Visual Cultures of the Modern and Global City

Course description:
This course examines visual culture through a focus on the city, from the dynamics of visuality in the nineteenth-century modern cityscape to the mega cities of globalization. We will focus in particular on the visual dynamics, visuality, culture, architecture, public art and design imaginaries of urban spaces, taking New York City as our primary case study while also looking at other cities, from the nineteenth century to the present. We will consider the politics of urban design, the city as a site of division, disaster, and memory, and the city as political activism. Modern visual culture finds its origins in the urbanscapes of cities such as Paris, London, New York, and the contemporary global landscape has given rise to the mega cities of Shanghai, Mumbai, Mexico City, and Buenos Aires. In tracing the history of the city as a site of visual culture, we can gain understanding into the complexities of global visual culture.

Course Requirements:
Students are required to attend all seminars, to undertake the reading assignments seriously before each class, and to participate fully in seminar discussions. Readings will be prioritized each week. Each week 2-3 students will be assigned to bring questions to class for discussion. We will do short exercises in relation to life in the city, which will take you out in the New York cityscape.

Students will write one short paper mid-semester of 5-7 pages (due Week 8), and one more in-depth research paper due at the end of the semester. Grades will consider class participation and short assignments 10% and paper 1 30%, paper 2 60%.

Required Texts:
Stephen Graham, *Vertical: The City from Satellites to Bunkers* (Verso 2016)
All other readings are posted in pdf on NYU Classes.
Week 1—January 29: Introduction

Week 2—February 5: Rise of the Modern City
Reading:
Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” excerpt
Lewis Mumford, “What is a City?” excerpt
Kevin Lynch, The Image of the City, excerpt
Dolores Hayden, The Power of Place, excerpt
David Harvey, Paris, Capital of Modernity, excerpt (Prologue and Chap 4)

Week 3—February 12: The Arcades, Visuality, and Modern Ways of Seeing
Reading:
Anne Friedberg, Window Shopping, Chapter 1: “The Mobilized and Virtual Gaze in Modernity” and Chapter 2: “The Passage from Arcade to Cinema”
Nicholas Mirzoeff, “World Cities, City Worlds” section on Imperial City (pp. 159-74)
Ben Singer, “Modernity, Hyperstimulus, and the Rise of Popular Sensationalism”
Walter Benjamin, “Paris, The Capital of the Nineteenth Century”
Vanessa Schwartz, Introduction to Spectacular Realities and Chapter 2: “Public Visits to the Morgue”
Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex”

Week 4—February 19: The Vertical City and the Skyscraper
Reading:
Stephen Graham, Vertical: The City from Satellites to Bunkers, Intro and Part One
Adrienne Brown, Introduction to The Black Skyscraper
Rem Koolhaus, Delirious New York, excerpt
Christoph Lindner, “New York Vertical”

Week 5—February 26: The Street and the City Underground
Reading:
Stephen Graham, Vertical: The City from Satellites to Bunkers, Part Two
Michel de Certeau, “Walking in the City”
Jane Jacobs, “The Uses of Sidewalks”
Michael Sorkin, Twenty Minutes in Manhattan, except
Week 6—March 5: The City as Consumption
Reading:
Sharon Zukin, “A Brief History of Shopping”
Christoph Grunenberg, “Wonderland: Spectacles of Display from the Bon Marche to Prada”
Vicki Howard, From Main Street to Mall, excerpt
Adam Gopnik, “Under One Roof”

Week 7—March 12: The Divided City: Division/Occupation/Segregation
Reading:
Nicholas Mirzoeff, “World Cities, City Worlds,” section on Divided Cities (pp.175-92)
Jonathan Bach, “The Berlin Wall After the Berlin Wall”
Eyal Weitzman, Hollow Land, excerpt
Ariella Azoulay “A Tour of the Museum of Regime-Made Disasters”
http://cargocollective.com/AriellaAzoulay
Simone Browne, “Everybody’s Got a Little Light Under the Sun” from Dark Matters

Spring Break March 18-22

Week 8—March 26: Mega Cities, Global Cities
Reading:
Nick Mirzoeff, “World Cities, City Worlds,” section on Global Cities (pp. 192-207)
Keller Easterling, “Introduction” and “Zone” from Extrastatecraft
Chad Haines, “Cracks in the Façade: Landscapes of Hope and Desire in Dubai”
Arjun Appadurai, The Future as Cultural Fact, excerpts
Cities in Transition, Introduction and Shane, Chinese Rapid Urbanization

Week 9—April 2: The Disaster City
Reading:
Terry Smith, The Architecture of Aftermath, excerpt
Mike Davis, Ecology of Fear, excerpt
Ashley Dawson, Extreme Cities, excerpt
Lynnell Thomas, Desire and Disaster in New Orleans, excerpt
Week 10—April 9: The City of Memory
Reading:
James Young, *The Stages of Memory*, Introduction
Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania* Chapter 1
Andreas Huyssen, “After the War: Berlin as Palimpsest”
Marita Sturken, *Post-9/11 American Memory*, excerpt

Week 11—April 16 Urban Screens, the Digital City and the Smart City
Reading:
Selections from *Urban Screens Reader*
Christine Boyer, “The Smart City in the Twenty First Century” (in *Cities in Transition*)
Smart Cities Readiness Guide https://readinessguide.smartcitiescouncil.com/

Week 12—April 23: Starchitecture, Global Finance, Security Architecture, and the Reshaping of the Skyline
Reading:
Leslie Sklair, “Iconic Architecture and Capitalist Globalization”
Aiwa Ong, “Hyperbuilding: Spectacle, Speculation and the Hyperspace of Sovereignty”
Richard Florida, *The New Urban Crisis*, excerpt
Saskia Sassen, “Who Owns Our Cities?”

Week 13—April 30: Postindustrial Style and Lifestyle
Reading:
Edward Dimendberg, *Diller, Scifidio + Renfro* (excerpts)
The High Line, Interview with architects
Richard Ocejob, *Masters of Craft*, excerpt
Sharon Zukin, *Naked City*, “Destination Culture”

Field trip to High Line

Week 14—May 7: Activism and Political Action in the City
Reading:
David Harvey, *Rebel Cities*, excerpts and “The Right to the City”
Yates McKee, *Strike Art*, Introduction and Chapter 3
Nicholas Mirzoeff, “Changing the World” from *How to see the World*
Keller Easterling, “Extrastatecraft” (Chapter 6)
Nicholas Mirzoeff, “The Space of Appearance” in *The Appearance of Black Lives Matter*