

L354: SS Critical Studies Seminar

Fall 2010, T: 4:00-6:45 pm; B460

Instructor: Margee Morrison: X460 or leave message with Judy Lidie at X350 (W); 410-889-1054 (H); email: mmorrison@erols.com; office: Bunting 419, Hours: T, W, R: 3-4 pm or by appointment. Please feel free to come by my office, call, or email if you have questions or comments or should you wish to talk.

Objectives: This seminar will review some of the important theoretical lines of thought impacting subjects in general, and artists in particular, in our contemporary culture: first, by examining some of the principal shifts in thought that have occurred in the last 60-70 years or so; second, in the process, by interrogating modernism/postmodernism, structuralism/poststructuralism, and other broad theories that have emerged in the past 20-30 years: (1) through key art historians' (Ulmer, Krauss, Crimp, Owens, Said, etc.) applications of the theories to their thinking about vision and visuality and (2) through your own applications of the theories. In addition, we will examine a broad spectrum of specific topics on contemporary art work related conceptually to: space/time; bodies and performance; "sculptural" studies in "an expanded field"; video & film space; public art and politics; sound spaces; hybridity; the relationship between subject formation and power; material processes in fiber art; and so on. An important aim of the course is to help you articulate how you are "reading/writing" yourself and your work across these or similar theoretical lines of thought.

Texts

- (1) Amelia Jones & Andrew Stephenson (Editors). *Performing the Body/Performing the Text*. NY: Routledge, 1999. ISBN: 0-415-19060-6. [Jones]
- (2) Erika Suderburg, Editor. *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*. Minneapolis: U of MN Press, 2000. ISBN: 0-8166-3159-x. [Suderburg]
- [3] Catherine Belsey. *Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction*. NY: Oxford UP, 2002. ISBN: 0-19-280180-5.
- [4] John Scanlan. *On Garbage*. London: Reaktion Books, 2005. ISBN: 978-1861892225.

=====OPTIONAL BOOKS and BLACKBOARD essays=====

(6) David Macey: *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory*. NY: Penguin, 2000. ISBN: 014051369-8

PRIMARY theoretical essays you can find on BLACKBOARD:

- [1] Roland Barthes, "Myth Today";
- [2] Jacques Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the discourse of the human sciences";
- [3] Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in an Expanded Field"
- AND [4] Douglas Crimp, "On the Museum's Ruins" [postmodernist changes in art];
- [5] Kaja Silverman, "The Subject" [on Lacan];
- [6] Michel Foucault, "Panopticon" [from *Discipline & Punish*]
- AND [7] Louis Althusser, "Ideology & Ideological Apparatuses";
- [8] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction";
- [9] Helene Cixous, "The Newly Born Woman";
- [10] Freud, "Fetishism";
- [11] Trinh T. Minh-Ha, "Difference";
- [12] Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question: the Stereotype & Colonial Discourse";
- [13] Deleuze & Guattari, from *A Thousand Plateaus*...
- [14] Sturken on MAYA LIN;

Syllabus

AUGUST

- 31 Introduction. Introductory paper due next week, 2-3 pages.

SEPTEMBER

7 **Theory=background/REVIEW. Jones, chapters 1 & 3; Barthes**, "Myth Today" [optional]; first half of Belsey: *Poststructuralism*; class discussion on before poststructuralism. **Short intro paper due. [I]**

14 **Derrida**, "Structure, Sign and Play in the discourse of the human sciences"; second half of Belsey; class discussion on poststructuralism ... **video: Derrida**.

21 **Site Specific Art & Institutional Critique:** [1] Krauss and "sculpture in the expanded field" and Crimp, "On the Museum's Ruins" how sculpture grew beyond museums; [2] Suderburg: *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*, [a] Meyer: The **Functional Site**; or, The Transformation of Site Specificity [23-35]; [b] Kwon: One Place After Another [38-58];

28 **Environmental & Installation Art:** Suderburg: [1] ** Suderburg: Written on the West [130-141]; [**2] Coleman: Landscapes of the Mind [158-170]; [3] Jones: The 1970s "Situation" and Recent Installation [332-344]; Kaja Silverman, "The Subject" [on Lacan]...

OCTOBER

5 **POLITICAL art [another kind of institutional critique]:** [1] Foucault, "Panopticon" AND [2] Althusser, "Ideology & Ideological Apparatuses"; Suderburg: [3] Larsen: Ordinary Gestures of Resistance [171-188]

[Q1: covers September readings, discussions, films]

12 **"PUBLIC" [monuments & memorials]:** STURKEN on Maya Lin; **video:** Maya Lin

[Q1]

[FYI: **Fall Break: Oct. 18-19**]

- 26 **Film/Video space:** [1] Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”; [2] Film and video spaces: **Suderburg:** **Sturken: The Space of Electronic Time: The Memory Machines of Jim Campbell [287-296]; **Lopez: Imaging Community: Video in...[317-331];
video: STELARC/Orlan [intro body art] [SP1]

NOVEMBER

- 2 Amelia JONES, chs. 7, 11, 12: Role of performances/bodies in art.; Acconci, Stelarc, Burden, Wilke, & others; **Cixous**, “The Newly Born Woman”; **video:** *Chris Burden*.
9 **BODY ART:** Jones: chs. 14, 16; **Freud**, “Fetishism”; **video:** Marlon Riggs's *Black Is, Black Ain't*

16 SCANLAN. *On Garbage*, chs. 3-5; **Fritz Haeg et al...** **video:** *Home*

23 **CROSS-CULTURAL/Postcolonial ART & thought:** [1] JONES: ch. 5; [2] **Trinh T. Minh-Ha**, “Difference”; [3] **Bhabba**, “The Other Question: the Stereotype & Colonial Discourse”; [Q2]
video: Trinh Minh-Ha: *Reassemblage*

[FYI: **Thanksgiving Break: Nov. 24-28**]

- 30 **Fiber Arts-TEXTILES:** [1] **FASHION & PERFORMANCE**, essay + **video** on Leigh Bowery; [2] **Deleuze & Guattari** from *A Thousand Plateaus* [SP2]

DECEMBER

- 7 **Groups 1 & 2.** [Q3] **video** (possibly) Cage & Cunningham [hand in reading journals]
14 **Summary & Final essay due.** **Groups 3 & 4.** [reading journals returned] party!

Requirements:

- [1] **Introductory paper:** (2-3 pages) what are the conceptual or theoretical bases of your work as you currently see them? what ideas do you value the most in your work? (10 points). Be prepared to read these papers in class. [I]
[2] **short papers** [SP1 & SP2 in syllabus]: 2-3 pages; formal, typed paper that makes a specific point about the material you have read for the weeks prior to the due-date. The idea you develop should be an assertion about a topic that interests you that you develop with details from the reading as your evidence. You may use research materials that relate to the material we have been studying but that were not assigned. You should be prepared to read and discuss these papers in class. Points will be deducted for late papers. [You may use these two papers as a basis for your final paper if you like.] [10 points each = 20]
[3] **Quizzes:** [Q1 & Q2 on syllabus] two [2] announced quizzes, each of which may cover any of the material that has not been quizzed before the quiz date: labeled [Q] in syllabus. [possible 10 points each = 20]
[4] **Reading Journals:** your informal **thoughts** about the material you are reading, TYPED and gathered for submission near end of the semester; submit one entry per class; entries will be read in class during the semester, so please bring them with you to class...Hand all entries in together near the end of the semester... [10 points]
[5] **Presentation:** In four groups, you will each present your own, current visual work to the class and indicate in a short talk what excites you about the territory you are exploring visually and how those explorations might reflect ongoing, fluid conceptual or theoretical “frames” that you think you may be able to identify/articulate more and more—perhaps as a result of conversations accruing and dispersing from this class. Use whatever aids you wish to use. Hand in a brief, one page summary, typed. . [10 points]
[6] **Final essay,** 5-7 pages comparing before/after class theoretical thinking about your work--more later [20 points]; [F]
[7] Class participation, attendance are important in this class. [10 points].

Grading

If you have an emergency or illness, please let the teacher know. Excused absences require verification. Four or more unexcused absences are cause for failure (institutional rule)... **POINTS:** 95-100 = A; 89-94 = A-; 88-83 = B+; 82-77 = B; 78-81 = B-; 72-77 = C+; 67-71 = C; 63-68 = D+; 57-62 = D; 51-56 = D-

SPECIAL NOTES:

- [1] **ADA COMPLIANCE:** In MICA's efforts to provide the highest possible quality educational experience for every student, MICA maintains compliance with the requirements of the ADA and Section 504. Any student who has, or suspects he or she may have, a disability and wants to request academic accommodations must contact Dr. Kathryn Smith at the Learning Resource Center, 443 695-1384 or email at ksmith@mica.edu immediately.
[2] **MICA has developed policies and practices to ensure a healthful environment and safe approaches** to the use of equipment, materials, and processes. It is the mutual responsibility of faculty and students to review health and safety standards relevant to each class at the beginning of each semester. Students should be aware of general fire, health, and safety regulations posted in each area and course specific policies, practices, and cautions. Students who have concerns related to health and safety should contact Quentin Moseley, Environment Health and Safety Coordinator at 410 225 0220 or email at qmoseley@mica.edu
[3] **PLAGIARISM** is strictly forbidden. Please see hand-out for definitions and consequences.