**Critical Theory B: Postmodernism and Contemporary Culture**

CS – 301

San Francisco Art Institute

Fall 2017

Professor: Clark Buckner

# Midterm Paper Assignment

Due: December 5th

Requirements: a) Papers should be 10 - 12 double-spaced pages, with 10 – 12 pt font and reasonable margins. b) Longer quotations should be single-spaced and indented. c) Late papers will be docked a letter grade for every week they are overdue.

Please address *one* of the following questions as clearly, concretely, and completely as possible:

1. In diverse ways, artists since the 1960’s have taken up and engaged the conditions of art’s production and reception beyond Greenberg’s reductive insistence upon “medium specificity.” With respect to an artist or group of artists of your own choosing, identify and explain some such strategy. What is its critical force? How does it inform the aesthetics of the work? What are its implications for our understanding of art, more generally? What are its limits and/or problems? Consider counter arguments and draw your own conclusions.
2. Beyond the loss of the sense of reality, postmodern critical theorists celebrate and defend the heteronomous conditions of autonomous self-determination as the basis for personal and/or social transformation. With respect to an artist or group of artists of your choosing, consider: how is this same strategy evident in contemporary art? What are its critical implications? How does it inform the aesthetics of the work? What are its implications for our understanding of art, more generally? What are its limits and/or problems? Consider counter arguments and draw your own conclusions.
3. In *The Location of Culture*, Homi Bhabha argues that post-colonialism anticipates post-modernism as a counter-history of modernity that subverts the myths of progress and enlightenment, while providing grounds for conceiving subjectivity as hybrid in its complication with power and culture. With respect to an artist or group of artists of your choosing, consider how he/she/they find support in Bhaba’s argument? What are the critical implications of their work? How do their considerations of history and culture inform their art’s aesthetics? What are limits and/or problems does their work present? Consider counter arguments and draw your own conclusions.
4. In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler argues that sex is irreducibly qualified by the constructs of culture. With respect to an artist or group of artists of your choosing, consider how he/she/they finds support in Butler’s argument? How does it inflect the ways in which we think of ourselves as men, women, gay, straight, transgendered, or otherwise? hat transformative potential doe it entail? Consider counter arguments and draw your own conclusions.