Visual Anthropology -01:070:309
Tues (periods 2-3) 10:55-1:55 - Ruth M. Adams Building 207

Pilar K. Rau - pkr205@nyu.edu
Office hours: Tuesday 2:15-4:00 Biological Sciences Building rm207

Objectives

- To explore the history of and key philosophical and ethical debates in Visual Anthropology.
- To critically examine approaches to inter-cultural representation.

Visual anthropology encompasses both the study of visual culture and the modes of producing inter-cultural visual ethnographic texts. The first part of this course, “Art, science, spectacle: The Origins of Visual Anthropology” looks at the history of approaches to the study of visual culture and key debates about the representation of cultural differences. It explores the legacies of Visual Anthropology in the collections of exotic artifacts and images of exotic cultures that circulated in the West as popular spectacles, scientifc specimens, and, at times, as works of art. Part II, “Approaches to Ethnographic Film,” examines key movements in the history of ethnographic film and the ethical and philosophical debates about the objectivity of the filmic image, about the power relations inherent in the ethnographic gaze, and about the politics of inter-cultural representations. This class seeks to understand film, video, and photography as both representations of other cultures as well as products that reflect their own historical and cultural milieu. Part III, “Indigenous Visual Producers” turns to more recent scholarship in Visual Anthropology, including the anthropology of media, and Indigenous media.

Assignments

- **Class Participation and Attendance 20% Due: Weekly** – Students are expected to attend every class. Each class meeting has its own dynamics and provides a unique opportunity for learning. Absences for reasons of religious holiday, serious illness, death in the student’s immediate family, or required participation in a university-sponsored event are, with the appropriate documentation, excused absences. Your final participation grade will be the average of your weekly participation grades. Absences will result in a grade of zero for the missed class, which will be factored into your Class Participation and Attendance average.
- **Discussion (15%)** – A pair of students will be responsible for leading the weekly discussion.
- **Paper 1 (15%)** – Develop an original thesis that synthesizes your thoughts on the films and readings from Part I of the course.
- **Paper 2 (20%)** – Develop an original thesis that synthesizes your thoughts on films and readings of Part II.
- **Photo Project 1 (5%)** – Reproduce a photograph of a person that you have found on the internet. Completely change its interpretation by juxtaposing each of them with a different text.
- **Photo Project 2 (5%)** – Representing “The Other.” With permission, photograph an individual engaged in a practice. Attempt to take a photo that gives information about the activity, one that expresses the social/cultural life of the individual, and one that captures the person’s personality. Be prepared to discuss the problems you ran into and future solutions. (Framing is important)
- **Indigenous Film Review (3-5pp.) (20%)** – Review of 1 or more films produced by indigenous peoples. Contextualize your review in terms of important debates in Visual Anthropology. See example film reviews in VAR or another journal you can access via JStore or AnthroSource.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY** - You are responsible for adhering to these policies in all assignments
http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu

**SAKAI & EMAIL INTEGRITY** - It is important that you familiarize yourself with how to use Sakai right away. You will need to regularly check the email attached to Sakai as it is the primary means by which I will contact you about class.

**ABSENCES** - Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/ to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. Missed presentations or exams may be made up with a doctor’s note.
Reading Schedule

I. Art, Science, Spectacle: Origins of Visual Anthropology

Week 1-2. (Jan 28). Introduction to Visual Anthropology

Week 3. (Feb 4) Art, Science, Spectacle.
RONY, FATIMAH TOBING, "Taxidermy and Romantic Ethnography" pp. 99-126
Additional readings about Flaherty’s Nanook of the North.
FILM: Robert Flaherty. 1922. *Nanook of the North: A Story of Life and Love in the Actual Arctic* (79 min)

Week 4. (Feb 11) Exhibiting Others
CHAPTER 2: Science and Spectacle: Visualizing the Other at the World’s Fair. 46-85
ONLINE: Examples of early anthropometric photos  Early Edison films.

Week 5. (Feb 18) Collecting Art and Culture

Week 6. (Feb 25) Anthropology, Representation, and Inter-cultural Aesthetics
Background Notes for People of the Australian Western Desert and Desert People
FILMS (selections):
Ian Dunlop. People of the Australian Western Desert. 1967 (314min)
Dreamings: Michael Riley *The art of aboriginal Australia*. 1988. First Run/Icarus Films. (30min)
Werner Herzog. *Where the Green Ants Dream*. 2006. (100min)
*Paper 1 assigned*
II. Approaches to Ethnographic Film

Week 7. (Mar 4) Voice-Over Narrator: Margaret Meade
Margaret Mead, “Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of Words” in Principles of Visual Anthropology, pp. 3-9
*FILM*: Margaret Mead & Gregory Bateson 1952. Bathing Babies in 3 Cultures (9 min). Trance & Dance in Bali (22 min)

Week 8. (Mar 11) John Marshall
LOIZOS, PETER. Chapter 2. For the Record: Documentation filming from Innocent Realism to Self-consciousness. 16-44. *Innovation In Ethnographic Film*.
LOIZOS, PETER. Chapter 4. Constructions from Real Lives. 67-89. (Intro, concl, N!ai.)

ONLINE: DER Film Guide for N!ai, the story of a !Kung Woman Smithonian NMNH John Marshall page

Spring Break March 15-23

Week 9 (Mar 25) Cinéma Verite / Cinéma Participe: Jean Rouch
LOIZOS, PETER. *Innovation In Ethnographic Film*. Chapter 1. Innovation in Ethnographic Film, 1966-85. 5-15.
LOIZOS, PETER. Chapter 3. Challenging Documentation-Realism. *Innovation In Ethnographic Film*, 45-64.
ONLINE: Jean Rouch [http://www.maitres-fous.net/home.html]
*FILM*: Jean Rouch. 1954. *Les Maitres Fous (Mad Masters)* (54 min); 1967. *Jaguar*. (93 min)

Week 10. (Apr 1) Deconstructing the Objectivity Filmic Image **Photo Project Due.**
Berger, JOHN. The ambiguity of the Photograph. *Anthropology of Media* 47-55.
ONLINE: DER Film Guide for the Axe Fight.
*FILM*: Timothy Asch and Napoleon Chagnon. 1975. *The Axe Fight* (30 min)

ONLINE: CHANDLER, DANIEL. Notes on the Gaze. [http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/gaze/gaze.html]
*FILM*: John Berger - Ways of Seeing - Episode 2 [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1GI8mNU5Sg]
*FILM*: Gary Kildea, Jerry Leach. 1979. *Trobriand Cricket: An Ingenious Response to Colonialism* (54 min)
III. Indigenous Media Producers

**Week 12. (Apr 15) Other Histories of Photography / Anthropology of Media**


**Anthropology of Media** Pick an article from one of these edited volumes:


**FILM:** David & Judith MacDougal. 1992 *Photo Wallahs: an encounter with photography in Mussoorie, a north Indian hill station*. 60 min

**Week 13. (Apr 21) Indigenous Media  *4/21 Last day to withdraw with a W***


**ONLINE:** Video na las Aldeias (Video in the Villages)  Igloolik Isuma Productions  Warlpiri Media Association

**FILM:** Mari Correa and David Carrelli. 2002. *Video in the Villages Presents itself*. DER (9 min)

**FILM:** Masayesva, Victor. 1992. *Imaging Indians*. DER (60 min) (VCA 9144)

**Week 14. (Apr 27) Sovereign Screens**


Read more: http://www.filmreference.com/Films-My-No/Nanook-of-the-North.html#ixzz2rf1tfonj


Visual Anthropology Resources

Books


Journals

American Anthropologist (Available through JSTOR, Wiley, AnthroSource)
Anthropological Quarterly (Available through JSTOR)
Anthropology Today (Available through JSTOR or Wiley)
Cultural Anthropology (Available through JSTOR or AnthroSource)
TDR (Available through JSTOR)
Visual Anthropology (available through Taylor and Francis)
Visual Anthropology Review (aka VAR)(Available through AnthroSource)

Web Archive in Visual Anthropology (Temple U.)
Jay Ruby's Publications Available On The Web
Documentary Educational Resources (DER)
USC Center for Visual Anthropology
Temple Anthropology of Visual Communication
NYU Center for Media Culture and History, NYU Program in Media and Culture
Harvard Visual Anthropology
Society for Visual Anthropology

Margaret Mead Film Festival at The Museum of Natural History
Native American Film and Video Festival & Native Networks at National Museum of the Native American