

LIT 6856. Cultural Studies: Interventions, Spring 2019
Professor: Dr. Trevor Mowchun

The Image World: Themes and Experiments

Class: Graduate seminar room (TUR 4112)—Wednesday, periods 3-5 (9:35am-12:35pm)
 Screening: ROL 115—Thursday, periods E1-E3 (7:20pm-10:10pm); projectionist: Matthew Barkley

Office hours (TUR 4336): Wednesday 1:15pm-3:00pm and Thursday 4:15pm-5:30pm, or by appointment.

Email: tmowchun@ufl.edu (please allow at least 24 hours for a response)

Office phone number: 352-294-2839

Media Assistant: Jessica Murray (TUR 4303)

Availability: Tuesday periods 9-10 (4:05pm-6pm), Wednesday periods 6-8 (12:50pm-3:50pm), Thursday periods 9-10 (4:05pm-6pm), Friday periods 4-5 (10:40am-12:30pm)

Email: jrmurray94@ufl.edu

Course Description

An exploratory course on the nature of images as we experience them today (from art objects to historical objects to fundamental facts of our everyday life), we will be driven by some very basic yet demanding questions: What do images *do*? What do different kinds of images do *differently*? What do *we* do with images when we view them thoughtfully, and how are we affected in turn when we allow ourselves to be carried away by them? Why do some images enthrall while others barely scrape our awareness? Why has the image become so vital to our way of life and how have technologies of visual representation like photography and film changed our way of life? The image-based mediums of painting, photography and film will be considered individually and in light of each other, as “image fields” within the increasingly complex and rapidly changing contexts of contemporary visual culture. Today, amidst a dense saturation and daily consumption of images, it is more important than ever to learn how to view such images critically without diminishing their remarkable powers of illumination and arrest. To this end, classes will feature a cluster of questions and contexts designed to expand our everyday habits and horizons of viewing. Ideas within and between film studies, aesthetics, art history, philosophy, psychology and ethics will be developed in relation to various motifs, movements, and epiphanies from the visual arts. With text and image in either hand, some ideas to be considered are as follows: the ambiguity of the image, the historical evolution of realism, the ruptures of abstraction, chance, the psychology of analogue and digital images, the optical unconscious, the candid versus the staged, shock value, image pollution, and the ocularcentrism of the West.

In addition to being interdisciplinary, the methods of this seminar on the image are also of a hybrid nature encompassing both theoretical and artistic modes of inquiry. Students will be encouraged to think openly and freely, to develop their own methods of interdisciplinary research and creation, exploring the resonance between readings and screenings through response papers and video essays. The video essay will also be studied as a way of thinking in audiovisual terms, with a selection of screenings devoted to exemplars of this relatively recent genre of “cinematic scholarship.” (Students will be provided with access to the English

department's production and post-production equipment; basic proficiency in video editing in particular is recommended but not required. Collaborations on the video essays are possible and encouraged.) Regardless of the forms of thought developed throughout this course, our primary mandate will be to stage a meaningful dialogue between ideas and images in an effort to intellectualize our senses and sensitize our intellect. The absence of a single method or overarching paradigm to tackle "the image world" calls for an expansive, deeply engaged perspective that is both theoretical and hands-on, one with an openness for intellectual and creative experiment. Be prepared for an intense and exciting semester of reading, viewing, thinking and making.

Equipment, Technical Assistance, and Proficiency (for video essay projects)

The Department of English provides production and post-production equipment, including Adobe Premiere editing software, however you are free to use your own equipment if you so choose. A basic proficiency test administered by our media assistant will be required before checking out equipment for the first time, particularly the department's cameras.

Our media assistant will be available in the equipment room (TUR 4303) to conduct basic proficiency tests and provide demonstrations of production and postproduction equipment, in addition to assisting with any technical questions you may have in person and via email. Please be aware that technical support is restricted to the department's onsite resources. Hours of availability are listed at the top of the syllabus.

In order to record, store, transfer and regularly back up your work you may need all or some of the following equipment:

- SD card for video recording (recommended: SanDisk 32GB Extreme Pro SDHC UHS-1 Memory Card)
- SD card for audio recording (recommended: SanDisk 16GB Ultra UHS-1 SDHC Memory Card class 10)
- External hard drive for project storage (recommended: WD 1TB My Passport USB 3.0 Secure Portable Hard Drive)
- SD card reader (recommended: Transcend RDF5 USB 3.0 SDHC / SDXC / microSDHC/SDXC Memory Card Reader) *The department's iMac computers have SD slots, as do the majority of laptops

Equipment and Lab Policies

The production room is located in TUR 4303. Throughout the semester you will have 24/7 access and will be given keys to the building and to an interior editing room. If you lose either of these keys, you will be charged \$50 for a replacement. To sign out keys please consult with the technician during scheduled office hours in TUR 4303. Be sure to return your keys at the end of the semester.

When checking out equipment, the technician will manage all equipment sign-ins and sign-outs, support all computer platforms and deal with any equipment problems, exchanges, repairs etc. She will provide a schedule and forms for requesting equipment for all projects and determine return dates in accordance with the syllabus and the course deadlines. You are fully responsible for all equipment that you have signed out, including any mishandling, damage or loss of gear.

Online technical resources:

- Video Production Tips (from Penn State Media Commons):
<https://mediacommons.psu.edu/2017/02/01/video-production-tips/>
- Department camera manual—Canon Rebel T5i (information about video starts on page 173; page 176 discusses manual video settings): <http://gd1p01.c-wss.com/gds/5/0300010905/07/eos-rebelt5i-700d-im7-en.pdf>
- Film glossary (from New York Film Academy):
<https://www.nyfa.edu/student-resources/glossary/>
- Basic Adobe Premiere editing tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hls3Tp7JS8E>

Schedule:

- * The screening schedule is subject to change.
- * Films shown on the Thursday screening pertain to the following week in which they are scheduled and will be taken up on the next Wednesday class.
- * In addition to feature films, screenings will consist of thematically linked clusters of clips. The screening session will typically involve a feature film and sometimes a short film—only these are indicated in the syllabus. The clip materials will be shown in class. Titles of all paintings, photographs and films shown in class will be posted on Canvas for your reference.
- * There will be no textbook for the course. All readings are on reserve and generally available for download through Canvas. Readings are assigned to animate weekly themes and will be used less as guides than catalysts for discussion.

Week 1 (Jan. 9-10): Introduction and Some Cinematic Awakenings

Rainer Maria Rilke, “Archaic Torso of Apollo,” in *Ahead of All Parting: Selected Poetry and Prose of Rainer Maria Rilke*, translated by Stephen Mitchell (Modern Library, 1995).

Screening (short): *Untitled (for Marilyn)* (Stan Brakhage, USA, 1992)

Screening (feature): *San Soleil* (Chris Marker, France, 1983)

Week 2 (Jan. 16-17): Visual Thinking and the Pictorial Challenge

Rudolf Arnheim, “A Plea for Visual Thinking,” in *The Language of Images*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 171-179.

John R. Searle, “*Las Meninas* and the Paradoxes of Pictorial Representation,” in *The Language of Images*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 247-258.

James Elkins, “Why Don’t Art Historians Attend Aesthetics Conferences?”, in *Art History Versus Aesthetics*, ed. James Elkins (New York and London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 39-49.

Screening (feature): *Toute une nuit* (Chantal Akerman, France/Belgium, 1982)

Week 3 (Jan. 23-24): Grounding the Image, Redeeming the Everyday

Maurice Blanchot, "Everyday Speech," in *The Everyday*, ed. Stephen Johnstone (London and Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel Ventures Limited), pp. 34-42.

Siegfried Kracauer, "Epilogue: Film in Our Time," in *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 285-311. Notes pp. 336-337.

Susan Sontag, "One Culture and the New Sensibility," in *Against Interpretation, and Other Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1986), pp. 293-304.

Screening (short): *La Morte Rouge* (Victor Erice, Spain, 2006)

Screening (feature): *Blue* (Derek Jarman, UK, 1993)

Week 4 (Jan. 30-31): The Form/Formlessness of the Essay

Essayists on the Essay: Montaigne to Our Time, ed. Carl H. Klaus and Ned Stuckey-French (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012).

Selections: Michel de Montaigne, "From, 'Of Practice,' 'Of Repentance,' and 'Of Vanity'—1850"; Ralph Waldo Emerson, "From 'Montaigne, or the Skeptic'—1850"; Walter Pater, "From 'Dialectic'—1893"; Theodore Adorno, "From 'The Essay as Form'—1958"; Susan Sontag, "Introduction to *The Best American Essays*—1992"; Cynthia Ozick, "She: Portrait of the Essay as a Warm Body—1998"; John Bresland, "On the Origin of the Video Essay"—2011

Screening (short): *A Movie* (Bruce Conner, USA, 1958), *Wavelength: For Those Who Don't Have the Time* (Michael Snow, Canada, 2003)

Screening (feature): *Contempt* (Jean-Luc Godard, France, 1963)

Week 5 (Feb. 6-7): Mobile Mediums

Stanley Cavell, "An Autobiography of Companions," "Sights and Sounds," and "Photograph and Screen," in *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film*, Enlarged Edition (London and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 3-25. Notes pp. 231-233.

Noël Carroll, "Forget the Medium!", in *Engaging the Moving Image* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 1-9.

José Ortega y Gasset, "Meditations on the Frame," trans. Andrea L. Bell, *Perspecta*, Vol. 26 (1990): pp. 185-190.

Screening (short): *Who Killed Brown Owl* (Joe Lawlor and Christine Molloy, UK, 2004)

Screening (feature): *Dream of Light* (Victor Erice, Spain, 1992)

Week 6 (Feb. 13-14): The Look and Logic of Realism

Norman Bryson, "The Natural Attitude," in *Visual Culture: The Reader*, ed. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999), pp. 23-32.

Mary Ann Doane, "Indexicality: Trace and Sign: Introduction," *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (2007): pp. 1-6.

Laura Marcus, "Cinematic Realism: 'A Recreation of the World in its Own Image,'" in *A Concise Companion to Realism*, Revised Edition, ed. Matthew Beaumont (Malden, MA and Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 195-210.

Screening (short): *idizwadidiz* (Isiah Medina, Canada, 2018)

Screening (feature): *Mirror* (Andrei Tarkovsky, USSR, 1975)

Week 7 (Feb. 20-21): The Image as Other

Giovanna Borradori, Marcia Brennan, Linda Connor, Mary Ann Doane, Angus Fletcher, Peter Geimer, Gloria Kury, Mark Ledbury, C. Brian Rose, Frances Spalding, Chris Spring, "Notes from the Field: Contingency," *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 94, No. 3 (Sept. 2012): pp. 344-361.

Giorgio Agamben, "Notes on Gesture," in *Infancy and History: The Destruction of Experience*, trans. Liz Heron (London and New York: Verso, 2007), pp. 147-156.

W.J.T. Mitchell, "What Do Pictures Want?," in *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp. 28-48.

Screening (short): *Interface* (Harun Farocki)

Screening (feature): *Holy Motors* (Leos Carax, France, 2012)

Week 8 (Feb. 27-28): From Analogue to Digital Images and Psychologies

André Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," in *What Is Cinema?*, Volume 1, ed. and trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 9-16.

Richard Misek, "Digital Color," in *Chromatic Cinema: A History of Screen Color* (Malden, MA, and Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp. 152-180. Notes pp. 192-194.

Vilém Flusser, "Digital Apparition," in *Electronic Culture: Technology and Visual Representation*, trans. Andreas Broeckmann, ed. Timothy Druckrey (New York: Aperture, 1996), pp. 242-245.

Screening (short): *Rose Hobart* (Joseph Cornell, USA, 1936), *Alone. Life Wastes Andy Hardy* (Martin Arnold, Austria, 1998)

Screening (feature): *The Phantom of Liberty* (Luis Buñuel, France, 1974)

Week 9—no classes, spring break

Week 10 (Mar. 13-14): Cinephilia, Surrealism, and the Optical Unconscious

Martin Jay, "Photo-unrealism: The Contribution of the Camera to the Crisis of Ocularcentrism," in *Vision and Textuality*, ed. Stephen Melville and Bill Readings (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1995), pp. 344-360.

George Toles, "Rescuing Fragments: A New Task for Cinephilia," *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Winter 2010): pp. 159-166.

Nicolas Calas and Elena Calas, "In the Light of Dreams," in *Light in Art*, ed. Thomas B. Hess and John Ashbery (New York: Collier Books, 1971), pp. 1-20.

Screening (feature): *Play Time* (Jacques Tati, France, 1967)

Week 11 (Mar. 20-21): Phenomenologies of the Image

T.J. Clark, Preface and Excerpt from *The Sight of Death: An Experiment in Art Writing* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 1-13, and 218-229. Notes p. 243, and pp. 251-252.

Roland Barthes, Chapters 1-10 from *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: The Noonday Press and Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981), pp. 3-27.

Vivian Sobchack, "Phenomenology and the Film Experience" and "The Embodied and Enworlded Eye: Perception and Expression," in *The Address of the Eye: A Phenomenology of Film Experience* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 3-14.

Screening (short): *November* (Hito Steyerl, Germany, 2004); examples of videographic essays by Eric Faden, Catherine Grant and Kevin B. Lee

Week 12 (Mar. 27-28): The Videographic Essay

Christian Keathley and Jason Mittell, *The Videographic Essay: Criticism in Sound and Image* (Montreal: Caboose, 2016)

Screening (short): *13 Most Beautiful... Songs for Andy Warhol Screen Tests* (Andy Warhol, USA, 1964-66)

Screening (feature): *Christine* (Antonio Campos, USA/UK, 2016)

Week 13 (Apr. 3-4): Visual Truths and Lies

André Bazin, "The Myth of Total Cinema," in *What Is Cinema?*, Volume 1, ed. and trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 17-22. Notes pp. 173-174.

Stanley Cavell, "Excursus: Some Modernist Painting," in *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film*, Enlarged Edition (London and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 108-118. Notes pp. 239-240.

Roland Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image," in *Visual Culture: The Reader*, ed. Jessica Evans and Stuart Hall (London, Thousand Oaks, and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999), pp. 33-40.

Jean Epstein, "Photogénie and the Imponderable," in *French Film Theory and Criticism: A History/Anthology 1907-1939*, Volume 2: 1929-1939, ed. Richard Abel (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), pp. 188-192.

Screening (feature): *The Master* (Paul Thomas Anderson, USA, 2013)

Week 14 (Apr. 10-11): From the Sacred to the Profane

James Elkins, "A Very Brief History of Religion and Art," in *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 5-20. Notes pp. 117-120.

Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility: Second Version" in *The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility, and Other Writings on Media*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Rodney Livingstone, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Brigid Doherty, and Thomas Levin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 19-55.

David Morgan, "Enchantment, Disenchantment, Re-Enchantment," in *Re-Enchantment*, ed. James Elkins and David Morgan (New York and London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 3-22.

Screening (feature): *Afterschool* (Antonio Campos, USA, 2008)

Week 15 (Apr. 17-18): Image Pollution and Violent Images

Vilém Flusser, "The Reception of Photographs" and "The Photographic Universe," in *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, trans. Anthony Matthews (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2000), pp. 57-75.

Susan Sontag, Chapters 1-3 from *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), pp. 3-58.

Screening (short): *Eye Myth* (Stan Brakhage, USA, 1972) *screen 3 times, *Kindering* (Brakhage, USA, 1987), *Mothlight* (Brakhage, USA, 1963), *The Domain of the Moment* (Brakhage, USA, 1977), *World of Glory* (Roy Andersson, Sweden, 1991), 88:88 (Isiah Medina, Canada, 2015)

Week 16 (Apr. 24): Wondering and Wandering: Towards an Ethics of Image Production and Reception

Andrei Tarkovsky, "The Artist's Responsibility," in *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*, trans. Kitty Hunter-Blair (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), pp. 176-201 (excluding pp. 190-191 and pp. 195-197).

Stan Brakhage, Excerpt from *Metaphors on Vision*, in *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*, Fifth Edition, ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 228-234.

Adriano Pedrosa, “Re-Making Time,” in *Making Time: Considering Time as a Material in Contemporary Video & Film*, curated by Amy Cappellazzo (New York: Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art and Distributed Art Publishers, Inc., 2000), pp. 19-23.

Coursework:

3 response papers (3-4 pages each), Due in class: Jan. 30, Feb. 20, Mar. 13	30%
Moving Image Experiment (2-4min), Due: Apr. 5, via WeTransfer	15%
Essay (8-12 pages) or video essay (5-10min), Due in class or WeTransfer: Apr. 24	30%
Oral presentation	15%
Participation	10%

Response papers are thoughtful engagements with the readings and artworks explored in class. The goal is not to summarize anything or toss quick and easy answers to complex material. Rather these papers are opportunities to contemplate, experiment and build a deeper understanding of the course content in a more direct, imaginative and unsystematic way. More detailed instructions are forthcoming.

The Moving Image Experiment will explore the scholarly, artistic, and/or pedagogical possibilities of the video essay. The conceptualization and realization of a short video essay or audiovisual fragment of thought is also an opportunity to combine the intellectual rigor of the scholarly essay *and* the aesthetic power of a work of art. The experiment can be seen as interdisciplinarity itself in action where you will have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate your own manner of “audiovisual thinking.” In the process, we will test to what extent a video essay/fragment can reach the depth, detail and precision of written essays/thoughts. Two possible paths you may undertake in the development of the moving image experiment are as follows: audiovisual hermeneutics and speculative reflection. The former involves an audiovisual interpretation of one of the films or film clips screened in class, and the latter is a more artistic activation/exploration of one of the concepts taken from the readings or lectures.

The oral presentation is a 15-20 minute consideration of some of the ideas and questions emerging from the readings and films for a given week. Depending on your interests, you may focus more on the readings or screenings—though I would like to see some possible connections between them. Use of quotes from the readings, clips from the films, and any other outside scholarly and/or artistic material is encouraged. Conclude your presentation with 1-2 questions or speculations for further discussion. These presentations can also be used as a testing ground for material from the response papers or the moving image experiment.

The final paper or video essay will be a more substantial consideration of a suggested topic or topic of your own choosing. You may expand and develop one of your response papers or the moving image experiment, if you feel it is worth pursuing in greater depth and contains the seeds of a larger research project. However, you are also free to start from scratch if a new set of ideas and connections emerge in your thinking. It is highly recommended that you discuss the overall direction and details of your final work with me during office hours or via email, especially if

you plan on pursuing ideas not yet tackled in your shorter work. You can use the course material as a theoretical foundation and/or inspiration for analyses involving multiple artworks and artistic mediums.

* Submission of written material: I require hardcopies of all written assignments, submitted in class and on time. If you are unable to submit your work in class, please let me know the reason and email me a PDF file on the due date. If you cannot meet a deadline then please inform me as soon as possible and we will figure out how best to proceed. Use 1.5 or double spacing, reasonable formatting and bibliographic referencing, as per usual.

* Submission of film material: I recommend using a free file sharing service called WeTransfer instead of flash drives. On WeTransfer you can upload files upwards of 2GB, which should be more than sufficient. If your files exceed the maximum size be sure to compress them. Send your files to my email address: tmowchun@ufl.edu. Once you successfully transfer your files using this service, I will receive a link with the time of submission and you will receive a confirmation email once they have been downloaded. Please ensure your files are labelled with your name and project title, if applicable.

Policies and Services

* I will respond to emails usually within a day or two. While email communication may seem indispensable nowadays, you may find it more productive and interesting to come meet with me during office hours to discuss the course material. If you are unable to meet during scheduled office hours then feel free to make an appointment.

* If you have to miss a class for any reason, please let me know ahead of time. A maximum of 2 absences will be permitted with advance notice and a reasonable excuse. Communication with the instructor is crucial to avoid misunderstandings related to absences. These policies are consistent with the UF's attendance policies. For more information on these policies, please visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

* I respectfully ask all students to refrain from using cell phones and internet during class and screenings.

* Please do not record any class lecture without permission from me.

* Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism. Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code:

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

* Students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://drc.dso.ufl.edu/>).

* For information on UF Grading policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

* For counseling or urgent help you may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center at 352-392-1575, or contact them online: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/services/individual/>

* UF's policy on Harassment: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty:

<https://hr.ufl.edu/forms-policies/policies-managers/sexual-harassment/>