

## Syllabus "WORLDS OF OUR MAKING: REPRESENTATIONS & INTERPRETATIONS"

Instructor: Ulrich Meurer | [meureru@ceu.edu](mailto:meureru@ceu.edu) | winter term 2020/21 | mandatory | 1<sup>st</sup> year | credits: 2.0 / ECTS: 4.0 | Mo. 13:30-14:30 / Wed. 16:00-17:00

Link for participation via ZOOM:

<https://zoom.us/j/92982714931?pwd=b1kyYlZvaUlPTE0rZEN0TkV6cVNIUT09>

Meeting-ID: 929 8271 4931 / Password: Wc7waH

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

During their history, human cultures have developed ever-changing understandings of the world and ever-new techniques to represent it. From paleolithic cave paintings to digital search engines, concepts of reality are closely entangled with our basic ways of perceiving, ordering, and remembering. The course will explore some of the most significant phases and crucial turning points of this continuous 'world making' process. Open discussions, close readings of text sources and the encounter with varying image material will enable students to decipher art works, artifacts, discourses, and technologies of the past and identify their lasting effects in contemporary cultures.

In the first instance, the course traces the evolutionary path and specificities of basic media for recording, storing, retrieving, or constructing reality. It addresses the world as it presents itself in a drawing or painting, in a manuscript or printed text, in photographs or film images, in computer programs or data clouds. Beyond that, and in more general terms, we will focus on the shifting dominants of (visual) perception that are incorporated in such concrete media: how are writing and the alphabet connected to overarching notions of *linearity*; how does 15<sup>th</sup> century *central perspective* invent both a new space and human subject; what arises from the idea of an all-seeing *panopticism* in the 18<sup>th</sup> century; what is the meaning of *visual objectivity* in 19<sup>th</sup> century science; are Google Maps and drone warfare related through their two-dimensional *aerial view*? (And finally: can we perhaps leave behind all these "Worlds of our Making", visual or not, to acknowledge a multitude of non-human agents and forces that make up the global sphere?)

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will be introduced to ▷ central developments and ruptures in CULTURAL HISTORY from the paleolithic to the present. They will gain insight into selected instances of the self- and world-construction of ▷ Western civilizations regarding their SCIENTIFIC, DISCURSIVE, POLITICAL, AND MEDIA OPERATIONS. The participants will learn how to ▷ establish connections between HISTORICAL EVENTS, WRITTEN SOURCES, AUDIOVISUAL REPRESENTATIONS, AND THEORETICAL CONCEPTS. The discussion of texts and images will contribute to their abilities ▷ to STRUCTURE AND CRITICALLY EVALUATE academic arguments. The participants will train their ▷ SKILLS OF SYNTHESIS AND COMMUNICATION through discussions, in-class presentations and papers. They will have the opportunity to ▷ APPLY PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE in the form of image/video works.

SCHEDULE + READINGS:

▷ PARTICIPANTS WILL PREPARE MANDATORY READINGS PRIOR TO THE RESPECTIVE CLASS

▷ [GREY FONT INDICATES OPTIONAL/ADDITIONAL READINGS & MATERIAL]

▷ 'ARCHIVE' SECTIONS [HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW] PROVIDE A CHOICE OF FURTHER TEXTS & MATERIAL ON ADJACENT SUBJECTS

01) 11.01. 13.01.	INTRO "Making Worlds?" + methods/schedule/assignments	-- Jorge Luis Borges: "On Exactitude in Science", in <i>Collected Fictions</i> . Penguin 1999, 325. -- <i>Process of making collage "On Exactitude in Science"</i> (Hannah Downing, 2015): <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NN47exMey2s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NN47exMey2s</a> [-- Thomas S. Kuhn: <i>The Structure of Scientific Revolutions</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1970, 111-135.]
MODELING THE WORLD: REPRESENTATIONS		
02) 18.01. 20.01.	Paleolithic	-- John Halverson: "Art for Art's Sake in the Paleolithic" [and Comments and Replies by Levon H. Abrahamian, Kathleen M. Adams, Paul G. Bahn, Lydia T. Black, Whitney Davis, Robin Frost, Robert Layton, David Lewis-Williams, Ana Maria Llamazares, Patrick Maynard, David Stenhouse], in: <i>Current Anthropology</i> 28/1 (Feb. 1987), 63-89; esp. 63-71. -- <i>Cave of Forgotten Dreams</i> (Werner Herzog, 2010): <a href="http://www.documentarymania.com/player.php?title=Cave%20of%20Forgotten%20Dreams">http://www.documentarymania.com/player.php?title=Cave%20of%20Forgotten%20Dreams</a> [-- Emmanuel Anati: "Archetypes, Constants, and Universal Paradigms in Prehistoric Art", in: <i>Semiotica</i> 100-2/4 (1994), 125-140.] [-- Lutz Koepnick: "Herzog's Cave: On Cinema's Unclaimed Pasts and Forgotten Futures", in: <i>The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory</i> 88/3 (2013), 271-285.]
03) 25.01. 27.01.	Alphabet	-- Vilém Flusser: "Inscriptions", "Notation", "Letters of the Alphabet", in: <i>Does Writing Have a Future?</i> Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press 2011, 11-35. -- Marshall McLuhan: "The Written Word: An Eye for an Ear", in: <i>Understanding Media. The Extensions of Man</i> . London, New York: Routledge 2002, 89-96. [-- Claude Lévi-Strauss: "Writing Lesson" in: <i>Tristes Tropiques</i> . New York: Criterion 1961, 286-297; esp. 288-293.]
OVERSEEING THE WORLD: PERSPECTIVES		
04) 01.02. 03.02.	Renaissance	-- Hans Belting: <i>Florence &amp; Baghdad: Renaissance Art and Arab Science</i> . Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard UP 2011, 13-26. -- Antoine Bousquet: "The Perspectival Eye", <i>Glass Bead</i> – Research Platform (2017): <a href="https://www.glass-bead.org/research-platform/the-perspectival-eye/?lang=enview">https://www.glass-bead.org/research-platform/the-perspectival-eye/?lang=enview</a> [-- Erwin Panofsky: <i>Perspective as Symbolic Form</i> . New York: Zone Books 1991, 27-36; 67-72.]
	<i>Archive Linear Perspective</i>	-- Leon Battista Alberti: <i>On Painting</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2011, 26-43; 50-52. -- Kim H. Veltman: "Military Surveying and Topography: The Practical Dimension of Renaissance Linear Perspective", in: <i>Revista da Universidade de Coimbra</i> XXVII (1979), 263-279: <a href="https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/16303275/1-kim-h-veltman-military-surveying-and-topography-the-practical-">https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/16303275/1-kim-h-veltman-military-surveying-and-topography-the-practical-</a> -- Margaret Iversen: "The Discourse of Perspective in the Twentieth Century: Panofsky, Damisch, Lacan", in: <i>Oxford Art Journal</i> 28/2 (2005), 193-202.
05) 08.02. 10.02.	Panopticon	-- Michel Foucault: "Panopticism", in: <i>Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison</i> . New York: Vintage 1995, 195-228. [-- Jeremy Bentham: "Panopticon; or, The Inspection-House", in: <i>Works</i> Vol. IV, 1787, 39-66.] [-- <i>Totentanz – Anatomie eines Ortes: Der Wiener Narrenturm</i> (The Madhouse Tower in Vienna / Nico Weber, ORF/3Sat 2013): <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNfrnPlb6mE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gNfrnPlb6mE</a> [go to: Settings / Subtitles / Auto-translate / English]

	Archive Panorama	<p>[– Alison Griffiths: <i>Shivers Down Your Spine: Cinema, Museums, and the Immersive View</i>. New York: Columbia University Press 2013, 37-78.]</p> <p>[– William Uricchio: “A Proper Point of View: The Panorama and some of its Early Media Iterations”, in: <i>Early Popular Visual Culture</i> 9/3 (August 2011), 225-238.]</p> <p>[– <i>Panorama from the Tower of Brooklyn Bridge</i> (American Mutoscope &amp; Biograph, 1903):  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOGT8XIK_WA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOGT8XIK_WA</a></p>
06) 15.02. 17.02.	Aerial View	<p>-- Hito Steyerl: “In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment in Vertical Perspective”, in: <i>eflux</i> 24 (April 2011):  <a href="https://www.e-flux.com/journal/24/67860/in-free-fall-a-thought-experiment-on-vertical-perspective/">https://www.e-flux.com/journal/24/67860/in-free-fall-a-thought-experiment-on-vertical-perspective/</a>  <a href="https://vimeo.com/81109235">https://vimeo.com/81109235</a></p> <p>[– Paula Amad: “From God's-eye to Camera-eye: Aerial Photography's Post-humanist and Neo-humanist Visions of the World”, in: <i>History of Photography</i> 36/1 (2012), 66-86.]</p>
	Archive Verticality	<p>-- Carla Benzing: <i>Artistic Politics of the Drone</i> (Exhibition catalog / Central Saint Martins Degree Show), London 2018.</p> <p>-- David Allen: “A Mirror of Our World: Google Earth and the History of Cartography”, in: <i>Coordinates: Online Journal of the Map and Geography Round Table of the American Library Association</i> B/12 (2009), n.p.</p> <p>-- Brooke Belisle: “I See the Moon, the Moon Sees Me: Trevor Paglen's Satellite Images”, in: <i>Media-N: Journal of the New Media Caucus</i> (Spring 2014):  <a href="http://median.newmediacaucus.org/art-infrastructures-hardware/i-see-the-moon-the-moon-sees-me-trevor-paglens-satellite-images/">http://median.newmediacaucus.org/art-infrastructures-hardware/i-see-the-moon-the-moon-sees-me-trevor-paglens-satellite-images/</a></p>
MEDIATING THE WORLD: TECHNOLOGIES		
07) 22.02. 24.02.	Photography	<p>-- Dominique François Arago: “Report (of the Commission of the Chamber of Deputies)”, in: Alan Trachtenberg (ed.): <i>Classic Essays on Photography</i>. New Haven: Leete's Island Books 1980, 15-25.</p> <p>-- Walter Benjamin: “Little History of Photography”, in: <i>Selected Writings</i> Vol. 2, Part 2, 1931-1934. Cambridge, MA, London: Harvard University Press 1999, 507-530.</p> <p>[– Jennifer Tucker: <i>Nature Exposed: Photography as Eyewitness in Victorian Science</i>. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press 2005, 234-240.]</p> <p>[– Malcolm Daniel: “Daguerre (1787–1851) and the Invention of Photography” / “William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–1877) and the Invention of Photography”, Website of the <i>Metropolitan Museum of Art</i>, New York, October 2004.]:  <a href="https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/dagu/hd_dagu.htm">https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/dagu/hd_dagu.htm</a>  <a href="https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tlbt/hd_tlbt.htm">https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tlbt/hd_tlbt.htm</a></p>
08) 01.03. 03.03.	Movement Image	<p>-- Marta Braun: <i>Eadweard Muybridge</i>. London: Reaktion Books 2010, 133-158.</p> <p>[– <i>Eadweard Muybridge, Zoopraxographer</i> (Thom Andersen, 1975):  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6z-dXPXGIY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6z-dXPXGIY</a></p> <p>[– Joel Snyder: “Visualization and Visibility”, in: Caroline A. Jones, Peter Galison (eds): <i>Picturing Science, Producing Art</i>. London, New York: Routledge 1998, 379-397.]</p>
	Archive Locomotion	<p>-- Eadweard Muybridge: <i>Animals in Motion: An Electro-Photographic Investigation of Consecutive Phases of Animal Progressive Movements</i>. London: Chapman &amp; Hall 1907:  <a href="http://www.cinereources.net/consultationPdf/web/o000/019.pdf">http://www.cinereources.net/consultationPdf/web/o000/019.pdf</a></p> <p>-- Henri Bergson: <i>Creative Evolution</i>. New York: Random House 1944, 324-335; 359-365.</p> <p>-- <i>The Weird World of Eadweard Muybridge</i> (Jill Nicholls, BBC 2010):  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Awo-P3t4Ho">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Awo-P3t4Ho</a></p>
09) 08.03. 10.03.	Digital Data	<p>-- Lev Manovich: “Database as Symbolic Form”, in: <i>Convergence</i> 5/2 (1999), 80-99.</p> <p>-- Charlie Gere: <i>Digital Culture</i>. London: Reaktion Books 2008, 11-20.</p> <p>[– Lev Manovich: <i>The Language of New Media</i>. Cambridge, MA, London: MIT Press 2001, 18-48.]</p>
COMPILING THE WORLD: REPOSITORIES		
10) 15.03. 17.03.	Archive	<p>-- Markus Friedrich: <i>The Birth of the Archive: A History of Knowledge</i>. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 2018, 1-15; 59-82.</p> <p>[– Jacques Derrida: <i>Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression</i>. Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press 1996, 1-5.]</p> <p>[– Lester K. Born: “Baldassare Bonifacio and His Essay de Archivis”, in: <i>The American Archivist</i> 4/4 (Oct. 1941), 221-237.]</p>

11) 22.03. 24.03.	Google Books	-- <i>Google and the World Brain</i> (Ben Lewis, 2013): <a href="https://archive.org/details/GoogleAndTheWorldBrain_201611">https://archive.org/details/GoogleAndTheWorldBrain_201611</a> -- Marlene Manoff: "Archive and Database as Metaphor: Theorizing the Historical Record", in: <i>portal: Libraries and the Academy</i> . 10/4 (2010), 385-398.  [-- Tully Barnett: "The Human Trace in Google Books", in: Diana Glenn, Graham Tulloch (eds): <i>Border Crossings</i> . Mile End: Wakefield 2016, 53-71.] [-- Wolfgang Ernst: "Underway to the Dual System: Classical Archives and Digital Memory", in: <i>Digital Memory and the Archive</i> . Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press 2013, 81-94.]
12) 29.03.	EXTRO "After the Human?" + wrap-up	-- Paul J. Crutzen: "The 'Anthropocene'", in: Eckart Ehlers, Thomas Krafft (eds): <i>Earth System Science in the Anthropocene</i> . Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer 2006, 13-18. -- Michel Serres: <i>Times of Crisis: What the Financial Crisis Revealed and How to Reinvent our Lives and Future</i> . New York, London: Bloomsbury 2015, 27-48.  [-- Rosi Braidotti: "Post-Anthropocentrism: Life Beyond the Species", in: <i>The Posthuman</i> . Cambridge, Malden, MA: Polity 2013, 55-104; esp. 81-89.]

ASSIGNMENTS :

Attendance and ACTIVE PARTICIPATION in discussions / close readings / image interpretations	10%
1 SUMMARY (0,5 to 1-page max.) of one of the <i>optional</i> /readings (article or book chapter)   handed in via email 2 days before the respective class	10%
Short in-class PRESENTATION of one of the weekly topics – in groups of max. 3 [incl. 1-page handout with main theses, questions, discussion impulse   handed in via email 2 days before the respective class]  <i>Select a topic/date for your presentation and enter your name here:</i> <a href="https://doodle.com/poll/nbty9gk4t72qmvux">https://doodle.com/poll/nbty9gk4t72qmvux</a>	30%
Final PAPER [~ 1.500-2.000 words   can be prepared in groups of 2 (only upon consultation!)   handed in via email   due 2 weeks after end of term]  ▷ <i>Alternative:</i> Final RESEARCH VIDEO, IMAGE OR PHOTO WORK [audiovisual thesis   self-produced material and/or found footage]  The subject of the final paper/audiovisual thesis is chosen by the student; it should not adopt a subject from the class sessions. Final audiovisual works will NOT be assessed according to technical criteria, but based on the originality of the approach and the potential to visualize the main arguments.	50%