Visual and Critical Studies Offerings FALL 2017

VISC 180 A Critical Perspective of the Americas (AD 1300—1940)
Guzman  T 9:00-12:00

Latin Americans have a complex, rich visual culture that has accommodated both complementary and competing narratives. This class explores how artists from the Americas have creatively devised and appropriated visual forms to accommodate their own interests. Before the Spanish Conquest Mexica forms reflected an international style while those of the Inka emphasized an abstract language of forms. In the ensuing Colonial period, artists fused European forms with the extensive indigenous iconographic lexicon to generate new polyvalent visual vocabularies. These newly devised visual languages accommodated ideological, artistic and cultural dialogues that continued the long-standing indigenous tradition of cultural integration and effective sovereignty. This class examines the art and architecture of Pre-Columbian, Colonial, and Modern Latin America from a variety of topics including: myth, cosmogony, sacrifice, religion, social history, economics, ethnicity and race, identity, political theory, independence, revolution, creation of nation states, and modernity. An overview of these topics reveals competing opinions about what Latin American visual culture is, a culture where there is no single, precise perspective.

VISC 190 The Art of Building Empire
Guzman  W 9:00-12:00

The art and architecture of Inca and Aztec people are a testimony of their political brilliance and offer clues about the role art and architecture play in disseminating the ideas of ambitiously expanding governments. What were some of the contributing social factors that led the Inca and Aztec to achieve domination of such vast areas in such short periods of time (roughly one hundred years) and how did visual culture help them maintain their social control? This class examines the strategies Amerindian sovereigns used to assert political control among their multi-ethnic constituents. The lectures and readings in this course are designed to help students explore what visual strategies were used to co-opt dominion, negotiate power conflicts, as well as underwrite and disseminate the ideological interests of dominating political groups and classes over their subjects. Although the course focuses mainly, but not exclusively, in the ancient Americas, students will be exposed to a number of political concepts and comparable case studies throughout history that will help mine the makings of statecraft among imperial powers of the Inka and Mexica.
**VISC 24 Introduction to Modern Western Sculpture**  
Bottinelli  
F 2:00-5:00

This class offers an overview of the history of sculpture between the late 19th century and the mid-20th century, by discussing the work of one sculptor per week. We will look at the different phases of the artists’ body of work, which will be contextualized historically and theoretically. The goal of the course is to allow an understanding of modern sculpture through the study of a selection of personalities. Students will analyze different types of sources (artist statements, exhibition reviews, curatorial texts and scholarly essays), in order to view the same topic from different perspectives. The approach will offer the opportunity to expose the students to in depth analysis of primary and secondary sources, and refer to these sources as evidence in writing projects. Each case study exemplifies a tendency or style, such as Impressionism, Cubism, Constructivism, Dadaism, and American Modernism, among others. The case studies analyzed are: Medardo Rosso, August Rodin, Constantin Brancusi, Jacques Lipchitz, Vladimir Tatlin, Marcel Duchamp, Pablo Picasso, Louise Nevelson, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, David Smith, Alexander Calder, Lucio Fontana, Alberto Giacometti.

**VISC 129 The Greening of Art: Ecology, sustainability and sculpture since 1970**  
Bottinelli  
R 2:00-5:00

We will explore the impact of theories for sustainable development on contemporary sculpture. We will cover the history of the ecology movement since the late 1960s, as well as the development of ideas of sustainability since the late 1980s. The class will also highlight the different concepts, contexts, and reception of the terms "ecology" and "sustainability". Furthermore, we will study artists whose work contributed to shape current perceptions of such terms, for example as Hamish Fulton, Helen Mayer Harrison, Newton Harrison, Joseph Beuys and Mark Dion. Furthermore, the socio-political implications of recent definitions of sustainability will be considered and framed within the discourse of globalization: in this context, we will look at the work of Rirkrit Tiravanija, Eteam, Andrea Zittel, Marjetrica Potrc, Gediminas and Nomeda Urbonas, among many others. We will finally consider local practices, such as artist Julie Stone’s commitment to community gardening, which blurs the boundaries between environmental activism and sculpture.
The two Histories of Film courses are sequential, single semester courses that may be taken separately, but are created as a year-long inquiry into the art of cinema. Constructed as a foundational course we will examine the development of cinema from its inception in the late nineteenth century through to the present. Using a broad historical, theoretical and critical framework, this course will introduce the student to the study of cinematic representation in a roughly chronological manner by focusing on the first half of its development in the fall and the second half of its development in the spring. By investigating the aesthetic, formal and stylistic devices of film as well as its narrative codes and structures we will consider the evolution of its rich and complex language. The two courses will focus on such noteworthy film movements as the early International Avant-Garde, German Expressionism, Soviet filmmaking of the 1920s, the classical studio Hollywood film, postwar cinemas in France and Italy, the American Avant-Garde, International New Wave Cinemas of the 1960s and 1970s, post-classical American Cinema, contemporary Global cinemas including works from Iran, New Zealand and more. This course will also introduce the student to several foundational ideas and methodologies in the study of cinema including theories of modernity and postmodernity, feminist film theory, queer theory, intertextuality, post-colonialism, trauma studies and more. The presentation of films will be paired with noteworthy essays that engage a variety of methodologies and readings of the films while positioning them within critical, interpretive and historic contexts.

Invented at the end of the 19th century as a uniquely modern medium, and at a time of enormous urban growth and expansion, the cinema has had a long and illustrious relationship to the city. From the early silent celebrations of modernity and urban space in Berlin, Symphony of a City and Man with a Movie Camera, to later postmodern dystopian machinations in Blade Runner and The Matrix, the cinema has been uniquely positioned to script both the celebration and decay of urban space. Guided by thematic topics, this course will investigate the cinematic representation of the city as the site of promise, emancipation, and creativity but also as the site for projected dystopian futures, where the excesses and decay of capitalist expansion and global climate change become starkly evident.
VISC 145 Mass Incarceration and the Literature of Confinement  
Binda  W 8:30-11:30

This course facilitates learning about deep differences while also enabling the creation of bonds and bridges between people through shared experiences and shared acts of interpretation and imagination. This seminar on the literature of incarceration is supported by The Tisch College of Civic Life and will meet most weeks at the state prison in Shirley, MA; for those who do not drive, the Tisch College van will provide transportation from the Medford Campus. When not meeting at the prison, this class will meet in the Paige Hall conference room on the Medford campus. The Literature of Confinement will be composed of Tufts students and incarcerated students in equal numbers. Together, we will read, discuss, and write on literary and sociological texts directly and indirectly pertaining to the experience of confinement – understood in different senses – as well as mass incarceration. Inside and outside students will work in small groups to complete an interdisciplinary project of the group’s invention and design. Throughout the semester, students will learn about the structuring ideologies of race, class, gender-sexuality, and education in relation to the US criminal justice system. A weekly focus on interactive learning across cultural, social, and literal barriers and on self-reflection, as well as the incorporation of literary texts, will enable students to develop a personal or qualitative knowledge about confinement, power, and resistance in the face of social injustice and structural inequalities. Texts will be drawn from the following, among others: The Book of Jonah, Melville’s “Bartleby the Scrivener,” James Joyce’s Dubliners, Kafka’s “In the Penal Colony,” August Wilson’s Fences, Suzan-Lori Parks’s TopDog/Underdog, Henrik Ibsen’s A Doll’s House, Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wallpaper,” Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye, Gloria Naylor’s The Women of Bewster Place, Alice Michelle Alexander’s The New Jim Crow, James Forman’s “Beyond the New Jim Crow,” Stormy Ogden’s “The Prison-Industrial Complex in Indigenous California,” essays from Julia Sudbury’s Global Lockdown, and Lisa Neve’s “Challenging the Criminalization of Women Who Resist.”

Signature Required – please email the faculty member as soon as possible if you are interested: hilary.binda@tufts.edu. Course may fill.