

EMILY FRANCES WINTER
TEXTILES TEACHING PORTFOLIO



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While my interests and expertise are rooted in textiles, I define my stance more expansively. I approach teaching as a writer, a weaver, an artist, and an advocate. I believe in the importance of broadening the contexts in which education happens—moving between a college classroom, a community arts center, a museum, an industrial weaving mill. It is fundamental to my philosophy that these practices are not divorced from one another. They are all rooted in the same principles—to challenge students to observe and think critically, to articulate their needs, to solve problems using their available tools, and to approach their peers with openness, curiosity, and respect.

Teaching is as much about the relationships built between individuals as it is about the material transmitted. One of my primary goals—in any context—is to facilitate a classroom/studio context where students rely on one another. When one student answers another's questions, the first student reiterates her own understanding through re-articulation. This dynamic creates a community of artists that can hold its own over time, regardless of the presence or input of the teacher. I encourage this in the classroom by incorporating group work and directing students to their peers for help whenever possible. I encourage the extension of this dynamic into the critique context by prioritizing student feedback and encouraging students to direct the course of their own critiques. The critique is a potent site for challenge, conversation, and reflection. By utilizing a range of formats, from individual meetings to group conversations, I try to keep the dialogue dynamic, open, and relevant. The goal in any critique is to help students better articulate their needs and motivations, raise relevant questions, and identify areas of growth.

In textiles curricula, there is often an emphasis on consistent production. While this approach encourages students to make discoveries through the act of making, it is also important to encourage students to experiment with different modes of expressing their ideas. Bringing a broader range of vocabularies into the textile studio only strengthens the work students do at the loom. It is well known that no two students absorb information in the same way-- as a teacher, I try to pick up cues from students and adapt to their learning needs. Varying the class structure week to week and presenting information from a variety of perspectives lays the groundwork for students to respond to the material as they need to and provides them with a model for an expansive approach to textile studio work.

The textile object is always tied up in how it is made and incredible discoveries can grow out of an inquiry into how a thing was made. The field of textiles, weaving in particular, is strongly tied to the technology used to create the work. Having a clear understanding of that technology- what tools to use and when, what the implications of different techniques are-- pushes the work into the dialogue between medium and content. I want my students to understand the flexibilities offered by the frame loom versus the Jacquard loom and be able to articulate how that means of production serves the object they are trying to create. In a studio environment, it can be challenging to find a balance between conceptual/generative work, technical instruction, and theoretical background. I ask my students to maintain a consistent commitment to all three realms throughout their working process-- and understand that this commitment may take different forms for different students. An advanced dobby weaving course would include readings from Lewis Mumford's *Art and Technics*, T'ai Smith's *Bauhaus Weaving Theory*, and Glenn Adamson's *Thinking Through Craft* as a way of introducing some

of the key questions of technique, craft, and the relationship of the tool to the artist. The course would ask students to think critically about the impact of the computer interface on the act of designing and weaving, while concurrently asking students to push the limits of woven structures through expansive exploration of the loom's possibilities.

I encourage my students to actively investigate the lineage and contemporary context of textiles as a discipline. Making textiles is a fundamental, ancient, and profound practice. I do not ask my students to be textile historians, but I want them to see and feel the profundity of this practice. When you wind out dozens of threads on the warping board, when you tension those threads on the loom, when you introduce the weft threads in sequence into the warp threads-- you are participating in an event that speaks to a basic human inclination to organize raw material into form. Research into both utilitarian and fine arts textiles allows students to see and learn from the mounds of innovative work done in the medium. Museum collections can serve as great resources in this process of research-based studio work. As a teacher, it is my job to act as a conduit of these references-- to listen to students' articulations of their interests, their questions, their priorities, and to point them to the work that may speak to them.

In my beginning weaving class, I ask students to give short research-based presentations throughout the course, sharing some textile-related topic with the rest of the class. The goal in these presentations is to get the students into the library and to encourage the students to begin developing an understanding of the topography of the discipline. To ask a beginning weaver to articulate the shape of their practice might be premature, but to ask them to speak about a type of making, a use for fabric, or an artist whose work resonates with them can provide information to me as a teacher and to them as a student. In describing and researching another's work, they start to find the language they need to think through their own work.

At the foundation of my teaching philosophy is the belief that the work done in the studio is always a starting point. The conversation may start with a textile object, but I ask students to approach that object as an entry point to broader questions about the medium of textiles, about art, design, history, and society. While we work with the stuff of textiles, we are always recognizing that it is not ever just about a fabric—the fabric is a means of engaging in larger dialogues which transcend the particularities of the textile.

Over/Under: Woven Fundamentals*3 credits**Mondays 1-6pm*

Weaving is the intersection of sets of vertical and horizontal linear elements. Within this very simple relationship is a multitude of possible permutations. In this introductory weaving studio, students will learn how to dress and weave on a 4-harness floor loom. We will cover a variety of structures and techniques, including plain weaves, twills, tapestry, inlay, and pile weaves. Draft notation (textile pattern transcription) and fabric analysis (deconstructing existing fabrics to understand their structure and material) will be covered as well. In this course, students are encouraged to build dexterity with the medium in order to use the tools in innovative and personalized ways. Students will explore the possibilities found in the over-under-over-under of woven structures through extensive sampling and execution of finished works.

*Major requirement; Elective for non-majors**No prerequisites**Lab fee: \$150**Class limited to 14 students***Complex Binary: Computer Interfaced Dobby***3 credits**Wednesdays 1-6pm*

As the mechanization of textile equipment increases, the balance of active making shifts from the person to the machine. In this advanced weaving studio, students will learn how to draft and weave on 24-harness dobby looms. Designing with the computer introduces a new level of mediation into the weaving process—students will consider this dynamic through readings and writing exercises while focusing on the development of complex woven fabrics. Students will work through a series of assigned structures, expanding on the foundation established in Woven Fundamentals. These experimental samples will form the vocabulary used by students to develop more refined fabrics utilizing any and all tools at the student's disposal.

*Major elective; Elective for non-majors**Prerequisite: Woven Fundamentals**Lab fee: \$150**Class limited to 16 students***Unraveling the Archive***6 credits**Thursdays 9-12 am, Friday 9-4 every other week*

What constitutes a textile archive? What forces shape its curation? How can we as artists use the archive in our own practice? This joint studio/seminar class will approach these questions from the standpoint of researching artists, continually seeking to articulate the archive's relevance to the artist. We will look to artists who have utilized archival research in their own practices and students will consider how this research impacts their own studio work. Using the RISD Museums' Costume and Textile Collection as our starting point, this class will include site visits to the Harvard Art Museums, the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, the American Textile History Museum, the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, and Slater Mill.

*Major and non-major elective; Juniors, seniors, graduate students**No prerequisites*

UNRAVELING THE ARCHIVE

6 credits

Thursdays 9-12 am, Friday 9-4 every other week

What constitutes a textile archive? What forces shape its curation? How can we as artists use the archive in our own practice? This joint studio/seminar class will approach these questions from the standpoint of researching artists, continually seeking to articulate the archive's relevance to the artist. We will look to artists who have utilized archival research in their own practices and students will consider how this research impacts their own studio work. Using the RISD Museums' Costume and Textile Collection as our starting point, this class will also include site visits to the Harvard Art Museums, the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, the American Textile History Museum, the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, and Slater Mill. Combining reading, discussion, and studio work, this class will consider the different modes with which research and practice can be integrated.

6 credits

Major and non-major elective; Juniors, seniors, graduate students

No prerequisites

GOALS

- Consider influences and inspirations in an investigatory, object-based way
- Situate one's own work in the genealogy of the medium (textiles)
- Develop an individual approach to archival research with respect to studio practice
- Gain familiarity with contemporary conversation around museum curation and object classification as it relates to textiles

OBJECTIVES

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| Development of a personal study collection with articulated curatorial philosophy — found or purchased objects which can be touched/unravelled/played with/lived with | <i>30%</i> |
| Introductory presentations on field trip sites (history of collection and the institution, curatorial stance, provenance of objects) and guidance of group discussions as a means of understanding how to view and experience a curated collection with a critical and contextualizing eye | <i>20%</i> |
| Close study/investigation of particular museum objects in relation to student's own work shown through the Object Project | <i>50%</i> |

COURSE OVERVIEW

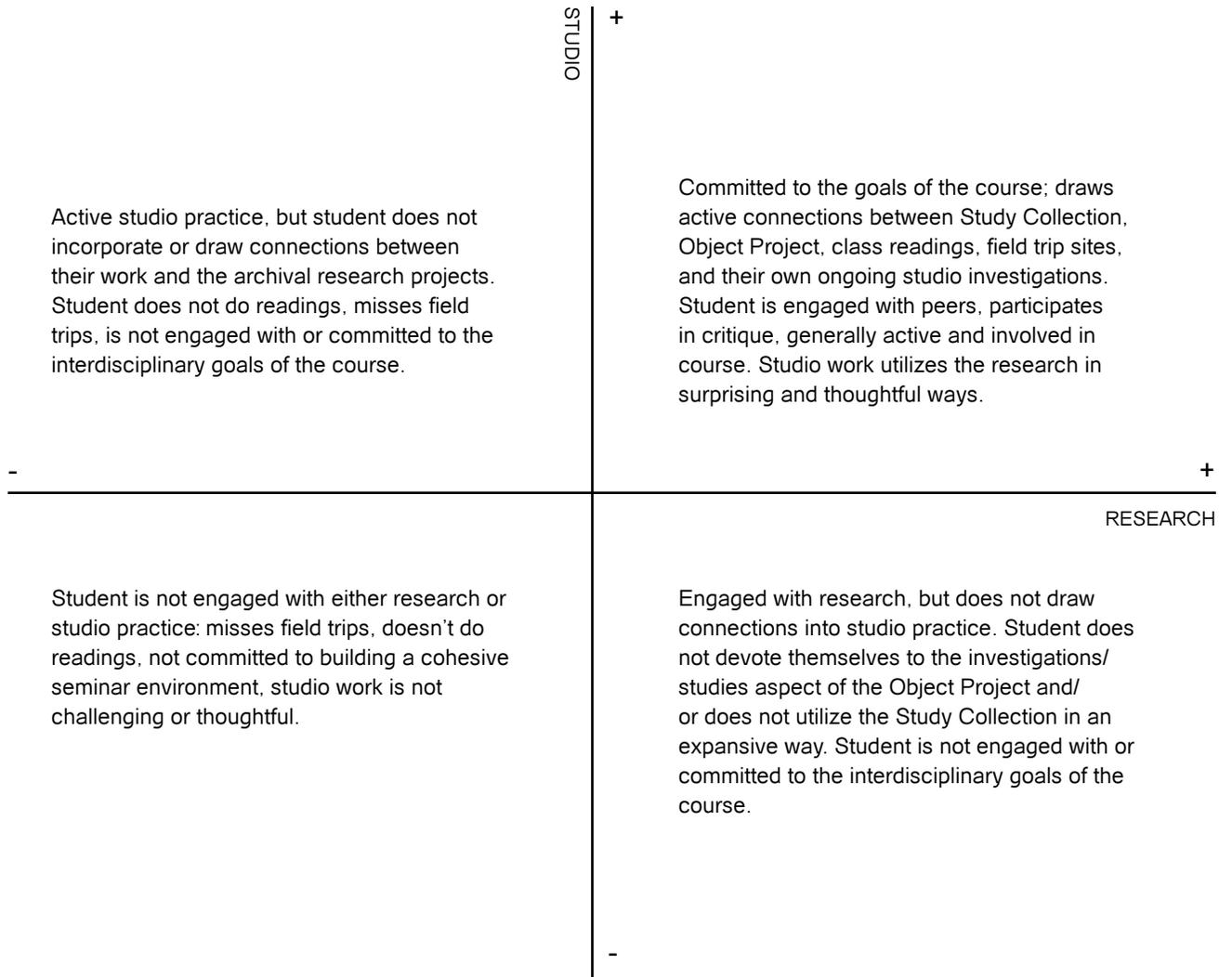
| | READINGS, PROJECTS, STUDIO WORK | FIELD TRIPS |
|--------|--|--|
| WEEK 1 | Introduction: go over syllabus, course structure, and expectations. Introduce Study Collection assignment. | RISD Museum , Providence RI (half day) Meet with curators and discuss history of the collection as well as their approaches to building and developing the collection |
| | <i>Outcomes: Understand the range and type of questions raised by museum studies and curation practices, Bring those questions into practice through development of Study Collection.</i> | |
| WEEK 2 | From Tool to Machine Reading: Conrad, "Drive that Branch" Understanding the trajectory of textile manufacturing history through the machinery itself | Slater Mill , Pawtucket RI (half day) How do we archive an industry? How do we understand/remember the relationship between the object and the machines which made it? |
| | <i>Outcomes: Contextualize the history of textile production with the textile object. Expand the boundaries of how we think about the organization and curation of material culture. Gain a foundation knowledge of the specific textile history of the Providence region.</i> | |
| WEEK 3 | Reading: Prichard, "Collecting the Contemporary" Peer review of curatorial philosophy and work on Study Collection | |
| | <i>Outcomes: Articulate personal approach to object collection, clarify motivations and priorities in object studies as a means of internalizing and personalizing larger questions of object hierarchies and organization schema.</i> | |
| WEEK 4 | Voices from the Factory Integrating oral histories with textile histories: how do we connect objects to their makers? Reading: Excerpt from <i>The Last Generation</i> | American Textile History Museum/ Lowell National Historic Site , Lowell MA (full day) How do we remember the people who produce our objects? How is the relationship of a factory worker to the textile different from the artist's? |
| | <i>Outcomes: Draw connections between objects and the labor which produces them. Integrate historical and political narratives with object narratives.</i> | |
| WEEK 5 | Student presentations of Study Collection and curatorial philosophy | |
| | <i>Outcomes: Synthesize personal practice (object collection) with the language of museum curation: what does it look like to curate your own studio?</i> | |
| WEEK 6 | Culture on a Pedestal Reading: TBD, dealing with classifications of art objects and relationship to culture/cultural imperialism, potentially Klassen article "Representation of African American Quiltmaking" | Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology , Providence RI (half day) How do we understand cultural boundaries and imperialism through objects? What does it do to an object and the people who made it to be experienced in a museum of anthropology versus a museum of art? |
| | <i>Outcomes: Understand the political potentials of objects themselves and the power dynamics present in the act of organizing them.</i> | |
| WEEK 7 | Presentations of Part 1 of Object Project Close reading | |
| | <i>Outcomes: Build material and historical foundation for studio practice, exercise research skills and demonstrate openness to the tangents that arise in act of research</i> | |

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| WEEK 8 | <p>Giving names in an anonymous field Reading: excerpt from <i>Bauhaus Weaving Theory</i> The textile industry, and consequently its archive, is known for its lack of attribution. How does this impact our view of these objects and how do we understand Bauhaus weaver Otta Berger's contestation of this practice?</p> | <p>Harvard Art Museums, Boston MA (full day) Viewing Bauhaus textiles, specifically samples by Otta Berger:</p> |
| | <p><i>Outcomes: Understand the role of an individual artist in the archive, locate larger gender and power dynamics through particular case study</i></p> | |
| WEEK 9 | <p>Studio visits, discussing progress of Object Project, small group critique</p> | |
| | <p><i>Outcomes: Synthesize research with studio practice, build individual approach to integrating research discoveries into object making, articulate connections and next moves to colleagues and visiting critics. Use conversation format to encourage expansive thinking and articulation of project motivations.</i></p> | |
| WEEK 10 | <p>Studio visits, discussing progress of Object Project, small group critique</p> | |
| | <p><i>Outcomes: Synthesize research with studio practice, build individual approach to integrating research discoveries into object making, articulate connections and next moves to colleagues and visiting critics</i></p> | |
| WEEK 11 | <p>Learning from great teachers: unweaving pre-Columbian textiles Reading: excerpt from <i>Anni Albers and ancient American textiles</i></p> | <p>Josef and Anni Albers Foundation, Bethany CT (full day) Viewing Anni Albers work in the Foundation's archive, as well as her personal study collection.</p> |
| | <p><i>Outcomes: Challenge ideas of how we can best preserve the textile artifact. Dig into the ethics of unraveling.</i></p> | |
| WEEK 12 | <p>Final presentations of Object Project Final documentation due</p> | |
| | <p><i>Outcomes: Challenge notions of how we can incorporate research into studio practice, read the vast range of histories and power dynamics into museum objects, understand the object as a materialization of political/social/cultural dynamics which can be unraveled from the object through close reading and expansive analysis. Articulate personal approach to museum study and how it has impacted studio work.</i></p> | |

PROJECTS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN

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| RESEARCH | |
| <p><i>Site Presentations/discussion leading</i></p> <p>In pairs, students will prepare introductory presentations on our field trip sites, including a brief history of the institution, the type of objects held by the institution, and the place of the institution in the field of textiles and textile history. These students will also be responsible for preparing discussion questions and leading class discussion in anticipation of the field trip.</p> | 20% |
| <p><i>Study Collection</i></p> <p>Students will compile a personal study collection: the goal of this project is to build an archive of objects that you can engage with firsthand. These can be objects you already own (garments, heirlooms, home goods, etc) or objects that you acquire (from the thrift store, antique store, department store, from a friend, from the street). Be expansive in your curation--these objects are to be lived with, touched, unravelled, folded, and most of all, learned from.</p> | 15% |
| <p><i>Curatorial philosophy</i></p> <p>Students will draft a curatorial philosophy for their personal study collection: describing their motivations for including certain objects and types in the collection and describing how they engage with these objects. Students will have the opportunity to do a peer review/edit before presenting their collection and philosophy. (500 words)</p> | 15% |
| OBJECT PROJECT | |
| <p><i>Close reading</i></p> <p>Students will choose an object from their personal collection or from a local collection (the limitation being that you must be able to view it in person at least twice) and research its provenance and history. Students will also research the techniques used to make the piece, the type of equipment used to make it, and materials used.</p> | 10% |
| <p><i>Work in response</i></p> <p>Students will use the object as a source in their studio practice, investigating the object through drawing, painting, weaving, photography, video, models etc. This process may result in a finished piece or body of work, or may remain as an extensive series of studies.</p> | 10% |
| <p><i>Final presentation</i></p> <p>Students will present their Object Project (close reading and resulting work) to the class for critique</p> | 15% |
| <p><i>Final documentation</i></p> <p>Students will create a document of the Object Project, which will include their research into the object, their close reading studies, and their resulting studio work</p> | 15% |

GRADING FRAMEWORK



ATTENDANCE POLICY AND EXPECTATIONS

You are expected to attend all classes and field trips; If you know already that you will not be able to attend one of the field trips, you should not take the class. By nature of its interdisciplinary structure, this class will ask you to approach both research and studio practice in new ways. I ask that you all be open and engaged with the wide range of approaches you can take to the assignments and what you can pull from our field trip sites.

If you have to miss a class due to sickness or unavoidable circumstances, we will meet to discuss options for making up missed conversation/information.

CRITIQUE, PARTICIPATION, AND RESEARCH

Participation, in classroom discussions, critiques, and site visits is an essential part of this course. Engaging in dialogue with our colleagues gives us the opportunity to articulate our own thoughts and responses, while being open to alternate perspectives and readings. The nature of our work this semester is simultaneously personal and historical. To bridge the space between the museum and the studio requires that we are open to a range of approaches to working and researching. The type of research we are undertaking is not about finding an answer to one particular question but rather about being open to the myriad questions that arise as soon as we begin looking closely at an object. Critiques, as well as class discussions, should follow a similar model. The intention is not to find a particular answer or defense, but rather to challenge ourselves and our colleagues to see and begin fleshing out the expansive realm of questions that are raised by our work. To that end, I ask that students prepare questions to guide their own critiques in the direction they will find most helpful.

SELECTED READINGS

James L. Conrad Jr. "'Drive that Branch': Samuel Slater, the Power Loom, and the Writing of America's Textile History." *Technology and Culture*, Vol 36, No. 1 (Jan 1995), p 1-28.

Sue Prichard. "Collecting the Contemporary: 'Love will decide what is kept and science will decide how it is kept'." *Textile* 3, no. 2 (2005), p 150-165.

Mary Blewett. *The Last Generation: Work and Life in the Textile Mills of Lowell Massachusetts, 1910-1960*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990.

Teri Klassen. "Representation of African American Quiltmaking: From Omission to High Art." *The Journal of American Folklore*. Vol. 122, No. 485 (Summer 2009), p 297-334.

T'ai Smith. *Bauhaus Weaving Theory: from Feminine Craft to Mode of Design*. Minneapolis; University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Virginia Gardner Troy. *Anni Albers and ancient American textiles: from Bauhaus to Black Mountain*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002.

George Kubler. *The Shape of Time: remarks on the history of things*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962.

Anni Albers. *On Weaving*. Middletown Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1965.

OBJECT PROJECT

As we become familiar with different approaches to utilizing the archive in artistic practice, it is time to start bringing some of these methods into our own studios. This project will give students the opportunity to look closely at a particular object and work with it as inspiration and reference in whatever way makes most sense in their individual studio. Beginning with a close technical and historical reading of the object, students will then use the object as a source material in their studio work. Investigatory drawings, paintings, weavings, photographs, videos, and models can be used as methods of understanding the object. Continued historical/theoretical research will further fine-tune the concerns brought up by the object.

Students will choose an object—either from their personal study collection or from the RISD Museum’s collection—to investigate closely. The first step of the project is an investigation into the object’s history/provenance, including its place in the museum collection and the broader questions it raises as an artifact and object. Next, students will analyze the materials and construction of the object and research the tools used to create the object. Then, students will bring their study of the object into visual/material terms, culminating in a body of work/project/series of studies which finds its starting point in the object, but may stray far from the object itself.

The project will result in a close reading of a textile object, a piece of work created by the student in response to the object, and documentation of the investigations into the object. The documentation should include the initial research, the studies, and the final project. Students will present the trajectory of the project to the class at the end of the semester. The combination of these three elements will provide students with a model for personalized research and a groundwork for understanding and analyzing the relationships between influences and studio work.

GOALS

- Conduct in-depth research into a particular object, including its history, typology, maker
- Incorporate the findings of that research into visual/material terms through a range of studies using diverse methods
- Utilize research skills to expand the range of your studio practice
- Identify and work with the social/political/historical questions that are found in material culture

OUTCOMES

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| <i>Close reading</i> In depth research into the object’s history, production, cultural/social impact | 10% |
| <i>Studio investigations</i> Integration of that research into studio practice through studies, exercises | 10% |
| <i>Resulting work</i> Body of work which expands on ideas currently percolating in student’s studio practice | 15% |
| <i>Document/archive of process</i> Documentation of the path from object to object | 15% |

ASSESSMENT

Basic Competency

Cursory or obvious investigation into the object’s history, production, etc.
Studio investigations are straightforward and surface-level

Advanced Competency

Deep research into object’s history, production, provenance
Studio investigations utilize research in meaningful and expansive ways

MIDTERM FEEDBACK FORM

UNRAVELING THE ARCHIVE

COURSE GOALS

- Consider influences and inspirations in an investigatory, object-based way
- Situate one's own work in the genealogy of the medium (textiles)
- Develop an individual approach to archival research with respect to studio practice
- Gain familiarity with contemporary conversation around museum curation and object classification as it relates to textiles

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following questions, 5 being absolutely, 1 being not at all:

The readings relate to the field trips in an interesting and thought-provoking way.

1 2 3 4 5

The field trips and readings are informing my studio work in a meaningful way.

1 2 3 4 5

The student-led discussions contribute to a cohesive classroom environment.

1 2 3 4 5

I am able to use the Object Project to serve my own studio practice.

1 2 3 4 5

I am getting the support and input I need with respect to the research aspects of the course.

1 2 3 4 5

I am getting the support and input I need with respect to my studio work.

1 2 3 4 5

Please respond to the following open-ended questions:

How are you finding the joint seminar/studio course structure? Do you like having two modes in one course, or would you prefer to keep them separated?

Are you being challenged to push the boundaries of your practice? If so, how? If not, what do you think might achieve that?

Do you feel that the instructor is responsive to your feedback and input?

Do you feel clear about the expectations of the course?