WS 375: Women and Visual Culture
Professor Guisela Latorre
Winter 2012

Time and Days: Mondays and Wednesdays 1:30 – 3:18 p.m.
Classroom: 151 University Hall
Office Hours: Mondays 10-12pm or by appointment

Office Location: 286 University Hall
Office Phone: 242-7720
Email: latorre.13@osu.edu

Course Description

This course will explore the relationship between women and visual culture, putting particular emphasis on the fine arts, film, the music industry, mass media, and gaming culture. Each of these forms of visual culture depends on the construction of women as visual objects through "the gaze," which contributes to formulations of sexuality, gender, race and nation. We will explore several theories of "the gaze" and its means of producing modern identities. Various critical questions will be raised in the course of the quarter: How does the visual differ from other forms of representation when it comes to portraying women and/or gendered “others”? Can women’s bodies in visual culture function outside patriarchal discourse? Can “the male gaze” be disrupted or redirected when women themselves are creating their own images?

Of great interest to us will also be how women of color are particularly vulnerable to the objectifications of "the gaze." Visual culture has played a critical role in the construction of stereotypes of Asian, Latina, and Black women, among others. A large portion of this class will then be spent deconstructing images pertaining to women of color in visual culture. We will thus arrive at the understanding that “the male gaze” is implicated in the construction of gendered, racial and colonial hierarchies.

Required Texts


CARMEN Readings.

Requirements

1) Midterm (20%) - This exam will test your knowledge of the material from the first half of the quarter. The format will consist of the following: Part 1) fill-in-the blank and short answers, Part 2) Essay questions.

2) Final (20%) – This exam will test you on the material from the second half of the quarter. The format will be the same as the midterm.
3) Quizzes 1 and 2 (5% each) – These will be a short examinations meant to prepare students for the midterm and final exams, respectively. You will be asked to provide short answers (or fill in the blank) to questions based on the PowerPoint presentations from lecture.

4) Discussion and Participation (20%) – Your participation points will be based on your level of engagement with class discussion. It is extremely important that you actively partake in our classroom conversations and always come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings.

5) Research Paper on Current Visual Production (30%): For this paper you will write a research-based analysis on a current visual production (movie, play, art exhibition, fashion spread, music videos, etc.) This analysis should focus on the gendered representations in your chosen production. Further details and guidelines for this paper will be provided during the second week of the quarter.

Extra Credit Activity

You may earn extra credit in this class by attending and participating in the Richard Lou talk titled “A Chicanese in the Land of Dixie” on Thursday October 7, 2010, from 3:30-5:30pm (Multicultural Center, Ohio Union.) A possible 4-5 points will be added to your final grade if you participate. Please see me for more details.

Attendance Policy

You are allowed two unexcused absences this quarter without affecting your course grade. I will subtract half a letter grade off your final grade in class for each additional absence you may incur. In addition, you are still responsible for all the course material you miss during your absences (excused or unexcused.)

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense that is strictly forbidden. Use of another’s work without proper documentation, intentional or not, is tantamount to plagiarism and thus unacceptable. For information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, see the following link:

http://cstw.osu.edu/writingCenter/handouts/research_plagiarism.cfm

Class Discussion Etiquette

As many courses on feminism, gender and ethnic studies do, this class deals with numerous controversial and sensitive issues that often elicit heated discussion. I expect that a number of you will disagree with the opinions expressed in the class readings and discussion. I certainly expect you to express your honest opinion. Nevertheless, all in-class dialogue needs to happen within an atmosphere of civil intellectual exchange and
mutual respect. Personal attacks, heckling, loud speaking and cutting people off before they are done talking will not be permitted.

Personal Emergencies

If you experience a personal emergency during this quarter such as a serious illness, death in the family, accidents and/or other unforeseen circumstances that may potentially prevent you from completing coursework in this class, please contact me immediately. I will deal with these emergencies on a case-to-case basis. Be aware, however, that in most cases you will need to provide documentation for any reported emergency in order to for me to help you. Note that social events such as weddings, vacations, quinceañeras and barmitzvahs, to cite just a few examples, are not considered emergencies.

Note on PowerPoint Presentations

I use PowerPoint as a pedagogical tool in almost all my lectures. It is important, however, that you not misunderstand the function that my PowerPoint presentations have in this course. These are meant to facilitate in-class note taking by providing you with general outlines for each lecture. Nevertheless, I do not share my PowerPoint slides outside of class, nor do I post them on the web. Moreover, it is not sufficient for you to just write down what is up on the screen because these outlines will merely contain keywords and ideas that will not make much sense without the oral explanations and discussions that we will have in class.

Technology Policy

Please turn off all cell phones during class. Texting is strictly forbidden. Laptops, iPads and tablets are permitted only for the purposes of note-taking and viewing articles assigned for class during discussion. If I find that you are doing anything else with these devices during class, you will be automatically deducted one letter grade off your final class grade.

Class Calendar

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<th>Week 1</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>January 4 – General Introduction</strong></td>
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<th>Week 2</th>
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<td><strong>January 9 – Women, Gender and the Visual</strong></td>
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**January 11 – The Gaze and the Female Body**

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<th>Week 3</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>January 16 – Martin Luther Kind Day</strong> (No Classes)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>January 18 – The Gaze and the Female Body</strong></td>
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<td><strong>January 23 – Art– Proposal for Visual Production Paper Due</strong></td>
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<td>• Linda Nochlin, “Why have There been No Great Women Artists?” in The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader, 263-267.</td>
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<td>• Lynda Nead, “Theorizing the Female Nude,” The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader, 519-534.</td>
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| **January 25 – Film** |
| • Camera Obscura Collective, “Feminism and Film: Critical Approaches,” in The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader, 268-273. |
| • Jackie Byars, “Feminism, Psychoanalysis, and Female-Oriented Melodramas of the 1950s,” in Multiple Voices in Feminist Film Criticism (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994): 93-108. CARMEN. |

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<td><strong>January 30 – Film</strong></td>
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<td>• Film Screening – Out of the Past (1947), starring Robert Mitchum and Janet Greer, directed by Jacques Tourneur. NO READINGS.</td>
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| **February 1 – Television and Mass Media – Quiz 1** |
| • John Howard and Laura Prividera, “The Fallen Woman Archetype: Media Representations of Lynndie England, Gender and the (Ab)uses of U.S. Female
Soldiers,” *Women's Studies in Communication* 31:3 (Fall 2008): 287-311. CARMEN.

### Week 6

**February 6 – The Music Industry**

**February 8 – Midterm Exam**

### Week 7

**February 13 – Cyberspace and Gaming Culture**

**February 15 - Racialized Visions: Asian/Asian-American Women and Media Images**
- Gina Marchetti, “White Knights in Hong Kong: Love is a Many-Splendored Thing and The World of Suzie Wong,” in *Romance and the ‘Yellow Peril’*, 109-124. CARMEN.

### Week 8

**February 20 – Racialized Visions: Asian/Asian-American Women and Body Image—Outline and Bibliography for Research Paper Due**

**February 22 - Racialized Visions: Latinas on Film**

### Week 9

**February 27 – Racialized Visions: Latinas in the Mass Media**
• Charla Orgaz, “On the Semiotics of Lorena Bobbitt,” in From Bananas to Buttocks, 201-218. CARMEN.
• Isabel Molina Guzmán, “Disorderly Bodies and Discourses of Latinidad in the Elián González Story,” in From Bananas to Buttocks, 219-242. CARMEN.

February 29 - Racialized Visions: Black Women and Art – Quiz 2

Week 10
March 5 - Racialized Visions: Black Women and Film

March 7 - Queer and Transgender Identities – Visual Production Research Paper Due

FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, March 14, 1:30-3:18pm. 151 University Hall.