

CAST 202: Visible Bodies and the Politics of Sexuality
Spring 2013
MWF 11-11:50
King 127

Wendy Kozol

Phone: x6679

Rice 112

Office Hours: T: 11-12; W: 1:30-3:30; and by appointment

e-mail: wendy.kozol@oberlin.edu

***** This course fulfills a GSFS major requirement *****

This course examines the role of visual culture in producing varied and often-contested concepts of sexuality in American society. We will examine how mainstream culture universalizes certain experiences of gender and sexuality as normative or deviant, and how the politics of race, ethnicity, class and nationalism have historically structured these categorical identifications. Further, we will analyze how marginalized groups have used visual representation to contest and subvert these hegemonic ideals. Instead of a survey, we will examine selected case studies from the media, medical, legal, and artistic fields to explore how differences in sexuality and embodiment are produced and/or contested through visual representations. We will study key theoretical concepts such as the gaze, spectacle, surveillance, and agency that will form the foundations for your own writing projects.

Course Objectives:

- To utilize intersectional and interdisciplinary approaches to the study of visual culture
- To develop a historical perspective on the role of visual culture in shaping dominant and contested ideals about embodiment and sexualities
- To build a critical vocabulary of key terms in American visual cultural studies.
- To develop visual literacy skills and become conversant in the range of methods use in visual culture studies
- To improve critical thinking through discussion and writing assignments
- To pursue a particular interest, improve information literacy, and develop writing skills through an independent research project

Required Readings:

*Farrell, Amy. *Fat Shame; Stigma and the Fat Body in American Culture*. New York: NYU Press, 2011.

*Kunzel, Regina. *Criminal Intimacy: Prison and the Uneven History of Modern American Sexuality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

*Maia, Suzana. *Transnational Desires: Brazilian Erotic Dancers in New York*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012.

*Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

*Vogel, Shane. *The Scene of Harlem Cabaret: Race, Sexuality, Performance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

*Articles can be located on Blackboard (BB).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This course will use Blackboard for announcements, handouts, articles, and assignments.

I - PARTICIPATION (10%)

Preparation & Attendance

An important component of the course will be class discussions; therefore regular attendance is required. Attendance in class, however, does not constitute participation. You must come to class having carefully read all material and be prepared to discuss, question, argue, and perhaps rethink issues raised in the readings. By the way, asking questions does constitute class participation.

Some of the topics we discuss in class are controversial or provoke strong personal feelings. It is therefore crucial that we maintain a climate of open and honest debate in the classroom. We all have much to learn from perspectives different from our own and therefore I ask class members to carefully think through your ideas and to listen and ask questions with respect. The goal in this class is not consensus but rather to consider a range of perspectives and to develop your own positions with greater insight.

Classroom absences and tardiness: Three unexcused absences will result in a lower grade by 1/3. A note from a dean or a doctor is required for an excused absence. Since late arrivals are disruptive, I expect you to arrive on time and be prepared for the work of the day. If you are not present when I call attendance, you will be considered absent that day. Repeated lateness may result in significant deductions to your final grade for this class.

Classroom Etiquette: Please arrive a few minutes early so that we may start class on time. Turn off all cell phones. No texting. Laptops are great for consulting readings and note taking, but I take great exception to people who use class time to check email, surf the web, or engage in social networking.

II – GROUP DISCUSSIONS, 5%

Groups of 4-5 students will meet outside of class three times per half term. **Six** reports are required for each group over the course of the semester. The purpose of these groups is to enable you to conduct in-depth discussions of the readings and class discussions. You may either meet in person or conduct an electronic discussion via email. Each group must prepare and submit to BB a 1-2 page report of each meeting. Each report should include the names of group members participating/attending, the number (e.g. Group Report #1), and the date. These assignments will not receive a letter grade, but you will receive credit for completing them.

Suggestion: While it is fun to be with friends, as you decide about group membership, please consider the logistics of your various schedules. A couple of times during the term, consider as an option that your group view a relevant film, or attend a college-sponsored lecture or event as the basis for enhancing your discussion of a particular set of course materials.

III - WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

This WR course is designed to introduce students to some of the central methodological tools used in visual culture studies. Each of the first three assignments addresses a different methodology while all ask you to work with theoretical concepts discussed in class. The final project will combine these approaches in a research paper. See handouts on BB for more information.

Paper # 1: Visual Analysis. (10%)

Visual analysis is the cornerstone of visual culture studies because it provides a crucial source of evidence for any argument about how representations produce meanings. For this assignment, you

must go either to the Allen Art Museum on campus or the Cleveland Museum of Art. There, select a single image (painting, photograph, sculpture, etc.) to study that represents some aspect of sexuality. The first part of the assignment is a 1-page description and the second part takes this description and turns it into an analysis.

Part 1, one-page, P/NP. Due February 18.

Part 2, 3-4 pages. Due February 27.

Paper # 2: Contexts of Production, 4-6 pages. Due March 22. (20%)

The contexts of production (who made the image, what technology was used, when it appeared, where it appeared, etc.) are critical elements in understanding the politics of meaning in visual culture. Historical, cultural, political, and/or institutional contexts provide insights into the intent of the producer(s), meanings generated at the time, and subsequent interpretations of an image. Examine the varied contexts of production ranging from the creator of the image to the venue in which it appeared to the social, political and/or cultural events, conditions, and beliefs systems that have some degree of influence on the image.

Paper # 3: Contexts of Reception, 5-7 pages. Due April 29. (25%)

One of the key tenets of cultural studies is that texts do not have a single meaning. Instead, scholars argue that audiences interpret texts from varied perspectives, depending on one's social location. This assignment asks you to examine the context of reception, that is, how audiences respond to an image, a text, or a performance from perspectives shaped by sexuality, gender, race, class and other factors. We will discuss in class different methods for studying audiences, ranging from surveys and interviews to observations and ethnography.

Final Research Project

“Sexuality and Advocacy”

Choose a visual text (a photograph or series of photographs, a film or series in a genre, a performance, etc.) that explicitly advocates a cultural politics about sexuality. This advocacy can be in support of a normative or non-normative sexuality, and it does not have to be one that you endorse. Your goal is not to argue for or against an issue but rather to analyze cultural practices. Your essay should include a discussion of production, reception, historical context, and visual analysis. Be sure, as well, to utilize key theoretical concepts that we have studied in class.

Topic Proposal Due May 3 by 5pm.

Write a brief statement (1-2 paragraphs plus preliminary bibliography) that identifies the topic, primary sources, and your preliminary research question about how the text advocates for a particular sexual politics.

Final Paper, 7-9 pages. Due May 16 to BB by 9pm (30%)

ALL ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES ARE FIRM DEADLINES

Papers should be double-spaced, using 12-point type, and include page numbers. Please proofread carefully and comply with the page limits. All references must be properly cited using MLA citation style. *Submit ALL assignments electronically in Word format to Blackboard.*

Grading

Class participation	10%
Group Discussions	5%
Paper #1	10%
Paper #2	20%
Paper #3	25%
Final Project	30%

COURSE POLICIES

Late Work: All assignments must be completed on time. Papers not turned in by the due date and time will be penalized in grading (your grade will drop by 1/3 each day) and will not receive written comments.

P/NP: If you opt for this grading system, you must complete all assignments to receive credit.

Academic Incompletes at the end of the semester: you must get approval from me at least 48 hours before the deadline.

Honor Code: This course adheres to the policies of the Oberlin College Honor Code which applies to all work submitted for academic credit, whether it is a creative project, a quiz, an exam or a paper. For quizzes and exams, this means you must complete the assignment independently of other students. For papers, you must cite all written sources that you use, whether you quote directly or paraphrase. This is true whether you are using electronic or printed materials. Incomplete or improper citations are a form of plagiarism. If you are unfamiliar with proper citation formats, or have questions please consult me, a reference librarian, a writing tutor and/or a style manual. Lack of familiarity with proper procedures is not a defense.

At the end of each academic exercise, students shall write in full and sign the Honor Pledge: "I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment." See Oberlin Honor Code, http://www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code2.html, for more information.

Students with Disabilities: If you need disability-related accommodations for your work in this class, please let me know. Support is available through Student Academic Series. Contact Jane Boomer, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities, for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs.

CLASS SCHEDULE

- 2/4: Introduction
- 2/6: Embodied Identities
Reading: Farrell, Chap. 1-2
- 2/8: Modernity and Embodiment
Reading: Farrell, Chaps. 3
- 2/11: Visual Literacy
Reading: *Practices*, Chaps. 1-2
- 2/13: Allen Memorial Art Museum Visit
Group A meets at 10:00
Group B meets at 11:00
- 2/15: Sexuality and Discourse
Reading: Foucault, 17-35, 77-114 (BB)
- 2/18: Practices of Looking
Reading: *Practices*, Chaps. 3 & 4
Part I of Paper #1 due to BB by 11am
- 2/20: "Advertising Normativity and Deviance
Reading: Farrell, Chap. 4, and *Practices*, Chap. 7

- 2/22: "You can't mean: REALLY fat people": Fat Activism and Re-Imaging the Body
Readings: Farrell, Chaps. 5-6 & Conclusion
- 2/25: Visual Technologies in the Everyday
Reading: *Practices*, Chap. 5
- 2/27: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Visuality
Part 2 of Paper #1 due to BB by 11am
- 3/1: Sexuality and Social Regulation
Reading: Kunzel, Intro & Chap. 1
- 3/4: Incarcerating Perversion: Race, Class and Deviance
Reading: Kunzel, Chap. 2 and Somerville, "Queering the Color Line" (BB)
- 3/6: Representing Criminality in the 20th C.
Reading: Kunzel, Chaps. 3-4
- 3/8: Eugenics, Reproductive Technologies, and Envisioning the Human
Readings: "Introduction to Special Issue," "Reading Critical Art Ensemble's *Flesh Machine*"; and "The subRosa Collective: Cyberfeminist Interventions," all by Rebecca Jordan-Young, <http://sfonline.barnard.edu/reprotech/>
Practices, Chap. 9

Special Event: Keynote Address for International Women's Day

Loretta Ross, "Reproductive Justice, Religion and Human Rights
March 8, 7:30pm
King 106
Extra Credit Assignment: Write a 1-2 page critique of Ross's lecture

- 3/11: Gender, Sexuality and Social Regulation
Reading: Kunzel, Chaps. 5-6 & Epilogue
- 3/13: Medicine, Bodies and Social Control
Reading: Karkazis, "Fixing Sex" (BB)
- 3/15: Medical Gazes
Reading: Butler, "Doing Justice to Someone" (BB)
- 3/18: Publics and Counter-Publics
Reading: *Practices*, chap. 6
- 3/20: Authority, Law, and the Body
Reading: Kirkland, "Transgender Discrimination" (BB)
- 3/22: Spectrums of Queer Subjectivity
Reading: Groner, "Sex as Spock"
Paper #2 due to BB by 11am

3/25-3/29 *** SPRING BREAK *******

- 4/1: Public Intimacy and Sexuality Subjectivity
Reading: Vogel, Introduction
- 4/3: Black Cabaret and Queer-of-Color World Making
Reading: Vogel, Chaps. 1-2
- 4/5: Queer Temporality and Embodied Sexualities
Reading: Vogel, Chap. 3-4
- 4/8: Affect, Subjectivity and Live Performance
Reading: Vogel, Chap. 5 and conclusion
- 4/10: Reception Studies and Fan Culture
Reading: Pearson, "Fandom in the Digital Era" (BB)
- 4/12: NO CLASS**
Start working on Paper #3
- 4/15: Queering Reception Studies
Gudelunas, "There's an App for that" (BB); Andrea Wood, "'Straight Women,' Queer Texts" (BB)
- 4/17: Global Flows: Performing in the Diaspora
Reading: Maia, 1-30; *Practices*, Chap. 10
- 4/19: Global Flows: Performing in the Diaspora
Reading: Maia, 31-58
- 4/22: Global Flows: Performing in the Diaspora
Maia, 59-122
- 4/24: Writing Workshop
- 4/26: Global Flows: Performing in the Diaspora
Maia, 123-202
- 4/29: Library Session for final paper
Paper #3 due to BB by 11am
- 5/1: Beyond Exoticism
Reading: Munoz, *Disidentifications*, 181-200 (BB); Hobson, "Exotic Sisterhood"
- 5/3: Diverse Masculinities and Spaces of Resistance
Reading: Markotic and McRuer, "Leading with Your Head" (BB); Gao, "The Virtuosity of Asian American YouTube Stars," <http://sfoonline.barnard.edu/feminist-media-theory/the-virtuosic-virtuality-of-asian-american-youtube-stars/>
Final Paper Proposals Due by 5pm
- 5/6: Cyborgs and Embodied Performance
Reading: Jones, "The Body is not Obsolete" (BB)

5/8: Corporeality and Internet Activism
Reading: Daniels, "Rethinking Cyberfeminism(s)" (BB)

5/10: Visual Possibilities
Reading: Flanagan and Looui, "Rethinking the F Word" (BB)

FINAL PROJECT DUE TO BB MAY 16 NO LATER THAN 9 PM.

ARTICLES ON BLACKBOARD

- Butler, Judith. "Doing Justice to Someone: Sex Reassignment and Allegories of Transsexuality." *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2004, pp. 57-75.
- Daniels, Jesse. "Rethinking Cyberfeminism(s): Race, Gender, and Embodiment." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 7, 1/2 (Summer 2009): 101-124.
- Flanagan, Mary and Suyin Looui. "Rethinking the F Word: A Review of Activist Art on the Internet." In *Global Visual Cultures: An Anthology*, ed. Z. Kocur, 65-81. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, vol. 1. New York: Vintage, 1990, pp. 17-35; 77-114.
- Gao, Cindy. "The Virtuosity of Asian American Youtube Stars." *S & F Online* 10, 3 (Summer 2012). <http://sfonline.barnard.edu/feminist-media-theory/the-virtuosic-virtuality-of-asian-american-youtube-stars/>
- Groner, Rachael. "Sex as 'Spock': Autism, Sexuality, and Autobiographical Narrative." In *Sex and Disability*, eds. Robert McRuer and Anna Mollow, 262-281. Durham, NC: Duke U. Press, 2012.
- Gudelunas, David. "There's an App for that: The Uses and Gratifications of Online Social Networks for Gay Men." *Sexuality & Culture* 16 (2012): 347-365.
- Hobson, Janell. "Exotic Sisterhood: The Limits and Possibilities of Global Feminism." *Body as Evidence: Mediating Race, Globalizing Gender*. New York: SUNY Press. 2012.
- Jordan-Young, Rebecca. "Introduction to Special Issue," "[Reading Critical Art Ensemble's *Flesh Machine*](#)"; and "[The subRosa Collective: Cyberfeminist Interventions.](#)" *S&F Online* 9, 1-2 Fall 2010/Spring 2011 Special Issue: Critical Conceptions: Technology, Justice and the Global Reproductive Market. <http://sfonline.barnard.edu/reprotech/>
- Karkazis, Katrina. *Fixing Sex: Intersex, Medical Authority, and Lived Experience*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008, 1-27.
- Kirkland, Anna. "What's at Stake in Transgender Discrimination as Sex Discrimination?" *Signs*, 32, 1 (Autumn 2006): 83-111.
- Markotic, Nicole and Robert McRuer, "Leading with Your Head: On the Borders of Disability, Sexuality, and the Nation." In *Sex and Disability*, eds. Robert McRuer and Anna Mollow, 165-182. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012.
- Munoz, Jose Esteban. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1999, pp. 181-200.
- Pearson, Roberta. "Fandom in the Digital Era." *Popular Communication* 8, 1 (2010): 84-95.
- Somerville, Siobhan B. *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000, pp. 15-38.
- Wood, Andrea. "'Straight Women,' Queer Texts: Boy-Love Manga and the Ruse of a Global Counterpublic." In *Global Visual Cultures: An Anthology*, ed. Z. Kocur, 293-309. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

BOOKS AND FILMS ON MAIN RESERVE

- Conboy, K., N. Medina, and S. Stanbury, eds. *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
- Farrell, Amy. *Fat Shame; Stigma and the Fat Body in American Culture*. New York: NYU Press, 2011.
- Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, vol. I. New York: Vintage, 1990.
- Jones, Amelia, ed. *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Kunzel, Regina. *Criminal Intimacy: Prison and the Uneven History of Modern American Sexuality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Maia, Suzana. *Transnational Desires: Brazilian Erotic Dancers in New York*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012.
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas, ed. *The Visual Culture Reader*. London: Routledge, 2002 Edition 2nd ed.
- Price, J. and M. Shildrick, eds. *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Rose, Gillian. *Visual Methodologies*. London: Sage, 2001.
- Sturken, Marita and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. 2nd edition. New York: Oxford U Press, 2009.
- Vogel, Shane. *The Scene of Harlem Cabaret: Race, Sexuality, Performance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.