

The Graduate Center
City University of New York
Ph.D. Program in Art History

Fall 2020 Course Descriptions

all classes meet in room 3421, unless otherwise noted

ART 70000, 54939 *Methods in Art History*

GC: Thurs. 2:00-4:00 pm, 3 credits, Prof. Claire Bishop

This course is designed to familiarize incoming graduate students in Art History with the methodological approaches that have impacted on the discipline, with a special emphasis on developments since the 1980s. A close examination of primary sources will be combined with a historiographical approach to classic art historical texts in which these ideas have been implemented. The syllabus is structured by way of a multiple choice menu to which students are invited to contribute. Topics to be covered include (but are not limited to): formalism, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, feminism, post-and de-colonial theory, social history of art, visual culture, and digital art history.

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ART 80010, 54937 *Empathy Theory from Art Nouveau, Fauvism, Expressionism to the Bauhaus*

GC: Wed. 2:00-4:00 pm, 3 credits, Prof. Romy Golan

As Wilhelm Worringer argued in his book of 1908, the two poles of artistic volition—the urge for abstraction (which he related to self-alienation and agoraphobia) and the urge for empathy (*Einfühlung*, the desire for “feeling into” the object of perception)—are inextricably linked. From the 1880s to the 1920s, painters, architects, art historians, psychologists, and pedagogues alike were captivated by what has been called Empathy Theory.

Providing new ways to think of form and space, Empathy Theory crossed both medial and national divides. And yet it also partook in a history of nationalism, colonialism and of racial violence. In the face of encroaching capitalism, Empathy Theory countered the alienation of labor on the assembly line. And yet it also foisted forms of pedagogy where body language was programmed by a series of exercises, endlessly rehearsed not so much *by* the body as *on* the body, with the aim of developing that elusive thing called experience.

ART 82000, 54938 *Mellon Seminar: Ancient Near Eastern Art at the Met*

GC: Thurs. 10-12 noon, 3 credits, Prof. Rachel Kousser

This Mellon seminar will draw on the rich collections of the Metropolitan Museum to reimagine the history of ancient Near Eastern Art. Conceived in conjunction with the museum's planned reinstallation of the Near Eastern collection, the course will combine close in-person study of key objects, if possible, and discussions with curators and conservators involved in the reinstallation. The goal is an enhanced understanding of how ancient Near Eastern Art can speak to contemporary museum-goers. Topics to be addressed include the materiality of clay; the role of ancient Near Eastern art in an encyclopedic museum; how museum space can be activated through engaging visitors in connection and dialogue; and ancient and modern collecting practices. This class can be taken for either Ancient/Medieval or Non-Western distribution credit.

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ART 86020, 54928 *Race and Latin American Modernisms*

GC: Tues. 10:00-12 noon, 3 credits, Prof. Anna Indych-López

This course analyzes the various currents of modernism that developed in Latin America in the first half of the twentieth century through the lens of race and ethnicity. Theories and movements such as *mestizaje*, *indigenismo* and *afrocubanismo* reveal the ways in which visual artists and intellectuals in Latin America were preoccupied with constructions of racial identity as they sought both to account for indigeneity, racial hybridity, and the African diaspora in the push toward cultural and political nationalisms. Disenfranchised politically, racialized subjects featured in the formation of modern, state, and aesthetic policies by the intellectual elite, raising questions of cultural appropriation and primitivism, at the same time that they disclose anxieties over the construct of whiteness. Breaking with centuries of Euro-centrism resulting from colonialism, however, many of these vanguard movements and cultural thinkers mobilized local racial thematics precisely to assert their modernity. Engaging with a variety of manifestos, painting practices, and socio-historical contexts, we will concentrate on aesthetic formations of race in the broader effort to put pressure on a (white) Euro-American and Latin American art history. Students will present on weekly readings as well as write and present an original research paper on a topic related to the seminar. While not limited to those majoring or minoring in Latin American or Modern art, the course also seeks to prepare students for Orals.

No auditors allowed

ART 86040, 66165 *Roadworks: Processional Performance and the Diasporic*

GC: Mon. 9:30-11:30 am, 3 credits, Prof. Claire Tancons

The reemergence of processional performance in contemporary art practice since the start of the new millennium, dovetailed by a global upsurge in protest movements, asks us to examine the continued prevalence of artistic and political forms of mass address, their convergence from main street to the museum and back, and their survival prognostic under pandemic conditions of social distancing. How did processional performance resurface on street pavements, in and out of

gallery floors, in many places and on many platforms, often with a virtual, social media relay? How does processional performance, in overt or covert ways, in celebration or in mourning, thicken the ranks of the retinue of resistance and resilience that puts side by side those who choose to take to the streets and those who are forced on the road?

The course will chart the revival of a millennium-old mass medium to the transformation of forms of mass address in the aftermath of the dual pandemic of the global coronavirus outbreak and the racially motivated police violence in America. Readings will include theories of diaspora (Brent Hayes Edwards), dispossession (Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou), processions of the dispossessed (Homi K. Bhabha and Leora Maltz-Leca on William Kentridge), the non-object (Monica Amor) among others. A wide variety of artists and settings will be studied, contrasting Euro-American and African diasporic – especially Caribbean – performances as well as processional forms of protest around Black Lives Matter.

Students are expected to participate actively in the making of the seminar through an open-source database of textual and visual images both stemming and steering away from the course's inquiries; presentation and discussions of self-selected works or events related to the topics at hand as well as other remote participatory forms to be decided jointly at the start of the seminar and updated throughout the semester.

Auditors with permission of instructor.

ART 88000, 54929 *Vernacular Photography of the African Diaspora*
GC: Wed. 9:30-11:30 am, 3 credits, Prof. Emilie Boone

Description: While the history of photography most often begins with a named photographer, considerations of vernacular photographs commonly start with the unknown subject depicted. In the case of vernacular photography of the African Diaspora, interpretations depend heavily on discourses of race as they intersect with the images' historically specific social uses and viewing conventions, their physical and tactile nature, and diverse networks of circulation. Through a consideration spanning the 19th to the 20th century of daguerreotypes, commercial studio portraits, family albums, identity photographs and lynching postcards, this course will consider how the social uses of photography offer insight into the possibilities and limitations of the medium's relationship to black subjectivity.

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ART 89600, 54927 *Seminar: Selected Topics in Film Studies: Contemporary Cinema*
[Cross-listed w/FSCP 81000]
GC: Mon. 4:15-6:15 pm, 3 credits, Room 3416, Prof. Ivonne Marguiles

Re-enactment, a common strategy for reconstructing past events in cinema, has, in the last four decades gained a new critical currency as a way to articulate history and the embodied self. This

course, composed of lecture, discussion and in class presentations, explores the impetus for self-revision via reenactment looking at cinematic appropriations of pedagogic, clinical and legal models (such as talking cures, psychodrama, public testimony and truth and reconciliation commissions) to deal with the past. The questions that guide the course relate to the distinct temporalities involved in replaying past events as they are mediated and displayed in film. When and how does it matter if an event is unique or recurring, or that a person acts their story? What is the status of ageing in reenactment? We will discuss the part reenactment plays in memorial and testimonial practices and what is the interface between theatrical and therapeutic repetition and how verbal recall differs from mimetic replay; the role of reenactment in social documentaries, in historical and biographical films; in classic examples of cinema vérité and role-play; and in testimonial and allegorical films featuring the original protagonists on camera. We consider the ritual, psychological and evidentiary connotations of reenactment in cinema and in related practices (commemorative pageants, mass theatrical spectacles, battle reenactments; psychoanalysis and tribunals) as well as its currency in contemporary art. We will examine related discourses and debates on affective history; on performance and the archive (the relation between live and reproduced events) and the relation of reenactment with other realist and referential modes. The course is loosely organized historically moving from the 30s (the heyday of social documentaries and early formulations on reenactment) to neorealist instances of exemplary; from vérité cinema of the sixties (engaged with psychodrama and self-analysis) to contemporary testimonials starting with Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985) and *The Thin Blue Line* (1985).

ART 89900, (class section TBA) *Dissertation Workshop*
GC: Wed. 6:30-8:30 pm, Prof. Molly Aitken

For CUNY Level III students only with permission