The Image: History of Media II  
ID SEM-UG 1043

**Description:** In 1859 Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote of the new science and art of photography: "Every conceivable object of Nature and Art will soon scale off its surface for us. Men will hunt all curious, beautiful, grand objects, as they hunt the cattle in South America, for their skins and leave the carcasses as of little worth." We now live in the world that Holmes could then only glimpse. In this course we will study the relationship between skin and carcass, surface and reality through the history of theatre, light, photography, film, television, and “selfies.” We will pay special attention to issues of representation, presentation, celebrity and spectacle.

**Requirements:**
1) Attendance, diligent reading, and active participation in all class discussions.
2) Three short essays--approximately 7-8 pages--over the course of the semester.
3) Image presentation: selecting, displaying and discussing an “image to think with” in class

**Notes:**
- I'm always open to suggestions on assignments. A video, poem, song, performance, web site, etc. in place of one of the written assignments is possible and could be very exciting. Just talk to me first.
- All papers handed in on time can be re-written for new grades, but the re-write must returned within two weeks of first receiving back the corrected paper and no rewrites can be handed in the last two weeks of class.
- Syllabus, assignments, links--as well as on-line class forum--can be found on Blackboard
- Plagiarism, in any form, is not tolerated. For a full review of Gallatin’s policy on plagiarism see http://gallatin.nyu.edu/about/bulletin/undergrad/policies/integrity.html

**Books:**
- Erik Barnou, *Tube of Plenty*
- Daniel Boorstin, *The Image*
- Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*
- Joshua Gamson, *Claims to Fame*
- Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*
- Alan Trachtenberg, *Classic Essays on Photography*

**Articles:**
- Plato, “Book X: On Art,” *The Republic*
- Jacques Rancière, selections from *The Politics of Aesthetics*
- *The Bible*, Exodus: 20, Isaiah: 40-45
- Qur’an, excerpt from “The Prophets”
• Wolfgang Schivelbusch, “The Stage” from *Disenchanted Night*
• Susan Sontag, “In Plato’s Cave,” from *On Photography*
• Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”
• Elizabeth Ewen, “City Lights” from *Channels of Desire*
• Tom Gunning, “Buster Keaton or The Work of Comedy in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” from *Cineaste*
• Radio Act of 1927
• “Black and White Television,” *Primary Documents #3*
• Deborah Willis, “Picturing Us,” from *African American Identity in Photography*
• Leo Braudy, “The Longing of Alexander” from “The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History”
• Nick Mirzoeff, “How to See Yourself,” from *How to See the World*

**Videos:**
*Kleptomaniac* – Edison Films  
*Sherlock Jr* – Buster Keaton  
*Midnight Ramble* – American Experience  
*Quiz Show Scandal* – American Experience

All books can be bought at Bluestockings Books, 172 Allen Street (a block and a half below Houston in the Lower East Side). Copies of the essays -- for reference only: do not copy or download -- are available on Blackboard.

**Semester Schedule:**

**Jan 23 M**  **Course Introduction**

**Jan 25 W**  **Representation and Reality**  

**Jan 30 M**  **Graven Images**  

**Feb 1 W**  **Learning to Watch**  
READ: Wolfgang Schivelbusch, “The Stage”

**Feb 6 M**  **The Photograph: I**  
READ: Oliver Wendell Holmes, “The Stereoscope and the Stereograph” 
Louis Daguerre, “Daguerreotype”  
Charles Baudelaire, “The Modern Public and Photography”  
all in Alan Trachtenberg’s *Classic Essays on Photograph*

**Feb 8 W**  **The Photograph: II**  
READ: Lewis Hine, “Social Photography,”  
Bernice Abbott, “Photography at the Crossroads”  
Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, “Photography”
Man Ray, “The Age of Light”
all in Alan Trachtenberg’s *Classic Essays on Photography*

**First Assignment Handed Out**

**Field Trip: MOMA Permanent Photo Exhibition (after Class)**

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**Feb 13 M**  
The Politics of Images  
READ: Susan Sontag, “In Plato’s Cave,” from *On Photography*  
Jacques Rancière, “The Intolerable Image” *The Emancipated Spectator*

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**Feb 15 W**  
Images in the Age of Reproduction  
READ: Walter Benjamin, “Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”

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**Feb 20 M**  
NO CLASS – PRESIDENTS’ DAY

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**Feb 23 W**  
Early Film: Active Audience  
WATCH: *Kleptomaniac*  
READ: Elizabeth Ewen, “City Lights”

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**Feb 27 M**  
Going Hollywood  
WATCH: *Sherlock Jr.*  
READ: Tom Gunning, “Buster Keaton or The Work of Comedy in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (Read ahead in *Tube of Plenty*)

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**Mar 1 W**  
Black and White Film  
WATCH: *Midnight Ramble*  
READ: Deborah Willis, “Picturing Us,” from *Picturing Us: African American Identity in Photography; Primary Documents* “Black and White Television” (Read ahead in *Tube of Plenty*)

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**Mar 6 M**  
Learning to See  
DISCUSS: *Sherlock Jr* and *Midnight Ramble*  
(Read ahead in *Tube of Plenty*)  
**DUE: First Assignment**  
Second Assignment handed out

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**Mar 8 W**  
Broadcasting and the Birth of TV  
and “Radio Act of 1927”  
**FIELD TRIP: Museum of the Moving Image (After Class)**

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**Mar 13&15**  
NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

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**Mar 20 M**  
Coming into its Own  
WATCH: *Quiz Show Scandal*  
READ: Erik Barnou, *Tube of Plenty* pp. 152-248

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**Mar 22 W**  
TV America  
DISCUSS: *Quiz Show Scandal*
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Reading Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar 27 M</td>
<td>Pseudo Events</td>
<td>READ: Daniel Boorstin, <em>The Image</em>, up to p.76</td>
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<td>DUE: Second assignment</td>
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<td>Third Assignment handed out</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 29 W</td>
<td>Pseudo Life</td>
<td>READ: Daniel Boorstin, <em>The Image</em>, pp. 77-180</td>
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<td>Apr 5 W</td>
<td>Modern Deities: Celebrity</td>
<td>READ: Leo Braudy, “The Longing of Alexander” and Joshua Gamson, <em>Claims to Fame</em> up to p. 54</td>
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<td>Apr 10 M</td>
<td>Manufacturing Fame</td>
<td>READ: Joshua Gamson, <em>Claims to Fame</em> pp. 57 - 125</td>
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<td>Apr 12 W</td>
<td>Without You I’m Nothing</td>
<td>READ: Joshua Gamson, <em>Claims to Fame</em> pp. 129 –196</td>
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<td>WATCH: Facebook</td>
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<td>Apr 16 M</td>
<td>Spectacular Capitalism</td>
<td>READ: Guy Debord, <em>Society of the Spectacle</em> #s 1-72.</td>
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<td>Apr 19 W</td>
<td>Society of the Spectacle</td>
<td>READ: Guy Debord, <em>Society of the Spectacle</em> #s 125-221</td>
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<td>DUE: Third Assignment</td>
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<td>Apr 24 M</td>
<td>The Active Spectator</td>
<td>READ: Jacques Rancière, “The Emancipated Spectator” from <em>The Emancipated Spectator</em></td>
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<td>Apr 26 W</td>
<td>The Selfie</td>
<td>READ: Nick Mirzoeff, “How to See Yourself,” from <em>How to See the World</em></td>
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<td>May 1 M</td>
<td>Image and Reality</td>
<td>CHART: Variances of the Relationship of Image to Reality</td>
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<td>May 3 W</td>
<td>The Image</td>
<td>Catch up and wrap up</td>
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<td>May 8 M</td>
<td>The Image</td>
<td>Catch up and wrap up</td>
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*All Work Due on May 8th in class*