

New York University
Media, Culture, and Communication
Spring 2019
MCC-GE 2407-001
Waverly 369
Tues 2-4:10

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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 visibility in the nineteenth-century modern cityscape to the mega cities of globalization. We will focus in particular on the visual dynamics, visibility, 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 urban landscapes 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 Koolhaas, *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*Andreas Huyssen, *Other Cities, Other Worlds*: Introduction, Nestor Canclini, Mexico

City, and Ackbar Abbas, "Faking Globalization", Beatriz Sarlo on Buenos Aires

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*, excerptMike Davis, *Ecology of Fear*, excerptAshley Dawson, *Extreme Cities*, excerptLynnell Thomas, *Desire and Disaster in New Orleans*, excerpt

Week 10—April 9: The City of Memory

Reading:

James Young, *The Stages of Memory*, IntroductionErika 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:

Donald McNeil, *The Global Architect*, excerpt

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?”

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/nov/24/who-owns-our-cities-and-why-this-urban-takeover-should-concern-us-all>**Week 13—April 30: Postindustrial Style and Lifestyle**

Reading:

Edward Dimendberg, *Diller, Scofidio + Renfro* (excerpts)

The High Line, Interview with architects

Richard Ocejib, *Masters of Craft*, excerptSharon 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 3Nicholas 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*