**Televisual Culture**

San Francisco Art Institute Hum – 200

Professor: Clark Buckner Spring 2020

Meeting time and place: Thursday, 1 – 3:45, MCR

Office hours: By Appointment

phone: 415.336.2349

email: cbuckner@sfai.edu

Everyday experience now is interrupted and informed by images disseminated across the Internet. Screens litter public and private spaces, as both large-scale architectural installations and small, private looking glasses. Video conferencing has made face-to-face encounters possible, regardless of distance; while face-to-face encounters themselves have suffered from the distracting interruption of our screen technologies. We document our lives in real time on social media, make our way through the world using satellite-based global positioning systems, and find ourselves subjected to ever more invasive forms of surveillance.

In this course, we will undertake a critical history of contemporary visual experience with particular attention to the development of modern, moving image, information, and telecommunication technologies. What are the structures and dynamics of the visual field, now that it is interrupted by screens and broadcast in real time? How has this changed the way we see our selves, others, and the world? How have these changes been registered in the history of art? How have they been informed by concomitant social and political changes? What are their effects in contemporary culture? And what are their implications for philosophy?

**Course Requirements:** Students are required to complete course readings, regularly attend classes, actively participate in class discussions, and complete three writing assignments.

(Note: *ALL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE COMPLETED IN ORDER TO PASS THE COURSE!!)*

**Writing Requirements:** a) Papers should be five or six double-spaced pages, with 10 – 12 pt font and reasonable margins. b) Longer quotations should be single-spaced and indented. c) Late papers will be docked a complete letter grade for every week they are overdue. d) Students will be granted one one-week extension on only one paper during the course of the semester.

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**Required Texts:** All assigned readings will be available for downloading as PDFs at: [www.clarkbuckner.com](http://www.clarkbuckner.com) under the menu, “Texts (for students)”

**Restrictions:** No computers or smart-phones in class.

**Learning Outcomes:**

* Enhanced critical thinking
* Expanded conceptual vocabulary
* Enriched intellectual, cultural, and social history
* Enhanced written and verbal skills

**1. Introduction: As Seen on TV** Jan. 23

**2. The Annihilation of Time and Space** Jan. 30

Read: (TRT: 44 pages)

Solnit, Rebecca. *River of Shadows: Eedweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West*

“The Annihilation of Time and Space,” pp. 1 – 24

“From the Center of the World to the Final Frontier,” 239 – 259

**3. The Making of the Modern Mass Public** Feb. 6th

Read: (TRT: 60 pages)

Butsch, Richard. *Screen Culture: A Global History*

* Ch. 1, American Cinema to World War I,” from, pp. 21 – 37
* Ch. 2, “The Hollywood Studio Era, 1910s – 1940s,” pp. 65 – 82
* Ch. 5, “Western Television in the Broadcast Era, 1945 – 1990,” pp. 116 – 144

Watch:

* *Network* (1976), Directed by Sidney Lumet

Free on Vimeo w/ Spanish subtitles: *<https://vimeo.com/148940954>*

**\*\*\***First paper assigned**\*\*\***

**4. Existentialism, Experimental Film, and New Hollywood** (Feb. 13th)

Read: (TRT: TBD pages)

* [Biskind, Peter. “Introduction: Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door,” from Easy Riders and Raging Bulls, pp.13-22](http://clarkbuckner.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Biskind-Easy-Riders-Introduction.pdf)
* Brakhage, Stan. Notes on Seeing. TBD
* Buckner, Clark. “The Question of the Meaning of Being: On the Fundamental Concepts of Heidegger’s Existential Phenomenology,” pp. 1 – 5

Watch:

* Stan Brakhage, Dogstar Man
* A representative film from the Hollywood Renaissance (Easy Rider, Bonnie and Clyde, Five Easy Pieces, A Woman Under the Influence)

Also Cited:

* Immanuel Kant, “The Analytic of the Beautiful,” from *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 43 – 95
* Greenberg, Clement. “Avant-Garde and Kitsch,” pp. 5 – 22

**5. Ways of Seeing / Ways of Something** Feb. 20th

Read: (TRT: 41 pages)

Marx, Karl. "Communist Manifesto," pp. 221 - 238

Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," pp. 217 – 251

Watch: (TRT: 60 mins.)

John Berger, Ways of Seeing, episode #1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pDE4VX_9Kk>

Lorna Mills, Ways of Something, episode #1

<https://tttelematiccc.com/portfolio-item/ways-of-something-episodes/#1541796505797-35830ff9-7446>

Also cited:

John Berger, Ways of Seeing, Essay # 1, pp. 7 – 34

**6. Video Art: Anti-Art Anti-Television** Feb. 27th

Read:

* Hall, Doug and Feiffer, Sally Jo. Complexities of an Art Form,” Introduction to *Illuminating Video: Essential Guide to Video Art*, pp. 13 – 27
* Hanhardt, John, “Collage/De-Collage: Notes Toward a Re-examination of the Origins of Video Art,” pp. 71 – 79
* Buckner, Clark. Review of *Feedback: Television against Democracy*, by David Joselit, in The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol pp. 97 – 99

Watch:

* Craig Baldwin, *Spectres of the Spectrum*, 2003. TRT: 91 mins. *On Reserve*

Also cited:

- “Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism,” Rosallind Krauss, pp. 50 - 64

- “Performance, Video, and the Rhetoric of Presence,” [Anne M. Wagner](http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.sfpl.org/action/doBasicSearch?Query=au%3A%22Anne+M.+Wagner%22&wc=on),

* + 1. pp. 59-80

**7. Postmodernity, Deconstruction, and Postcolonialism** March 5th

Read (TRT: 42 pages):

Homi K. Bhabha, “The Postcolonial and the Postmodern,” pp. 245 – 282

Buckner, Clark. “The Supplement at the Origin: On Deconstruction,” pp.1-5

Also cited: Baudrillard, Jean. “Simulacra and Simulation,” pp. 1 – 45

Derrida, Jacques. “Signature, Event, Context,” pp. 80 – 109

*\*\*\*FIRST PAPER DUE\*\*\**

*\*\*\*Second Paper Assigned\*\*\**

**8. Simians, Cyborgs, Women**  March 12th

Read: (TRT: 78 pages)

Haraway, Donna J.

* “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late 20th Century,” Ch. 8 from *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: the Re-Invention of Nature*, pp. 149 – 181
* Tentacular Thinking: Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Chthulucene,” Ch. 2 from *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, pp. 30 – 57

Watch:

“Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene”

Donna Haraway at SFAI

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GrYA7sMQaBQ

Also Available:

Haraway, Donna J. “Sympoiesis: Symbiogenesis and the Lively Arts of Staying with the Trouble*,” Ch. 3 from Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*,” pp. 30 – 57

**9. SPRING BREAK** March 19th

**10. Avatars, Cyberspace, Selfies, and Social Media** March 26th

Read: (TRT: TBD)

Turke, Sherry. “Identity in the Age of the Internet,” Introduction to *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet* (1995)

Jurgenson, Nathaniel. *The Social Photo: On Photography and Social Media*

Ch. 1 Documentary Vision, pp. 1 – 52

**11. Surveillance Capitalism and the War on Terror** April 2nd

Read: (TRT: 72 pages)

* Greenwald, Glenn. *No Place to Hide*, “
  + Ch. 04: The Harm in Surveillance,” pp. 170 – 209
* Zuboff, Shoshana. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*
  + Ch. 1: Home or Exile in the Digital Future, 3 - 26
  + Ch. 15: Coup from Above, 495 – 525

Watch:

Citizen Four

*\*\*\*SECOND PAPER DUE!!\*\*\**

*\*\*\*Third Paper Assigned\*\*\**

**12. TBD** April 9th

**13. TBD** April 16th

**15. FINAL CLASS: PAPERS DUE** April 23rd

\*\*\*Final Papers Due\*\*\*