Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks
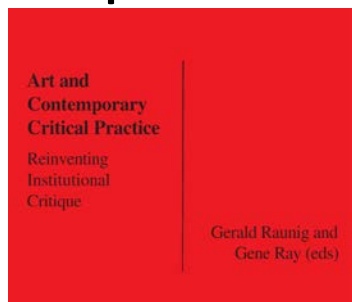
The California Open Educational Resources Council has designed and implemented a faculty review process of the free and open etextbooks showcased within the California Open Online Library for Education (www.cool4ed.org). Faculty from the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California were invited to review the selected free and open etextboks using a rubric. Faculty received a stipend for their efforts and funding was provided by the State of California, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Textbook Name:

Art Contemporary Critical Practice: Reinventing Institutional Critique

License:

Find it: **eTextbook Website**

Textbook Authors:

Gerald Raunig and Gene Ray

Reviewed by:

Beverly Grindstaff
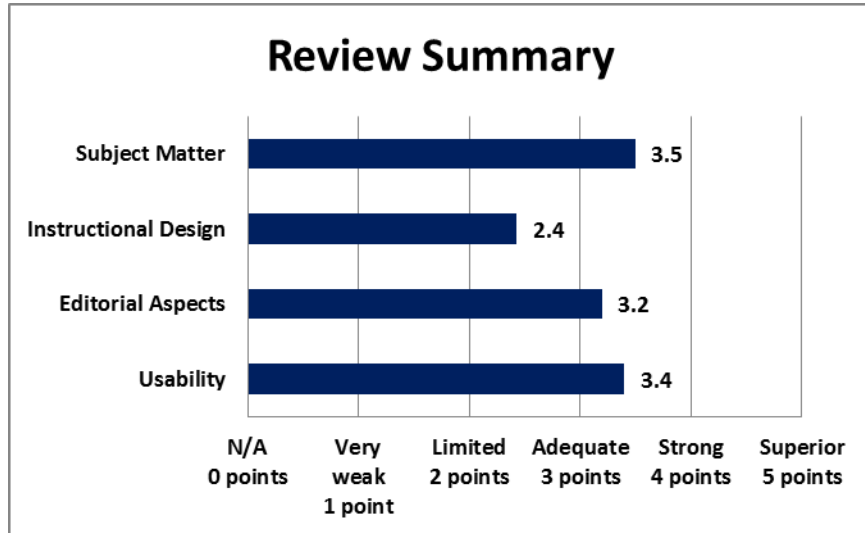
Institution:

San Jose State University

Title/Position:

Professor

Format Reviewed:

Online

A small fee may be associated with various formats.

Review Summary

Subject Matter	3.5
Instructional Design	2.4
Editorial Aspects	3.2
Usability	3.4

N/A 0 points | Very weak 1 point | Limited 2 points | Adequate 3 points | Strong 4 points | Superior 5 points

Date Reviewed:

March 2015

California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: ARTH 120

Subject Matter (30 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the content accurate, error-free, and unbiased?				X		
Does the text adequately cover the designated course with a sufficient degree of depth and scope?				X		
Does the textbook use sufficient and relevant examples to present its subject matter?					X	
Does the textbook use a clear, consistent terminology to				X		

	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
present its subject matter?					X	
Does the textbook reflect current knowledge of the subject matter?					X	
Does the textbook present its subject matter in a culturally sensitive manner? (e.g. Is the textbook free of offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)					X	

Total Points: 21 out of 30

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:

- This is an intriguing volume on institutional critique and contemporary art appropriately issued outside the institution by MayFly Books, founded in 2005 as an independent open-access press. It is the published outcome of TRANSFORM, a three-year research project of the European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies (eipcp) Transnational Project which "continues the research on political and artistic practices of institutional critique during the years 2005-2008. With a setup of exhibitions and discursive events in Europe TRANSFORM will investigate the relationship between institution and critique along three lines that overlap in some points, but principally are to be differentiated" (see <http://transform.eipcp.net>). Contributors include writers, cultural critics, activists, professors, theorists and unaffiliated participants, and the open-access nature of this volume is well suited to their institutional critique.

- Of the 21 chapters, among the strongest is Rosalyn Deutsche's "Louise Lawler's Rude Museum" (63-77). Deutsche is an accomplished senior art historian with a distinguished record of publication, and a credit notes her essay was "[f]irst published in Louise Lawler, Twice Untitled and Other Pictures (looking back), Wexner Center for the Arts and MIT Press, 2006." Many chapters are present unique points of view, and here not knowing the standards of peer review for this independent open-access work makes it difficult to assess which assertions are fresh and provocative and which are merely inaccurate.

Instructional Design (35 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Does the textbook present its subject materials at appropriate reading levels for undergrad use?			X			
Does the textbook reflect a consideration of different learning styles? (e.g. visual, textual?)			X			
Does the textbook present explicit learning outcomes aligned with the course and curriculum?	X					
Is a coherent organization of the textbook evident to the reader/student?					X	
Does the textbook reflect best practices in the instruction of the designated course?					X	
Does the textbook contain sufficient effective ancillary materials? (e.g. test banks, individual and/or group activities or exercises, pedagogical apparatus, etc.)	X					
Is the textbook searchable?						X

Total Points: 17 out of 35

Please provide comments on any aspect of the instructional design of this textbook:

- The book is written at a level suitable for an MA or MFA seminar, and possibly an advanced upper-division course familiar with its terms, concepts and methodologies. Its consideration of learning styles is that of any similar anthology; no concessions are made for diverse learning styles. The thematic organization is clearly explained and consistently developed across its three main sections. The direct access online format loads in one searchable block of text in continuous scroll-format numbered pages, presumably as do the PDF and .TXT formats available for purchase through the <www.scribd.com> site; the book is also available in print

Editorial Aspects (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the language of the textbook free of grammatical, spelling, usage, and typographical errors?					X	
Is the textbook written in a clear, engaging style?				X		

	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Does the textbook adhere to effective principles of design? (e.g. are pages latid0out and organized to be clear and visually engaging and effective? Are colors, font, and typography consistent and unified?)					X	
Does the textbook include conventional editorial features? (e.g. a table of contents, glossary, citations and further references)						X
How effective are multimedia elements of the textbook? (e.g. graphics, animations, audio)	X					

Total Points: 16 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- It appears on the screen as a traditional hardcopy book, with formatted and numbered pages, Chicago Style citations, a table of contents, a bibliography and all other conventional editorial features. Open-access is its sole engagement with technology as there are no illustrations, figures or hyperlinks or other electronic features. (This is intended as a neutral comment.)

Usability (30 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the textbook compatible with standard and commonly available hardware/software in college/university campus student computer labs?					X	
Is the textbook accessible in a variety of different electronic formats? (e.g. .txt, .pdf, .epub, etc.)						X
Can the textbook be printed easily?					X	
Does the user interface implicitly inform the reader how to interact with and navigate the textbook?					X	
How easily can the textbook be annotated by students and instructors?	X					

Total Points: 17 out of 30

Please provide comments on any aspect of access concerning this textbook.

- The book appears on the screen free of charge and without problem save the minor distraction of letters that occasionally overlap each other. Paid options allow for multiple other formats (not reviewed), and are accessed through two prominent download buttons. The interface is straightforwardly that of a conventional book, and menu options for page numbers and a pull-down Table of Contents allow for easy navigation. A search box accesses the entire volume.

Overall Ratings						
	Not at all (0 pts)	Very Weak (1 pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3 pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
What is your overall impression of the textbook?					X	
	Not at all (0 pts)	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)
How willing would you be to adopt this book?			X			

Total Points: 6 out of 10

Overall Comments

If you were to recommend this textbook to colleagues, what merits of the textbook would you highlight?

- Many parts of this work would constitute good supplementary sources for a course that is itself dedicated to an institutional critique of contemporary art.

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?

- Use of independent open-access press works in the university classroom is complicated by the absence of the legitimizing apparatuses associated with the academic press. This is a familiar and shared concern reflective of the necessity of the peer-review process within the university. See, for example, this account from Inside Higher Ed: "Fabio Rojas, an associate professor of sociology at Indiana University, said he's "still a believer in regular publishing." (His next book is forthcoming with Cambridge University Press.) "The reason that academia has value is that we're people who engage in self-criticism," Rojas said. "We

have peer review. It's not perfect, it doesn't always work, and a lot of garbage gets published anyway. But that's why most of the energy in academia may be on traditionally peer-reviewed materials -- because that's what the value added is" (qtd. in Charlie Tyson, "A Publisher of One's Own" (July 17, 2014), Inside Higher Ed <https://www.insidehighered.com>. Downloaded 4/10/2015). The same article presents Mayfly Books co-founder Steffen Bohm's counter to the long process of peer review; says Bohm, a University of Essex professor, "We have published stuff that between the conception of the idea and having it in print, it took nine or ten months." Pros and cons, but for now it seems the clear choice for a course is a more conventionally legitimate textbook.

We invite you to add your feedback on the textbook or the review to the textbook site in MERLOT
(Please register in MERLOT to post your feedback.)

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