

“An artist can show things that other people are terrified of expressing.” – Louise Bourgeois

# Getting Weird and Hilarious

CER 2035- (3 Credit Hours) Fall 2014 • Wednesday 9:00 A.M. - 4:00P.M. Columbus M152

**William J. O'Brien**, Assistant Professor of Art, School of the Art Institute Chicago Office Hours: BY APPOINTMENT

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**Prerequisites:** None

**Course Description:** This class will explore both traditional and non-traditional approaches to firing and using clay to explore the topics of humor, exaggeration and perception. Historical references such as 1960s California Funk Ceramics, High Victorian Rococo, as well as more contemporary approaches to clay will serve as starting points for sculptural, installation and performative projects.

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## Course Objectives - Assessment Measures

1. Explore the language of humor in contemporary art and popular culture and how that applies to contemporary approaches to working with clay
  2. Become familiar and grasp a basic understanding of ceramics materials and processes
  3. Articulate and refine approaches to working with clay in sculpture, performance and installation
  4. Gain confidence in being able to articulate ones own direction in studio practice and public exhibition.
  5. Understand the concepts of presentation of ones own work as it relates to studio practice.
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## Course Requirements: Student Attendance

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If a student misses MORE than three classes, whether or not for a reasonable cause, the student will fail the class, if the student does not withdraw from the class prior to the deadline for withdrawal with a grade of "W." Deadline for withdrawal: Tuesday October 28, 2014 (fall semester) and Wednesday, March 25, 2015 (spring semester). If a student attends FEWER than three classes his/her financial aid, merit scholarship, academic standing, and/or immigration status will be compromised, regardless of an individual faculty member's modifications of these recommendations.

### Reasonable cause to miss a class might include:

- **Illness or hospitalization,**
  - **Observation of a religious holiday**
    - **Family illness or death**
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# Plagiarism

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The School of the Art Institute of Chicago prohibits "dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the School" (Students' Rights and Responsibilities, Student Handbook). Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. One plagiarizes when one presents another's work as one's own, even if one does not intend to. The penalty for plagiarizing may also result in some loss of some types of financial aid (for example, a No Credit in a course can lead to a loss of the Presidential Scholarship), and repeat offenses can lead to expulsion from the School. To find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, you can (1) go to the portal, select the "Services" tab, and click on "Plagiarism" under "Academic Advising and Student Success"; (2) go to the SAIC Web site, select "Departments, Degrees, and Academic Resources," then select "Libraries," then select "Flaxman Library," and then click on the plagiarism links under the "For Our Faculty" tab; or (3) read about it in the Student Handbook under the section "Academic Misconduct."

## Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

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SAIC is committed to full compliance with all laws regarding equal opportunities for students with disabilities. Students with known or suspected disabilities, such as a Reading/Writing Disorder, ADD/ADHD, and/or a mental health or chronic physical condition who think they would benefit from assistance or accommodations should first contact the Disability and Learning Resource Center (DLRC) by phone at 312.499.4278 or email at [www.dlrc.saic.edu](http://www.dlrc.saic.edu). DLRC staff will review your disability documentation and work with you to determine reasonable accommodations. They will then provide you with a letter outlining the approved accommodations for you to deliver to all of your instructors. This letter must be presented before any accommodations will be implemented. You should contact the DLRC as early in the semester as possible. The DLRC is located on the 13th floor of 116 S. Michigan Ave.

## Writing Center

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MacLean Center Basement, 112 S. Michigan Ave., B1-03

SAIC offers free, hour-long writing tutorials at the Writing Center, which is located in the basement of MacLean. Tutors are available to assist all currently enrolled students with any stage of the writing process, including the following: getting started with writing; forming a claim or thesis statement; developing ideas; strengthening organization; improving writing style; revising drafts; correcting grammar and punctuation errors; addressing MLA, CMS, and APA style questions; and citing references. Writing Center tutors work with students to help them find their own solutions to questions. Rather than correcting or editing papers for students, tutors work with students to help them identify issues that need further attention. Tutors may ask students to discuss their ideas as a way to specify, clarify, or deepen them. Tutors may also offer feedback on drafts, suggest writing approaches, review information, and help students analyze their own writing. Ultimately, the goal in the Writing Center is to help students become more proficient, independent writers.

## Individual Projects/Meetings:

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During the course of the semester you will be required both in writing, and in person meet with William J. O'Brien and the Teaching Assistant to discuss and present your projects for the semester. You are expected to have a concise and focused direction with your work to participate in this class. In addition you should be able to work independently on your work and have the capacity to work during the day on your work. Individual meetings with William J. O'Brien will occur twice during the semester. You will be required to in writing have 2 different projects for the semester. The first is for the mid-term critique and the second is for the final critique.

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## Critiques:

We will have 2 main critiques during the semester. The first at mid-term is a works-in-progress critique and the final critique should be a concise and focused presentation of your work. It is required to both participate and attend the duration of these critiques. If you do not participate in critique or attend you will not receive credit for this class.

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## Required Readings/Discussion:

**There will be readings for this class. There are assigned deadlines for the readings throughout the semester. It is a requirement that you are prepared for discussion beforehand for class**

Kallen, Horace M. "The Aesthetic Principle of Comedy," *The American Journal of Psychology*, Vol.22, No. 2 (Apr., 1911), pp. 137-157

Zatlin, Linda Gertner. "Aubrey Beardsley's "Japanese Grotesques," *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol. 25, No.1 (1997), pp. 87-108

McCarthy, David. "Dirty Freaks and High School Punks: Peter Saul's Critique of the Vietnam War," *American Art*, Vol.23, No.1 (Spring 2009), pp.78-103

Export, Valie. "Aspects of Feminist Actionism," *New German Critique* No 24 (Spring-Summer, 1989), pp 66-92

Meyer, Richard. "Artists sometimes have feelings," *Art Journal*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (Winter 2008), pp. 38-55

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# COURSE OUTLINE

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During the course of this semester we will have both written, studio critique, and formal presentation assignments due.

Below is a brief summary of the projects for this course:

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## Week 1- 4:

**Introductory Techniques to using Clay**(Pinching, Coil Building, Slap Construction)

**Introductory Glaze Demonstrations**

**Project #1: Exaggeration & Narrative**(details to follow)

**Project #2: Perversion**(details to follow)

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## Week 5 – 6:

**Mid-term Critique Presentations**

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Weeks 7-12:

**Project #3: Getting Weird & Hilarious  
Final Critique Presentations**

# Weekly Schedule

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## **Wednesday, August 27th**

**Week 1: Introductions.**

**Out of Class Reading:**

McCarthy, David. "Dirty Freaks and High School Punks: Peter Saul's Critique of the Vietnam War," *American Art*, Vol.23, No.1 (Spring 2009), pp.78-103

**Assignment Due September 3rd:** Prepare for Individual Meetings with William J. O'Brien & Gabrielle Kan

**Written Assignment:** Prepare a written list of 20 nouns(person, place, things) that could deal with exaggeration for use in Project #1

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## **Wednesday, September 3rd**

**Week 2: Individual Meetings with William J. O'Brien and Edward Muela, Discussion of Dirty Freaks and High School Punks**

**Out of Class Reading:**

Meyer, Richard. "Artists sometimes have feelings," *Art Journal*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (Winter 2008), pp. 38-55

**Studio Assignment Due September 10th:** Have at least 3 sculptures started that address critique the concept of Exaggeration

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## **Wednesday, September 10th**

**Week 3- Work Time Project #1 Exaggeration, Discussion of "Artists sometimes have feelings"**

**Out of Class Reading:**

Zatlin, Linda Gertner. "Aubrey Beardsley's "Japanese Grotesques," *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol. 25, No.1 (1997), pp. 87-108

**Studio Assignment Due September 17th:** Continue work on sculptures for Project #1: Exaggeration

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## **Wednesday, September 17th**

**Week 4- Work Time (ALL DAY), Project #1 Exaggeration**

**Out of Class Assignment:** Prepare for Discussion of Aubrey Beardsley Japanese Grotesques

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## **Wednesday, September 24th**

**Week 4- Work Time, Discussion of Aubrey Beardsley Japanese Grotesques**

**Studio Assignment Due October 1st:** Finalize work on sculptures for Project #1: Exaggeration

**Out of Class Reading:**

Export, Valie. "Aspects of Feminist Actionism," *New German Critique* No 24 (Spring-Summer, 1989), pp 66-92

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**Wednesday, October 1st**

Week 5- Discussion of Aspects of Feminist Actionism, Discussion of Project #2 Perversion

**Out of Class Reading:**

Kallen, Horace M. "The Aesthetic Principle of Comedy," *The American Journal of Psychology*, Vol.22, No. 2 (Apr., 1911), pp. 137-157

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**Wednesday, October 8th**

Week 6- Work Time(All Day)

**Assignment Due October 15th:** Work on Sculptures for Project #2: Perversion

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**Wednesday, October 15th**

Week 7- Work Time, Discussion of The Aesthetic Principle of Comedy

**Assignment Due October 22nd:** Group 1: Prepare for Midterm Critique

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**Wednesday, October 22nd**

Week 8 – Work Time, Afternoon Group 1 Midterm Critique

**Assignment Due October 29th:** Group 2: Prepare for Midterm Critique

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**Wednesday, October 29th**

Week 9- Work Time, Afternoon Group 2 Midterm Critique

**Assignment Due November 5th:** Group 3: Prepare for Midterm Critique

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**Wednesday, November 5th**

Week 10- Work Time, Afternoon Group 3 Midterm Critique

**Assignment Due November 12th:** Prepare for Individual Meetings with William J. O'Brien & Gabrielle Kan

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**Wednesday, November 12th**

Week 11- Work Time, Individual Meetings

**Studio Assignment Due December 10th:** Begin work on sculptures for Project #3: Getting Weird and Hilarious

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**Wednesday, November 19th**

Week 12- Work Time, Individual Meetings

**Studio Assignment Due December 10th:** Begin work on sculptures for Project #3: Getting Weird and Hilarious

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**Wednesday, November 26th**

Week 13- No Class Thanksgiving – Prepare for Final Presentations

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**Wednesday, December 3rd**

Week 14 – No Class Critique Week – Prepare for Final Presentations

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**Wednesday, December 10th**

Week 15 – Final Presentation