

## AH 200 001 Topics: Surrealism (Modern Art)

Dr. Elliott H. King

"Poetry should be made by all." – Lautréamont

"Transform the world, said Marx; change life, said Rimbaud; for us these two watchwords are one."  
– André Breton, "Speech to the congress of Writers", Paris, June 1935

### Outline

**Surrealism** was one of the most multi-faceted and influential intellectual movements of the twentieth century; it is also among the most widely used – and misused – terms in popular culture. What motivated this enduring, pan-cultural movement, and how can one explain its continued influence today? This course will study the development of surrealist art and thought, keeping in mind that for its practitioners surrealism was – and remains – foremost a *revolution*, striving to "transform the world" (Marx) and "change life" (Rimbaud). We will examine writings and ideas underlying key works by artists such as Dalí, Magritte, and Max Ernst; watch surrealist films; take part in surrealist activities; and play surrealist "games of chance". N.b., **Students are expected to keep a dossier of these activities in addition to a dream journal, which will be used towards the submission of a magazine project due on the final class day.**

### Warning!

The educational material for this course may include illustrations and texts that some may regard as offensive. Such material is germane to the art historical study of surrealism and is not included with the intention of offending the religious, political, human, or social sensibilities of any person.

### Required books:

- Sarane Alexandrian, *Surrealist Art*, Thames and Hudson, London and New York, 1992.
- André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane, Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1972.
- .pdf readings (\* denotes required for graduate students only; \*\*denotes optional reading)

### Recommended books:

- Gérard Durozoi, *History of the Surrealist Movement*, trans. Alison Anderson, Chicago, 2002.

### Important dates:

September 28:	Quiz 1
October 5:	No Class
October 7:	Proposed research topic due
October 21:	Quiz 2
October 28:	Abstracts and working bibliographies due
November 9:	Deadline to submit rough drafts of research papers for review
November 16:	Quiz 3
November 18:	Magazine projects due
November 18:	Research papers due
November 20:	Graduate student final exam

## Week 1

### 9/14, Tuesday – Introduction

Hand-outs	Read (for 9.16): Books	Read (for 9.16): Texts
Conroy Maddox, "Only Chaos within One Gives Birth to a Dancing Star" (1996)	Sarane Alexandrian, <i>Surrealist Art</i> , pp. 7-8; 27-46; 54-59.	André Breton, 'After Dada' (1922)
		André Breton, "The Mediums Enter" (1922)
<b>To do: Please begin keeping dream journal!</b>		

### 9/16, Thursday– The origins of Surrealism

Hand-outs	Dossier	Read (for 9.21): Books	Read (for 9.21): Texts
	Dadaist poem	Sarane Alexandrian, <i>Surrealist Art</i> , pp. 47-54.	J.-A. Boiffard, Paul Éluard, and R. Vitrac, "Editorial" (1924)
		André Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism" (1924), pp. 3-29	André Breton, <i>Nadja</i> (1928), pp. 23-39.
			"Declaration of Jan 27" (1925)
			"Open the Prisons, Disband the Army" (1925)
			Pierre Naville, "Beaux-Arts", (1925)

## Week 2

### 9/21, Tuesday – A Wave of Dreams: The Surrealist Revolution

Hand-outs	Dossier	Read (for 9.23): Books	Read (for 9.23): Texts
	Exquisite Corpse (writing)	Sarane Alexandrian, <i>Surrealist Art</i> , pp. 60-92.	*André Breton, <i>Surrealism and Painting</i> (1925-28)
	Exquisite Corpse (Drawing)		**Roger Cardinal, "André Masson and Automatic Drawing" (1996), pp. 79-93.
			Max Ernst, "Beyond Painting" (1925)

### 9/23, Thursday – 'The Eye in its Savage State: Surrealism and Painting', part I & review

Hand-outs	Dossier	Read (for 9.28): Books	Read (for 9.28): Texts

## Week 3

### 9/28, Tuesday – ‘The Eye in its Savage State: Surrealism and Painting’, part II

Hand-outs	Dossier	Read (for 9.30): Books	Read (for 9.30): Texts
			André Breton, “As in Wood” (1951)
			Jean Ferry, “King Kong” (1934)
			Salvador Dalí, “Luis Buñuel”, (1929)
			**Jody Hauptman, “The Erupting and Occluded Body: Rose Hobart” (1999), pp. 85-115.
			Salvador Dalí, “Un Chien Andalou” (1929)
			Elliott King, “Art and Anti-Art”, pp. 13-16; “Un Chien Andalou” (2007), pp. 17-27.

#### Quiz 1

### 9/30, Thursday – Hallucinogenic Celluloid: Surrealism in Film and Photography

Films: <i>Un Chien Andalou</i> (Salvador Dalí & Luis Buñuel, 15 min); <i>Rose Hobart</i> (Joseph Cornell, 19 min)		
Hand-outs	Read (for 10.7): Books	Read (for 10.7): Texts
		Salvador Dalí, “L’Age d’Or” (1930)
		Elliott King, “L’Age d’Or” (2007), pp. 28-36.
		Salvador Dalí, “L’Age d’Or” (1930)
Tip: Begin designing magazines!		

## Week 4

### 10/5, Tuesday– No class

First photo ‘dérive’: Go in search of ‘the marvellous’! For more information, see Guy Debord, “Theory of the Dérive” (1958)

### 10/7, Thursday – L’Âge d’Or

Film: <i>L’Age d’Or</i> (Salvador Dalí & Luis Buñuel, 1 hr)		
Hand-outs	Read (for 10.12): Books	Read (for 10.12): Texts
	André Breton, “Second Manifesto of Surrealism”, <i>Manifestoes of Surrealism</i> , pp. 117-187.	Georges Bataille, “The ‘Lugubrious Game’” (1929)
		Georges Bataille, “Formless” (1929)

Submit one to two sentences describing your proposed topic for the research paper. Arrange a time to meet with me next week about your choice(s).

## Week 5

### 10/12, Tuesday – Bataille and the Abject

Hand-outs	Read (for 10.14): Books	Read (for 10.14): Texts
	Sarane Alexandrian, <i>Surrealist Art</i> , pp. 94-105.	Salvador Dalí, "L'Âne pourri" (1930)
		Salvador Dalí, Excerpts from: <i>The Tragic Myth of Millet's Angelus</i> (1963)
		Salvador Dalí, "I defy Aragon" (1937)
		Salvador Dalí, "Rêverie" (1931)

### 10/14, Thursday – Dalí and Critical Paranoia

Hand-outs	Read (for 10.19): Books	Read (for 10.19): Texts

## Week 6

### 10/19 – Tuesday, Dalí after Surrealism

Hand-outs	Read (for 10.21): Books	Read (for 10.21): Texts
	Sarane Alexandrian, <i>Surrealist Art</i> , pp. 106-118, 140-160.	

### 10/21, Thursday –Surrealist Objects and Fetishes

Hand-outs	Read (for 10.26): Books	Read (for 10.26): Texts
	Sarane Alexandrian, <i>Surrealist Art</i> , pp. 160-176.	**André Breton, "Artistic Origins and Prospects of Surrealism" (1941)
		André Breton, "The Marseilles Deck" (1940)

### Quiz 2

## Week 7

### 10/26, Tuesday – 'Leave Everything: Political Turmoil and Emigration'

Hand-outs	Read (for 10.28): Books	Read (for 10.28): Texts
	**Sarane Alexandrian, <i>Surrealist Art</i> , pp. 119-139.	**André Breton, "Situation of Surrealism Between the Two Wars" (1942)
	André Breton, "Prolegomena to a Third Surrealist Manifesto or Not" (1942)	

### 10/28, Thursday – Surrealist International

Hand-outs	Dossier	Read (for 11.2): Books	Read (for 11.2): Texts
	New Superstitions		<i>Investigating Sex</i> , pp. 21-34; 109-118
			Rudolf Kuenzli, "Surrealism and Misogyny" (1991), pp. 17-26.
			*Dawn Ades, "Surrealism, Male-Female" (2001), pp. 171-176
			*Hal Foster, "Violation and Veiling in Surrealist Photography: Woman as Fetish, as Shattered Object, As Phallus" (2001), pp. 203-216
			*David Lomas, "The Omnipotence of Desire: Surrealism, Psychoanalysis and Hysteria" (2001), 55-76.

Submit abstract of research paper with working bibliography.

## Week 8

### 11/2, Tuesday – 'Je ne vois pas la femme: Surrealism and Women'

Hand-outs	Read (for 11.4): Books	Read (for 11.4): Texts
	Sarane Alexandrian, <i>Surrealist Art</i> , pp. 190-216.	"À la niche les glapisseurs de Dieu!" (1947)
		"Expose the Physicists, Empty the Laboratories!" (1958)
		"Freedom is a Vietnamese Word" (1947)

### 11/4, Thursday – Surrealism in post-War Paris

Hand-outs	Dossier	Read (for 11.9): Books	Read (for 11.9): Texts
			Neil Cox, "Critique of pure desire, or when the surrealists were right" (2001)
			Sade, Excerpts fr. <i>120 Days of Sodom</i>

## Week 9

11/9, Tuesday – ‘Sade/Surreal’

Hand-outs	Dossier	Read (for 11.11): Books	Read (for 11.11): Texts
		Sarane Alexandrian, <i>Surrealist Art</i> , pp. 218-232. (Recommended but not required; 232 is required)	Guy Debord, Contribution to the Debate, “Is Surrealism Dead or Alive?” (1958)
			Jean Schuster, <i>The Fourth Canto</i> (1969)
			“The Example of Cuba and the Revolution: A Message from the Surrealists to Cuban Writers and Artists” (1964)

**Deadline to submit rough drafts of research papers!**

\*Arrange to watch Jan Svankmajer’s *Lunacy* (2005) for discussion after the quiz on Tuesday, 11/16

11/11, Thursday – Surrealism in the ‘60s

Hand-outs	Dossier	Read (for 11.16): Books	Read (for 11.16): Texts

## Week 10

11/16, Tuesday – *Lunacy* Discussion following Quiz 3

Hand-outs	Read (for 11.18): Books	Read (for 11.18): Texts
		Jean Clair, “Surrealism and the De-Moralization of the West” (2001)
		“Neither your War nor your peace!” (1937)

**Quiz 3**

## 11/18, Thursday – ‘Still Crazy After All These Years’: The present and future of Surrealism

Hand-outs	Read: Books	Read: Texts
“Definitions of Surrealism”		

**Research Papers due**

**Magazines due**

## 11/20 – Final (graduate students only), 8:00-9:50am

**Graduate student final**

## Projects

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### Final Magazine Group Project

The final project for this course will be the group submission of a surrealist magazine titled *Le Noir et l’Or*. It is due by class time on November 18. The magazine will include all group members’:

- In-class dossier projects (see below), including, but not limited to:
  - Dadaist poems
  - Exquisite corpse drawings
  - Exquisite corpse writings
  - Answers to “New Superstitions”
- Individual answers to QODs (see below)
- Evidence/experience of *dérive* (see below)
- One dream chosen from each group member’s dream journal (see below)
- Any other material you consider interesting or relevant (e.g., collages, drawings, photographs, frottages)

I will provide additional details regarding the final magazine project in class. It is assessed jointly on the basis of completeness (60%) and presentation (40%). Each group will share one grade for the final group magazine project.

### In-Class Dossier Projects

Students are required to keep a dossier of surrealist projects and inquiries that will constitute the primary content of the final magazine group project. Anticipated in-class projects include, but are not limited to:

- Dadaist poem
- Exquisite corpse (drawing)
- Exquisite corpse (writing)
- New Superstitions

If you are absent for an in-class project, please get the instructions from me and work with the members of your group to complete the exercise. Be sure to add the finished product to your dossier towards the final group magazine project.

I will also pose **Questions of the Day** (QODs) at various times throughout the course. These are questions based on actual inquiries that the surrealists posed to one another during their daily meetings. Students will quickly write their answer and then share with the class. Please note that I am not after a “correct” or somehow “impressive” answer: rather, I want the first thing that comes into your head, since this is your automatic response and the one that says the most about how you think when “freed from aesthetic or moral concerns”. Be sure to add your answers to the dossier towards the final group magazine project.

If you are absent during QOD, please get the question from me or a classmate so that the response may be added to your dossier.

## Dérive

One of the basic 1960s Situationist practices was the *dérive* (literally “drift” or “drifting”), a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances. It was very similar to activities undertaken by the surrealists in the 1920s and 1930s. You are required to do at least one *dérive*, the first taking place in lieu of our October 5 class. Material evidence of each person’s *dérive* must be included as part of the final magazine group project.

## Dream Journal

You are required to keep a dream journal throughout the course to encourage you to pay attention to your dreams and consider how they reflect your subconscious. The dream journal does not require analyzing your dreams (though you are welcome to do so if this is your proclivity!) – only that you transcribe them as accurately as possible. You may consider drawing pictures in your dream journal as well.

I recognize that dreams are personal and often private. To discourage you from censoring yourself out of concern for my or others’ opinions, *I will not be collecting or grading dream journals*; they are wholly for your benefit, though I believe they add an important personal element to the course. That said, I require that you select one dream narrative to include in the final magazine group project. *Do not wait until the last week of class to begin keeping the dream journal!*

# Requirements

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## Required books:

- Sarane Alexandrian, *Surrealist Art*, Thames and Hudson, London and New York, 1992.
- André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane, Ann Arbor Paperbacks, 1972.
- .pdf readings (on the syllabus, \* denotes reading required for graduate students only; \*\*denotes optional readings for both graduate and undergraduate students)

## Recommended books:

- Gérard Durozoi, *History of the Surrealist Movement*, trans. Alison Anderson, Chicago, 2002.

## Class Meetings:

The class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9am-10:50am, SAB 119

## Policies:

### Readings:

Please complete all required readings for each day prior to class. Many classes also have recommended readings to complement lectures and discussions; these are not required, though you may find them useful, especially as you prepare for quizzes and the final exam (if applicable).

### Attendance and make-up work:

Punctual attendance of class is mandatory, and repeated tardiness will affect your final grade. You *must* have a valid excuse to miss class (a valid excuse includes documented illness or personal emergency). If you must miss class, *you are responsible for informing me beforehand*. Excused absences for matters other than illness need to be cleared with me – in person, by phone, or by e-mail – two days before the date in-question. In the event of illness, a doctor’s note may be required for the absence to be excused.

Unexcused absences occur when you do not notify me that you must miss class. Unexcused absences will result in penalization of your grade.



If you have an unexcused absence on a quiz day, you cannot make up that quiz. If you have a special circumstance or illness that requires you to miss a quiz, please see me as soon as possible to make special arrangements. If you miss a quiz for health reasons, a doctor's note or other documentation may be required. Please note that I will drop your lowest quiz grade, so if you are absent for a quiz, that can (and in most cases should) be the grade that I drop. If you have a special circumstance that requires you to miss more than one quiz, please see me as soon as possible to make special arrangements. If you are satisfied with your first two quiz grades, you are not required to sit for the third quiz.

If you are absent for an in-class dossier project, please get the instructions from me or a classmate and work with the members of your group. Be sure to add the result to your dossier towards the final project. Similarly, if you are absent during QOD, please get the question from me or a classmate and add the response to your dossier towards the final project.

There are a few small preparatory assignments that relate to your research paper and final magazine group project. These writing assignments are intended to help you and ensure that you are on track for a successful research paper and project, both in terms of content and timing. **It is imperative that you work on your research paper and final magazine group project throughout the quarter so that you are not pressed for time at the end.** As such, *late assignments will not be accepted* (again, in case of emergency, please talk to me as soon as possible!).

#### **Academic Integrity:**

Upholding academic integrity is a very serious issue. You are expected to be familiar with the Honor Code, to follow it, and to work to achieve the community of trust and the atmosphere of intellectual integrity that it aims to create. Using sources without documentation – including borrowing work and ideas from fellow students without citation – is intellectual theft. Not only is this a violation of the University of Denver's Academic Honor Code, but, more globally, intellectual theft encourages a distrustful academic environment that readily impairs the progression of the intellectual discourse.

*You must always cite information that is not considered common knowledge, regardless of whether you quote directly from a source or paraphrase.* Although this is most directly applicable to research papers, it is important to credit your sources on all assignments. Plagiarized work receives a grade of "0".

#### **ADA Questions:**

If you have a disability and require accommodations for this course, please speak with me as soon as possible so that your learning needs will be appropriately met.

#### **Military:**

If you are a military student with the potential of being called to military service and/or training during the course of the semester, you are encouraged to contact me no later than the first week of class to discuss the class attendance policy.

#### **Grading:**

Undergraduates will receive one grade for the course based on the following criteria: final magazine group project (30%), research paper (30%), two of the three quizzes (30%), and preparatory assignments for the research paper (10%).

Graduate students will receive one grade for the course based on the following criteria: final magazine group project (30%), final exam (20%), research paper (20%), two of the three quizzes (20%), and preparatory assignments for the research paper (10%).

Each of these is assessed on the following criteria:

### **Final magazine group project**

The 'magazine' is a collaborative group project consisting of all in-class assignments and special projects you have worked on throughout the course, presented in the form of a magazine. It contains elements indicative of your overall engagement with the course.

At its most basic, the magazine must include the individual elements delineated under "Projects". Completeness is 60% of the final project's grade, and the remaining 40% is based on presentation (organization, creativity, etc.). Each group will share one final grade regardless of individual contributions.

I am happy to meet with individuals or groups prior to the due date to review final project ideas and offer input. **The final project is due to me on November 18.**

### **Research paper**

Please begin thinking about a subject for your research paper as soon as possible. The research paper should ideally be cross-disciplinary, joining surrealism to some of your outside interests (e.g., specific topics might concern issues relevant to surrealism and science, surrealism and psychology, surrealism and poetry, surrealism and food, etc.). You must propose a topic by October 7, as I will schedule required individual meetings the following week to discuss your proposal. An abstract and working bibliography is due October 28.

I do not require you to submit a full draft of your paper, though you are welcome to submit writing to me for suggestions and I encourage you to meet with me outside class about your progress. *You are more likely to do well on your research paper if you meet with me to discuss your ideas!* As I will need sufficient time to read papers and respond so that you may integrate suggestions into your final draft, rough drafts must be submitted to me no later than November 9.

Papers must:

- For undergraduates: be between 7 and 8 pages of text
- For graduate students: be between 10-12 pages of text
- **have 1.5 spacing**
- **be written in 10pt font**
- have 1" margins
- include proper footnotes (see below)
- include page numbers!
- include images. Note: Images should be included at the end of the paper (black and white or color are equally acceptable). Please caption the images – e.g., Salvador Dalí, *The Lugubrious Game*, 1929. Oil and collage on cardboard. Private collection.
- Include a bibliography.

For citations, please use the following format as a guide:

1. Rudolf Kuenzli, "Surrealism and Misogyny", in Mary Ann Caws, Rudolf Kuenzli, and Gwen Raaberg (eds.), *Surrealism and Women* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 17-26.
2. Jean Clair, "Surrealism and the Demoralization of the West", [http://watch.windsofchange.net/themes\\_39.htm](http://watch.windsofchange.net/themes_39.htm) (accessed 9 December 2009). Originally published in French as "Le surréalisme et la démoralisation de l'Occident", *Le Monde* (Paris), 21 November 2001.

Except in the case of extraordinary circumstances at my discretion, late research papers will not be accepted.

### Research preparation

These short assignments are meant to ensure you are on track to finish your research paper. As noted, you must submit a topic for your research paper on October 7. This does not need to be much more than a sentence or two. I will meet with you the following week to discuss your idea. Meeting with me is part of this preparation grade and is required.

An abstract consisting of about 200 to 400 words along with a working bibliography is due on October 28. This is chiefly to give you sufficient time to consider your subject and meet with me again if you are encountering obstacles as you write your paper.

I do not require you to submit a full draft of your paper to fulfill the requirements of 'research preparation', though you are welcome to submit writing to me for suggestions, and I encourage you to meet with me outside class about your progress. To reiterate, as I will need sufficient time to read papers and respond so that you may integrate suggestions into your final draft, rough drafts must be submitted to me no later than November 9.

### Quizzes

Quizzes will consist of image identifications (single and comparison), factual questions, and/or short answer questions. For image identifications, you should be able to identify a work's artist, title, and year of execution in addition to any other pertinent information. Please note that I will drop the lowest of your three quiz grades. If you are satisfied with your first two quiz scores, you are not required to sit for the third quiz.

### Final exam

The final exam is only required for graduate students, though undergraduates may choose to sit for the exam for extra credit. The final exam is an essay exam designed to test your depth of knowledge on broader issues related to surrealism. Answers should be well-organized, which is to say that they *must contain a thesis that addresses the question or topic followed by supporting ideas*. I will assess essays based on thoughtfulness and originality, how adequately and interestingly the answer addresses the subject or question, and the organization of the essay.

### Class participation

Class participation is based on individual performance in class discussions and other contributions, including arranging auxiliary meetings with me outside class, if applicable. Although there is no set participation grade, I will take participation, as well as marked improvement and attendance, into account during final grading, especially for those whose final letter grade is on the 'borderline'.

### Grading standard:

**A range:** Excellent. "A" work is truly exceptional. It achieves a very high degree of originality and insight and shows intellectual sophistication and mastery of the course material. "A" papers take into account required readings and may include additional materials as well. They are technically perfect and written with elegance and style.

Lower "A" range work demonstrates that the student is capable of independent, creative, and critical thought, can synthesize their knowledge well, and can produce a finely wrought product. This level of work contains significant insights and ideas deriving from the student's own research and understanding of the course materials. In addition to the "B" qualities listed below, an "A-" paper is also very well written.

**B range:** Very good. "B" work indicates the student demonstrates sound knowledge of all the facts

and information given concerning the object or issue in question. "B" projects will show the student thinking clearly and with rigor about issues and ideas. The student also has the ability to articulate his or her knowledge in the form of a clearly written essay.

Upper and lower ends of this range will indicate, for the former, a higher degree of performance, or, for the latter, a corresponding loss of clarity, insight, sophistication, and/or writing ability.

**C range:** Adequate. "C" work demonstrates the student's basic understanding of the material, with some mistakes or gaps in knowledge of relatively minor import. There may be flaws in written ability or expression (e.g. lack of coherence and organization, spelling and word choice issues, and inability to clearly express ideas or opinions) which detract from the student's ability to demonstrate his or her knowledge.

**D range:** Poor. "D" work displays meager comprehension of the basic course material and major gaps and flaws in the amount and quality of the student's knowledge. "D" papers and exams have serious flaws in factual information or written expression.

**F:** Failure. Failing work shows no knowledge or that the student cannot pull together the few things he or she does know into any synthetic understanding of the material of the class. "F" work will have serious flaws in writing, grammar, spelling, and structure.

#### How you can reach me:

If you feel lost or have any questions at all about the course, please email me at XXX or call me at XXX.XXX.XXXX (personal mobile); I check my email obsessively and will respond as quickly as possible. I am not as effective at responding to text messages, but I will respond (with brevity – my phone is archaic).

Remember that I am here to help you. *Please* ask for help anytime! **The only truly bad question is the one you don't ask!**