

PROF. CHRISTOPHER B. STEINER
DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY
CONNECTICUT COLLEGE
OFFICE: CUMMINGS 211 (x2797)
OFFICE HOURS: WED. 2:00 – 4:00 PM

SPRING 2007
AHI/ANT 356
MON & WED 10:25-11:40, C308
FILM SCREENINGS WED 7:00PM, C308

Imagining Otherness in Visual Culture



*Tertia, terra premeis exordia, ducit astra
Vespere, hylionem dicitur tunc AFRICA nomen*

*Tertio, sed verum pro hac novitate suspendi
Primas, quoniam sunt molibus eternum*

DESCRIPTION

This course examines race, gender, and ethnicity in the creation, circulation and consumption of visual images. After studying the problem of representation in art history, anthropology, and postcolonial theory, we move chronologically through stages in the history of European visual images of Otherness -- from fanciful monsters, to invented wildmen, to newly "discovered" cultures, to colonial subjects, to neo-tribal fantasies. Interleaved within this historical framework, we examine selected topics that offer critical insights into theories of representation and the construction of meaning in the visual field -- Orientalism, Primitivism, essentialism, universalism, race and gender stereotypes, museum exhibitions and world's fairs, advertisement and popular culture, film and television.

In addition, the course also considers what might be called the counter gaze -- i.e., representations of the "dominant" culture by those who are, or have been, its subject(s). These powerful and complex images, often forged in the spirit of resistance and critique, challenge us to avoid naive binary structures of the West/other.

II. REQUIREMENTS

In order to pass the course, all assignments and exams must be completed and submitted to the professor in a timely manner. No exceptions.

Plagiarism, cheating, and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated, and will likely result in a failing grade on the assignment and the course.

Finally, I reserve the right to assign a grade of "F" to anyone who misses more than three classes (without a verifiable and valid excuse).

1. *Class attendance, participation, and feedback (20%).* You are required to attend all weekly class sections, as well as the evening film screenings. Informed and active participation in class discussion is essential, and will be taken into account in your final course grade. Also:

Discussion question(s) – each week you are responsible for writing one question to help stimulate classroom discussion. The question(s) should

demonstrate your understanding of the key issues and arguments of the weekly reading. A question may address a single reading, or may call for a comparison/contrast between more than one reading. The questions should be thoughtful, informed and intelligent. Thus, for example, if one were to write a discussion question based on a reading of Melville's *Moby Dick*, an informed question might read, "In what ways does the whale in *Moby Dick* represent both Ahab's Self and Other?" A poor question might read, "What kind of animal is Ahab hunting?" Hopefully, you get the point! **These questions must be posted to the course webpage prior to our Monday class meeting, no later than Sundays at 10pm.**

2. Film screening reaction papers (20%). Following each film screening on Wednesday evening, you are responsible for writing a one-page, single-spaced (maximum) reaction to the film. Each paper is due by the following Monday class. You should use the "Film Screening Reaction Paper Guidelines" (which appear on the course webpage) to frame your response to the films. There are ten (10) evening film screenings and **you are required to hand in nine (9) reaction papers.** Thus you may select one film for which you do not have to write a reaction paper. However, you **MUST** hand in a sheet of paper with your name and an indication that "I am not handing in a film reaction paper for *TITLE OF FILM*".

3. Midterm exam (20%) To be taken in class on Wednesday, March 7.

4. Term research paper (20%). Approximately 10 double-spaced pages. **Topic and working bibliography due Monday, April 2; Paper due in class on Wednesday, May 9.** Late papers will be marked down by one grade increment for every day that the paper is overdue.

5. Final exam (20%). In class exam to be scheduled during exam week. The final exam is cumulative (i.e., will cover materials from the **entire** semester).

III. READING ASSIGNMENTS AND CLASS TOPICS:

WEEK 1 (JAN 22 & JAN 24): INTRODUCTION TO KEYWORDS AND CONCEPTS

Key topics: What is Otherness? What are Stereotypes? What is Visual Culture? What is the relationship between visual representation and authenticity?

Required reading (to be read before class on Jan 24):

E. H. Gombrich (1956) "Truth and Stereotype." In Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation, pp. 63-90. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

WEEK 2 (JAN 29 & JAN 31): WILDERNESS AND MONSTERS

FILM SCREENING #1 (Wednesday, Jan 31 at 7pm): *The Giant Behemoth*, Eugene Lourié, dir. 1959 (71 mins.)

Key topics: Ancient monsters; Medieval wildman; nature vs. culture; imaging the unimaginable; ambiguity of self/other in representations of the monstrous.

Required reading:

Annemarie de Waal Malefijt (1968) "Homo Monstrosus," Scientific American 219(4): 112-118.

Roger Bartra (1994) "Ethnography on the Medieval Wild Man," pp.85-125. In Wild Men in the Looking Glass: The Mythic Origins of European Otherness. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

WEEK 3 (FEB 5 & FEB 7): EUROPEAN ENCOUNTERS IN THE AGE OF DISCOVERY

FILM SCREENING #2 (Wednesday, Feb 7 at 7pm): *How Tasty was my Little Frenchman*. Nelson Pereira dos Santos, dir. 1973 (80 mins).

Key topics: Discourses on the Noble Savage and Golden Age; cannibalism in the New World; repetition and redundancy in the construction of stereotypes.

Required reading:

Bernadette Bucher (1981) "The Great Voyages (1590-1634)," pp. 3-42 and "The Old Tupinambá Cannibals," pp. 46-64. In Icon and Conquest: A Structural Analysis of the Illustrations of de Bry's Great Voyages. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Alden T. Vaughan (1993) "People of Wonder: England Encounters the New World's Natives," pp. 11-23. In New Worlds of Wonders European Images of the Americas, edited by Rachel Doggett. Washington, DC: The Folger Shakespeare Library.

WEEK 4 (FEB 12 & FEB 14): CLASSES CANCELLED

WEEK 5 (FEB 19 & FEB 21): ORIENTALISM

FILM SCREENING #3 (Wednesday, Feb 21 at 7pm): *M. Butterfly*, David Cronenberg, dir. 1993 (101 mins).

Key Topics: What is Orientalism?; the image of the harem; stereotypes of Asian women.

Required reading:

Linda Nochlin (1989) "The Imaginary Orient." In The Politics of Vision, pp. 33-59. New York: Harper & Row.

Dorinne K. Kondo (1990) "*M. Butterfly*: Orientalism, Gender, and a Critique of Essentialist Identity," Cultural Critique 16 (Fall): 5-30.

WEEK 6 (Feb 26 & FEB 28): PRIMITIVISM, PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE QUESTION OF "RACE"

FILM SCREENING #4 (Wednesday, Feb 28 at 7pm): *Princess Tam Tam*, starring Josephine Baker, 1935 (80 min).

Key topics: The "idea" of the primitive in art (Gauguin, the Brucke, Picasso); Leni Riefenstahl; photography and scientific racism.

Required reading:

Colin Rhodes (1994) "Savage Exoticism," pp. 68-106. In Primitivism and Modern Art. London: Thames and Hudson.

Brian Wallis (1995) "Black Bodies, White Science: Louis Agassiz's Slave Daguerreotypes," American Art 9(2): 39-61.

WEEK 7 (MARCH 5 & MARCH 7): EDWARD CURTIS AND "INDIAN"

NO FILM SCREENING

MIDTERM EXAM (in class) on Wednesday, March 7

Key topics: "Imperialist Nostalgia"; Edward Curtis and the invention of the American Indian.

Required reading:

Renato Rosaldo (1989) "Imperialist Nostalgia," pp. 68-87. In Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis. Boston: Beacon Press.

Christopher Lyman (1982) "How *The Indian* Was Made," pp. 62-78. In The Vanishing Race and Other Illusions: Photographs of Indians by Edward Curtis. New York: Pantheon.

SPRING BREAK

WEEK 8 (MARCH 26 & MARCH 28): WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE "FAMILY OF MAN"?

FILM SCREENING #5 (Wednesday, March 28 at 7pm): *A Global Affair*, starring Bob Hope, 1963 (86 min).

Key topics: *Family of Man* exhibition; *It's a Small World* (Disneyland); United Colors of Benetton ad campaign; problems with essentialism and universalism.

Required reading:

Roland Barthes (1972) "The Great Family of Man" and "The *Blue Guide*" in Mythologies. London: Jonathan Cape.

Jeff Rosen (1993) "Merchandising Multiculturalism: Benetton and the New Cultural Relativism," New Art Examiner 21(3): 18-26.

Sally Price (1989) "The Universality Principle," pp. 23-36. In Primitive Art in Civilized Places. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

WEEK 9 (APRIL 2 & APRIL 4): THE BODY AS SPECTACLE OF OTHERNESS

FILM SCREENING #6 (Wednesday, April 4 at 7pm): *Freaks*, Tod Browning, dir. 1932 (64 mins).

Key topics: The social constructions of the "normal" body; Hottentot Venus; Freak shows.

Required reading:

T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting (1999) Black Venus: Sexualized Savages, Primal Fears, and Primitive Narratives in French. Chapel Hill, NC: Duke University Press. Pages TBA.

Robert Bogdan (1996) "The Social Construction of Freaks," pp. 23-37. In Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body, edited by Rosemarie Garland Thomson. New York: New York University Press.

WEEK 10 (APRIL 9 & APRIL 11): THE HORROR OF THE OTHER: RACISM IN *KONG KONG*

FILM SCREENING #7 (Wednesday, April 11 at 7pm): *King Kong*, Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Scheedsack, dirs. 1933 (100 mins.)

Key topics: race and miscegenation in *King Kong*; authenticity in ethnographic film; images of Africa.

Required reading:

Eric Schaefer (1999) "Timely as Today's Front Page: Vice, Exotic, and Atrocity Films," pp. 253-89. In Bold! Daring! Shocking! True!: A History of Exploitation Films, 1919-1959. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Cynthia Erb (1998) "Camera Adventure, Dangerous Contact: Documentaries and Genre Traditions Behind King Kong," pp. 65-119. In Tracking King Kong: A Hollywood Icon in World Culture. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

James Snead (1994) "Spectatorship and Capture in King Kong: The Guilty Look," pp. 1-27. In White Screens, Black Images: Hollywood from the Dark Side. New York and London: Routledge.

WEEK 11 (APRIL 16 & APRIL 18): BLACK FACE AND MAMMY

FILM SCREENING #8 (Wednesday, April 18 at 7pm): *Bamboozled*, Spike Lee, dir. 2000. (135 mins).

Key topics: African-American stereotyping; Black Americana; Blackface Minstrelsy; "Aunt Jemima"; Betye Saar; Kara Walker; Renée Cox; Michael Ray Charles; David Levinthal.

Required reading:

Jo-Ann Morgan (1995) "Mammy the Huckster: Selling the Old South for the New Century," American Art 9(1): 86-109.

Shawn-Marie Garrett (2002) "Return of the Repressed," Theater 32(2): 26-43.

WEEK 12 (APRIL 23 & APRIL 25): NEO-TRIBALISM, THE NEW NOBLE SAVAGE AND SPORT MASCOTS

FILM SCREENING #9 (Wednesday, April 25 at 7pm): *The Emerald Forest*, John Boorman, dir. 1985. (114 mins).

Key topics: Contemporary versions of the Noble Savage and the Eco-Savage; neo-tribal and punk culture; New Age religions and the image of Native American peoples.

Required reading:

Roger Sandall (2001) "Designer Tribalism," pp. 9-38. In The Culture Cult: Designer Tribalism and Other Essays. Westview Press.

Shari M. Huhndorf (2001) "Rites of Conquest: Indian Captivities in the New Age," pp. 162-98. In Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Carol Spindel (2000) Dancing at Halftime: Sports and the Controversy of American Indian Mascots, pp. 10-37. New York: NYU Press.

WEEK 13 (APRIL 30 & MAY 2): IN SEARCH OF OTHERNESS -- TOURISM AND TRAVEL

FILM SCREENING #10 (Wednesday, May 2 at 7pm): *The Sheltering Sky*, starring Debra Winger and John Malkovich. Bernardo Bertolucci, dir. 1990 (132 mins).

Key topics: Tourism and the quest for visual authenticity; tourist performances; photography and tourism; "native" views of tourists as Others.

Required reading:

Edward M. Bruner and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1994) "Masai on the Lawn: Tourist Realism in East Africa," Cultural Anthropology 9(4): 435-70.

Peter D. Osborne (2000) "Paradox Amusements: Tourism and the Modern Image" and "Travel Products: Promoting the Tourist Vision," pp. 70-91. In Travelling Light: Photography, Travel and Visual Culture. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Yosefa Loshitzky (1993) "The Tourist/Traveler Gaze: Bertolucci and Bowles's *The Sheltering Sky*," East-West Film Journal 7(2): 111-37.

WEEK 14 (MAY 7 & MAY 9): IN THE EYE OF THE COUNTER GAZE

Key topics: Images of the Other by those who historically have been subjected to Western colonialism or political/social control. What are the implications of perpetuating stereotypes in these types of representations? Guillermo Gomez-Pena, Coco Fusco, James Luna.

Required reading:

Michael D. Harris (2003) "The Language of Appropriation: Fantasies and Fallacies," pp. 190-223. In Colored Pictures: Race and Visual Representation. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Diana Taylor (1998) "A Savage Performance: Guillermo Gomez-Pena and Coco Fusco's *Couple in the Cage*," The Drama Review 42(2): 160-175.