

FOUNDATIONS OF VISUAL PRACTICE (2 credits, Sociology but open to other departments)

Dalia Neis—visiting fellow

Office hours:

The course acquaints students with the principles of audio-visual language from a combined theory and practice perspective across a variety of media, with a focus on the audio-visual essay. It provides a critical understanding of visual perception, the basic elements and structure of visual language and audio-visual grammar, and the relationship between the two. The course enables participants to apply principles of audio-visual grammar in their own scholarship and creative work, and empowers participants to develop their own unique audio-visual voice.

The course further prepares students for the production of creative work in a range of visual media. It explores various methodologies for the production of visual work, from the basics of visual language to the fundamental principles of visual storytelling and the essay form, while also touching on theoretical frameworks for these applications.

The course is formed of lectures, seminars, student presentations, screenings, listening sessions, and workshop/group assignments.

The final project will be an audio/visual/cross disciplinary essay project chosen by the students. This can take the form of a photo/video essay, a blog, a radio show, a mixtape, a podcast, a performance, a visual presentation of a research project, or any other proposal that will be approved the instructor.

Learning outcomes:

- An introductory understanding of the basics of audio-visual practices and their usage for different purposes varying from arts to academic presentations.
- Demonstration of an understanding of the essential elements of form and content and those principles that control their organization in composition.
- Acquisition of audio-visual thinking, observation and research skills through a refined audio-visual vocabulary and its application through the essay form.
- Develop a group research project/cross disciplinary essay with newly acquired knowledge in a variety of media.

Assignments:

- Attendance, participation and presentations (15)
- Midterm submission: journal and note taking. (Creating a visual diary, combining photography, note taking, design, and/or any tools that will lead to the final project) (25)
- Workshops in total (25).
- Final group project: a blog, a visual presentation of a project, a photography selection, a diary, a podcast, a radio show, a mixtape, a video, a performance, or any visual project with the approval of the instructor (35)

FOVP SYLLABUS (2020)

1. INTRODUCTIONS TO VISUAL CULTURE(S) (THEORY AND PRACTICE)

- The Politics of Vision
- Reading Images / Cultural Contexts / Unlearning Assumptions
- Visual Pleasures / Seeing at the margins of the visible

Reading:

- Irit Rogof 'Studying Visual Culture' in *The Visual Culture Reader* (London Routledge, 2002).
- Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasures & Narrative Cinema' in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 1989)
- Hito Steyerl *The Wretched of the Screen* (New York: E-Flux Journal, 2012)
- http://thecomposingrooms.com/research/reading/2013/e-flux_Hito%20Steyerl_15.pdf
- Mark Fisher. "It's easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism" in *Capitalist Realism Is There no Alternative?*, London: Zero Books, 2009)

2. INTRODUCTIONS TO THE ESSAY (THE ESSAY AS CRITICAL-CREATIVE METHOD)

- The Essay as a Formless Form?
- The Essay as an Intermedial Aesthetic
- Visual/Film Essayists

Reading:

- T.W. Adorno, 'The Essay as Form' in: O'Connor, Brian (Ed.) *The Adorno Reader*, Oxford, Blackwell, (1958/2000)
- Georg Lukács, 'On the nature and form of the essay' in *Soul and Form*, Massachusetts, MIT Press, (1974)
- Raymond Bellour, 'The Unattainable Text' in *Analysis of Film* (1975)
- Michael Witt 'Taking Stock: Two decades of teaching the history, theory, and practice of audiovisual criticism' in *Necsus* (May 2017)
- Timothy Corrigan, 'Introduction: Of Film and the Essayistic' in *The Essay Film: from Montaigne, after Marker*, (Oxford University Press, 2011)
- Nicole Brenez, 'The Visual Study: The Forces of Cinematographic Form,' *Exploding* (2000)
- Christian Keathley, Jason Mittel (eds) *The Videographic Essay: Criticism in Sound and Image* (Caboose, Montreal, 2019)

Viewing Material:

- Jean-luc Godard, *Historie du Cinema*, (1988-1998)

- *A Movie* (Bruce Connor, 1958)
- *The Stuart Hall Project*, John Akomfrah (UK, 2013)

3. READING VISUAL IMAGES

- Ways into the Image
- The Active Reader
- Archiving Images
- Found Images
- The Artist as Archivist

Reading:

- John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 2008). Pp.7-34, 45-64.
- Walter Benjamin, ‘The work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’ in: Arendt, Hannah (Ed.), Zohn, Harry Trans. *Illuminations*, (London, Fontana Press, 1940/1996).
- Lev Manovich ‘Paradoxes of Digital Photography’ in *Photography after Photography* (Germany, 1994).
- Ben Davis, *Ways of Seeing Instagram* (2014):
<https://static.squarespace.com/static/529fc7ede4b0b1af9175c11e/t/53fa1f68e4b0454b92d50e64/1408900968165/Ways%20of%20Seeing%20Instagram.pdf>
- Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (London: Vintage Books, 1993).
- Laura Wexler, ‘What Vishniac Saw: Another Look’ in *Roman Vishniac Rediscovered* (Pretsel Publishing: New York, 2005)
- Ines Schaber, *Obtuse, Flitting by, and in Spite of it all – Image Archives in Practice* (Archive Books & Camera Austria Graz, 2018)
- Jaimie Baron, *The Archive Effect: Found Footage and the Audiovisual Experience of History*, (London, Routledge, 2014).
- Jean Epstein ‘Photogenie’ in *Jean Epstein: Critical Essays* (Amsterdam University Press, 2012).

Viewing Material:

- *Roman Vishniac, A Vanished World* (1983)
- Arthur Jafa, *Apex* (US, 2013)
- Chris Marker, *La Jetée – Ciné-roman /Book Version* (France, 1962)

4. WAYS INTO NARRATIVE, STORYTELLING, EDITING

- Narrative: Central Conflict Theory
- Linearity / nonlinearity
- Linkages, juxtapositions, constellations, temporal ellipses
- The ‘Shot’ versus the ‘Cut’

Reading:

- Bordwell, David. ‘Three Dimensions of Film Narrative’
http://www.davidbordwell.net/books/poetics_03narrative.pdf
- Raul Ruiz ‘The Poetics of Cinema’ (Disvoir: Chicago: 1995)
- Béla Balázs, ‘Visual Linkage’ in *Visible Man and the Spirit of Film*, Trans. Rodney Livingstone. (Berghahn Books, New York/Oxford, 2010)

- Béla Balázs, 'The Close-Up' in *Visible Man and the Spirit of Film*, Trans. Rodney Livingstone (Berhahn Books: New York/ Oxford: 2010)
- Andrey Tarkovsky, 'The Pressure of Time' in *Sculpting in Time* (University of Texas Press: 1989).
- Andre Bazin, *What is Cinema?* (University Press Group, 2005)

Viewing Material:

- Nan Goldin, *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (Aperture: New York, 2012)
- Chris Marker, *La Jetée* (France, 1962)
- Carl Theodor Dreyer, *Joan of Arc* (Denmark, 1928)
- Andrey Tarkovsky, *Sacrifice* (Sweden, 1986)

5. SUBJECTIVE MAPPING & SPATIAL REPRESENTATION: HAUNTOLOGICAL DRIFT & PSYCHOGEOGRAPHY

- Haunted Terrains
- Navigating space / place
- Absence/ Presence

Reading:

- Fisher, Mark 'Hauntology Now' in *K-Punk Blog* (2006)
<http://k-punk.abstractdynamics.org/archives/007230.html>
- Mark Fisher 'The Eerie ' in the *The Weird and the Eerie* (London: Repeater Books, 2017).
- Avery F. Gordon, 'Her Shape and his Hand' in *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (University of Minnesota Press, 2008)
- Charles Baudelaire. 'The Painter of Modern Life' (1859-60) (extracts), in *Painter of Modern Life and other essays*, London: Phaidon, 2008. Pp. 1-11; 26-29.
- Guy Debord, 'Theory of the dérive' in *Internationale Situationniste #2* (December 1958) <http://tbook.constantvzw.org/wp-content/derivededebord.pdf>

Viewing/Listening Material:

- *London* (Patrick Keiller, UK, 1994)
- *Sapphire & Steel* 'Assignment 6: The Trap' (Shaun O'Riordan & David Foster, UK, 1979)
- *La Jeu de L'Oie* (Raul Ruiz, Paris, 1980)
- *On Vanishing Land*, (Mark Fisher & Justin Barton UK, 2015)
- *Too Early, Too late* (Jean-Marie Straub - Danielle Huillet, France/Egypt, 1982)

6. INSPIRATION WALK: 'How to sharpen our eyes, ears, and inner eye'/ 'How to record the unseen and the invisible'

Workshop / Assignment – 'Haunted Terrains'

–A collective visit to a resonant site with recitations of specific texts (TBC)

This is a group exercise whereby students will sketch ideas, photograph, film or make a collage of a resonant site within the city and visualize it via collage, design, film, photograph, blog, presentation.

7. COLLAGE / COMPILATION/ MONTAGE/ SUPERIMPOSITION

Reading:

- Sergei Eisenstein, 'Methods of Montage' in *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory* (A Harvest/HBJ Book, New York, 1977)
- Artavazd Peleshian 'On Distance Montage' in *Artavazd Peleshian, Our Century* (Bielefeld: Kerber, 2004)
- Jay Leyda, 'Forward', in *Films Beget Films* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964)
- David Montero Sánchez 'Commenting On Images with Images: Dialogic-Visual Critique in the Films of Harun Farocki' in *Vanishing Points: L'Atalante 21 (Jan-June 2016)*:
<file:///Users/user/Downloads/281-1146-2-PB.pdf>
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Viewing Material:

- *Beginning* (Arthur Pelechian, 1967)
- *History Lessons* (Barbara Hammer, 2000)
- *Night and Fog* (Alain Resnais, 1956)
- *Images of the World and Its Inscription of War* (Harun Farocki, Germany, 1988)

8. THE SOUNDTRACK

- Submission of 'Haunted Terrains' assignment
- Acousmatic Sound
- Practical approaches to producing sound: (Diegetic / Non-diegetic Sound / Field recording / Voice-overs / Ambience / Silence / Noise)
- Invisible Frequencies / Sounding the Unseen

Reading:

- Jean Epstein, 'Slow Motion Sound', in Elizabeth Weis and John Belton (eds), *Film Sound: Theory and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985)
- Robert Bresson, 'Notes on Sound', in Weiss and Belton (1985).
- Walter Murch, 'Forward' to Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).
- Serge Daney, 'Cinemetereology: Too Early Too Late' in: Rosenbaum, Jonathan. (Trans.), 1982 *Libération*, available at http://home.earthlink.net/~steevee/Daney_too.html.

Viewing Material:

- *La Tempestaire* (Jean Epstein, 1948)
- *Reassamblage* (Trinh T Minh Ha, 1983)
- *My Bodies* (Hannah Black, UK, 2014)
- That film that George had from filmmaker
- *On Vanishing Land* (Justin Barton & Mark Fisher, 2013/2019)

9. Diary/Autobiography /Memoir: Essaying the Self

- Group Presentations of Haunted Terrains
- Approaches to audio-visual diary forms

Reading:

- o Catherine Russell, *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video* (Duke University Press, 1999)
- o Heewon Chang, *Autoethnography as Method* (Left Coast Press, 2008)

Viewing Material:

- o *Window Water Moving Baby* (Stan Brakhage, US, 1959)
- o *Meshes of the Afternoon* (Maya Deren (US, 1943)
- o *News from Home* (Chantal Akerman, US, 1977)
- o *Lost Lost Lost* dir. Jonas Mekas (US, 1943-1976)
- o *It wasn't Love* dir. Sadie Benning (US, 1992)
- o *November* (Hito Steyerl, 2004)
- o *Claude Cahun 'Self Portraits' (1920-1944)*

10. THE ESSAY AS AFTERTHOUGHT: EXPANDING EXPERIMENTAL ESSAY PROPSALS

- The Essay as post-cinematic intervention?
- Performance
- Audio Essays
- Installation
- The literary script as a mode of filmmaking

Film / Audio /Text/ Performance Material:

- o Mark Leckey, *Cinema in the Round* (2003, Performance Lecture)
- o Mohamed A. Gawad, Dalia Neis, Andreas Reihse, *Celluloid Corridors* (2018, sonic cinema intervention/audio essay).
- o Chris Kraus, *Aliens & Anorexia* (Semiotext(e), 2001)
- o Mark Fisher, Justin Barton, *On Vanishing Land* (2013, Audio Essay)

11. FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS/TUTORIALS.

- Presentation of projects in class before the final submission.

12. Guest Artist Essayist / Filmmaker TBC

- Case Study Presentation: An invited guest artist presents their work from conception to final stages.