Instructor: Susan Stabile
Course: ENGL 219
Title: Literature and the Other Arts

Description: As part of Texas A&M University’s core curriculum in Creative Arts, this course focuses on the appreciation and analysis of creative artifacts and works of the human imagination through the idea of bricolage (French for “tinkering”) in literature and the visual arts: making creative and resourceful use of whatever materials are at hand. Bricolage, in short, is the “art” of recycling. In an age concerned with sustainability—of the natural environment, of green architecture, of planned obsolescence—art offers creative models of recycling, reuse, and adaptation. From the avant-garde experiments of Surrealism in the early 20th century to contemporary Trash Art, artists have revived what is considered garbage or waste into raw materials for creative expression. Art, then, is aesthetic and political. Our particular focus will be on the “aesthetics of the everyday”: art as recycling (i.e., collage, assemblage, erasure), adaptation (i.e., book art and hermit crab essays) and activism (i.e., environmental art).

Proposed Readings: Readings will include:
Charles Simic, Dime Store Alchemy
Selections from Kim Adrian, The Shell Game
Mary Ruefle, The Little White Shadow
Linda Weintraub, To Life!: Eco-Art in Pursuit of a Sustainable Planet