



Honors Research Seminar

Representation in Painting and Photography

Fall/Spring Semester 2008/09,
Michigan State University

Dr. Christian Lotz

Tentative Schedule (last **UPDATE**: November 03, 2009)

Number	Date	Topic	Reading	Information	Oral Present.	General Assignments
1	Aug 27	Introduction				
Images and Photography						
2	Sep 10	Images	Jonas, Image Making and the Freedom of Man (copy)			
3	Sep 24	Images	Sontag, On Photography			
4	Oct 3	Excursion to Detroit Art Museum (12pm-6pm)	Sontag, On Photography	Kenro Izu in Detroit		
5	Oct 15	Photography	Barthes, The Photographic Message; Barthes, Rhetoric of the Image			
6	Oct 22	Photography	Barthes, Camera Lucida			
Painting and Photography						
7	Oct 29	Photography	Barthes, Camera Lucida			
	Oct 31	Excursion to Grand Rapids Art Museum (12pm-6pm)	Bolton, <i>In the American East: Richard Avedon Incorporated</i> (copy)	Richard Avedon in Grand Rapids		
	Nov 16 (Sunday, 12pm-4pm)	Weekend Retreat with Lunch	Batchen, <i>Burning with Desire</i> (Introduction); Baetens, After Medium Specificity; Research, Databases, Preparation of Projects, etc.			
8	Nov 19	cancelled	cancelled			
9	Dec 3	Painting and Photography	TBA			
Research Projects						
10	Jan 13	cancelled				
11	Jan 20	Meetings with instructor				
12	Jan 27	Group meetings in the library				
13	Feb 3	Group meetings in the library				
14	Feb 10	Meetings with instructor				
15	Feb 17	Group meetings in the library				
16	Feb 24	Group meetings in the library				

17	Mar 3	Meetings with instructor	
18	Mar 10	Group meetings in the library	
19	Mar 17	Group meetings in the library	
20	Mar 24	Meetings with instructor	
	April 5 (Sunday)	Research Presentations	Presentations (long)
	April 16	Undergraduate Research and Arts Forum	Presentations (short)

Class Meetings:

Days: W (Spring TU !!!)

Time: 6:00pm-8:00pm

Place: Ernst Bessey 314

Office:

Phone: 517.353.9721 (if you are unable to reach me, please leave a message at 517.355.4490 [dept.])

Place: 507 S. Kedzie Hall

Hours: TBA

Exceptions:**Other Contact:**

E-mail: lotz@msu.edu

Home Phone: 734.975.0803

Webpage

URL: <http://www.msu.edu/~lotz/classes>

(Please check the webpage *regularly* for the current schedule)

Box

You will find my box in the front office of the philosophy department (503 South Kedzie); you can also slip your assignments under my door if I am not in my office (507 South Kedzie)

Course Description:

In this seminar, students will investigate the general concept of images and particular representations through semiotic theory, by researching selected artists whose work is itself an investigation in the power of images, such as Dutch painting of the 17th century, and modern artists, such as Jeff Wall, Gerhard Richter, Andy Warhol, and Cindy Sherman. Students will work out detailed projects that research the works of art and artists of the 20th Century, share their findings in writing and develop PowerPoint presentations. There will be two excursions (Oct 3; second date TBA) to Detroit art museums and two weekend retreats on Sundays (Fall 2008: Nov 23, Spring 2009: TBA)

Course Goals:

In particular, students will perform research on the question of how photographs and painting can be "read" and researched in depth. This research will not only include traditional library research, but will also include taking two excursions with the instructor to the Detroit Institute of the Arts and the Cranbrook Arts Museum. Finally, students are asked to produce presentations of the results of their research for the Undergraduate Research Forum. Whereas the first part of the class will be realized in a traditional classroom setting, the second part will be performed in groups as well as in pre-arranged meetings with the instructor. Every research team will work on selected modern art/artists that are located at the intersection of painting and photography, such as Jeff Wall, Gerhard Richter, Andy Warhol, and Cindy Sherman. The goal of the research is to go beyond the average understanding of images as something immediately accessible. Instead, students will do intensive research and learn how complex even single works can be and how these can be appropriately researched. The research will include "technical" aspects, such in introduction to appropriate database research, and working together with MSU's visual library. In addition, there will be two intensive weekend sessions, during which detailed discussion of class reading and materials will take place, as well as

preparation for the excursions. The weekend sessions will give students the experience of an open academic discussion, combined with a social component..

Note:

The seminar requires the students' willingness to study texts and their excitement about reading and studying concrete cultural phenomena. In addition, students should come with an interest in art that goes beyond simply looking at examples. Finally, students must be willing: (a) to meet for several hours at two selected weekend retreats (on selected Sundays), and (b) to participate in two excursions to museums (which will be scheduled on Fridays).

Required Texts

- Barthes: Camera Lucida
- Bell, What is Painting?
- Sontag, On Photography

Library

You will spend a considerable amount of time in the library because most of the material needed for this seminar, such as expensive catalogs and books on painting, will not be accessible through other sources..

Course Organization

The course significantly differs from a "normal" seminar: [1] it requires self-responsible learners, [2] it should be built upon an open and academic atmosphere, [3] I understand my role in this class as a mediator of your work and ideas, not as a traditional "teacher".

Course Requirements

- regular attendance
- regular meetings with your research team and me outside of usual class times
- there will not be any assignments, except preparation of readings and project
- research project (in teams) on one selected artist (Warhol, Sherman, Richter, Celmins, Wall)

Research Presentations

a) Handout and PowerPoint

Every research team, which gives a presentation (=retreat II), must submit (to the class) a detailed handout per email before the presentation is given. The handout must contain [i] a two page paper with detailed explanations of selected points of your presentation/text plus [ii] one page with an outline of your presentation/text. A mere outline is not sufficient. The handout should have a length of 3 pages and it should help us to prepare your presentation. In addition, you should produce a poster, the first version of which should be finished by [TBA] (the final version has to be presented at the Undergraduate Research and Arts Forum). Your presentation should be accompanied by a well worked out slide presentation in MS PowerPoint (we will develop and improve your presentation in our individual sessions).

b) Presentation

The oral presentation assignment is twofold: first give a presentation and then lead into a discussion on the topics of your presentation. The purpose of the assignment is (i) to give you practice in public speaking, (ii) to give you a chance to pick the topics that deserve class time, (iii) to share your research with the whole class and not just me, and (iv) to raise consciousness about the dynamics and difficulties of a good discussion. If past evaluations are any guide, even students who don't enjoy speaking in front of others, or who do so poorly — perhaps especially such students — are glad of the opportunity to practice. The presentation should offer a reading of the text for that day. To offer a reading is to take a stand on what the author is saying, and how the author argues it, not merely to point out the presence of certain themes, to ask certain questions, or to give your own views on the same topics. Your presentation should take up to 1 hour. During this time, you should do all the talking. Wait until you're finished to ask the class questions and lead discussion.

c) Undergraduate Research Forum

You will have the opportunity to present your research during MSU's Research Forum on [TBA].

Research Paper

Your research paper should display that you are able to produce a scholarly paper that satisfies academic standards. The paper

should be the extension of your research assignments and oral presentations. It should have a length of 10-12 pages. In addition, the paper should display your ability to connect the theory of images, as discussed during the first part of this seminar, with the analysis of selected artists.

General Remark

Given that this seminar is a special seminar for selected Honors students, I expect self-responsibility and self-motivation. I also assume that you will - without my control and external pressure - study the texts and work on your research assignments because you desire to participate in this special seminar.

Participation

Given that we do not meet weekly, I expect that you always come to our meetings, though I do not employ an attendance policy in my classes.

Course Evaluation

This is a pass/fail class (no grades)

GENERIC SYLLABUS (might not be applicable to each class)

Class Attendance

I do not employ in my classes a class attendance policy. Having said this, you should be aware that class attendance is very important. When engaging in a philosophical and humanistic dialogue it is necessary to be an active and present participant in the ongoing discussion. If you miss class please do not email me asking if you missed anything important. Every class is important. You should get a study buddy for the class; a student in class who will inform you of what you missed. If you miss a class you can come to my office hours or make an appointment to discuss the material, providing you have read the material and you simply want to see if your understanding of the material is on target. Time in office hours will not be used to repeat the class lectures.

Grading Criteria

[Click here to see my grading criteria for oral presentations \(not required in this class\)](#)

[Click here to see my grading criteria for papers \(tentative\)](#)

[Click here to see an EXAMPLE of my grading criteria for essay exams \(taken from an older class\)](#)

Helpful information about oral presentations, paper writing and plagiarism

[Click here to find help on your presentations and your writing](#)

Online Research Sources

Unfortunately, some people think that the internet as such is a reliable source of information. If you decide to use online sources for additional information or your paper then do not just use one of the common internet search engines, such as Google; rather, use **reliable academic** sources, such as *Britannica Online*, or the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. Here are other resources: Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy - Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy - Encyclopedia of Continental Philosophy (e-book) - The Oxford Companion to Philosophy. The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy isn't very good, but still acceptable. Check out MSU's library resources! And, as with other sources, you must cite any online sources to which you refer in your essay.

Writing Center Information

MSU's writing center offers excellent help on all matters regarding writing and learning. Check the website at <http://writing.msu.edu> for an overview and hours. For more information, please call 517.432.3610 or send an e-mail to writing@msu.edu.

Plagiarism

In any essay or exam answer submitted for assessment, all passages taken from other people's work must be placed within quotation marks, with specific reference to author, title and page. *no excuse* can be accepted for any failure to do so, nor will inclusion of the source in a bibliography be considered inadequate acknowledgement. If the marker decides that plagiarism has occurred, the student may be judged to have failed the class.

Academic Honesty

Article 2.3.3 of the Academic Freedom Report states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the (insert name of unit offering course) adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide and/or the MSU Web site: www.msu.edu) Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any course work in (insert course number here). Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including but not limited to a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html>)

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor, call 353-9642 (voice) or 355-1293 (TTY)

Drops and Adds

The last day to add this course is the end of the first week of classes. The last day to drop this course with a 100 percent refund and no grade reported is (see Academic Calendar). The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is (see Academic Calendar). You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.

Note on Attendance

Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course

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