The Politics of the Gaze: Sensory Formations of Modernity
MCC-GE 2112

Department of Media, Culture and Communication

The seminar will conduct a multi-site exploration of "the gaze" as an everyday life structure, as the sensorial formation of modern experience and personhood, as a material culture of simulation, as geography, as historical memory, as trans-cultural signification and as the production of political scenography and violence. The mediatization and technological development of vision and its dominance over the human sensorium is integral to the emergence of the modern, including experiences of urbanism, consumer desire, spatial experience, gender/sexual identities, race and ethnicity, trans-cultural image systems, aesthetic production and the making of power and political truth claims. This seminar will focus on introducing participants to the core theories and analytic methods of visual culture, and the socio-political history of the human sensorium in a variety of disciplines, including ethnography, social history, urban studies, cinema studies social geography, material culture studies and media studies.

Seminar Requirements and Grading:
• Consistent attendance and participation in class discussion: 30%
• Mid-Term: 10%
• End Term Take Home Essay Exam 2 Questions: 60%

Course Resource Materials:

Syllabus and All Readings in Classes Resources Section.

Learning Outcomes:
Students who successfully complete the course will be able to demonstrate:

• advanced understanding of research methodologies, vocabularies and procedures appropriate to M.A.-PhD level work in Media Studies, Cultural Studies and Visual Culture
• advanced skills in the application of critical and interpretive vocabularies
• Learn to write a critical literature review
• developed research, writing and communication skills
• self-reflexivity as a research practitioner
• developed ability in identifying and addressing research objectives
• knowledge of a range of specific critical vocabularies, debates and concerns focused on visual communication, visual culture, media, technology, and cultural studies.

Class Code of Conduct:

• **Recording devices, SMS messaging/email devices**, or other portable communication devices are not to be used during the class.

• **Attendance** is important to the success of this class and to your development as a media expert. Each unexcused absence will result in the lowering of your final grade. Excused absences, such those for documented illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or travel will not affect your grade. Five unexcused absences will automatically result in failure for the course.

• **Lateness** is disruptive to the seminar environment, and prevents you from fully participating and assimilating the information and materials discussed in class. Excessive tardiness will lower your participation grade.

• **Plagiarism** is the unauthorized use of the words or ideas of another person. It is a serious academic offense that can result in referral to the Committee on Academic Misconduct and failure for the course.

• **Student Work** must be completed and submitted on time. All assignments should be turned in when they are due.

• **Eating in Class:** NYU rules forbid food consumption in classrooms.

**September 8 - September 14**

Introduction: The Politics of Light

**September 15 - September 28**

Frames:

Zanara, Jana 2009. Machiavelli’s Optical Arts: Political Theory, Action and Realism (manuscript)


September 29 - October 5

Attention/Inattention:


Beller John, 2006/07 Cabinet, Paying Attention Issue 24 Shadows Winter

October 6 - October 12

Punition:


October 13 - October 19 (Fall Recess October 14-15) Midterm Due Oct 21

No Class

October 20 – October 26:

Mnemotechniques:


Steigler Bernard, n. d. Anamnesis And Hypomnese: Plato as The First Thinker of The Proletarianisation

Benjamin, Walter The Work of Art in the Age of its Technical Reproducibility Second Version

October 27- November 2

Archives:
Forster Hal. 2004 An Archival Impulse, October 110, Fall, Pp. 3–22.

Ernst, Wolfgang(1994) Arsenals of Memory The archi(ve)texture of the Museum


[2000]Imaging historical traces: Virtual Exiles project
[http://www.mediascot.org/exiles/ve/index.html]

November 3 - November 9

Ethics of the Face:

Agamben, Giorgio. 2000 Notes on Gesture, Face. In Means Without Ends, Minneapolis, University of Minneapolis Press.


November 10 - November 16

Defacement:


November 17-23

From the Sight/Site of the Other


**November 24-30**

**Traumatic Realism:**


Doherty, Brigid. 1997 We are All Neurasthenics” or, The Trauma of Dada Montage, Critical Inquiry 24, Autumn, pp. 82-132

**December 1 -December 7**

**Full Spectrum Dominance:**


Feldman Allen 2012, The Disputation Of Ashraf Salim: Apophasic Sovereignty Before The Law At Guantanamo Cultural Studies, Fall no. 4 2012, iFirst article, pp. 1_29


**December 8 -December 14**

**Witnessing the Unwitnessable:**


**Final Paper Due 12/21**