Content**

Most of your paper should be written in full sentences and paragraphs. It is acceptable if you have one or two sections that are not fully written yet, just include bullet points in those sections that outline the main ideas and structure. This will help your peer reviewers understand the flow of your argument.

- **Using Course Materials**

You should incorporate ideas from at least two readings from this course. Make sure you engage with these readings clearly. Summarize key ideas, quote where appropriate, and explain how these ideas relate to your argument. Show how the readings are in conversation with each other and with your topic.

- **Thick Description of Object**

Consider using the object you chose for your Ekphrasis assignment as part of your paper. How can you connect the thick description of your object to your broader argument?

- **Feedback Requests**

At the end of your draft, include a brief section with comments or questions for your peer reviewers. What specific feedback are you looking for? Are there areas of your paper that you are still working on or are unsure about?

Your draft should be 7–8 pages (or longer, if necessary). Follow MLA format: double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, 1-inch margins. Submit your paper as a PDF with the file name format: *LastName_DraftEssay.pdf*.

To avoid last-minute stress, start working on your draft early. Break your writing into manageable pieces. Set a timer and aim to write for 30 minutes each day. You can also team up with a classmate for a writing session to keep yourself accountable.

Peer Review of Two Papers – due Nov 26, 11:59 p.m. (3% for each review × 2 = 6%)

This exercise will be initiated in class but completed in your own time if you are unable to finish writing feedback during class time. In brief, you are expected to provide detailed and considered feedback to at least two of your peers. Each feedback should include in-paper comments and a 300-word comment that will help your classmate develop their paper. Each feedback is worth 3% of your grade.

You will be graded on the quality of the feedback and your 300-word comment to your classmate. Both your comments should adhere to the MLA format (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, 1-inch margins etc.). Submit your 300-word comment in PDF format with the file titles in this format – *YourName_PeerReviewforTheirName.pdf*

In-class Symposium and Presentation

In our final two classes you will have the opportunity to present your paper to the class. This is a performance of your research to an audience, and is part of the process of refining your paper before its final submission. This is common in most academic writing processes, where you present your ideas at conferences to colleagues and solicit feedback from them.

Your presentation should be five minutes long followed by a short question and answer session. You should:

- Provide us with a brief overview of your essay, object of analysis, readings you are citing and stakes of your research.
- You are encouraged to show one or two images of your object of analysis if necessary, but no further slides are necessary. I will create a Google Drive folder where you are able to drop your images before your presentation date.
- Share any ongoing questions or concerns, and what kind of feedback you would require at this stage of your writing process.

I will circulate a sign-up sheet closer to the symposium date.

10-page Final Essay

This essay marks the culmination of your semester-long engagement with the course materials, discussions, and assignments. It is an opportunity to synthesize your ideas, develop a clear argument, and demonstrate the depth of your understanding.

This final paper should reflect the progress you've made throughout the semester and build on the feedback received from your previous assignments, peer reviews, and office hour discussions.

Deadline: December 13

No extensions will be granted to ensure fairness to all students.

A 2/20 deduction per day will apply for late submissions.

Your final essay should include the following components:

- **Title**
Provide a clear and concise title for your paper on the first page.
- **Introduction and Conclusion**
Begin with a clear introduction that presents your thesis or central claim, explains the stakes of your argument, and outlines your evidence and method of analysis. Your conclusion should succinctly reinforce your argument and provide a sense of closure. Ensure that the feedback received from your abstract is integrated, with clear articulation of your thesis, evidence, and method.
- **Thick Description of Object**
Include a rich, detailed analysis of your object(s) of study, following the guidelines provided in Annex C. This section should offer in-depth engagement with your chosen object(s), demonstrating your critical analysis and reading skills honed in this course. Consider utilizing the object from your Ekphrasis assignment as part of your analysis to build continuity in your work.
- **Engagement with Readings**
Your essay should engage meaningfully with at least two readings from the course. Consider how these texts are in conversation with each other and with your thesis. Summarize relevant concepts and key terms, and clearly explain how the readings inform your analysis. Include quotes or citations, and ensure they are relevant and thoroughly explained in relation to your argument or contextually within your essay. Read Graff and Birkenstein's *They Say / I Say* as you write for further advice on quoting.
- **Works Cited**
Include a properly formatted "Works Cited" page in MLA format. All sources referenced in your paper should be listed here, and MLA citation rules should be strictly followed.
- **Incorporation of Feedback**
Demonstrate clear integration of feedback received throughout the semester from peer reviews of your draft, one-on-one office hour meetings, and the Q&A sessions during the symposium. The progression of your argument and the clarity of your ideas should reflect this revision process, and there should be adjustment and improvement where necessary compared to your 7–8-page draft.
- **Writing Quality**
The final paper should be polished and free of spelling, grammatical, and formatting errors. Proofread your work carefully before submission. Do not use contractions in your final essay.

Your essay should be 10 pages (not including the "Works Cited" page). Follow MLA format: double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font, 1-inch margins. Submit your paper as a PDF with the file name format: *LastName_FinalEssay.pdf*.

Course Policies

Format and Citation

Assignments use MLA format unless otherwise noted. Written work should be double-spaced, use a readable 12-point font, and include a Works Cited page when sources are used.

Email and Classroom Technology

Email is best used for scheduling, attendance, or urgent matters. Questions about course material and writing are welcome during class discussions or office hours. Laptops and reading devices may be used for course-related work, note-taking, research, and presentations. Please use them in ways that support rather than distract from our shared work. Keep phones silenced during class.

Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, and Generative AI

Academic dishonesty and plagiarism include using another person's words, ideas, or insights without proper acknowledgment and citation. Please treat course materials and your peers' work with care and respect.

Generative AI tools may be used sparingly at later stages of the writing process for tasks such as proofreading or refining prose, but I discourage their use when developing your ideas, thesis, or voice. These tools can produce inaccurate or misleading information, and students remain responsible for the originality, accuracy, and citations of their work.

Content Warnings

As we delve into the archives, particularly archives of the queer, the omitted, and the minor, we will encounter material and objects that may be unsettling or challenging. I will provide warning when possible regarding materials that engage in graphic description of sex and violence, and I ask for your generosity as we work through difficult material together. Please let me know if you have concerns about material shared in class.

Accessibility and Accommodations

If you anticipate or experience barriers to learning, please feel welcome to discuss your needs with me. I will work with you to identify reasonable ways of supporting your participation in the course. If you have an approved academic accommodation, please contact me so we can develop an implementation plan together.

Annex A – Terms of Engagement

On speaking up. In a discussion-based class, pay attention to the shape of the discussion and others in the room. Raise your hand before interjecting and wait for an appropriate moment to do so. Prepare brief notes when you pose a comment or question. Keep your comment or question succinct and note how it is affecting the shape of the discussion. (Optional, but good practice: Raise a hand with one finger if it is related to the ongoing conversation. Raise a hand with two fingers if your question is going to take the discussion in a completely different direction.)

On asking questions. You might initially be intimidated by asking your question out loud, but you will get better with practice. Make sure the question is specific. It helps to use the theory that we are engaging with collectively to ground your question. It would be even better if you can draw our attention to specific parts of the reading. Talk to the theory, not around it. Make sure your question is not relying on information that the class does not have. If absolutely necessary, provide the missing information as a brief preamble before posing your question.

On listening. Be sensitive and listen to what your peers are saying and sense the affective energy in the room. What sort of energy would you like to send into this shared pedagogical space? How can you be held accountable for the words and energy that you are sharing with the class? How much space are you taking up in the room? What structures are in place that prevent a more equitable distribution and investment in this pedagogical space?

On intellectual humility. To know ourselves, we have to begin by admitting what we do not know. It is brave to admit what you do not know in front of the class. I can assure you that if you encounter difficulties in approaching the text or gaps in information, you will not be alone. The way we can learn collectively is to share these struggles with each other. It is what this pedagogical space is for.

On critical generosity. Critical generosity is the ability for differing or opposing thoughts to be held together in the same space. You can have critical generosity for others but also for yourself. Give others and yourself the space to make mistakes. A classroom is the space to encounter differences and remake your opinions as a rehearsal for future encounters in life. A pedagogical space is different from a social media space. We are not performing our position solipsistically, but always in relation to others. This is time and space we have agreed to set aside for us to come together and engage critically and collectively.

What other terms of engagement would we like to draft collectively as a group? Are there any other points of concern that you would like to establish and that we can be held accountable to?

Annex B – Reading Theory¹

Theory takes time. If you are engaging with something outside your field of study, it can almost be akin to acquiring a completely different language. Give theory adequate time. Do not try to rush through your readings, always engage with them a couple of days in advance to allow the text to simmer. Not all readings require multiple reads. Skim through the reading before you start, decide on a time limit you would spend on the reading and adhere to it. Plan breaks in between if it is a particularly long reading.

Theory is a map. Start identifying patterns in order to decipher the code. Create a map of the reading by noting down the structure of the argument, section headings, and subheadings. Another approach is to create a list of all the writers being cited in the text. How is the text in dialogue with these writers? What are the stakes of this text? Why is it being written? Who is it being written for? You might want to consider creating a map in dialogue with your peers. If you can afford the time, discussing the readings collectively before coming to class always helps to clarify your relationship to the text.

Theory is hypertext. Engaging with a text is always engaging with it in relation. A text is a node within a larger citational network. In order to fully comprehend the stakes of the writing, it is important to review other points within this network of information. Get into the habit of using digital tools in aid of your understanding of theory. Google the author, search for what other writing has been produced in response to the text, listen to their voice in YouTube lectures or podcasts to get an understanding of their tone and cadence. If an object or artwork is mentioned try looking for visual documentation to support your understanding of the article. Situate this reading within the author's larger oeuvre. When was it written? What was the historical context and situation? If there is a group of readings assigned for the week, it is important to consider how they are in dialogue with each other, attend to their resonances and dissonances. How would you position yourself and your research interests in relation to these readings?

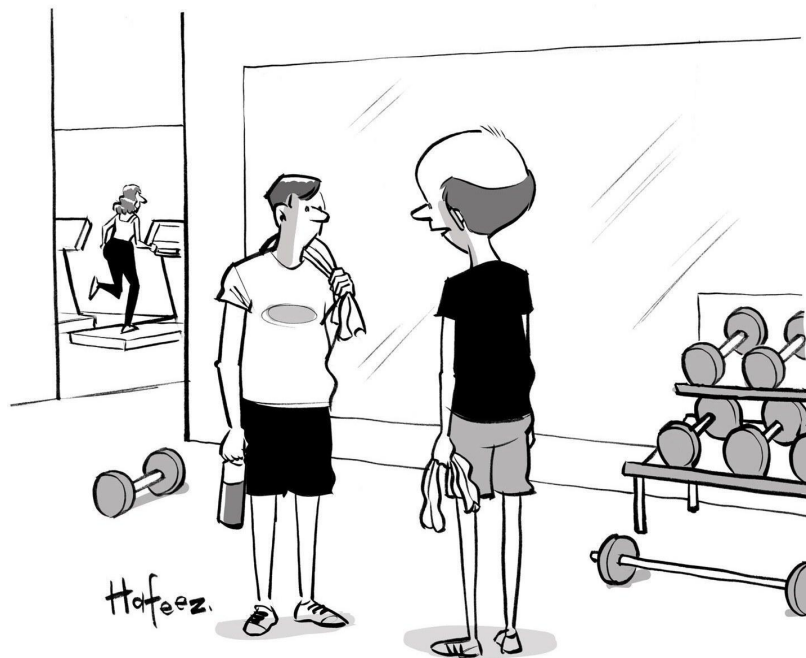
Theory in a tangible form. I find it helpful to print out denser readings because it gives me a concrete idea of how many pages of readings there are each week. It also allows me to read while commuting without being distracted by my digital devices, and allows my eyes to take a break from staring at the screen. I am also a visual learner, so it helps me to scribble in the margins and highlight key paragraphs. That being said, not all readings require printing. A brief interview or news article can be skimmed on the computer. Decide which reading you would like to give more weight and attention to, and if the way you are reading the text might complement the form or style of the writing.

¹ This annex is developed in reference to Hentyle Yapp's reading theory handout, and in conversation with materials prepared by Rebecca Struch, Crystal Song, and others.

Theory is worth a second chance. If possible, read each text at least twice, the second reading is often in conversation with the notes and highlights you made in the first reading. Note how you are viewing the text differently on repeated readings. I find it helpful to write a brief summary of key ideas after every reading on the first page beside the title for future reference. These notes, however brief, are important so that you will not be starting from scratch the next time you return to this reading, which might be several years down the road.

Theory is a performance. For particularly dense theories, I find it helpful to read the content aloud. It might take a lot more time to get through a reading, but it really helps to listen to how the words are being formed. Some texts are transcripts of lectures and reading them aloud helps to reassemble the cadence of ideas. It is also helpful to take note of translated texts – sometimes the convoluted language is a result of the translator wanting to adhere as closely as possible to the author's voice. If you are really struggling, try to find alternative translations of the text if they are available and do a comparative study of how and why these translations differ.

Theory is not everything. Be kind to yourself. If you are struggling with a particular text, put it aside and come back to it again when you are in a different frame of mind. It is easy to give up on theory, especially in a world that is constantly competing for your attention. It is helpful to keep in mind that reading theory is just like acquiring any other skill. The more you exercise and practice, the better you will eventually become at engaging critically with theory. Think of it as a gymnasium for the training of your mind. You might eventually learn to appreciate it.



"I've been working out for six months, but all my gains have been in cognitive function."

Annex C – Approaching Objects

What are objects? Theoretical objects of study refer to what we are analyzing within the text. It can be a performance, an art installation, a political cartoon, or an experience. Sometimes it is also referred to as evidence. Objects work hand-in-hand with theory to ground abstract ideas within our concrete world. It is a common tendency to use objects as a means to an end, instead of paying close attention to how they might reshape our position or theory. To do objects justice, it is important to examine them critically and closely. Listen to what they have to say.

How do I approach objects? I often start with a thick description. If it is a performance, free write to recall everything you have witnessed and experienced. If it is an installation or art object, try to engage with it physically as you write. Let yourself be surprised by the object. For art objects and performance, I approach them with this scaffold inspired by Feldman's method of art analysis. This scaffold can be applied in any order:

- *Thickening the description.* Describe what you see before you. Through this description, you are forming a narrative about the object. Be conscious of how and what you describe in the object. A good exercise is to imagine describing the object to someone who has never witnessed it. How would you account for your experience to another? How is information made available about the object and how is access to this information restricted?
- *Technicalities and its Parergon (Derrida).* How is the object supported in space both physically and conceptually? How is the object created? What is its material and the history of this material? What is the composition and form of the object? How is the object framed or edited? Technical aspects of the work can appear objective and factual, but challenge yourself to move beyond these observations to understand structural aspects of an object's technical components.
- *Ideological context.* What socio-political-cultural framework does the object exist in relation to? What are the politics of this object? Are these politics covert or overt? Locate the object in the here and now while paying attention to the history of not just the object but also the object-producer (biographical approach). Note down not just what you see before you, but also what remains hidden from view. (e.g. What is cropped out of frame? Why are only performers of a certain gender featured? What labor supports the possibility of this object's existence? etc.)
- *Inter-textual entanglements.* How is the object positioned in relation to other objects in space? How would you position the object in relation to other work you have seen before in the past? How is the object positioning itself in relation to theory? What theoretical framework can we use to analyze the object? What does it remind you of? What can the object be in conversation with?

- *Affective and kinesthetic sensing.* Take note of the affective and emotional sensation that the object evokes. How does this affective relationship vary from individual to individual? What are the consequences of a shared affective energy that the object is sending out into the world? Does it produce any discomfort in the viewer, and is it possible to “stay with the trouble” (Haraway)?

As you must realize by now, all the above points are interrelated. You cannot approach an object examining the affective sensations without attending to the ideological implications of your response. Neither can you attempt to talk about inter-textual entanglements without overlapping with an analysis of the *parergon* or frame.

The purpose of the above scaffold is to allow you to break your analysis down into its constituent components, and to address what blind spots you might have when approaching your object. Are you examining the object from a limited angle, without allowing yourself to expand your perspective? Are you permitting your understanding of the object to be remade as you examine it closely?

