**TO LIVE AS AN ARTIST**

**Arts & Sciences 1138.\*\*, Freshman Seminar**

**1 Semester-hour Credit**

**Thursdays/4-5PM DE 368**

##### Instructor Name: Michelle Herman Office Hours: Wednesdays, 4-6 PM

**e-mail: herman.2@osu.edu**

# Course Description

This course introduces you to living artists and their work, and the many paths toward how they make their ways as artists. Through a series of visits from practicing artists across many disciplines and at different stages of their careers—and through close examination of their work and the opportunity to talk with them about it—we will learn how and why artists make the art they do, how artists prepare for their careers and lives as artists, and the relationship between their lives and their work—as well as matters as disparate as the roles of inspiration, planning, intention, and “happy surprises” in the work they do, how they determine when a given work is “finished,” how they cope with the inevitable disappointments and rejections that a life in the art inevitably include, and (even) how they have supported themselves and their art-making in lean times.

# Texts

All the texts will be work (written, visual, audio, film/video) by the artists who visit.

**Course Policies**

* Attendance at every session is expected. Three unexcused absences will result in a grade of U. (In cases of illness or family emergency, please email the instructor—ahead of time if possible.)
* You are expected to be present mentally as well as physically: participation in the discussions and Q&A with each visitor is an important part of the class’s work. Laptops for note-taking are permissible; checking social media or email are not (and will result in being marked absent for that class session). Phones should be put away and silenced.
* Your weekly assignments will include looking at/listening to/reading the work of our visitors in preparation for their visits and writing (very) short response papers. You will also be expected to prepare written questions for each visitor.
* The final project will be an artistic project of your own, of your own choosing, in your own art discipline.

# Grading

This course will be graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) grade. To earn a grade of S, you will need to turn in every assignment and participate in class discussions.

**Academic Misconduct**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (<http://studentlife.osu.edu/pdfs/csc_12-31-07.pdf>).

**Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

**Biographical Statement**

Professor Herman is the author of the novels *Missing* (1990), *Dog* (2005), and *Devotion* (2016), as well as the forthcoming *Close-Up*; the collection of novellas *A New and Glorious* *Life* (1998); and three essay collections - *The Middle of Everything: Memoirs of Motherhood* (2005), *Stories We Tell Ourselves* (2013), and *Like A Song* (2015) *-* as well as a book for children, *A Girl's Guide to Life* (2015). Her essays and short fiction have appeared in magazines as varied as American Scholar and the *Southern Review* to O, the Oprah Magazine and *Redbook*, and her numerous awards and honors include Fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Copernicus Foundation, multiple grants from the Ohio Arts Council and the Greater Columbus Arts Council, and two major teaching awards from Ohio State: the University Alumni Distinguished Teaching Award and the Rodica Botoman Award for Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching and Mentoring. She was for many years Director of the MFA Program in Creative Writing at Ohio State, and she continues to direct the Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization in Fine Art and to serve as the Artistic and Executive Director of the Young Writers Workshop, a residential summer program for Columbus City Schools teenage writers. Professor Herman is also a serious amateur jazz singer and a proud member of a Columbus-based arts and service organization, The Harmony Project, through which she is active in a wide range of community service activities, projects, and initiatives—with adults transitioning from homelessness, children in foster care, families in shelters, and other vulnerable populations—and with which she sings alto in a choir of over two hundred voices.

#### Weekly Schedule (tentative)

### **Week 1 – Introduction to the course**

Professor Herman will talk about her own life as a working artist and begin the discussion of the topics to be considered in the weeks ahead viewed through the lens of each visiting artist and the particular medium in which each works.

Assignment: Prepare for next week’s discussion of the work of our first visitor. (Tentatively planned: Kora Radella, a [choreographer](http://www.boomerangdance.com/about). Preparation will include viewing videos of her work and of new work in progress, reading reviews and interviews, and other material.) Write a short response paper to the work. (Responses will be collected next week.)

### **Week 2 – Discussion of the work of visiting artist #1 and of questions raised by the work**

Assignment: Prepare questions for the visitor, who will be with us Week 3.

### **Week 3 – First visiting artist**

The visitor will talk about her life and work; you will ask questions based on your own experience of the work, the class discussion last week, and the questions you’ve prepared in advance. Written questions will also be collected.

Assignment: Prepare for next week’s discussion of the work of our second visitor. (Tentatively planned: painter [Glen Holland](http://www.glenholland.com). Other possibilities include a sculptor, a glass artist, or a printmaker. Two visual artists doing related work, or at different stages of their careers, may visit at the same time.) You would be looking at images of the artist’s work as well as reading about it.) Write a short response paper to the work you’ve viewed.

### **Week 4 – Discussion of the work of visiting artist #2 and of questions raised by the work**

### Assignment: Prepare questions for visitor #2, who will be with us Week 5.

### **Week 5 – Second visiting artist**

The visitor will talk about his life and work; you will ask questions based on your own experience of the work, the class discussion last week, and the questions you’ve prepared in advance. Written questions will also be collected.

Assignment: Prepare for next week’s discussion of the work of our third visitor. (Tentatively planned: [Happy Chichester](https://happychichester.bandcamp.com/), a musician/singer/songwriter and music producer.) Write a short response paper to the music you’ve listened to and music videos you’ve viewed.

### **Week 6 – Discussion of the work of visiting artist #3 and of questions raised by the work**

### Assignment: Prepare questions for visitor #3, who will be with us Week 7.

### **Week 7 – Third visiting artist**

The visitor will talk about his life and work; you will ask questions based on your own experience of the work, the class discussion last week, and the questions you’ve prepared in advance. Written questions will also be collected.

Assignment: Prepare for next week’s discussion of the work of our fourth visitor(s). (Tentatively planned: an experimental [theater-maker and stage director](http://www.theasy.com/Reviews/2016/R/revelsend.php), Grace Herman-Holland, and an actor/independent filmmaker, [Nathan Luttrull](https://www.nathanluttrull.com/).) Write short response papers to the work you’ve viewed and read about online.)

### **Week 8 – Discussion of the work of visiting artists #4 & 5 and of questions raised by the work**

### Assignment: Prepare questions for visitor(s) #4 and 5, who will be with us Week 9.

### **Week 9 – Fourth and fifth visiting artists**

The visitors will talk about their life and work; you will ask questions based on your own experience of the work, the class discussion last week, and the questions you’ve prepared in advance. Written questions will also be collected.

Assignment: Prepare for next week’s discussion of the work of our sixth and seventh visitors. (Tentatively planned: the playwrights [Jennifer Schlueter](http://www.jenniferschlueter.com/) and [Danny Mitarotondo](https://atlanticactingschool.org/danny-mitarotondo/)) Write short response papers to the work you’ve read [handouts distributed in class today] and viewed online.)

### **Week 10 – Discussion of the work of visiting artists #6 and 7 and of questions raised by the work**

Assignment: Prepare questions for visitors #6 and 7, who will be with us Week 11.

### **Week 11 – Sixth and seventh visiting artists**

The visitors will talk about their life and work; you will ask questions based on your own experience of the work, the class discussion last week, and the questions you’ve prepared in advance. Written questions will also be collected.

Assignment: Prepare for next week’s discussion of the work of our eighth visitor. (Tentatively planned: [novelist](https://www.amazon.com/How-Survive-Summer-Nick-White/dp/0399573682) Nick White. Write short response papers to the work you’ve read [handouts in the form of excerpts of the novel, an autobiographical essay, reviews, and interviews in class today].)

### **Week 12 – Discussion of the work of visiting artist #8 and of questions raised by the work**

Assignment: Prepare questions for visitor #8, who will be with us Week 13.

### **Week 13 – Eighth visiting artist**

The visitor will talk about his life and work; you will ask questions based on your own experience of the work, the class discussion last week, and the questions you’ve prepared in advance. Written questions will also be collected.

Assignment: Prepare for final week’s discussion wrap-up.

### **Week 14 – General discussion of the life of the contemporary artist**

In addition to considering larger questions raised by the many visitors collectively, we will also talk about practical strategies for pursuing a life in the arts and discuss your final projects.

**Week 15 – Finals week: art project due (written, recorded, digitized images of artwork, etc.).**

If you choose, this work will be distributed to the entire class.