

Visual Studies Seminar [CAMS 350]

Winter, 2011 • Professor Schott

Required texts:

Sturken, Marita, and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking: an Introduction to Visual Culture*. New York: Oxford UP, 2009.

Ritchin, Fred. *After Photography*. New York: Norton, 2010.



Week 1: What is Visual Studies? Pre-history of the technological image. Cultural reception of photography in 1839 through documents from the period.



This is not a pipe.

Tuesday, January 4:

Dikovitskaya, Margarita. "What Is Visual Culture?" *Visual Culture: the Study of the Visual after the Cultural Turn*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2005

Mirzoeff, Nicholas. "What Is Visual Culture?" *An Introduction to Visual Culture*. London: Routledge, 1999.

Rogoff, Irit. "Studying Visual Culture." *Visual Culture Reader*. Nicholas Mirzoeff, Ed. London: Routledge, 1998.

Irvine, Martin. "Ways of Looking at All Things Visual." [Handout.]

Thursday, January 6:

* Visual presentation on the technological pre-history of photography: perspective, camera obscura, camera lucida. The first photographs.

- Wees, William C. "The Cinematic Image As A Visualization of Sight." *Light Moving in Time: Studies in the Visual Aesthetics of Avant-garde Film*. Berkeley: University of California, 1992.

- "Bill Presented to the Chamber of Deputies, France." France, June 15, 1839.

- "A Review in the London Quarterly Review." 1839. Excerpt.

- Selections from: *Daguerreian Texts: The First Two Years [1839-1840]* [<http://www.daguerre.org/resource/first2.html>]



Week 2: The ontology of the photographic image. Bazin, Barthes and beyond.



Tuesday, January 11:

* Discussion of *The Genius of Photography*. BBC, 2011. Program 1: *Fixing the Shadows*.

- Bazin, André. "The Ontology of the Photographic Image." *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 4 [Summer, 1960]. Pp 4-9.

- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1980. [Excerpt]

- Scruton, Roger. "Photography and Representation." Scott Walden, Ed. *Photography and Philosophy: Essays on the Pencil of Nature*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

Thursday, January 13:

- Arnheim, Rudolph. "On the Nature of Photography." *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 1, No. 1 Sept. 1974.

- Kracauer, Siegfried. "Photography." *Frankfurter Zeitung*. 1927. [Excerpt]

**Week3: The artist as theorist:
early modern manifestos.**



- LaGrange, Ashley. "Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida." *Basic Critical Theory for Photographers*. Amsterdam: Focal, 2007.



Tuesday, January 18:

* Students are assigned individual readings, and will offer visual presentations on defining ideas in their assigned reading.

* Discussion of *The Genius of Photography*. BBC, 2011. Program 2: *Documents for Artists*.

Pictorialism

- O.J. Rejlander: "An Apology for Art Photography." [1863]
- Henry Peach Robinson: "Idealism, Realism, Expressionism." *The Elements of a Pictorial Photograph*. London, 1896.]Henry Peach Robinson: "Pictorial Effect in Photography." [1869] [Excerpt]

Straight Photography

- Paul Strand: "Photography" and "Photography and the New God." [Seven Arts. 1917.] and [Broom. 1922.]
- Paul Strand: "The Art Motive in Photography." [1923]
- Walker Evans: "Interview with Walker Evans." Leslie Katz. *Art In America*. March, 1971.
- Edward Weston: "Seeing Photographically." *Encyclopedia of Photography*. Greystone Press, 1965.
- Edward Weston: "Daybooks, 1923-1930." [Excerpt]
- Edward Weston: "Photographic Art." [1942] [Excerpt]
- Ansel Adams: "A Personal Credo." [1943] [Excerpt]
- Ansel Adams: "I Am a Photographer." *Image*. March, 1959.

Thursday, January 20:

* Students are assigned individual readings, and will offer visual presentations on defining ideas in their assigned reading.

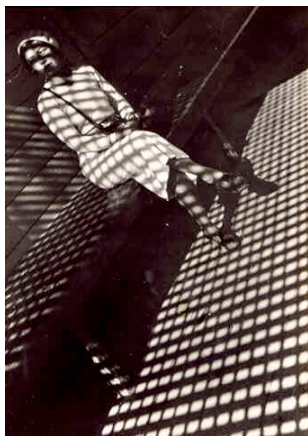
Bauhaus/Modernism

- Franz Roh: "Mechanism and Expression." *Photo-Eye*. [1929]
- Laszlo Moholy-Nagy: "A New Instrument of Vision." *Telehor*, 1936.
- Laszlo Moholy-Nagy: "From Pigment to Light." [1936]
- Anton Giulio Bragaglia: *Futurist Photodynamism*. [1913] [Excerpt]

Midcentury Perspectives

- Henri Cartier-Bresson: Introduction to *The Decisive Moment*. [1952]
- Minor White: "Equivalence, A Perennial Trend." [1963]

John Szarkowski: Introduction to *The Photographer's Eye*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966.



Week 4: How photographs mean: semiotic theory and the rhetoric of the advertising image.



Tuesday, January 25:

* Discussion of *The Genius of Photography*. BBC, 2011. Program 3: *Right Time, Right Place*

* Visual Presentation on Semiotics of the Image

Evreinova, Tatiana: "Introduction to Semiotics by David Chandler."

Barthes, Roland: "The Photographic Message." *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1978.

Barthes, Roland: "The Rhetoric of the Image." *Image, Music, Text*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1978.

Barthes, Roland: "Myth Today." *Mythologies*. Hill & Wang, 1984.

Thursday, January 27:

* Visual Presentation on the rhetoric of advertising and culture jamming/*détournement*.

Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright: "Advertising, Consumer Cultures, and Desire." *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), Chapter 7.

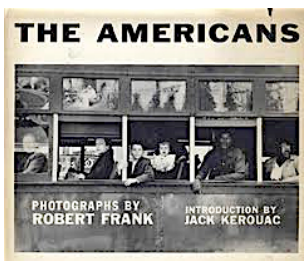
Jhally, Sut: "Image-Based Culture." From "The World and I." [July, 1990]

Dery, Mark: "Culture Jamming: Hacking, Slashing and Sniping in the Empire of Signs." [Excerpt]

* Assignment: Semiotic analysis of an advertising image. [3 pages]



Week 5: Cultural criticism and the image: foundational assumptions and critical tools.



Tuesday, February 1:

* We explore this week's essential ideas of cultural criticism, focusing our analysis on the contemporary classic, Robert Frank's *The Americans*. We review a variety of sources on Frank, particularly Sarah Greenough's *Looking In: Robert Frank's "The Americans"*.

* Discussion of *The Genius of Photography*. BBC, 2011. Program 4: *Paper Movies*.

Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright: "Images, Power and Politics." *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), Chapter 1.

Thursday, February 3:

Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright: "Viewers Make Meaning." *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), Chapter 2.

Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright: "Modernity: Spectatorship. Power and Knowledge." *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), Chapter 3.

* Assignment: Each student will be assigned a range of five or six images from *The Americans*, from which they may pick two. Write a tight, polished one-page essay for each image applying the critical approaches of cultural criticism found in this week's readings. We will pair each essay and photograph in a PDF publication on the model of John Szarkowski's *Looking at Photographs*.



Week 6: Instrumentality and control: the panopticon, the archive, and social sorting.



Tuesday, February 8:

- * Discussion of *The Genius of Photography*. BBC, 2011. Program 5: *We Are Family*.
 - * Visual presentation on the panoptic gaze, surveillance, & dataveillance.
 - Bentham, Jeremy. "Panopticon; or The Inspection-House." [Excerpt]
 - Foucault, Michel. "Panopticism." *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*. New York: Pantheon, 1977.
 - Lyon, David. "From Big Brother to Electronic Panopticon." *The Electronic Eye: the Rise of Surveillance Society*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1994. pp 57-80.
 - Koskela, Hille. "'Cam Era'—The Contemporary Urban Panopticon." *Surveillance & Society* 1(3): pp. 292-313.
- Reference, not required: Phillips, Sandra et al. *Exposed: Voyeurism, Surveillance and the Camera*. San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Art, 2010.

Thursday, February 10:

* *Assignment for today*: Student presentations applying the ideas of the panoptic gaze, surveillance, the image as a vehicle of social/institutional control, or the archive/database/social sorting to the following individuals, ideas or works:

- Duchenne de Boulogne: *The Mechanism of Human Facial Expression* [1862]
- 19th century Physiognomy/Phrenology [key ideas, images]
- Malek Alloula: *The Colonial Harem* [cultural stereotypes/control]
- Richard Avadon: *The American West* [typological catalogue]
- Trevor Paglan [contemporary new media surveillance]
- Steve Mann & *sousveillance* [new media artist practicing "reverse surveillance"]
- Sophie Calle [photographer/conceptualist]

Storey, Derrick. "Surveyors and Surveyed." *Photography: a Critical Introduction*. By Liz Wells. London: Routledge, 2005. pp. 75-92.

Sekula, Allan. "Reading An Archive: Photography Between Labour and Capital." *Visual Culture: The Reader*. By Jessica Evans. Los Angeles: Sage, 2009.

Tagg, John. "Evidence, Truth and Order: Photographic Records and the Growth of the State." *The Photography Reader*. By Liz Wells. London: Routledge, 2006.



Week 7: Contemporary life as image culture.

Tuesday, February 15:

- * Discussion of *The Genius of Photography*. BBC, 2011. Program 6: *Snap Judgments*.
- Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright: "Visual Technologies: Image, Reproduction, and the Copy." *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), Chapter 5.
- Walter Benjamin: "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." 1935.



**Week 8: Digital photography:
a new logic of the image.**



- Debord, Guy. *Society of the Spectacle*. New York: Zone Books, 1995. [Excerpt]
- Sontag, Susan. "In Plato's Cave." *On Photography*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1977.

Thursday, February 17:

- Junod, Tom. "The Falling Man." *Esquire*, 8 Sept. 2009.
- Sontag, Susan. "Regarding the Torture of Others." *New York Times Magazine*, 3 May 2004.
- Hariman, Robert, and John Louis Lucaites. "Trauma and Public Memory: Accidental Napalm." *No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2007.
- Eisenman, Stephen F. "Resemblance" and "Freudian Slip." *The Abu Ghraib Effect*. London: Reaktion, 2007.
- Berger, John. "Photographs of Agony." *The Photography Reader*. By Liz Wells. London: Routledge, 2006.



Tuesday, February 22:

- * Discussion of *American Photography: A Century of Images*. PBS, 2011. Program 1 [John Schott, Executive Producer]
- Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright. "Postmodernism and Popular Culture." *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). [Chapter 7]
- Barrett, Terry. "Approaches to Post-Modern Art Making." *Fate in Review: Foundations in Art: Theory and Education*. Vol. 28, 2006/2007.
- Lister, Martin. "Photography in the Age of Electronic Imaging." *The Photography Reader*. By Liz Wells. London [u.a.: Routledge, 2006.
- Manovich, Lev. "Paradoxes of Digital Photography." *The Photography Reader*. By Liz Wells. London [u.a.: Routledge, 2006.

Thursday, February 24:

- * Discussion of *American Photography: A Century of Images*. PBS, 2011. Program 2 [John Schott, Executive Producer]
- Manovich, Lev. "Understanding Hybrid Media."
- Gunning, Tom. "What's the Point of an Index? Or Faking Photographs."
- Rosen, Philip. "Old and New: Image, Indexicality and Historicity in the Digital Utopia." *Change Mummified: Cinema, Historicity, Theory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2001.



**Week 9: After Photography:
the image in the era of social
media.**



Tuesday, March 1:

* Discussion of *American Photography: A Century of Images*. PBS, 2011. Program 2 [John Schott, Executive Producer]

- Ritchin, Fred. *After Photography*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2009. Read Chapters 1 through 5.

Thursday, March 3:

* Discussion of *American Photography: A Century of Images*. PBS, 2011. Program 3 [John Schott, Executive Producer]

- Ritchin, Fred. *After Photography*. New York: W. W. Norton, 2009. Read Chapters 6 through 10.

Tuesday, March 8:

Looking back. Final class.