Cultural Studies
&
Comparative Literature Department

Cultural Studies
Core and Graduate Certificate
Elective Courses

Spring 2017
This course introduces students to the field of cultural studies through an exploration of two distinct yet related questions: where did cultural studies come from, and what has it made possible? As such, we will set out to trace the history of the field and to map the debates, practices, and theories that have informed the political and intellectual project of cultural studies.

The goals of the course are twofold: 1) to familiarize students with the texts, thinkers, and traditions that have shaped the ways in which scholars approach the study of culture today; 2) to invite students to reflect critically on their own work and to situate themselves within the larger field. Rather than attempting to answer the question that will inevitably haunt the syllabus – “What is cultural studies?” – we will shift our attention toward the theoretical and disciplinary stakes of raising such a question.

**Wednesdays**

4:00-6:50pm  
Humanities 1051

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**CST 609.S01**

**Advanced Topics in Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies:**  
“Utopia/Dystopia”

Nikolaos Panou

This course will focus on the utopian impulse, and its opposite, in early modern and modern literature. Where do such impulses stem from, what is at stake in acting on them, and what are their methodological, aesthetic, and ideological implications? What triggered the transition from the pre-modern obsession with utopian perfection to the modern predilection for dystopian chaos? Do utopian visions represent programmatic attempts to escape the contingency of history or are they embedded with targeted criticism of contemporary deficiencies? Are dystopian nightmares tokens of radical disillusionment, pessimistic warnings about future perils, or vehement rejections of idealized versions of human society? In what ways do they incorporate and address a wide range of issues and fields of experience, from politics, economy, religion, morality, freedom, agency, community, justice and law to time, space, nature, culture, technology, progress, race, gender, and sexuality? Are utopian and dystopian projects so different after all? If yes, how? If no, why? Questions are legion, but we will have a semester at our disposal as well as a number of key texts that will provide answers to as many of them as possible.

**Tuesdays**

1:00-3:50pm  
Humanities 1051

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**ARH 546**

**The Movement-Image and the Kinetic Imaginary:**  
“On the Animation of Postwar Art”

Andrew V. Uroskie

"Fluids, so to speak, neither fix space nor bind time. While solids have clear spatial dimensions but neutralize the impact, and thus downgrade the significance, of time (effectively resist its flow or render it irrelevant), fluids do not keep to any shape for long and are constantly ready (and prone) to change it." Introducing his influential study *Liquid Modernity*, the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman here mobilizes liquidity as a master metaphor with which to engage our present post-disciplinary "society of control" (Deleuze).
Bauman’s account, like that of Deleuze before him, is sociological, economic, and geopolitical - part of the globalizing trajectory of modernity. I want to enlist Bauman’s trope in revisiting a more specific and delimited history: that particular animation of postwar art wherein the solidity of Modernist painting and sculpture became increasingly haunted by the Specters of temporality and movement, pressured by a kinetic imaginary. Postwar art did not simply abandon the solidity of the material object for the fluidity of the performative event, any more than it simply exchanged the art gallery for the concert hall or performance stage. Instead, familiar models of object and material were pressured through novel explorations of liminal states and zones of transition: between the cinematic and the sculptural, between stasis and duration, between object and performance, and between the still and moving image.

If the familiar rhetoric of aesthetic “dematerialization” helped to foreground a certain loss of solidity within traditional models of the art object, the metaphor of animation can help us dig deeper into the kinetic and temporal dimensions of this transformation and the new conditions it produced. Drawing kinetic sculpture and cinematic animation into dialogue with optical painting, performance, and intermedia, it encourages us to draw associations between new theories of materiality and objecthood, perception and spectatorial investment, and questions of temporality and duration both within and beyond the human. And at its limit, animation’s heretically premodern associations with the anima or life-giving spirit can help to uncover alternate, subordinated versions of the Modernist narrative.

Our seminar will trace the ideas of kinesis and animation across a range of sculptural, cinematic, and performative art practices, as well as in the texts of artists, art critics, and philosophers who have sought to engage explicitly with questions of process and duration.

**Mondays 1:00-3:50pm**

**Art Seminar Room**

**ARH 554 Topics Visual Culture:**

“Comparative Media”

Brooke Belisle

“Comparative Media” names an approach to working across media formats, national and historical contexts, and disciplinary methods. This course will move across examples and theoretical readings in photography, cinema, and digital media using approaches drawn from art history, film studies, media studies, and cultural studies. One goal of the seminar will be to challenge disciplinary divides (for example photography approached as art vs photography as history of science or as social practice) by focusing on formal questions about temporal and spatial experience, and relationships with the spectator. Another goal will be to consider philosophical questions about what visual media and technical aesthetics can 'do' or mean through the production of specific forms of experience...how can we find ways to consider the relationship between specific material forms and more abstract ontological, phenomenological, ethical, or social potentials? Readings will include work by ‘emerging scholars’ as well as canonical writing such as Walter Benjamin on photography, Sergei Eisenstein on montage, Mark Hansen on new media art. Artworks discussed may include historical photographic series, 20th century experimental films, and recent digital installations. Students will be expected to participate in rigorous discussion on weekly readings, share and analyze visual case studies, and compose a conference-length paper to present in the final weeks of class. Students from any disciplinary background are welcome, and credits from this course can be counted toward the graduate certificate in Media, Art, Culture and Technology.

**Thursdays 1:00–3:50pm**

**Staller Ctr 2205**
EGL 603.01
Problems in Literary Theory and Criticism:
“Benjamin, Bakhtin & Others”
Peter Manning

This doctoral seminar builds on the theme of the year in the Humanities Institute, "Histories of the Future," particularly the conference on "Romanticism's Futures" this November, followed by the visits of the noted Romantics Scholars Theresa Kelley and Maureen McLane in the spring, whose work will be incorporated in the syllabus. We will look at the theme in a number of ways: for example, Romantic self-development posits a future in which one might develop, but environmental catastrophe forecloses such a future; millennialism and revolution; apocalypse; on the other side, the future as obsessive repetition of the past. Though the examples on the syllabus would be chiefly British (Wordsworth, Byron, DeQuincey, Percy and Mary Shelley), the focus on the theme of temporality should appeal to students from across departments for whom the assigned theoretical works will be fruitful (e.g., Schiller, Benjamin, Ricoeur, Freud, Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*, Derrida). I will accept seminar papers on the particular projects of students in Hispanic, CSCI, ELLC, History, and others.

Mondays 1:00-3:50pm

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EGL 608. 01
Problems in the Relationship of Literature to Other Disciplines:
“Neoliberal Narratives”
J. Johnston

Literary and Cultural Studies, the prominent term “Neoliberalism” can refer to several overlapping but distinct phenomena. At times, the term points to an economic philosophy developed over the course the 20th century in the writings of Gary Becker, Jacob Mincer, Friedrich Hayek, and others associated with the Chicago School of Economics and the Mount Perelin Society. Politically speaking, neoliberalism refers to historically specific governing policies—first implemented by Augusto Pinochet, Ronald Regan, and Margaret Thatcher—that have been adopted over time (to varying degrees) by states across the globe. Alternatively, in literary studies, the term is often deployed to analyze how discourses of entrepreneurship, risk management, and "human capital" are represented within settings designed to foster competition and inequality. In addition to exploring the limits and multiple meanings of neoliberalism as a critical concept, this class will also consider neoliberalism as a form and object of storytelling. For example, what stories—and what kinds of stories—does neoliberalism tell about itself? What stories do others tell about neoliberalism? How do contemporary novelists and filmmakers repeat, resist, and reimagine neoliberal narratives?

In this course, we will likely read novels by Margaret Atwood, Mohsin Hamid, Lionel Shriver, Ben Lerner, Indra Sinha, Tom McCarthy, Colson Whitehead, Kazuo Ishiguro, and Jamaica Kincaid. We will also examine critical texts by Wendy Brown, Maurizio Lazzarato, Rob Nixon, Henry Giroux, Lauren Berlant, Melinda Cooper, David Theo Goldberg, Jasbir Puar, Lisa Duggan and Sara Ahmed.

Tuesdays 1:00–3:50pm