

FALL 2009

COURSES

&

ELECTIVES

IN

CULTURAL STUDIES



Revised 4/16/09

Courses & Electives in Cultural Studies

ARH 540

“Methodologies of Art History”

Andrew V. Uroskie

This seminar is designed to explore issues of historical and critical method in the interdisciplinary study of contemporary art history and visual culture. Issues in emiotics, feminist theory, psychoanalysis, anthropology and post-colonial theory, theories of mass culture and postmodernity will be addressed alongside a consideration of works from premodernity to the 21st century. Through a series of close readings and discussions, this broad terrain will be focused through a theoretical 'lens' of particular concern to the development of the field: 'art in the era of mechanical reproducibility.' We will consider how technologies of recording and registration - of image, sound, and performance - have transformed the production, conceptualization, exhibition and spectatorship of modern and contemporary art. Required for Art History graduate students, but encouraged for anyone seeking a broad, introduction to the diverse theoretical methods of contemporary art history and criticism.

Monday

5:00-8:00 p.m.

Fine Arts 3212

CLT/CST 501

“Contemporary Views of Literary and Cultural Studies”

Patrice Nganang

This class is an introduction to comparative literature and cultural studies, two fields that during the last decades have shaped each other both methodologically, and in term of interests and domains of application. The class will therefore present and discuss the trends in cultural studies at the interface of media studies, gender studies and postcolonial studies, as well as analyze the current developments in comparative literary studies as expressed through the paradigms of global, translation, transnational, and diaspora studies and multiculturalism. Reading through an array of material (philosophical, theoretical, scholarly, imaginative and narrative), we will address some of the main questions that persist today in both comparative literature and cultural studies: What are the limits of power and authority? What are the mechanisms of subject formation? What are the thresholds of the human? What are the meanings of things? How is the dialogue between the disciplines reformulated? What then after the cultural turn?

Monday

3:50-6:40 p.m.

Humanities 2052

CLT 602.01/FRN/ITL 571/EGL 603.02

“Postmodernisms”

Hugh J. Silverman

Peter Carravetta

What is the postmodern—culturally, aesthetically, politically, philosophically? What are the differences between the postmodern and the modern? What is the relation between a postmodernism and post-modernity? How have those differences been articulated by various contemporary philosophical, cultural, and art theorists—particularly in European thought of the late 20th and early 21st centuries? In what sense, is the postmodern plural--as postmodernisms? In the post-Sept 11 world, how does postmodern thinking help us to understand significant events in contemporary thought and cultures?

This time, we will focus on theories of painting and the visual and on their sociological implications. The avant-gardes (Marinetti, Tzara, Duchamp, Breton) mark a new way for the visual arts to undermine traditional expectations; phenomenology (Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Dufrenne) offer a method for rethinking the perceptual and the visible; semiologists and

Courses & Electives in Cultural Studies

poststructuralists (Barthes, Foucault, Deleuze, Kristeva) look for sign systems and structures of thought and cultural practices; postmodern architectural theorists (Venturi, Philip Johnson, F. Jameson, C. Jencks) juxtapose and shape differing styles, deconstruction (Derrida, Lyotard, Nancy) provides an alternative way to read margins, edges, frames in terms of textualities, visualities, and immaterialities; postmodern hermeneutics and cultural critique (Vattimo, Perniola) look for weak moments in thought and practice, cultural enigmas, and dimensions of ritual thinking; feminist psychoanalytic theories (Irigaray, Kristeva) open up alternative choric spaces, regions, and intervals for thought and semiosis. Out of these different postmodernisms, we shall ask painting, installations, architecture, visual and digital practices open up spaces for thinking differently for the contemporary world?

Lectures, readings, visuals, and discussions will retrace these postmodern itineraries and landmarks of contemporary – particularly European – thought and cultures. Texts and reading packets will include selections from Avant-Garde Manifestos, *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader*, Foucault's *This is Not a Pipe*, Deleuze's *Francis Bacon*, Charles Jencks' *What is Postmodernism*, Derrida's *The Truth in Painting*, Lyotard's *Postmodern Condition* and *The Inhuman*, Nancy's *Muses*, Vattimo's *Ends of Modernity*, Perniola's *Art and its Shadow*, and selected writings of Irigaray and Kristeva.

Monday

6:50-9:40 p.m.

Humanities 2052

CLT 602.02/EGL 603.01

“ Interdisciplinarity and Literary Study: Using Non-Literary Sources, Navigating Disciplinary Boundaries”

Ayesha Ramachandran

This course addresses the theoretical and methodological problem of using non-literary materials in literary study. When and how did the use of images, objects, instruments, space, data, music, digital media and other “non-literary” textual sources become a commonplace in the field of “literary study”? At point does “literary study” become simply synonymous for “cultural studies”? How useful or important might it be maintain distinctions between the “literary” and the “non-literary”? Taking as our subject the shifting boundaries between disciplines in the humanities and the call for greater interdisciplinarity in the last twenty years, this course will examine the case for interdisciplinary research within predominantly textual fields that focus on literary sources. In the process, we will examine how such inter-disciplinarity maybe achieved within the confines of specific graduate-student projects. The course will therefore be a rapid introduction to research methods in a variety of fields, as well as a theoretical investigation of that methodology. Students from all fields/disciplines are welcome. While tracing the critical trajectory of such debates, students will learn to incorporate a diverse range of primary source material into their own research, and to test the theoretical legitimacy of such incorporations. We will begin with a brief overview of debates over the relationship between literary and cultural studies, and arguments for and against interdisciplinary study, before turning to a week-by-week analysis of specific topics. At the moment these include: maps, pictorial images in a range of media, objects (“material culture”), landscape and architecture, scientific instruments, non-literary texts (cookbooks, travel narratives, legal cases etc), music and digital media. The final set of topics to be discussed will vary based on the composition and research interests of the class. Assignments: visits to archives/repositories as appropriate, bibliographic assignments, a conference paper, and a final research paper. Expect a lot of writing and come with a willingness to learn about material that may not seem to be directly related to your work!

Tuesday

3:50-6:40 p.m.

Courses & Electives in Cultural Studies

CLT/CST 609.01/EGL 608.01 “Film History, Theory and Criticism”

**E. Ann Kaplan
Krin Gabbard**

This course provides students with an overview of both the four ages of cinema (primitive, classical/modernist, postmodern, digital) and the four ages of film studies (amateur, early disciplined, late disciplined, fusionist/futurist). By showing films primarily from the “classical” Euro-American traditions, we hope to provide in each case a sense of the following aspects of cinema, from the silent period to the present:

1. The context—political, social (gender, race, class), technological, institutional—within which a film emerges;
2. Critical modes in place at the time;
3. Academic research ongoing at the time or at a later period regarding a film;
4. History of ideas and of artistic movements as they impact upon or relate to a particular film.

Our approach to the “four ages of Film Studies” will introduce students to debates (philosophical, literary, aesthetic) that engaged film scholars in the past and that still have important legacies today. We will spend the majority of the course on the second stage of cinema, the “Classical/Modernist moment.”

Tuesday

12:50-3:40 p.m.

HISB 1008

EGL 606.01 “Modernism and Cultural Studies”

Celia Marshik

The recent renaissance in modernist studies has been accompanied by theoretical and methodological commitments to interdisciplinary work. A glance at a conference program or journal suggests that the study of modernism, while continuing to address canonical authors and texts, has expanded into a study of modernity writ large. This seminar will explore the relationship between literary modernism and cultural studies (as well as parallel approaches, including the sociology of literature and political formalism) to address several key questions: what is the relationship between canonical modernism and the new modernist studies? How might scholars primarily interested in literary texts use or engage with cultural studies of modernity? What challenges do such studies pose to the field as a whole? Our readings will include modernist texts (including both “high” and “middlebrow” works) as well as recent scholarly studies of modernity; many of the readings will focus on gender, fashion and sexuality. In addition to regular participation in discussion, seminar requirements include one presentation and a 15-20-page paper. Students who intend to apply this course toward the Women’s Studies Certificate must write a seminar paper relevant to that program.

Monday

12:50-3:40 p.m.

Humanities 2094

Courses & Electives in Cultural Studies

HIS 532

“Social Theory and the City”

Themis Chronopoulos

This course considers a number of influential as well as contemporary theoretical works that address power relations in urban settings and the way that these works can potentially inform historical studies. Key concepts and processes such as governance, inequality, crime, public space, social interaction, urban development, neoliberalization, and social conflict are examined. The course will feature readings by Teresa Caldeira, Mike Davis, Samuel Delaney, Obika Gray, Bernard Harcourt, Henri Lefebvre, Lyn Lofland, and Martin Murray among others. Grades will be based on weekly readings, participation, presentations, and a historiographical or theoretical essay.

Wednesday

4:30-7:30 p.m.

HIS 516

“Transoceanic Migrations in the Age of Sail and Steam”

Iona Man Cheong

Before rootedness and place, migration is the basic condition of human existence. This course focuses on population movements across the world’s oceans. Migration has often remained on the margins of historians’ consciousness; such was and is the power of the nation-state and the national histories in its service. However the increasing complexity of globalization, internationalization of capital, and the demand for labor on a transnational scale challenges the hegemony of the nation-state model and push questions beyond the nation-centered explorations of “how we got here and where we came from” to viewing migration as a process integral to a broader pattern of population movements. We will explore the complexities of large-scale collective processes of migration in combination with the lessons of individual experiences. Focused on the 18th and 19th centuries and the consequences of empire and developing capitalism, we examine the cross-currents of the three great oceanic worlds of the Atlantic, the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, and voyage through the broad geographical sweep of Europe, the Americas, and Asia, engaging with migration theory (something to which historians often seem averse), questions of race and cross-cultural interaction, gender and coerced migration, class and the role of state policies; and postcolonial legacies. We will take an interdisciplinary approach, examining fiction and memoir besides social science and cultural theories and historical analysis. These new perspectives are increasingly crucial to practitioners of all disciplines, and especially in the practice of history, social sciences and cultural studies whether for research or for teaching.

Students are required to write two short position papers and a final analytical paper focusing on a discussion of historiographical developments or a literature review.

Tuesday

4:30 – 7:30 pm

PHI 616

“Technoscience Research Seminar”

Don Ihde

The technoscience research seminar is a contemporary, interdisciplinary seminar which reads in the areas of philosophy of science, philosophy of technology and science studies. We read living authors in common and participants take turns making presentations followed by critical discussion. Each participant will also have a research project which will be presented in the seminar. The projects may be designed for submission to conferences and eventual publication. For four years now we have regularly presented at the Society for the Social Studies of Science,

Courses & Electives in Cultural Studies

the Society for Philosophy and Technology and the Society for Phenomenology and Human Sciences.

Each term we begin with a theme, for example, this term we are looking at instruments in visual art, music and science, and last fall we did critical animal studies. This fall term we will examine the role of *play*, *technofantasy*, and *imagination* in relation to technologies. We will begin with readings from Hans Moravec, Marvin Minsky, and Ray Kurzweil, all technopians, some with hopes of downloading one's mind into a computer. But we will also read critics such as Hubert Dreyfus and others. What do futures hold? Will humans become post-or trans-human? And what role do imagination and play hold for technology development? For more information, email dihde@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

Monday

1:00-4:00 p.m.

THR 635.01

“Theories of Performance”

John Lutterbie

Theatre is generally defined as the performance of play, whether tragedy, comedy or drama. There is a long tradition, however, of theatre performances being created by other means, most notably Comedia dell' Arte. This course explores alternative creative practices of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Theories of creativity will be combined with studies of practitioners such as Robert Wilson, Robert Lepage, Ariane Mnouchkine, Societas Raffaello Sanzio, the Wooster Group, the Builders Association, Eugenio Barba, Augusto Boal, and others. In addition to a final paper, students will be expected to participate in in-class exercises exploring the techniques studied, attend productions in New York City and have the option of working on an original performance piece.

Tuesday

9:30-12:30 p.m

WST 600

“Feminist Interdisciplinary Histories and Methods”

Lisa Diedrich

Rather than begin with an exploration of “the” feminist methodology in Women’s Studies, or an account of “the” history of feminism, this course will explore what counts as “history,” as “method,” and as “evidence” in feminist scholarship. Since its emergence as a distinct knowledge project within the academy, feminism has sought to raise questions about how we know what we know, who gets to speak and for whom, and what are legitimate fields of inquiry. Our goal will not be to seek answers to these (and other) questions, but to trace some of the ways in which feminist scholars have sought to intervene in debates about disciplinary as opposed to interdisciplinary forms of knowledge, objective as opposed to “situated” knowledges, evidence versus experience, history versus fiction, etc. A central part of the feminist project for many scholars has been an engagement in self-reflexive questioning of the status, history, methods and goals of feminist scholarship. This course will attempt to continue that practice. To that end, students are encouraged to engage with the material with their own projects in mind, and to use the course in order to be self-reflexive about the methods and theories they intend to use for their graduate work. Along with classic essays by Joan Scott and Gayatri Spivak, we will read Sara Ahmed’s *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004), Tani Barlow’s *The Question of Women in Chinese Feminism* (2004), Assia Djebar’s *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* (1993), Sarah Franklin’s *Dolly Mixtures: The Remaking of Genealogy* (2007), Carla Freccero’s *Queer/Early/Modern* (2006), Annemarie Mol’s *The Body Multiple:*

Courses & Electives in Cultural Studies

Ontology in Medical Practice (2002), and Carolyn Kay Steadman's *Landscape for a Good Woman* (1987), among other materials.

Wednesday

2:20-5:10 p.m.

WGS 601

“Feminist Theories/Queer Theories”

Victoria Hesford

In their 2005 appraisal of the current state of Queer Studies, David Eng, Judith Halberstam, and José Esteban Muñoz ask the question, “what’s queer about queer studies now?” and not surprisingly answer, “A lot.” In this seminar we will ask a different but related question: how does contemporary queer theory in the U.S. operate in relation to, and against, a history of feminist thought and politics? Understanding against as at once “contrary” but also “close to” or “drawing towards” each other, we will explore some of the disarticulations, transmissions, intersections, and transferences between feminist and queer theory in the predominantly Anglo-American context. Beginning with position papers from the gay and women’s liberation movements from 1969-1972, the seminar will move forwards and backwards: to (for example) Monique Wittig, Judith Butler, Eve Sedgwick, Gloria Anzaldúa, José Muñoz, and Jasbir Puar in the post seventies era, to (for example) Edward Carpenter, Havelock Ellis, Krafft-Ebing, and Radclyffe Hall in the pre-world war two era. By moving back and forth in time we can trace some of the echoes—conceptual and political—between the pathologization of homosexuality by early twentieth century sexologists, and post- Stonewall reconfigurations of queer as “a political metaphor without a referent,” as Eng, Halberstam, and Muñoz present it. Moving back and forth between two distinct eras will also allow us to trace some of the historical fault-lines, as well as convergences, between feminist and queer as they have been produced, articulated, and defined in relation to each other.

Monday

12:50-3:40 p.m.