

**SYLLABUS FALL 2015**

**AVT 103: Introduction to the Artist's Studio**

Instructor: Elsabe J. Dixon

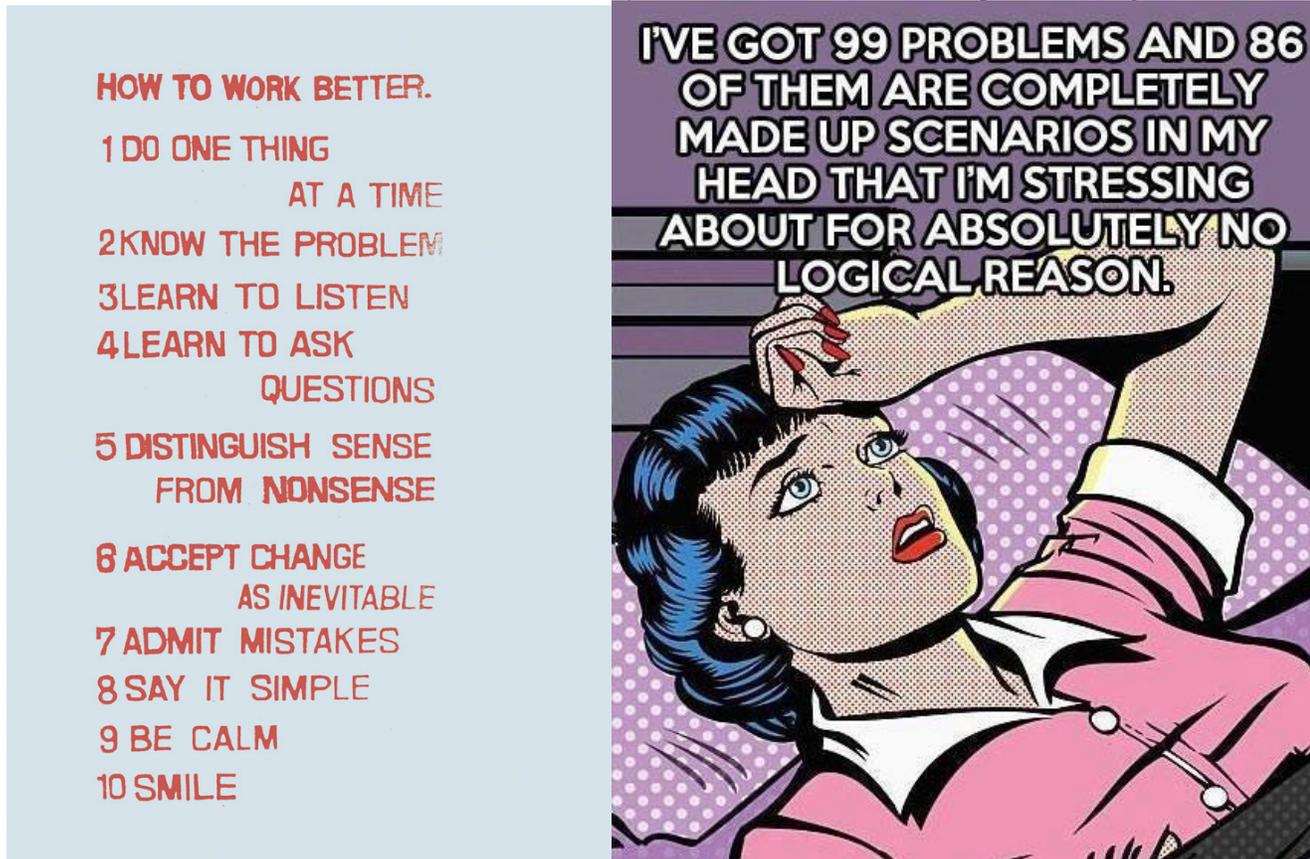
Place and Time: L002- 9:00 to 10:15am/12:00 to 1:15PM

Email: [edixon2@gmu.edu](mailto:edixon2@gmu.edu)

Blog: <https://elsabe-dixon.squarespace.com>

Pinterest: <http://www.pinterest.com/elsabedixon/> (examples of artists work)

*Fischli and Weiss, Lichtenstein and other explorations of What Art Might Possibly Be.*



**HOW TO WORK BETTER.**

- 1 DO ONE THING AT A TIME
- 2 KNOW THE PROBLEM
- 3 LEARN TO LISTEN
- 4 LEARN TO ASK QUESTIONS
- 5 DISTINGUISH SENSE FROM NONSENSE
- 6 ACCEPT CHANGE AS INEVITABLE
- 7 ADMIT MISTAKES
- 8 SAY IT SIMPLE
- 9 BE CALM
- 10 SMILE

**Course Objective:** This course will have an in-depth exploration of visual processes including fundamental principles and theories used in art. The development of aesthetics awareness is essential and complexities of sensory and conceptual processes will be explored and discussed. Students will develop creative capacities through technique, exploration and invention. Evaluation is integral to the development of creative capacities. Group critiques/ conversation and discussion will familiarize students with art terminology, general conceptual theory and will help students understand the broad spectrum of practices in the postmodern artist studio.

**Arts goal:** Courses aim to achieve a majority of the following learning outcomes: students will be able to identify and analyze the formal elements of a particular art form using vocabulary appropriate to that form; demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic technique and the expression of a work's underlying concept; analyze cultural productions using standards appropriate to the form and cultural context; analyze and interpret material or performance culture in its social, historical, and persona contexts; and engage in the artistic process, including conception, creation, and ongoing critical analysis.

## University and School of Art Policies

In accordance with George Mason University policy, **turn off all cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class.** The instructor of the class will keep his/her cell phone active to assure receipt of any Mason Alerts in a timely fashion; or in the event that the instructor does not have a cell phone, he/she will designate one student to keep a cell phone active to receive such alerts.

### Commitment to Diversity

This class will be conducted as an *intentionally* inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran's status, or physical ability.

### Statement on Ethics in Teaching and Practicing Art and Design

As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the School of Art adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

### Open Studio Hours

SOA teaching studios are open to students for extended periods of time mornings, evenings and weekends whenever classes are not in progress. Policies, procedures and schedules for studio use are established by the SOA studio faculty and are posted outside the studios. CHECK THE DOOR!

### School of Art Print Studio

**School of Art Print Studio (SOAP)** is located in the School of Art Building on the Fairfax Campus. As a non-profit studio, SOAP offers a variety of services including printing and production services to students, faculty and staff. All jobs are processed with high quality materials on state-of-the-art equipment, specifically for graphic design portfolios, mixed-media paintings and reproductions, posters, handmade books, student assignments and proof sheets. More information can be found at [soaprint.gmu.edu](http://soaprint.gmu.edu) or 703-993-7203.

### ArtsBus Dates and Credit

Fall 2015  
September 26<sup>th</sup>  
October 24<sup>th</sup>  
November 21<sup>st</sup>

Each student must have up to 5 AVT 300/Artsbus credits before graduation. For credit to appear on your transcript you must enroll in AVT 300. This also applies to anyone who intends to travel to New York independently, or do the DC Alternate Assignment.

If you plan/need to go on multiple ArtsBus trips during a semester and need them towards your total requirement, you must enroll in multiple sections of AVT 300. Please go to the ArtsBus website: <http://artsbus.gmu.edu> "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding ArtsBus policy.

Non-AVT majors taking art classes do not need Artsbus credit **BUT** may need to go on the Artsbus for a class assignment. You can either sign up for AVT 300 or buy a ticket for the bus trip at the Center of the Arts. Alternate trips must be approved by the instructor of the course that is requiring an ArtsBus trip.

## Visual Voices Lecture Series Fall 2015

Visual Voices is a year-long series of lectures by artists, art historians and others about contemporary art and art practice. Visual Voices lectures are held on Thursday evenings from 7:20- 9:00 p.m. in Harris Theater.

- September 3<sup>rd</sup> Jon Rubin “Art in Public Life”  
September 10<sup>th</sup> Helen Zughaib “Arab Song – Arab Spring”  
September 24<sup>th</sup> Catherine Kehoe “It’s Not What You Think”  
October 1<sup>st</sup> SOA Grads “Loading Content”  
October 8<sup>th</sup> Steve Badanes + Linda Beaumont “Speak of the Devil”

## Important Deadlines

Last Day to Add - **Tuesday, September 8**

Last Day to Drop (No Tuition Penalty) - **Tuesday, September 8**

Final Drop (67% Tuition Penalty) – **October 2**

Selective Withdrawal Period – **October 5 - October 23**

Incomplete work from Spring/Summer 2015 due to instructor - **October 30**

Once the add and drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Requests for *late adds* (up until the last day of classes) must be made by the student in the SOA office (or the office of the department offering the course), and generally are only approved in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid being processed), LATE ADD fee will apply. Requests for non-selective *withdrawals* and *retroactive adds* (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the academic dean of the college in which the student’s major is located. For AVT majors, that is the CVPA Office of Academic Affairs, College Hall C211.

## Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences

If you have a diagnosed disability or learning difference and you need academic accommodations, please inform me at the beginning of the semester and contact the Disabilities Resource Center (SUB I room 234, 703-993-2474). You must provide me with a faculty contact sheet from that office outlining the accommodations needed for your disability or learning difference. All academic accommodations must be arranged in advance through the DRC.

## Official Communications via GMU E-Mail

Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

## Attendance Policies

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Class participation may be a factor in grading, therefore instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

## Honor Code

Students in this class are bound by the Honor Code, as stated in the George Mason University Catalog. The honor code requires that the work you do as an individual be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas. (This does not prohibit collaborative work when it is approved by your instructor.) As a faculty member, I have an obligation to refer the names of students who may have violated the Honor Code to the Student Honor Council, which treats such cases very seriously.

No grade is important enough to justify cheating, for which there are serious consequences that will follow you for the rest of your life. If you feel unusual pressure about your grade in this or any other course, please talk to me or to a member of the GMU Counseling Center staff.

Using someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is *plagiarism*, a very serious Honor Code offense. It is very important to understand how to prevent committing plagiarism when using material from a source. If you wish to quote verbatim, you must use the exact words and punctuation just as the passage appears in the original and must use quotation marks and page numbers in your citation. If you want to paraphrase or summarize ideas from a source, you must put the ideas into your own words, and you must cite the source, using the APA or MLA format. (For assistance with documentation, I recommend Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*.) The exception to this rule is information termed *general knowledge*—information that is widely known and stated in a number of sources. Determining what is general knowledge can be complicated, so the wise course is, "When in doubt, cite."

Be especially careful when using the Internet for research. Not all Internet sources are equally reliable; some are just plain wrong. Also, since you can download text, it becomes very easy to inadvertently plagiarize. If you use an Internet source, you must cite the exact URL in your paper and include with it the last date that you successfully accessed the site.

### Writing Center

Students who are in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). The services of the Writing Center are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis.

### List of Materials: For regular use (to bring all classes)

- Strathmore #400 Drawing Pad – 8" X 11" (For sketching)
- Black Composition Book (sketchbook/notebook)
- Graphite pencils: 4H, 2B & 6B (and pencil sharpener)
- Colored Pencils (optional)
- Black Sharpie
- Drafting or masking tape 18"
- Ruler, scissors, xacto knife, & # 11 blades
- Glue stick 12 inch
- 30/60/90 degree triangle (optional)
- Portfolio to hold work / or carry tote big enough to put your drawing pad/Notebook in.
- ***Please note that you will choose your material for each assignment and this can range from REPURPOSED material to FOUND and BOUGHT material.***

**Places you can buy ART MATERIALS: Johnson Center Bookstore (on campus)/ Plaza, 3045 Nutley St, Fairfax: 703 280-4500/ Utrecht, 1250 I (eye) St, NW DC, 202-230-9097 [www.dickblick.com](http://www.dickblick.com)**

### List of Places to Find Interesting Materials:

**Campus recycle sites:** Look online at: [facilities.gmu.edu/PhysicalPlant/Recycling/map.cfm](http://facilities.gmu.edu/PhysicalPlant/Recycling/map.cfm)  
Or "Ask Ben" (Who runs the Sculpture Department). Also look at hardware stores located in Fairfax.

Thrift Stores:

[www.local.com/](http://www.local.com/)

[www.whitepages.com/](http://www.whitepages.com/)

[www.hopethriftshop.com/](http://www.hopethriftshop.com/)

[www.goodwillches.org/](http://www.goodwillches.org/)

[www.revivethrift.org/](http://www.revivethrift.org/)

[www.ecathriftshop.org/](http://www.ecathriftshop.org/)

#### 1. Inova Fair Oaks Thrift Shop

Fairfax Circle Investors LLC · 9683 Fairfax Blvd  
Fairfax

#### 2. Goodwill Retail Store

Main Street Center · 9960 Main Street  
Fairfax

#### 3. St. Vincent de Paul Society

3700 Old Lee Hwy  
Fairfax



#### EXPECTED PROJECT RUBRIX

- Full Class attendance – 10%  
(You are allowed 3 EXCUSED absences)
- Participation in 2 Field trips  
(New York Trip with Artsbus/  
Glenstone/ Campus Tour/  
Visual Voices) – 12%
- Documentation of research for  
each project in journal – 20%
- Visiting 4 Gallery shows: At the  
Smithsonian/GMU/NYC or  
Museums when you travel. 10%
- Four Projects need to be  
completed throughout the  
semester and you are expected  
to communicate absences for  
critiques and negotiate  
rescheduling (IT MIGHT NOT  
ALWAYS BE POSSIBLE) –  
48% YOU WILL BE  
MARKED DOWN 10% ON  
EACH PROJECT FOR A  
CRITIQUE ABSENCE.

## Class Assignments

**Project #1: Material**

Exploration of the Artist's Materials and the meaning these materials can make. Material can be associated with many things and it is not just to be considered for its durability. What can be done with material? (Richard Serra's Verb List).

**Project #2: Process (Handmade and Found)**

Exploration of the Processes the Artist applies to produce art. Objects can be produced using both "found" materials and "constructed" forms made by hand. (Marcel Duchamp versus Robert Gober)

**Project #3: Material+Process+Idea**

Exploring how the Artist constructs Concepts; Looking at the object, the image of the object and the symbols of that object. We will also look at how the Object's meaning can change given different environments and when juxtaposing the object with other objects. (Joseph Kosuth: One and Three Chairs, 1965)

**Project #4: The object as Map/information sign/story**

Exploring how to use MATERIAL and PROCESSES and CONSTRUCTED CONCEPTS to create a narrative or a story based on:

1. A Current Event
2. A historical Event
3. A Work of Prose or Literature that has been iterated through performance

## Syllabus: Fall 2015

DATE	WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE
Mon August 31	<b>First day of classes:</b> Introduction to materials and syllabus (last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date)
Wed September 2  <b>Week I</b>	Class: <b>Assignment#1: Describing one thing with many different materials (The Material you use comes with its own history).</b> Lecture day: Discussion of characteristics of materials and their meaning/ meaning making with material.
Mon September 7	<b>LABOR DAY - UNIVERSITY CLOSED</b>  <b>Sept. 8: Last day to add classes</b> —all individualized section forms due <b>Last day to drop with no tuition penalty</b>
Wed September 9  <b>Week II</b>	<b>Class:</b> Workday (Bring Materials and cameras/phones to class!) Lecture and Demonstration.  Hand-out: Richard Serra's Verb List  Class: Demonstration exercises and workday. Have materials and cameras ready!
Mon September 14  <b>Sept. 15: Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty</b>	<b>Class:</b> Discussion of materials versus subject. Index cards with research on different materials and their histories/ uses! (Marcel Duchamp versus Robert Gober hand-out)  Discussion of Material meaning. Index cards with research

	<p>on different materials and their histories!</p> <p>Marcel Duchamp versus Robert Gober. Also look at Rauschenberg's "cardboard" series.</p>
<p>Wed September 16</p> <p><b>Week III</b></p>	<p><b>Class: Workday</b></p> <p>Hand-Out: <b>The Elements of Art</b></p>
<p>Mon September 21</p>	<p><b><u>Assignment#1: Due-date presentation: Bring Objects to class for review and discussion</u></b></p> <p>Critique (About 10 minutes for each student depending on class size). Make use of Formal Analyses Handout.</p>
<p>Wed September 23</p> <p><b>Week IV</b></p>	<p><b>Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty</b></p> <p><b>Assignment#2: Building, Constructing, Finding, Carving, Attaching and other Speculations on Design.</b> Lecture day: Discussion of characteristics of design and the techniques and craftsmanship supporting it.</p>
<p>Mon September 28</p> <p><b><u>Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via Patriot Web Sept 28 – Oct 23</u></b></p>	<p><b>Class: Workday</b></p> <p>Discussion of Material meaning. Index cards with research on different materials and their histories!</p> <p>Marcel Duchamp versus Robert Gober. Also look at Rauschenberg's "cardboard" series.</p>
<p>Wed September 30</p> <p><b>Week V</b></p> <p><b>Oct.2: Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)</b></p>	<p><b>Class: Workday</b></p> <p>Discussion of the readymade versus the "crafted "object.</p>
<p>Mon October 5</p> <p>Oct 5-30: Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)</p>	<p><b>Class: Workday</b></p> <p>Discussion of the repurposed Object and environment.</p>
<p>Wed October 7</p> <p><b>Week VI</b></p>	<p><b>Class: Workday.</b></p> <p>Discussion of Arte Povera: Have index cards ready! Found art materials and the act of repurpose.</p>
<p>Mon October 12</p> <p><b>Columbus Day recess</b> (Monday Oct.12 classes/labs meet Tuesday Oct.13. Tuesday classes do not meet this week)</p>	<p>Class: Work day. Bring materials</p>

Wed October 14  <b>Week VII</b>	Sign up for your individual Midterms Critiques.  <b><u>Overview of project #1 and #2: Using material to construct the work and using material to inform and create meaning.</u></b>  Critique (About 10 minutes for each student depending on class size).
Mon October 19 GUEST ARTIST LOOKS AT YOUR WORK	<b>Guest ARTIST from DC/ MD / VA:</b> Your work from the previous two projects will be discussed and the artist will talk about their practice.
Wednesday October 21	<b>Field trip GMU</b> Campus tour of works owned by the university and a short lecture on GMU collections. Will include a tour of sustainability gardens and bee hives as well as gallery spaces <b>or a Saturday Trip to GLENSTONE.</b>
Mon October 26	<b>Assignment #3: Material, Process + Idea</b>  <b>Class Workday:</b> Library research day: Provisions assignment and looking at Meridians.
Wed October 28  <b>Week IX</b>  <b>October 30:</b> Incomplete work from spring/summer 2015 due to instructor	<b>Class Discussion and Workday</b>  Lecture on different methods artists have used to fool the eye and used objects to express ideas. Discussion On Tromp L'oeil. Index cards with research on different methods artists have used to fool the eye!
Mon November 2	<b>Class Workday:</b> Demonstration on fast and effective construction.
Wed November 4  <b>Nov. 6: Incomplete grade changes from spring/summer 2015 due to Registrar</b>  <b>Week X</b>	<b>Class Workday:</b> Demonstration on mold making and casting methods.
Mon November 9	<b>Class Workday:</b> Demonstration on optical illusions and perspective manipulation.
Wed November 11  <b>Week XI</b>	<b>Class Workday:</b> Bring last materials and finish detail work on project.
Mon November 16	<b><u>Assignment#3: Due-date presentation: Bring Objects to class for review and discussion</u></b>  Critique (About 10 minutes for each student depending on class size).
Wed November 18  <b>Week XII</b>	<b>Introduction to assignment#4: Narratives, Sequences and Sentences.</b> Lecture/ discussion/ examples of the use of narrative and storytelling in art.

Mon November 23	<b>Class: Workday</b>  Slide Presentation: Color theory (how color affects the way we view our environment and feel about the world)
Wed November 25 -29  <b>Week XIII</b>	<b>THANKSGIVING RECESS</b>
Mon November 30	<b>Class Workday:</b> Nick Cave Costumes for stories, and Kate Hartman, Nick Cave, Lucy McRae, Suzanne Lee, Lucy Orta, Yinka Shonibar  <a href="http://vimeo.com/45276003">http://vimeo.com/45276003</a> Alexander McQueen Fashion/art <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_hG858nMiY">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_hG858nMiY</a>
Wed December 2  <b>Week XIV</b>	<b>Class: Field Day</b>  Gallery Visit Day: Heading to the Workhouse – Brett Johnson talk and a <i>visit to Frank's</i> .  (Discussing Public intervention and space for telling a narrative)
Mon December 7	<b>Class Workday:</b> Finishing up last touches to projects and preparing presentations on Material – Making – and Concept as it pertains to a Provisions <i>Meridian</i> .
Wed December 9  <b>Week XV</b>	<b>Last Reviews: Project # 4 due</b> Critique (About 10 minutes for each student depending on class size).
Mon December 14	<b>Last day to review for projects you missed or hand in assignments that were due</b>
Wed December 10: <b>Last day of classes</b>  Final Week CLEAN-UP  <b>EXAM PERIOD Dec 14- 21</b>  <b>Degree Conferral Date</b> The Winter Graduation Ceremony will be held on Sat December 19.	<b>Reading Days: None scheduled</b> Reading days provide students with additional time for Final Art reviews that are outstanding. THIS SHOULD ONLY BE USED WHEN THERE ARE NO OTHER OPTIONS. All projects reviewed during this time will be marked down 10% and will be considered late.  <b><i>If you missed a review you will need to make it up during this period of time. PLEASE RETREAVE ALL YOUR ART MATERIALS AND PROJECTS FROM CLASSES AT THIS TIME.</i></b>
<b><i>Be prepared to make Four Projects and to go to Four Museums /galleries/ art events during the semester!</i></b>	<b><i>This schedule may change during the semester to respond to specific class needs and unique educational opportunities that may arise, BUT, you will be notified in advance of such changes.</i></b>

## DISCUSSION STRUCTURES FOR CRITIQUES

### ARTISTS THEORETICAL FRAME:

- Research: Current art and related social themes
- Know Elements & principles of art
- Experiment with various media and techniques (2D and 3D)

#### ARTISTS SKILLS:

- Understand formal critique processes
- Introduction to and use of Historical and contemporary context
- Become familiar with the following PROCESSES: (1) Linear construction and line properties (2) Planar Construction (3) Additive and reductive processes (4) Mass, Volume, Positive/ negative space (5) Proportion, Scale (6) Proximity, Spatial Tension, Compression, Static/ Dynamic (7) Repetition, Rhythm, Movement, Direction (8) Density/Profusion/Economy (9) Balance, Distribution of weight (visual and physical) (10) Emphasis, Contrast, Dominance, Focal Point (11) Point of View (12) Value through light and shadow (13) Texture and Color, Inherent and Applied (14) Truth /history of Materials (15) Site Specific (16) Recycled Materials (17) Presentation (18) Craftsmanship (19) Use of base or Real Space (20) Time.

**WORK HARD, BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS and HAVE A GOOD TIME!**