

Media Cultures of the Cold War
Communication 386/Art History 475
Spring, 2012
Wednesdays, 2:15-5:05
Art Building, Room 103

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Seminar Goals:

This course examines the intersection of politics, aesthetics and new media technologies in the United States between the end of World War II and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Topics include the aesthetics of "thinking the unthinkable" in the wake of the atom bomb; Abstract Expressionism and "modern man" discourse; game theory, cybernetics and new models of art making; the rise of television, intermedia and the counterculture; and the continuing influence of the early cold war on contemporary media aesthetics. Readings will be drawn from primary and secondary sources, and from the fields of art history, communication, and critical theory.

Assignments & Grading:

We've designed this course as a springboard for your own, independent research, during and after the quarter. Thus, you will need to do two kinds of work: first, you'll need to read and analyze course materials; second, you'll need to identify important questions and objects needing further research. The assignments are designed to help you accomplish both these goals.

- 1. Active and useful seminar participation. As part of this, you are asked to lead one (1) presentation of the weekly readings. 40%**
- 2. A Bibliographic Essay. 5-8 pages of text, plus notes. Due in class Week 6 (May 9) (30%)**

We would like you to finish this course with a rich understanding of the major theoretical and historical debates in media studies and art history in this period, and with a map for a research project of your own. To get started, we would like you to work from required and recommended course readings, as well as your own research in primary and secondary sources, to build and analyze a bibliography around an analytical question of your choice. Your bibliographic essay should map an intellectual debate related to media in the period, outlining its key questions, texts and players. It should also identify the importance of that debate in shaping or potentially re-shaping our understanding of the era. Finally, it should identify and explain the likely significance of some object or objects that will become the basis of your final research proposal for the course.

3. Final assignment: Research Proposal for a Journal Article. 10-12 pages of text, plus notes. Due Exam Week (Precise date TBA). (30%)

We would like you to identify a relevant journal (such as *Grey Room*; *October*; *Critical Inquiry*; *Media, Culture and Society*; *The Information Society*; or *Technology and Culture*) and write a detailed proposal for an article within it. The proposal will need to address how your topic and approach relate to the existing literature in the field, the primary and secondary source work you have done and still have to do, and the importance of your research project for the journal's audience and the relevant field more broadly. In contrast to the midterm bibliographic essay, this proposal will depend heavily on primary sources and archival work. (For example, Special Collections or the Hoover Institution archives.)

Readings:

(Please buy the following through Amazon)

Tracy Davis, *Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007

Joselit, David. *Feedback: Television against Democracy*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007.

Martin, Reinhold. *The Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media, and Corporate Space*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.

Spigel, L. (1992). *Make room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Turner, Fred. *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006.

Doherty, T. P. (2003). *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American culture*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Fanon, Frantz, *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 2005

Harvey, David, *A Brief History of Neo-Liberalism*. New York and London: Oxford, 2007.

Course Schedule:

Section One: Mass and Networked Models of Communication After World War II

Week 1—April 4: Mass versus Network Culture

Readings:

Norbert Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings*. Ch's 1-3, 5.

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

Week 2 -- April 11: Personal Expression as Propaganda

Required:

Serge Guilbaut, "The Creation of an American Avant-Garde" and "Success: How New York stole the Notion of Modernism from the Parisians," in *How New York Stole The Idea of Modern Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005)

Clement Greenberg, "Avant-garde and Kitsch," and "Towards a Newer Laocoon," in Frascina, ed. *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, pp 48-71

"Part 2: History, Representation and Misrepresentation – the case of Abstract Expressionism," in Frascina, ed. *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, pp 130-211

Recommended:

Robin, Ron Theodore. *The Barbed-Wire College: Reeducating German POWs in the United States During World War II* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Christine Mehring, "The Art of a Miracle: Toward a History of German Pop," in *Art of the Two Germanys: Cold War Cultures*, Los Angeles: LACMA

Paul Kaiser, "Symbolic Revolts in the 'Workers' and 'Peasants' State: Countercultural Art Programs in the GDR" in *Art of the Two Germanys*

Susanne Leeb, "Abstraction as International Language," in *Art of the Two Germanys: Cold War Cultures*

Week 3 – April 18: The Bomb and Seeing: Performance and Simulation

Required:

Tracy Davis, *Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense*, pp 1-102

Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi, "Faith and Insight in War-Gaming," in *The Worlds of Herman Kahn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005): pp 149-180

Herman Kahn, "Some Possible Sizes and Shapes of Thermonuclear War," in *Thinking about The Unthinkable* (New York: Horizon Press, 1962): pp 39-80

Recommended:

Weart, Spencer R. *Nuclear Fear: A History of Images*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988.

“Dr. Strangelove” (the movie)

Light, Jennifer S. *From Warfare to Welfare: Defense Intellectuals and Urban Problems in Cold War America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

Week 4 – April 25: Systems of vision

Required:

Rosenblueth, Arturo, Norbert Wiener, and Julian Bigelow. "Behavior, Purpose and Teleology." *Philosophy of Science*, no. 10 (1943): 18-24.

Bateson, Gregory. “Minimal Requirements for a Theory of Schizophrenia” and “Double Bind, 1969,” in Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. University of Chicago Press ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000 (pp.244-278)

Bertalanffy, Ludwig von. *General System Theory : Foundations, Development, Applications*. Rev. ed. New York: G. Braziller, 1973. Introduction and Chapter 2 (pp.3-53)

Martin, Reinhold. *The Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media, and Corporate Space*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003, Chapters 1 & 2 (pp.3-79 & notes 234-252)

Recommended:

Bowker, Geoff. “How to Be Universal: Some Cybernetic Strategies, 1943-1970.” *Social Studies of Science* 23 (1993): 107-27.

Edwards, Paul N. *The Closed World: Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America, Inside Technology*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996.

Galison, Peter. “The Ontology of the Enemy: Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision.” *Critical Inquiry* 21, no. Autumn (1994): 228-266.

Slava Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002.

Haraway, Donna Jeanne. *Crystals, Fabrics, and Fields : Metaphors of Organicism in Twentieth-Century Developmental Biology*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1976.

Haraway, Donna J. "The High Cost of Information in Post-World War II Evolutionary Biology: Ergonomics, Semiotics, and the Sociobiology of Communication Systems." *The Philosophical Forum* 13, no. 2-3 (1981-82): 244-78.

Hayles, N. Katherine. *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*. Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1999. (esp. ch. 4 "Liberal Subjectivity Imperiled: Norbert Wiener and Cybernetic Anxiety")

Lee, Pamela M., "Aesthetic Strategist: Albert Wohlstetter, The Cold War and a Theory of Midcentury Modernism," OCTOBER, Fall 2011

Section Two: Media in Everyday Life, At Home and Abroad

Week 5 – May 2:

Required:

Spigel, L. (1992). *Make room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1-4.

Doherty, T. P. (2003). *Cold War, Cool Medium : television, McCarthyism, and American culture*. New York: Columbia University Press. Chapters 1-3, 8-11.

Spigel, L. (2008). *TV by Design: Modern Art and the Rise of Network Television*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press. Introduction, Chapter 1, Epilogue.

Watch: Emile de Antonio, *Point of Order*

Recommended:

Marling, K. A. (1994). *As seen on TV: the visual culture of everyday life in the 1950s*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press.

McCarthy, A. (2001). *Ambient television: Visual Culture and Public Space*. Durham, NC, Duke University Press.

McCarthy, A. (2002). "Urban Mobility and Cinematic Visuality: The Screens of Los Angeles -- Endless Cinema or Private Telematics." *Journal of Visual Culture* 1(2): 183-204.

Week 6 – May 9: New Media Spaces

Due: Bibliographic Essay

Required:

Martin, *The Organizational Complex*, Chapter 5, "Computer Architectures."

Colomina, Beatriz. "Enclosed by Images: The Eames' Multimedia Architecture." *Grey Room* 2, no. Winter (2001): 6-29.

Spigel, Lynn. "Outer Space and Inner Cities: African-American Responses to NASA," in Spigel, *Welcome to the Dreamhouse: Popular Media and Postwar Suburbs, Console-Ing Passions*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001: 141-182.

Recommended:

The films of Ray and Charles Eames (on DVD, at SUL)

Colomina, Beatriz. *Domesticity at War*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007.

Colomina, Beatriz, Annmarie Brennan, and Jeannie Kim. *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture from Cockpit to Playboy*. 1st ed. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004.

Light, Jennifer S. *From Warfare to Welfare: Defense Intellectuals and Urban Problems in Cold War America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

Virilio, Paul. *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*. London ; New York: Verso, 1989.

Virilio, Paul, and George Collins. *Bunker Archeology: Texts and Photos*. New York, N.Y.: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994.

Virilio, Paul, Sylvère Lotringer, and Semiotext(e) Inc. *Pure War*. New York: Semiotext(e) Inc., 1983.

Week 7 – May 16: Decolonization and the "Third World"

Required:

Jean-Paul Sartre, "Preface," to Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press, 2005: 7-31

Fanon, "Concerning Violence," "On National Culture," and "Colonial War and Mental Disorders," in *The Wretched of the Earth*: 35-106; 206-310

Christopher J. Lee, "Introduction: Between a Moment and an Era: The Origins and Afterlives of Bandung," 1-42; and Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Legacies of Bandung: Decolonization and the Politics of Culture," 45-68, *Making a World after Empire: The Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives* ed. Christopher Lee, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2010: 1-42; 45-48

Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000: 31-64

Watch: Gillo Pontecorvo, *The Battle of Algiers*, 1966

Recommended:

Blake Stimpson, Chapter 2 (on *The Family of Man*) in *The Pivot of the World*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2005

Carl Sandburg, Edward Steichen, *The Family of Man*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1955

Fred Turner, "The Family of Man and The Politics of Attention in Cold War America," *Public Culture* 24.1 (April, 2012), 51-80.

Section 3: From Counterculture to Neoliberalism

Week 8 – May 23: Early Counterculture and the Turn to Performance and Participation

Required:

Joseph, Branden W. "White on White." *Critical Inquiry* 27, no. 1 (2000): 90-121.

Turner, Fred. *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2.

Lambert, Carrie, "Performance Demonstration," in *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s*. Cambridge, MA: OCTOBER Books, 2008: 199-251

Recommended:

Kaprow, Allan. "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock (1958)" (pp. 1-9); "Happenings in the New York Scene (1961)" (pp. 15-26); "The Happenings Are Dead: Long Live Happenings! (1966)", all in Kaprow, Allan, and Jeff Kelley, eds. *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2003.

Banes, Sally. *Greenwich Village 1963: Avant-Garde Performance and the Effervescent Body*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.

Jones, Caroline A. "Finishing School: John Cage and the Abstract Expressionist Ego." *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. Summer (1993): 628-65.

Kostelanetz, Richard. *The Theatre of Mixed Means; an Introduction to Happenings, Kinetic Environments, and Other Mixed-Means Performances*. New York,: Dial Press, 1968.

Turner, Fred. "Romantic Automatism: Art, Technology, and Collaborative Labor in Cold War America," Vol.7, No.1 (April, 2008). *Journal of Visual Culture* 17, no. 1 (2008): 5-26.

Week 9 – May 30: High Counterculture (no pun intended) as Collision of Mass and Networked Media

Required:

Joselit, David. *Feedback: Television against Democracy*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007.

Turner, Fred. *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. Chapter 3.

Kreiss, Daniel. "Appropriating the Master's Tools: Sun Ra, the Black Panthers, and Black Consciousness, 1952-1973." *Black Music Research Journal* 28, no. 1 (2009): 57-81.

Recommended:

Gitlin, Todd. *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.

Lee, Pamela M. *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960's*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004.

Week 10 – June 6: The Coming of Neoliberalism

Required:

Harvey, *Brief History of Neoliberalism*

Wendy Brown, "Neo-liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy" *Theory and Event* 7, no. 1 (Fall 2003)

Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture*, Chapters 5-8.

Recommended:

Rogin, Michael, "Ronald Reagan the movie" from *Ronald Reagan: The Movie: And Other Episodes in Political Demonology* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987: 1-44