

Fall 2026 Course Syllabus

ART 5395.001/ ART 5397.001, Merrie Wright

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 2 – 2:30 pm, Wednesday, 11 am – 1 pm (please make an appointment)

MA & MFA Student Learning Outcomes

ANALYZE OBJECTS Students will be able to analyze the components of their visual object(s) and articulate the intended and discovered content of their aesthetic.

CONTEXTUALIZE AESTHETICS Students will be able to contextualize the artist's aesthetic to the canon of art history and contemporary art theory.

DOCUMENT WORKS Students will be able to digitally document their art works for the purpose of archiving, application, and presentation.

EXHIBIT WORKS Students will participate in juried, solo, group or curated exhibitions of their work.

INTERPRET WORKS Students will be able to define and interpret their works of art within the context of contemporary art.

RELATIVITY The student will be able to critique art works relative to traditional standards v. innovative standards.

Expectations and Responsibilities

It is imperative that the candidate works closely with his/her committee during the thesis semester to ensure a valuable learning experience and a quality result. MA and MFA candidates are responsible for following the guidelines below, and submitting all required materials according to specified deadlines.

The Graduate Committee Chair

The Committee Chair is responsible for mentoring the candidate through the documentation of and the exhibition of the candidate's work. It is the Committee Chair's responsibility to ensure that the candidate documents and exhibits his/her work with a clear purpose and intent.

The Committee Chair is the primary mentor for the candidate, and is responsible for the overall conduct of the Graduate Committee. The Chair will be the primary reader and editor of the thesis document. The Committee Chair is responsible for conducting a fair, thorough, and equitable exhibition defense. The Committee Chair is also responsible for (in consultation with the committee as a whole) the final grade for thesis hours (Thesis and Thesis Exhibition).

The Graduate Committee Members

Committee Members provide advice and counsel regarding the production of works included in the exhibition and the writing of thesis document, and will meet individually with the student as required.

MA Thesis & Exhibition Hours

Upon Completion of all required courses, university, college, departmental requirements, the candidate will enroll in six (6) hours of thesis work, three of which culminate in the thesis exhibition for the MA degree with an Emphasis in Studio Art. Approval from the candidate's committee must be given prior to the semester in which the student enrolls in the Thesis and Graduate Exhibition hours.

MFA Thesis & Exhibition Hours

Upon Completion of all required courses, university, college, departmental requirements, the candidate will enroll in nine (9) hours of thesis work, three of which culminate in the thesis exhibition for the MFA degree in Studio Art. Approval from the candidate's committee must be given prior to the semester in which the student enrolls in the Thesis and Graduate Exhibition hours.

MA & MFA Thesis Exhibition Proposal

Prior to enrolling in thesis hours, and with the advice and approval of the Committee Chair, the candidate must define the broad parameters of the exhibition. An exhibition proposal is then prepared and submitted to the graduate Committee Members for their approval and signatures.

The candidate should be aware that the work itself must be judged by the faculty to be original, conceptually mature, technically proficient, and formally sound. The exhibition proposal should include the following materials:

1. Cover Sheet: The exhibition proposal should include a cover sheet that includes the proposed Title of the exhibition, name, date, etc.
2. Description of the Proposed Work/Exhibition: The candidate should provide a brief description of the work and exhibition layout. The media, content, and formal characteristics of the proposed work should be described as completely and succinctly as possible.
3. Background Information: The candidate should provide a brief description of the source, inspiration, or basis for the work proposed.

Thesis Exhibition

Candidates are required to mount an exhibition of their work as part of the MA and MFA degree program requirements. The quality of this exhibition will be the primary determinate as to whether the candidate will be granted the MA or MFA degree. The location of the exhibition and exhibition dates will be determined by the thesis committee, in consultation with the Department Chair and Gallery Coordinator, within the first few weeks of the thesis semester.

Oral Defense

Candidates are required to complete an oral defense of the thesis exhibition by giving a scholarly presentation of the thesis work and fielding questions from the Graduate Committee. The exhibition will not be approved to open until the oral defense has taken place. The oral defense should be scheduled by the student,

Written Thesis

The candidate's written thesis should provide information that leads to an understanding of the intent of the work. The thesis document must demonstrate a thorough awareness of the sources, inspiration, and traditions relevant to the work, as well as the particular methods employed in the use of materials and conceptual principles that determined the form of the completed work. The quality of the oral defense and written thesis will also be considered in whether the candidate will be granted the MA or MFA degree.

While there are no set parameters pertaining to the organization, content, and length of the thesis document for the MA or MFA thesis, the document should be developed in consultation with the thesis committee,

under the direction of the thesis chair. The thesis document should follow the [Thesis and Dissertation Formatting Guidelines \(and Sample Pages\)](#) provided by the Graduate School.

The thesis document should include the following:

- Title Page
- Approval/Signature page
- Acknowledgments (not required)
- Table of Contents
- Abstract
- Thesis Text
- Bibliography
- Exhibition images and complete list/images of works included in the thesis exhibition (images should be embedded into the thesis document AND provided on a separate thumb drive, along with an image information sheet)

Public Gallery Presentation

MA and MFA candidates are required to present a public gallery talk as a part of the thesis exhibition. The Studio Art Graduate Coordinator and the Gallery Coordinator will schedule the lecture.

Submission of Thesis Documentation

1. Written thesis document (contents listed above in the written thesis section)
2. Photographic documentation of the thesis exhibition
Provided on a thumb drive, which contains images of the installed thesis exhibition, individual images of each work, and an image information sheet. The images of the thesis exhibition must be of the highest quality.
3. Curriculum vitae
4. Artist's statement
5. Statement of influences

A hard copy of all thesis documentation, printed in color on quality paper, will be submitted to the art office in a folder. MA and MFA candidates will not have completed the graduation requirements unless all of this information is approved by the graduate committee and is on file in the art office.

Thesis Semester Timeline

The student is responsible for following all university and department requirements and deadlines related to thesis hours. The timeline for Department thesis requirements and deadlines are listed below. Failure to follow the timeline may result in 'NC' or 'IP' grades for thesis hours.

Thesis Exhibition Proposal	Prior to thesis semester enrollment (<i>submit to thesis committee members</i>)
Schedule Oral Defense	At least 3 weeks prior to the scheduled opening of the thesis exhibition
Provide a Written Thesis Draft to Committee Members	At least 5 business days prior to thesis defense date
Exhibition Oral Defense	Typically scheduled for the preceding Friday or the

	morning of the first day of the scheduled exhibition. The exhibition will not open until the defense takes place and the committee members approve the exhibition.
Approved Written Thesis	Must be approved by committee members one week after the exhibition closes
Submission of all Thesis Documentation	All thesis documentation materials must be submitted to the art office by the Friday before finals week

Possession of Work

The Department of Art & Art History is entitled to retain as many as two works by each graduate student. The intention is to honor the successful candidate and to provide evidence of his/her success in lieu of the usual formal thesis. These works will become the property of the Permanent Collection of the Department of Art & Art History at The University of Texas at Tyler.

Final Exams: This course has no final exam.

Field Trips: This course has no required field trips.

Final Semester Grade

ART 5395/5396 Final Grade

Your final grade for the semester is based on the following:

75% Body of Work

Created Body of work will be assessed on the following:

- Quantity of work
- Quality of work
- Innovation and development of the studio practice, including but not limited to the technical, aesthetic, and conceptual development and progression
- Cohesion of formal and conceptual properties

25% Submission of the approved thesis document

Grades for ART 5395/5396 are as follows:

CR/NC	Credit/No courses as approved by the program. CR or NC may not subsequently be changed to a letter grade (See credit/no-credit option policy)
I	Indicates incomplete coursework (See incomplete policy)
W	Indicates withdrawal

(See withdrawal policies)

IP	Indicates a course "in progress" that spans more than one semester
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ART 5397 Final Grade

Your final grade for the semester is based on the following:

100% Graduate Exhibition, which includes:

- Quantity and quality of work presented (80%)
- Overall exhibition installation/design (10%)
- Oral Defense (5%)
- Gallery Presentation (5%)

Numeric to Letter Grade Translation: 100 - 90% = A 89 - 80% = B 79 - 70% = C 69 - 60% = D 59 - 0% = F

Studio Safety & Maintenance: Students are required to use appropriate safety equipment and practice safe operation procedures when using any hazardous equipment or materials. The student should only use these materials and equipment after the instructor has given instruction in the safe use of such equipment and materials. The instructor has the right and responsibility to suspend any art student from operating a piece of equipment if the instructor believes the student is incapable of operating the equipment in a safe manner. This is done so not to jeopardize the health and safety of the student or other members of the class.

- Students in studio classes are required to clean up and put away supplies that have been used during the class session.
- Children and non-registered students are not allowed in the studio at any time.
- Food and drink are not allowed in the studio at any time.
- Radio use in the studio is restricted to the use of personal headphones (not during class).
- A first aid kit is located in the studio.

Facility Access & Studio Lab Safety Training

Studio facility access is for enrolled students only. Students are required to use appropriate safety equipment (PPE) and practice safe operation procedures when using any hazardous equipment or materials. All students must successfully complete the lab safety training and quiz on Blackboard and complete an Art Safety Agreement before after hours access to the complex is granted. Failure to adhere to the terms of the Art Safety Agreement will result in the loss studio facility access.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

For your safety, you must follow all safety requirements established by the department and university. It is required that you provide you own Personal Protective Equipment for use in studio areas. This equipment includes: dust mask with at least a N95 rating and attached filter, safety glasses, ear protection, gloves, close-toed shoes, and appropriate clothing. Failure to use this equipment while working may result in the loss of studio privileges.

Materials and Chemicals

Any additional materials or chemicals not included on the course material list must be approved by the faculty member in charge of the area where the chemical (material) will be used prior to the material/chemical being brought into the studio. Students are responsible for notifying the studio technician of any new materials/chemicals the day they are brought to the studio in order to insure that the appropriate Safety Data Sheet is on file and in the SDS binder.

Labels for any new, approved chemicals brought into the art studios must include the following information when they are transferred to a new container or if the original chemical label is damaged: Name of Chemical, Date chemical was opened, and any basic hazards associated with the chemical. Labels are located in each studio and must be filled out and adhered to the container immediately.

Artificial Intelligence

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy. AI is not permitted in this course at all. All work students submit for this course should be their own. All assignments and class activities are carefully designed to support your learning. Doing your own work, without human or artificial intelligence assistance, is best for your efforts in mastering course learning objectives. For this course, ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for any stages of the work process, including brainstorming, may not be used. Deviations from these guidelines will be considered a violation of UT Tyler's Honor Code and academic honesty values.

* This syllabus is subject to change

**Please see UT Tyler's academic calendar for all important academic deadlines and dates.

***See Canvas course shell for University Policies and Student Resources

****A separate list of all required materials and supplies will be provided.