



Visual Studies Graduate Certificate Spring 2024 Course List

VSGC Core

VISS 599: Environmental Media, Technological Surrounds

Kimia Shahi **Wednesdays** **2-4:50pm** **THH 308**

The scope, severity, and uneven impacts of climate crisis and its attendant injustices have precipitated new challenges of visibility, visualization, knowledge, and communication, but also of scale, measurement, and quantification. Yet, as a growing body of scholarship demonstrates, conceptions of and encounters with the environment have always been mediated, whether by technologies like photographs, boats, museums, and databases, or by the body itself.

Environment, which entered English usage in the early 1800s, can be defined as that which surrounds an organism or collection of life-forms, though the term now carries broader associations with nature or earth systems. The environment can also be understood as a medium itself, capable of generating or impeding perception, transmitting information, and structuring forms of social, biological, and technological interrelation; indeed, in technical and regulatory parlance concerning pollution and contamination, soil, air, and water all constitute forms of “environmental media.”

Spanning a selection of different periods, places, and environs, this seminar assembles a multidisciplinary collection of readings to explore and historicize the following methodological questions: How do different media and technologies shape the ways the environment, or environments, are seen and known? In turn, how do environments mediate? Finally, how can approaches aligned with fields like media studies, history of science and technology, art history, and visual studies foreground decolonial, anti-racist, queer, and feminist accounts of environments, their histories, and our possible futures?

Pre-Approved for VSGC Credit

AMST 519: Indigenous, Decolonial and Transhemispheric American Studies

Chris Finley **Mondays** **2-4:50pm** **KAP 150**

Evaluate pressing social science and humanities concerns hemispherically in relation to first peoples, decolonialization, land, cultural memory, and politics within comparative ethnic studies.

ANTH 577: Advanced Anthropological Media Seminar

Jennifer Cool **Tuesdays** **2-4:50pm** **KAP 166**

A hands-on laboratory-based survey of post-production technologies, including editing both new and older footage. Students should be finishing their own documentaries.

ANTH 602: The Anthropology of Popular Culture

Tok Thompson **Tuesdays, Thursdays 5-6:20pm** **DMC 158**

The relationship between anthropology and popular culture is explored through a critical examination of the category “popular culture.

CTCS 517: Topics in Cultural Studies

Nitin Govil **Thursdays** **2-4:50pm** **SCA 316**

Introduction to central concepts, key theories and leading figures in cultural studies, particularly as they relate to issues of popular culture and visual media.

CTCS 567: Seminar in Film/Television and a Related Art

Jennifer Wild **Wednesdays** **10-1:50pm** **SCI 207**

Historical, critical, aesthetic, and theoretical issues raised by a comparison of cinema and television and other allied art forms.

CTCS 677: Cultural Theory: Media Environment, Capitalism

Thomas Pringle **Tuesdays** **2-5:50pm** **SCA 216**

Seminar in theoretical approaches to cultural studies; focus on interdisciplinary research of media and audiences, covering a range of methods and theoretical frameworks; concentration varies.

EALC 509: Transnational Korean Cinema

Youngmin Choe **Thursdays** **2-4:50pm** **DMC 204**

Korean cinema since the early 20th century, focusing on transnational production, circulation, and consumption.

EALC 510: Contemporary Japanese Cinema

Akira Mizuta Lippit **Mondays** **1-4:50pm** **SCA 316**

Japanese cinema since the 1980s focusing on the works by filmmakers.

Possible Substitutions for VSGC Credit

AHIS 510: Seminar in Ancient Art

Ann Marie Yasin **Mondays** **9:30-12:20pm** **THH 308**

Through constant processes of decay and destruction—whether slow or fast, natural or human-caused—individual buildings and whole cities deteriorate, and always have. Yet beyond the *fact* of material break-down lies a wide range of cultural responses to ruins—from their erasure through restoration or their preservation as memorials, to their "conversion" into new, useable spaces. Ruins, as materially fragmented former structures, are generally set apart from every-day, quotidian spaces and as such can become freighted with special status: as marginal

or dangerous sites outside the normal order, as material witnesses to past peoples or events, or as palpable access points to numinous powers.

This course examines how ruins, as cultural artifacts, have historically been made, and *un*made. Looking at the long "lives" of cities through a critical lens, we will investigate the ways in which (and by whom, to what ends) past buildings have been coded with different values in ancient, post-classical, and modern times—from squalor and symbols of social decay, to historical evidence or memorials of loss, to useful raw material. We will explore how these competing values and their change over time shape how built environments evolve, and we will consider social, cultural, and ethical dimensions of our own society's responses to ruins.

In the first part of the course, we will examine the institutions and technologies through which the Western tradition of ruins has been created and sustained. Our focus will be on representations of material remains in various ancient and modern media (text, painting, photography) and the institutions that have shaped them (e.g. war, religion, archaeology, conservation). The class will then turn to examine strategies for "unmaking" ruins, returning them to the every-day, through material and political interventions from antiquity to today. While we will primarily focus on the post-construction fates of ancient structures in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean, readings and discussion will also engage with critical questions raised by ruins of other civilizations and of more recent pasts (e.g. architecture of subaltern groups, shrinking urban centers, and post-industrial environments).

AHIS 511: Seminar in Medieval Art: Labor, Luxury, Abstraction

Luke Fidler

Thursdays

2-4:50pm

THH 308

This course tracks the shifting relations between three concepts—labor, luxury, and abstraction—throughout the artistic production of the western Middle Ages from late antiquity to the sixteenth century. These terms were repeatedly redefined by profound shifts in the conditions of artistic labor, the changing semantics of materials, the rediscovery of Aristotelian philosophy, and the rise of the mendicant orders who condemned luxury and valorized communal work. Special attention will be paid to the role that medieval theories and practices of valuation played in shaping how artists crafted ambitious aesthetic objects and construed their meanings in a social field; interpreting the latter is a task that required both post-medieval scholars and medieval beholders to fashion new protocols for reading form. As such, the course queries how art historians confront questions of exclusion, privation, imagination, and political economy in the visual record. In interrogating premodern art's contribution to the rise of the racial capitalism, we will test the resources of medieval, Marxist, and more recent abolitionist accounts of work and value against a range of images and objects in diverse media, from Lenten veils to deluxe manuscripts, many drawn from Los Angeles collections.

AHIS 514: Seminar in 18th and 19th Century European Art: British Art and Empire 1800-1914

Kate Flint

Tuesdays

2-4:50pm

THH 308

This course looks at British art of the long nineteenth century through the lens of its overseas attachments, paying particular attention to its relationship to India, the Caribbean, and Britain's

former colony, the United States. Among the issues that we will be discussing are images that help construct nationhood and national identity – especially landscape; the connections between landscape, architecture, art, and enslavement; practices of display – including international fairs and exhibitions, bazaars, and domestic interiors; collecting and museums; the emergence of new technologies, including photography and print reproduction, and their role in disseminating information and knowledge; history painting; “orientalism” and design; botanical illustration and the “botanical British empire;” patronage; public memorials; and the transmission of images, styles, practices and materials between countries, creating a complex set of imperial entanglements. We’ll be reading a wide range both of primary texts, and of recent art historical and historical approaches.