Writing 109V: Writing for the Visual Arts

**Prerequisites:** Writing 2, 2LK, 2E, or equivalent; upper-division standing or consent of the instructor.

**Catalog Description:** Analysis and various forms of writing for the visual arts, including reviews of film and art shows, grant proposals, and professional resumes. Of special interest to majors in the arts.

**Course Description:** Writing 109V is designed to help writers develop writing techniques and analytical skills appropriate for upper division coursework, independent research and writing projects, graduate school, and professional activity related to visual arts. To this end, students read relevant essays, propose and design original material, and learn the formal conventions of different genres of writing in and for the visual arts field. The class addresses such issues related to visual arts including: the role of the critic and the reviewer; the nature, value and limitation of research; the role of theory and of personal opinion in defining and categorizing art; the role of media in a changing ecology.

**Curricular Premises:** Visual arts students are exposed to classes such as studio arts, specialized art classes, and art history, but students generally are not formally trained in writing specific to a career in art, including self-promotional materials. Writing 109V offers students an opportunity to write documents common to the art world and various art professionals, including artists, museum curators, event organizers, art marketers, and art critics. A career in art requires considerable rhetorical flexibility and creativity in order to navigate the challenges of becoming an ‘insider’ and making one’s art or skills marketable. This class helps expose students to documents commonly produced and circulated in the art world, and prepares students with the skills necessary to describe and evaluate visual texts with words.

**Course Requirements:**

**Texts:** In order to facilitate discussion and writing on these areas, students read texts such as film and art reviews, essays on art theory or definitions of art, critical approaches to art, aesthetics, and models of written works produced by museums. Attention is also paid to design and practical methods of artistic reproduction.

**Assignments:** Writing 109V immerses students in several practical writing projects to give them an insider's view of the role of writing in their discipline. These can include resumes, letters of application, artist statements, press releases, exhibit reviews, art analyses, grant writing, brochures, as well as curation assignments and reflective essays.

**Outcomes:**

* Recognize and analyze discipline-specific formats and organizational strategies
* Understand specialized terminology of the art world
* Access secondary source materials using a range of resources, including specialized professional journals and databases, websites, and popular literature
* Analyze visual texts and presentations, including select artwork and exhibits
* Cite and document sources in a manner appropriate for the field
* Produce a series of shorter texts that demonstrate typical content, formats, and stylistic conventions of the field
* Refine and develop a mature style of writing and visual design appropriate for the art world
* Tailor writing to meet the requirements of lay, professional, or specialized audiences
* Translate complex writing into clear, concise language.