

Associated Colleges of the Midwest  
Chicago Arts Program

# Seminar: Chicago and the Creative Process

## Spring 2010

Instructor: Martina Nehrling

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1 – 3 pm and at the ACM class rooms (unless otherwise noted!)

*"Yet once you've come to be part of this particular patch, you'll never love another. Like loving a woman with a broken nose, you may well find lovelier lovelies. But never a lovely so real."* (excerpt from Chicago: City on the Make, Nelson Algren, 1951)

In this course students will explore the creative process across numerous disciplines while discovering the rich cultural history of the city of Chicago. The course will cull knowledge and inspiration from the city's museums, theaters, libraries, galleries, and creative business enterprises. Students will benefit from authentic experience with visiting artists and weekly excursions in Chicago's historic neighborhoods. Assignments will require of the students a cross disciplinary stretch of creativity and intellect. Mediums and techniques employed to complete the assignments will frequently be the students' choice, from research-based writing to traditional studio art (painting, drawing, sculpting, photography) and newer media such as video, sound and performance. Critiques and discussions will develop critical thinking and constructive response and are expected to be robust.

In addition to the assignments, workshops, and field trips the class will read three books together. Two student led discussions are scheduled for each book. Building on the Core studies of the centennial of Daniel Burnham's Plan of Chicago the class will first read The Devil in the White City by Erik Larsen, seeking to bring history alive with appreciation of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, the pivotal event that positioned Chicago to become known as The Second City. Next the class will read The Man with the Golden Arm, by Nelson Algren, a legendary champion of Chicago's working class struggles whose novel is set in the middle of the twentieth century as the city was adjusting to the end of World War II. Lastly the class will read the contemporary tale of an artist, The Time Traveler's Wife, by Audrey Niffenegger, in which much of the current life of the city will be recognizable.

### Course Requirements

- Completion of all assignments and readings is required.
- Regular attendance is mandatory.
- Attendance will be noted at the beginning of each meeting. If you arrive late to class, it is your responsibility to check in with the instructor after class.
- If you come unprepared to class you will be counted absent.
- Four absences will put you in danger of failing the course.
- Disruptive behavior may lead to dismissal from the class.
- All cell phones must be turned to silent during class. No cell calls during class.

Grades are computed as follows:

15% - Critiques, reading discussion, class participation

15% - Midterm (Assignment 5: Juxtaposition) and Final (Assignment 9: "Essay" on Chicago)

20% - Presentations, 2 each (1 person, 1 place)

50% - Assignments

Because this class accommodates students with different backgrounds and different levels of skills and knowledge you are evaluated on your work and the progress that you make individually.

Evaluations of the assignments will be verbal (during critiques) and often I will add written comments to accompany a grade. Please always feel free to discuss any questions that arise from comments, verbal or written. Grades reflect judgment of the quality of the work (never of the student). The following may help you interpret the letter grades:

- A (90-100) = the work is above and beyond expectations, truly exceptional.
- B (80-89) = the work is about what was expected of someone who had done all the work for the assignment in a thoughtful way; a good job.
- C (70-79) = the work is the minimum to meet the requirements.
- D (60-69) = the work is significantly deficient in some way.
- F (0-59) = the work does not meet the requirements in any way.
- You will lose one grade for each class period that an assignment is late.
- Request for a grade to be reconsidered must be made in writing and present an argument for how the work has been misjudged.

Any changes or exceptions to this syllabus are at the discretion of the instructor.

### **Week 1**

Feb. 3            Introductions, Syllabus Q & A  
Assignment 1: Scavenger Hunt

Feb. 5            Mystery Movie Night: Buster Keaton's silent films  
Chicago Symphony Orchestra  
Symphony Center  
220 S. Michigan Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60604  
<http://www.cso.org/main.taf?p=3,11,6,1&EventID=3102>

### **Week 2**

Feb. 9            Scavenger Hunt Walk and Presentations

Feb. 11          Poetry work shop with Cin Salach  
Chicago Public Library, Bezazian branch meeting room  
1226 W. Ainslie Street  
Chicago, IL 60640  
<http://www.chipublib.org/branch/details/library/bezazian/p/MeetingRooms>  
Assignment 2: Logos, presented, due Feb. 16

### Week 3

- Feb. 16 **Critique** Assignment 2: Logos  
Assignment 3: Response, presented, due Feb. 23
- Feb. 18 .....
- Feb. 20 Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind (TMLMTBGB)  
The Neo-Futurarium  
5153 N. Ashland Ave. 2nd Fl.  
Chicago, IL 60640  
[http://www.neofuturists.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=20&Itemid=45](http://www.neofuturists.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=20&Itemid=45)
- Feb. 21 Blueprints to Our Past Tour  
Museum of Science and Industry  
5700 S Lake Shore Dr  
Chicago, IL 60637  
<http://www.msichicago.org/whats-here/tours/blueprints-to-our-past/>  
Reading discussion: in progress, The Devil in the White City, through page 298

### Week 4

- Feb. 23 **Critiques/Discuss** Assignment 3: Response  
Assignment 4: Reaction and Assignment 5: Juxtaposition (Midterm),  
presented, due Mar. 9  
Slides and brainstorming
- Feb. 25 Threadless  
4043 N. Ravenswood #106  
Chicago, IL 60613  
<http://www.threadless.com>

### Week 5

- Mar. 2 Reading discussion: finish, The Devil in the White City  
Atwood Café in the Hotel Burnham  
1 W. Washington  
Chicago, IL 60602  
<http://www.burnhamhotel.com/atwood-cafe.html>
- Mar. 4 The Cabinet  
Redmoon Theater  
1463 W Hubbard St  
Chicago, IL 60642  
<http://redmoon.org/productions>

**Week 6**

Mar. 9 **Critique** Assignment 4: Reaction and Assignment 5: Juxtaposition

Mar. 11 5 pm, The Art Institute of Chicago  
Michigan Avenue at Adams Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60603

[www.artic.edu](http://www.artic.edu)

Shadowboxes and "In the Vernacular" (Assignment 6: Shadowbox, presented, due Mar. 23)

Mar. 14 7 am, James Turrell's *UIC Skyspace*  
SW corner of Hasted and Roosevelt Road

[http://www.uic.edu/aa/college/turrell/1\\_skyspace/skyspaceFrame.htm](http://www.uic.edu/aa/college/turrell/1_skyspace/skyspaceFrame.htm)

Maxwell Street Market

Neighborhood: Little Italy/University Village

Desplaines Street and Roosevelt Road

640 W. Roosevelt Road

<http://chicago.metromix.com/style/store/maxwell-street-market-little-italy-university-village/133691/content>

**Week 7**

Mar. 16 .....

Mar. 18 **Reading Discussion: in progress, The Man with the Golden Arm, through page 200**

6 pm, Hubbard Street Dance in Dialogue: 500 Ways to Look at the Modern

The Art Institute of Chicago

Michigan Avenue at Adams Street

Chicago, Illinois 60603

[www.artic.edu](http://www.artic.edu)

**Week 8**

Mar. 23 **Critique** Assignment 6: Shadowbox

Assignment 7: Antithesis, presented, due Mar. 30

Slides and brainstorming

Mar. 25 .....

**Week 9**

Mar. 30 **Critique** Assignment 7: Antithesis

Assignment 8: Mock-up/Performance for Street Art Style Public statement, presented, due Apr. 6

Apr. 1 Wicker Park: Division Street

**Reading discussion: finish, The Man with the Golden Arm**

**Week 10**

Apr. 6 **Critique** Assignment 10: Public Statement concept

Short Workshop: Response to word, to object

Assignments, 9: "Essay" on Chicago (Final), due Apr. 27  
and, 10: Documentation, presented, due May 11  
Slides, brainstorm

Apr. 8 Improv workshop with Jason Shotts

**Week 11**

Apr. 13 10 am – noon film and Q & A with Seth Boustead from Accessible Contemporary  
Music

<http://www.acmusic.org>

Assignment 11: What Art Would You Demystify and How?, presented, due Apr. 27  
Reading: Alex Kotlowitz on Manny's

Apr. 15 Auditorium Theater tour  
50 E Congress Pkwy  
Chicago, IL 60605

[www.auditoriumtheatre.org](http://www.auditoriumtheatre.org)

Manny's, lunch

1141 S Jefferson St  
Chicago, IL 60607

<http://www.mannysdeli.com>

Reading discussion: in progress, Time Travelers Wife, through page 280

**Week 12**

Apr. 20 TBA

Apr. 22 Meeting time TBA, Frank Lloyd Wright home and studio tour  
951 Chicago Ave  
Oak Park, IL

<http://www.gowright.org>

Hip Hop Baby, Oak Park

<http://www.itshiphopbaby.com>

Location, TBA

**Week 13**

Apr. 27 **Critique** Assignment 11: Plan for Demystifying Art,  
and Assignment 9: Chicago "Essay" (Final)

Apr. 29 Pilsen, walking tour of the murals  
Lunch at Simone's  
960 W 18th St  
Chicago, IL 60608  
<http://www.simonesbar.com>

**Week 14**

May 4 Reading discussion: finish, The Time Traveler's Wife  
Newberry Library

60 West Walton Street  
Chicago, IL 60610-3380

<http://www.newberry.org>

Print works Gallery

311 West Superior Street

Chicago, IL 60654-3548

<http://www.printworkschicago.com/artists/niffen/niffen.htm>

May 6

Illegitimate Art Festival Preparation

May 8

**Illegitimate Art Festival!**

**Week 15**

May 11

Disorientation: Reflection

**Presentation** of Assignment 10: Documentation of Semester