



Lecture and seminar program

Critique of contemporary visual culture

Analysis, understanding and practices

Module Booklet

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Module Booklet

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Module Booklet

Section 1

Module Specification

Title	Critique of contemporary visual culture
Code	
Level	Beginners
Teacher	Edward Rozzo
Program	CLEAAC
Semester	2nd
Hours	
Appointments	On request at: info@edwardrozzo.it

Module Summary

This module focuses on key theoretical readings and in class viewings that enable students to form complex, critical and analytical understanding of contemporary visual culture and especially the photographic image as expressed in contemporary culture. Emphasis will be made on exploring the photographic image in a variety of contexts such as documentary, artistic, fashion, editorial and news. Cinema, retail space, graphics and TV will also be discussed. The theoretical approaches will deal with visual studies, semiotics, mythology, history, sociology, religion and psychology.

Module aims

This module provides a theoretical and practical approach to understanding photography and contemporary visual culture and aims to:

- Provide students with the key theoretical tools to evaluate and challenge complex image usage that highlight contemporary ethical concerns and issues of sociology and psychology relevant to the concept of self-identity.
- Enable students to engage and debate with professional analyses and critiques of visual representation as complex and contextualized events.
- Encourage students' ability to articulate their own discursive approaches to the study of visual culture orally and in written form to their peer groups.
- Direct students to identify areas in the study of contemporary visual culture relevant to their interests and to develop appropriate strategies for conducting research from a range of textual and visual sources.

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Section 1

Module Specification

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a detailed understanding of key theoretical approaches to the study of contemporary images on a visual, aesthetic, social and psychological level.
- Identify key areas of debate concerning self-identity and visual culture.
- Be able to synthesize and communicate in English their own theoretical evaluation of an image using relevant theoretical and personal evaluation techniques.

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Section 2

Seminar Program

15.02.10

What this course is about.

Looking and identifying visual culture.

Why are the Visual Arts relevant?

History – Gombrich, Toynbee, Crary, Mirzoeff, Howells, Sturken & Cartwright

Sociology – Durkheim, Nozick, Foucault, Giddens, Bauman, Galimberti

Semiotics and tools: Panovsky, Fry, Sausurre, Barthes, Barrico

Visual languages: the semantics of the visual arts

Panowfsky

Fry

Painting: Antonello da Messina, El Greco, Manet, Renoir, Van Gogh, Reichert

Photography: a particular language

Szarkowsky

Berger

Newhall

Ph: Weegee, Atget, Cartier-Bresson, Frank, Friedlander, White,
Parr, Giacomelli, Bellocq and others

Photography: exercises in seeing

Szarkowsky

Berger

Barthes

Wells

Sturken & Cartwright

Ph: Weegee, Atget, Cartier-Bresson, Frank, Friedlander, White,
Parr, Giacomelli, Bellocq etc. etc.

Documents and memory : Opinion or commentary?

What do we want to remember? What do we want to *represent*?

Why are certain themes pertinent and others not?

Capitalism, history and economy.

Ph: Hine, Smith, Frank, Winnogrand, Norfolk, Calle

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Seminar Program

Art or description? Metaphore or visual games?

What is art and why? What is worthy subject matter?

Semiotics and tools: Panovsky, Fry, Sausurre, Barthes, Dissanayake

Ph: Edward Weston and Man Ray

Individuals and society: the sense of self

History of the individual – Tocqueville, Toynbee

The transformation of society – Diamond, Durkheim

The birth of capitalism – Smith, Weber, Marx

The birth of consumerism – Veblan, Ewen

Some references – Freud, Kline, Foucault

Ph: Family of Man, Bischof, Doisneau, Brandt, Davidson

Individuals and society: contemporary questions

History of the individual – Sennet, Bauman, Giddens

The transformation of society – Diamond, Giddens, Bauman, Baricco

Ph: Goldin, DiCorcia, Parr, Robbie Cooper

Contemporary visual culture

What images, objects or ideas create the basis for our visual culture?

Design objects

The media

Daily consumption

Entertainment

Video games

The Abstract and the spiritual self

What is it for, where does it come from, who needs it?

Ph: Harry Callahan

Edward Weston

Minor White

Marianne Boutrit

Various painters

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Seminar Program

Contemporary Mythologies : staging reality

Roland Barthes, Aldo Bonomi, Walt Disney and Marilyn Monroe

Semiotics and tools: Panovsky, Fry, Sausurre, Barthes

Ph: Joel-Peter Witkin

David LaChapelle

Sandy Skoglund

Pierre & Gilles

Jeff Wall

Fashion, Style and Self-Identity

Semiotics and tools: Panovsky, Fry, Sausurre, Barthes

Ewen, Bauman, Barnard

Ph: Steichen, Penn, Newton, La Chapelle, Amica, D Donna

23.03.10

Visual Merchandising – buying as a projection of self

Semiotics and tools: Panovsky, Fry, Sausurre, Barthes

Underhill

Nosick

Barnard

Cinema: From the theater to cinema

Frankenstein (1932), Terminator 2 (1991)

Cinema: The Hero

Superman (1943) Ben Hur (1959), Kill Bill (2003)

Cinema : Falling in Love

It's a wonderful Life (1946), Jules e Jim (1962), Manhatten (1979)

Cinema: Adolescence

Rebel without a Cause (1955), Easy Rider (1969), Elephant (2003)

Cinema: Psycho-Drama and contemporary identity

A Woman under the Influence (1974), Decalogue (1988)

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The photographic portrait – how we choose to see others

Ph: Sander, Lange, Strand, Avedon, Penn, Arbus, Sherman,
Pierre e Gilles, Lorca di Corcia, Cooper, Reims, Dijkstra

Graphic design : changing how we think about what we see

Hollis, Hall, Hochuli

Ph: Kruger, graphics, typography

New Media and the moving image of self

Art - Shopping - Change

How the business of *culture* has changed. Experience from the MoMA of New York.

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Section 3

Teaching methods and assessment details

Teaching methods

- Basic reading of assigned material in preparation for classroom discussion
- Lectures on specific themes and/or photographers
- Classroom discussions where the student is required to participate (in English or Italian) and express his personal views and feelings
- A visit to one or more photographic exhibits, retail spaces and/or events

Assesment

The final grade in this course is based on a written mid-term paper in English on the use of photography in contemporary culture and an exam in English which will require the student to express their knowledge of specific analytical tools available to them regarding visual culture, their knowledge of specific visual work and their capability to analyse and contextualize a group of images with regards to contemporary issues of identity, gender, globalization and culture.

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Section 4

Indicative reading and bibliography

These books form the basis of what is taught in this course. Some relate to imagery, others to history or sociology. There are no monographic books on specific photographers because it would make the list unending. You should use this list as a casual reference for furthering your studies.

The books listed in **BOLD** are basic books for understanding this course. You are obliged to read and be familiar with **ALL** the books indicated by the **ARROW (4 books)**.

The listings refer to the volumes in Edward Rozzo's library and do not represent the latest publishing dates nor editions. The books are not listed in alphabetical order, nor does the order represent any priorities. Some texts are not in their original language and can be found through www.amazon.co.uk for English language editions or www.bol.com or www.ibs.it for Italian language editions.

Hollis, Richard

Graphic Design, 2001, Thames & Hudson, London

Hall, Stuard (editor)

Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices, 1997, Sage, London

Pip Jones

Introducing Social Theory, 2003 Polity Press, Cambridge

Newhall, Beaumont

The History of Photography, 1984, MoMA, New York

McLuhan, Marshall

Understanding Media, 1994 (1964), MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Coomaraswamy, Ananda

Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art, 1956 (1943), Dover Publications, New York

Howells, Richard

Visual Culture, 2003, Polity Press, Cambridge



OBLIGATORY

Lasch, Christopher

The Culture of Narcissism, 1979, W. Norton & Co., New York

La cultura del narcisismo, 1981, Bompiani, Milano

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Indicative reading and bibliography

Mitchell, William

The Reconfigured Eye, 1994, MIT Press, Cambridge MA.

Dissanayake, Ellen

Homo Aestheticus, 1995, University of Washington Press, Seattle

Sturken, Marita – Lisa Cartwright

Practices of looking, 2001, Oxford University Press, Oxford

Barnard, Malcolm

Fashion as communication, 2004, Routledge, London

Clarke, Graham

The Photograph, 1997, Oxford University Press, Oxford

Szarkowsky, John

The Photographer's Eye, 1963, MoMA New York

Mirrors and windows, 1978, MoMA, New York

Looking at Photographs, 1973, MoMa, New York



OBLIGATORY

Wells, Liz (Edited by)

Photography: A Critical Introduction, 2004, Routledge, London

Augé, Marc

Non-places, 1995, Verso Books

Bauman, Zigmunt

Liquid Modernity, 2000, Polity Press, Cambridge

Appadurai, Arjun

Modernity at Large, 1996, Public Works Publications, Minnesota, IUSA

Ewen, Stuart

All Consuming Images, 1988, Basic Books

Sontag, Susan

On photography, 1979, Penguin Books, London

Berger, John

Ways of seeing, 1990, Penguin Books, London

About looking, 1992, Vintage Books, New York



OBLIGATORY

Parr, Martin – Gerry Badger

The Photobook: A History vol. 1, 2004, Phaidon Press

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Indicative reading and bibliography

Hughes, Robert

The shock of the new, 1991, Thames & Hudson, London

Freund, Gisèle

Fotografia e società, 1976, Einaudi, Torino

Barthes, Roland

Camera lucida, 1993, Vintage Classics, New York

Mythologies, 1993, Vintage Classics, New York

Image-music-text, 1993, Fontana Press

← ● **OBLIGATORY**

Lyons, Nathan (edited by)

Photographers on photography, 1966, Prentice Hall, Englewood, N.J.

Giddens, Anthony

Modernity and Self-Identity, 1991, Polity Press, Cambridge

Gombrich, E.H.

Ideali e Idoli, 1986, Einaudi, Torino

The Story of Art, 1995, Phaidon Press, London

Russell, Bertrand

A History of Western Philosophy, 1945, Simon & Shuster, New York

Crary, Jonathan

Techniques of the Observer, 1992, MIT Press, Mass.

Mirzoeff, Nicholas

An Introduction to Visual Culture, 1999, Routledge, London

Galimberti, Umberto

I vizi capitali e i nuovi vizi, 2005, Feltrinelli, Milano

L'ospite inquietante, 2007, Feltrinelli, Milano

Underhill, Paco

Why we buy, 2003, Texere, New York

Call to the Mall, 2005, Texere, New York

Baricco, Alessandro

I barbari, 2006, Feltrinelli, Milano

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Indicative reading and bibliography

Diamond, Jared

Guns, germs and steel, 1997, Norton, New York

The Third Chimpanzee, 1993, Harper Perennial, New York

Grant, John

After Image: mind-altering marketing, 2002, Harper Collins, London

Tarnas, Richard

The passion of the western mind, 1996, Pimlico, London

Rykwert, Joseph

The seduction of place, 2000, Vintage, New York

Hochuli, Jost

Detail in typography, 2008, Hyphen Press, London

Barber, Benjamin

Consumed, 2007, Norton, New York

Chadwick, Whitney

Women, art and society, 2007, Thames & Hudson, London

La Grange, Ashley

Basic critical theory for photographers, 2005, Elsevier, Oxford

Cotton, Charlotte

The photograph as contemporary art, 2007, Thames & Hudson, London

Reichert, Marcus - Rozzo, Edward

Art & Ego, 2007, Ziggurat books, London

Taylor and Hatch

Rigorous Magic, 2007, John Wiley & Sons, West Sussex, England

Zoja, Luigi

Il Gesto di Ettore, 2000, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino

Baines & Haslam

Type & Typography, 2005, Lawrence King Publishing, London