

AVT 395:001

**Project #6: Epistolary Art Conversation**

Term-long project commencing Friday September 25

Final due date: December 11, 5 p.m., delivered via Blackboard

Some of the most interesting thinking about art comes from impassioned discussion between friends; often, in the past, this impassioned discussion would take place within an exchange of letters over a period of time, and would culminate in a product or project—a book, a painting, an essay of art criticism. In our case, an exchange of letters between insider experts (you and your Critical Friend) will culminate in a short, informed blog post that is intended to educate, interest, fascinate and engage art-interested members of the general public.

**Comment [GG1]:** Writing assignment description.

***Friday, September 25: Initiating letter(s) from me***

All of the critical friend pairs will receive a set of three short letters from me on Friday, September 25; each letter-prototype will open a subject related to art (based on discussion we have in class on 9/21). I will also post these letters on Blackboard, along with some examples of letter-exchanges about art, to give you an idea of ways that you might approach the assignment.

This will, however, be a pretty free-form assignment. I will not dictate the form of the letter or the contents—all of that gets worked out between you and your critical friend. I will also not dictate specific deadlines beyond setting the periods during which the three letter-exchanges should take place (to keep you on track to the final deadline).

In class on Monday 9/28, you and your critical friend will meet for a few minutes to decide which one of the prototype letters you want to build your epistolary art conversation on, and to set deadlines for yourself for the next stages of the project.

***Between 9/28 and 10/14: First exchange***

Person #1 (alphabetically, the first critical friend): Using the subject matter and questions in the letter I send, you will write a letter to your critical friend, print it out, put it in an envelope, bring it to class and give it to your critical friend. (You can also email it to the person, if you wish.) You will also post the letter on Blackboard.

Person #2: You will respond to your critical friend's first letter, print out your response, put it in an envelope, bring it to class and give it to your critical friend. (You can also email it to the person, if you wish.) You will also post the letter for me on Blackboard.

***Between 10/14 and 10/28: Second exchange***

Person #1: You will respond to your critical friend's letter, print out your response, put it in an envelope, bring it to class and give it to your critical friend. (You can also email it to the person, if you wish.) You will also post the letter for me on Blackboard.

Person #2: You will respond to your critical friend's second letter, print out your response, put it in an envelope, bring it to class and give it to your critical friend. (You can also email it to the person, if you wish.) You will also post the letter for me on Blackboard.

**Between 10/28 and 11/18: Third exchange**

Person #1: You will respond to your critical friend's letter, print out your response, put it in an envelope, bring it to class and give it to your critical friend. (You can also email it to the person, if you wish.) You will also post the letter for me on Blackboard.

Person #2: You will respond to your critical friend's third letter, print out your response, put it in an envelope, bring it to class and give it to your critical friend. (You can also email it to the person, if you wish.) You will also post the letter for me on Blackboard.

**Between 11/18 and 12/9: Culminating Blog Post**

You will write three drafts of a 300-500 word blog post that draws intelligently from your epistolary exchange and provides insight on an art-related topic to an audience of people who have a general interest in creativity and in the arts. Like all blog entries, your entry should be informative, engaging, clear, and readable; it should reward the reader with the pleasure of reading and with some useful or interesting information, and it should have a distinctive voice (not academic-speak, and not too informal, but pleasant and eye-to-eye with the probable reader). Where you derive ideas from your Critical Friend's letters, these ideas should be appropriately acknowledged. I will post resources for you on how to structure an effective blog post and on how to edit your epistolary materials into an effective blog post.

- Draft one will be workshopped in class with your critical friend on 11/30. Bring two copies to class, and post the draft on Blackboard.
- Draft two will be workshopped in class on 12/2. Bring two copies to class and post the draft on Blackboard. I will also provide comments by 7 p.m. on 12/3.
- Draft three must be posted to Blackboard by Friday, 12/11 at 5 p.m.

**How This Work Will Be Evaluated**

Your grade will be based on the quality of your final draft of the blog post and on the quality and timeliness of your epistolary interactions (judged holistically). I will evaluate your work on how well you follow my instructions for the assignment; on the seriousness with which you take the assignment; on the promptness of your response to each letter-exchange (as judged by when you post copies to Blackboard); and on the quality (including successive improvements over the drafts) of the culminating blog post.

**Comment [GG2]:** Assignment indicates required draft deadlines, allowing students to revise.

**Comment [GG3]:** Assignment prompt includes rationales, strategies, and/or suggestions for writing in this field or genre.

**Comment [GG4]:** Assignment indicates writing resources to are available to students (here, workshops).

**Comment [GG5]:** Assignment describes grading criteria.