THEORIES OF SEXUALITY & REPRESENTATION

Professor David Getsy
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School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Spring 2006 Graduate Seminar
Tuesdays 1-4pm
MC 313
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to central theoretical texts on sexuality, this seminar will focus on the ways in which desire is played out in representation. Emphasis will be placed on the impact of queer theory and feminism on the practices of art history and art making. The literature on sexuality and queer theory is vast, and this seminar will introduce some of the foundational texts that have contributed to the rise of sexuality as an interpretative lens and, in particular, to the emergence of queer theory. There are many specific historical arguments within the field, but this seminar will aim at methodological and theoretical issues in order to introduce students to the tactics of interpretation. Consequently, the reading list for the seminar is in no sense comprehensive of the larger field.


COURSE STRUCTURE

Each three-hour session will focus primarily on the discussion of texts and images. Students will be evaluated on the basis of their preparation, attendance, and critical engagement with course readings and concepts.

There are four required texts available at the DePaul bookstore:

All other readings will be made available through the Docutek system. Students should refer to the syllabus, rather than the Docutek system, for page numbers of reading assignments.

**EVALUATION**

1. **Attendance and participation**
   
   *All students are expected to attend class meetings prepared to discuss the required readings.*
   
   This is a discussion-based class, and all students should regularly and productively contribute to class discussions. Attendance at all class meetings is essential. More than two missed classes may be grounds for a “no credit.”

2. **Weekly written summaries of required readings**
   
   For each class, students must submit a typed summary of each reading, consisting of
   
   a. An overview of the *thesis and argument* of the reading (one to two paragraphs)
   b. Questions for class discussion (5 for readings over 50 pages, 3 for all others).
   
   Questions should be about the ideas or implications of the readings rather than merely factual.
   
   In order to receive credit for the course, *all* reading summaries must have been submitted by 11 April (with the exception of Warhol readings, which are due on 9 May).

3. **Leading course discussion**
   
   Students will be assigned to small groups that will be responsible for leading a portion of the seminar discussions throughout the semester. On the day assigned, the student group will be responsible for:
   
   a. Introducing the themes and argument of the text
   b. Raising specific issues for discussion
   c. Fielding other students’ prepared questions
   
   Any visual materials should be brought to class prepared to present. That is, students should bring to class loaded slide carousels or a jump drive or cd with a Powerpoint/Keynote file containing digital images.

4. **Visual discussion topics**
   
   During each seminar session, a different group from the discussion leaders (#3) will be expected to introduce the work of one to three artists relevant to the readings for that day. Our discussion of this visual material will comprise the last 30-45 minutes of each session. Students should work collaboratively to identify artists, both past and contemporary, whose work seems related to or appropriate to be discussed by the authors read for that day. The obvious choices of artists discussed in the readings should be avoided. This is a chance to bring in different, even critical, topics into the discussions of the readings. Any visual materials should be brought to class prepared to present. That is, students should bring to class loaded slide carousels or a jump drive or cd with a Powerpoint/Keynote file containing digital images.

5. **Attendance of exhibitions**
   
   All students are expected to have visited and thoroughly examined the following exhibitions prior to our discussion of them in class:
   
   b. *ANDY WARHOL/SUPERNova* (Museum of Contemporary Art) before 9 May.

6. **Research Project**
   
   There are two options for the final research project. The choice of option a. or b. and topic of research must be approved by 21 March. All projects are due, without exception, by 4pm on 12 May.
a. **Research Presentation and Paper**: All papers should be on an original research topic relating to course themes and not done in conjunction with another class. Students will first give a *preliminary* research report in April, and then build upon those discussions in developing the final research paper. Research reports should be 15 minutes in length and should be used to introduce the topic, raise issues, and offer a preliminary thesis. The final research paper should be between 4000-5000 words, exclusive of a full bibliography and endnotes.

b. **Alternate syllabus**: Students can also opt to create their own annotated syllabus for an alternate seminar on theories of sexuality and representation. This alternate syllabus must be organized for 10-14 sessions. For each session, the student should write a 150-250 word introduction that discusses the theme explored and provide a list of required readings. In addition to the introduction, each reading assigned must be accompanied by a one-paragraph summary. These readings should be new, and *no more than three individual texts can be borrowed from our seminar readings*. The goal will be to outline an alternate approach to the field of sexuality studies than offered by our class. Students who choose this option do not need to prepare a research presentation, but will be required to distribute their final project to the rest of the seminar.

**DIFFERENTLY-ABLED STUDENTS**

Any students with exceptional needs or concerns (including ‘invisible’ difficulties such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, or psychiatric complications) are encouraged to make an appointment with the professor to discuss these issues by the end of the second week of the term so that appropriate accommodations can be arranged. Any student in need of academic adjustments or accommodations should first contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). SSD can be reached by phone at 312.345.9478 or by sending an email to Sara Baum, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities (sbaum@artic.edu).

**PLAGIARISM**

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago prohibits “dishonesty such as cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the School.” See Students’ Rights and Responsibilities, *Student Handbook*: [www.artic.edu/saic/life/studenthandbook/rights.pdf](http://www.artic.edu/saic/life/studenthandbook/rights.pdf)

One plagiarizes when one presents another’s work as one’s own. It is a form of intellectual theft. Plagiarism need not always be intentional. One can plagiarize even if one does not intend to. The penalty for plagiarizing ranges from a failing grade on the plagiarized assignment to not earning credit for the course. This may also result in some loss of some types of financial aid (for example, a No Credit in a course can lead to a loss of the Presidential Scholarship), and in cases of regular offenses can lead to expulsion from the School.

The Faculty Senate Student Life Subcommittee has prepared a 28-page handbook entitled *Plagiarism: How to Recognize It and Avoid It*. The document is available online on at [http://www.artic.edu/saic/programs/resources/library/plagiarism_packet.pdf](http://www.artic.edu/saic/programs/resources/library/plagiarism_packet.pdf)
**COURSE CALENDAR AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

**31 January**  
Course overview

**7 February**  
**Introduction: Perspectives on Sexuality Studies and Art History**

*Required reading*


*Further reference*


**14 February**  
**An Origin: Freud's Leonardo**

*Required reading*

Further reference  

21 February  
A History: Foucault  
Required reading  

Further reference  

28 February  
Identifying Politics: David Halperin on Foucault, Kobena Mercer on Mapplethorpe  
Required reading  

Further reference  

7 March  
Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick  
Required reading  

Further reference

14 March
Judith Butler

Required reading

Further reference
21 March

**Heterosexuality as denominator and numerator**

*NOTE: Deadline for approval of research topic*

**Required reading**


**Further reference**


28 March

**There’s something about Girodet...**

*All students should have already visited Girodet: Romantic Rebel at the Art Institute of Chicago prior to today’s class.*

**Required reading**


**Further reference**


4 April

**Beyond Gender**

**Required reading**


**Further reference**


11 April
PRESENTATIONS

18 April
PRESENTATIONS

25 April
PRESENTATIONS

2 May
NO CLASS, CRIT WEEK

9 May
Andy Warhol
NOTE: Class will meet from 1.30pm-3.30pm at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Assemble at the Education entrance on Pearson.

All students should have already visited Andy Warhol/SUPERNOVA at the Museum of Contemporary Art prior to today’s class.

Required reading


Further reference

Crimp, Douglas. “Getting the Warhol We Deserve: Cultural Studies and Queer Culture.” Social Text17, no. 2 (1999): 49-66