This seminar will examine art and architecture that have generated major conflicts in U.S. history, mainly during the past century, and especially since the early 1960s. The primary issues will involve patriotism, religion, race, modernism, feminism, sexuality and obscenity, public art and memorials, “sacred space,” and the changing place of museums in American life as demonstrated by the controversial museum exhibitions *Sensation* (1999) and *The Art of the Motorcycle* at the Guggenheim (1998). The role of media, art critics, corporate sponsors, and public opinion will be prominent along with censorship and First Amendment issues.

The readings include a mix of primary and secondary sources. Almost all of the required books are available at the Campus Store. Two that are out of print are on two-hour reserve in Fine Arts Library (FAL). Most of the primary sources have been scanned by the Fine Arts Library and can be read online. To access them, go to the Cornell Gateway. Go under Quick Links to Course Reserves. Login with your net i.d. and fill in “Kammen.” A few of the essays in journals will be found in the appropriate libraries as indicated on this syllabus.

There are two options for written work in the seminar. One option is to write a series of three analytical essays (9-10 pages each) based upon selected issues raised by the weekly readings. These will be due by noon (in the instructor’s mailbox, McGraw Hall 451) on Sept. 29th, November 3rd, and December 9th. The third essay should run a bit longer (10-12 pages). The other option is to write a research paper. A list of suggested topics will be distributed, and a schedule will be indicated for selecting your topic and regularly consulting with the instructor. These essays will be due on December 12th. They will obviously require additional work, but Cornell students should have an opportunity to undertake a research paper in advanced courses.

The written work for this course will determine 50% of your final grade. Because the weekly discussions are so central to a seminar, your faithful attendance and participation will determine 40% of your final grade. The remaining 10% will be based upon one oral report and one week in which you (and another student) will initiate the analysis and discussion of the week’s reading.

There is a listserv for this course so that we can send messages and information to the entire group. Please note that if you wish to send a message to the instructor only, you should use his e-mail address, posted above. Each year there is at least one
embarrassing moment when something not intended for the entire group nonetheless gets disseminated. *Que cela vous serve d’avertissemen*

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**Sept. 1**  **Introductory discussion and presentation of illustrative materials**

**Sept. 8**  **Controversial Monuments and Memorials, ca. 1842-1980**


**Sept. 15**  **The (Unprecedented) Vietnam Veterans Memorial**


*Critical Issues in Public Art*, ch. 5.

Sources online concerning the World War II Memorial to be dedicated on Memorial Day, 2004.

**Sept. 22**  **Misunderstanding Modernism and the Avant-Garde**


Opinion pieces by Thomas Hart Benton, Forbes Watson, and Edward Steichen on Constantin Brancusi’s *Bird in Flight* {controversy in 1926-28}. Online.


*Optional viewing in Uris Library later in the week of a documentary from the *Culture Shock* series: “The Shock of the Nude: Manet’s *Olympia.*” Time to be arranged. For those who cannot make the group showing, see FAL video #295, #4.

Sept. 29  **The Problem of Public Art in the 20th Century: Murals and Pigs**


{other half reads} Erika Doss, *Spirit Poles and Flying Pigs: Public Art and Cultural Democracy in American Communities* (Smithsonian Press pb), Intro. and chs. 1, 3-5 at least.


Oct. 6  **The Debate Over Public Sculpture, 1966-88: “Must I Look at This?”**

*Critical Issues in Public Art*, chs. 10, 13, 15, and 16.


*  *  *  Fall Break  *  *  *

Oct. 20  **Nationalism and Ideology Affecting Art: Dissent and Desecration**

Steven C. Dubin, *Arresting Images: Impolitic Art and Uncivil Actions* (Routledge pb), chs. 2 and 5.


*Optional viewing in Uris Library, later in the week, of “Andrew Wyeth: The Helga Pictures.” Time to be arranged. For individual viewing see FAL A/V Video-tape 154.

Oct. 27  **Transforming and Politicizing the American Museum**
Barry Hyams, *Hirshhorn: Medici from Brooklyn* (1979), pp. 155-59, 166. FAL 2-hour reserve; and media item online.
Opinion pieces about the exhibition of “Helga paintings” by Andrew Wyeth at the National Gallery of Art in 1986. Online.
Opinion pieces about the Sensation exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum in 1999. Online.

Nov. 3  **Feminism Stirs the Party**

Nov. 10  **Photographic and Other Provocations from the late 1980s**


Online. Fine Arts N1 Ar67.


Opinion pieces about the photography of Sally Mann. Online.

Nov. 17 Performance Art and Legal Controversies in the 1990s
Dubin, Arresting Images: Impolitic Art and Uncivil Actions, pp. 149-58 and chs. 8, 10, and 11.

Karen Finley, “It’s Only Art,” in Finley, Shock Treatment (1990), 69-74. FAL 2-hour reserve.


Opinion pieces about the performance art of Karen Finley. Online.

Opinion pieces about the performance art of Ron Athey (1994). Online.

U.S. Supreme Court decision pertaining to the case of the “NEA Four” (1990-98). Online. Also in the Law School Library in 524 U.S. 569 (1998) in the standard series of volumes with all Supreme Court rulings.

Nov. 24 Controversies Involving Race, Ethnicity, and Religion (1990s)
Dubin, Arresting Images: Impolitic Art and Uncivil Actions, chs. 1 and 9.


Richmond’s Monument Avenue, ed. Sarah Shields Driggs and others (2001), 88-95 for the controversy over a monument to Arthur Ashe in the capital of the Confederacy (1993-96). FAL 2-hour reserve.


Dec. 1 Rapping Up and Reporting Research
Dubin, Arresting Images: Impolitic Art and Uncivil Actions, ch. 12.

