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 “architainment.” 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 6-8 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://www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html

Books:
- Erik Barnou, Tube of Plenty
- Daniel Boorstin, The Image
- Guy Debord, Society of the Spectacle
- Joshua Gamson, Claims to Fame
- Jacques Rancièreme, The Emancipated Spectator
- Alan Trachtenberg, Classic Essays on Photography
- Venturi, Scott Brown & Izenour, Learning from Las Vegas

Articles:
- Plato, “Book X: On Art,” The Republic
- Jacques Rancièreme, sections from The Politics of Aesthetics
- The Bible, Exodus: 20, Isaiah: 40-45
- Qur'an, excerpt from “The Prophets”
- Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Avodet Kochavim
• St. John of Damascus, On the Divine Image
• Wolfgang Schivelbusch, “The Stage” from Disenchanted Night
• 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
• Leo Braudy, “The Longing of Alexander” from The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and Its History
• Stephen Duncombe, “Imagine an Ethical Spectacle” from Dream: Re-Imagining Progressive Politics in an Age of Fantasy

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
READ: Plato, “‘Book X: On Art,’ from The Republic and Jacques Rancière, from The Politics of Aesthetics

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”
al in Alan Trachtenberg’s Classic Essays on Photography
First Assignment Handed Out

Feb 13 M  Images in the Age of Reproduction
READ: Walter Benjamin, “Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”

Feb 15 W  Early Film: Active Audience
WATCH: Kleptomaniac
READ: Elizabeth Ewen, “City Lights”

Feb 20 M  NO CLASS – PRESIDENTS’ DAY

Feb 23 W  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)

Feb 27 M  Black and White Film
WATCH: Midnight Ramble
READ: Primary Documents “Black and White Television” (Read ahead in Tube of Plenty)

Feb 29 W  Learning to See
DISCUSS: Sherlock Jr and Midnight Ramble
(Read ahead in Tube of Plenty)
DUE: First Assignment
Second Assignment handed out

Mar 5 M  Broadcasting and the Birth of TV
READ: Erik Barnou, Tube of Plenty pp.1-60, 99-148
and “Radio Act of 1927”

Mar 7 W  Coming into its Own
WATCH: Quiz Show Scandal
READ: Erik Barnou, Tube of Plenty pp. 152-248

Mar 12&14  NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Mar 19 M  TV America
DISCUSS: Quiz Show Scandal

Mar 21 W  Pseudo Events
READ: Daniel Boorstin, *The Image*, up to p.76
DUE: Second assignment
Third Assignment handed out

Mar 26 M  Pseudo Life
READ: Daniel Boorstin, *The Image*, pp. 77-180

Mar 28 W  Living in the Image
READ: Daniel Boorstin, *The Image*, pp. 181-261

Apr 2 M  Modern Deities: Celebrity
READ: Leo Braudy, “The Longing of Alexander” and Joshua Gamson, *Claims to Fame* up to p. 54

Apr 4 W  Manufacturing Fame
READ: Joshua Gamson, *Claims to Fame* pp. 57 - 125

Apr 9 M  Without You I’m nothing
READ: Joshua Gamson, *Claims to Fame* pp. 129 –196
WATCH: Facebook

Apr 11 W  Spectacular Capitalism
READ: Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* #s 1-72.

Apr 16 M  Society of the Spectacle
READ: Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* #s 125-221
DUE: Third Assignment
Fourth Assignment handed out

Apr 18 W  Learning from Las Vegas
READ: Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*

Apr 23 M  Ethical Spectacle?
READ: Stephen Duncombe, “Imagine an Ethical Spectacle”

Apr 25 W  The Active Spectator
READ: Jacques Rancière, “The Emancipated Spectator” from *The Emancipated Spectator*

Apr 30 M  The Politics of Images
READ: Jacques Rancière, “The Intolerable Image” and “The Pensive Image” from *The Emancipated Spectator*

May 2 W  Image and Reality
CHART: Variances of the Relationship of Image to Reality

May 7 M  The Image
Catch up and wrap up

*All Work Due on May 7th in class*