

**HIS/HOS 599: Fall 2012, Princeton University  
Special Topics in the History of Science, Technology, and Medicine:**

**Sensory History / The Senses in History**

Professor Emily Thompson  
Tuesdays 9:00 - 11:50 AM, Dickinson 211  
emilyt@princeton.edu 609.258.8405  
Office Hours: Mondays, 12:30-2:30 or by appt., Dickinson 225

.....

This reading course is intended for graduate students engaged in advanced historical studies. Students not enrolled in the History Dept should meet with the Professor to discuss whether or not they have the appropriate level of background in history in order to take the course. The seminar will introduce students to scholarly literature in the history of the senses and sensory history, considering works in cultural history, as well as histories of technology, medicine, and the environment. There are two primary goals: to think about the role of the senses in history; and to challenge historians' emphasis on the textual when identifying primary sources to do historical work. The subjects of our readings will range widely in time and place as well as topic and methodology.

**BOOKS AND READINGS:**

Readings, which consist mainly of chapters, excerpts, and articles, will either be available as electronic texts via the library's catalogue; posted electronically on Blackboard; or made available as hard copy on reserve in the History Graduate Study Room, Firestone C-4-M.

The syllabus will be a work-in-progress over the course of the semester. Specific reading assignments will attempt to connect to the historical interests of the enrolled students, as well as to build, week-by-week, an overall mastery of this new and growing field. For the most part, assigned readings will be taken from the BIBLIOGRAPHY (also a work-in-progress, but already ample) distributed on the first day of class. Weekly reading assignments may be organized chronologically (Medieval, Early Modern, c19, c20), others topically (religion, medicine, environment, technology, war), or geographically.

**FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS:** Each week's reading assignment will be set at least one week ahead of time. All students are required to complete each assignment in full and be prepared to discuss it all in class. Please do not read reviews of assigned books prior to class discussion. A series of short writing assignments will be required, as indicated on the course SCHEDULE. A longer final paper is also required. In most cases this will be a historiographic essay wherein each student explores further the secondary literature on a field/topic of particular interest. History Dept. students may opt for a research paper in lieu of a historiographic essay.

**GRADING:** In assigning final grades, the following weighting applies:

Seminar Participation 35%  
Short Essays (3 @ 10%): 30%  
Final Paper: 35%

**SCHEDULE:**

**WEEK DATE TOPIC/ASSIGNMENT**

- 1 18 SEP: Course Introduction  
ESSAY ONE ASSIGNED: SENSORY HISTORY AND YOU (3-4 pp)
- 2 25 SEP: Getting Started: Roundtable and Forum
- 3 2 OCT: Building Foundations  
ESSAY ONE DUE: BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS IN CLASS
- 4 9 OCT: Ways of Sensing/Ways of Knowing: Religion and Cosmologies
- 5 16 OCT: Print, Vision, Orality, and "The Great Divide"  
ESSAY TWO ASSIGNED: INTERROGATING TEXTUAL SOURCES
- 6 23 OCT: Space, Self, and the Senses
- FALL BREAK
- 7 6 NOV: The Capitalist Sensorium  
ESSAY TWO DUE: BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS BRIEFLY IN CLASS
- 8 13 NOV: Sense and Social Order  
ESSAY 3 ASSIGNED: INTERROGATING NON-TEXTUAL SOURCES
- 9 20 NOV: INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH PROFESSOR THIS WEEK
- 10 27 NOV: METHODOLOGICAL CRITIQUE: Sense vs. Sensorium  
INFORMAL ASSIGNMENT DUE 30 NOV: IDENTIFY A HISTORICALLY-ORIENTED WEBSITE FOR THE CLASS TO EXAMINE AND DISCUSS AT WEEK 12 MEETING (email URL to Professor)
- 11 4 DEC: METHODOLOGICAL CRITIQUE: Sensorium vs. Sense  
ESSAY 3 DUE: BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS BRIEFLY IN CLASS
- 12 11 Dec: DIGITAL HISTORY AND SENSORY HISTORY:  
Opportunities and Challenges

**READING PERIOD:**

FINAL PAPER: HISTORIOGRAPHIC REVIEW OF APPROX. FIVE BOOKS (and/or a larger collection of articles) IN YOUR FIELD OF INTEREST (10-12 pp). CLASS MAY MEET ONCE DURING READING PERIOD TO DISCUSS FINAL ESSAYS-IN-PROGRESS.

FINAL PAPERS DUE TUESDAY 15 JANUARY 2013.

## **READING ASSIGNMENTS:**

### **WEEK 2: 25 SEP: Getting Started: Forum and Roundtable**

*American Historical Review* 116 (April 2011):

Forum: The Senses in History

- read essays by Jay (Intro), Rosenfeld, Jenner, Riskin, and Ferguson

*Journal of American History* 95 (September 2008):

Round Table: The Senses in American History

- read essays by Smith (Intro), Smith, Fitzgerald and Petrick, Chiang, Rath, Cook, Howes

Classen, Constance. "Engendering Perception: Gender Ideologies and Sensory Hierarchies in Western History" *Body and Society* 3 (June 1997): 1-19.

\* ASSIGNMENT: Scrutinize the READING LIST carefully and think about how you would like to organize this material into weekly topics and assignments. Identify five sources of particular interest to you, and be prepared to discuss your own goals for the course in class.

### **WEEK 3: 2 OCT: Foundations: Intellectual, Social, Environmental History, and Anthropology**

BACKGROUND: Jutta, *A History of the Senses: From Antiquity to Cyberspace* (2005), Part I: Senses and Historicity, and Part II: The Traditional Order of the Senses: From Antiquity to the Early Modern Era, pp. 1-123.

Smith, Mark. *Sensing the Past* (2007).

Parr, Joy. "Smells Like? Source of Uncertainty in the History of the Great Lakes Environment," *Environmental History* 11 (2006): 269-299. e-journal

Howes, David. *Sensual Relations: Engaging the Senses in Culture and Social Theory* (2003), Ch 1: Taking Leave of Our Senses and Ch 2: The Sensual Turn in Anthropological Understanding, pp. 3-58.

### **WEEK 4: Ways of Sensing/Ways of Knowing: Religion and Cosmologies**

BACKGROUND: Jutta, Part III: From the World of the Senses to the World of Reason (Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries), pp. 126-236.

Harvey, Susan Ashbrook. *Scenting Salvation: Ancient Christianity and the Olfactory Imagination* (2006). Intro and Chapter 3: Olfaction and Christian Knowing. Pp 1-9; 99-155 + notes. pdf

Woolgar, C.M. *The Senses in Late Medieval England* (2006). Intro; Ch 2: Ideas About the Senses; and Ch 3: Touch, Virtues, and Holiness. Pp 1-62 + notes.

Rath, Richard. *How Early America Sounded* (2003). Intro; Ch 5: The Howling Wilderness; and Conclusion. Pp 1-9; 145-184 + notes.

Schmidt, Leigh Eric. "From Demon Possession to Magic Show: Ventroloquism, Religion, and the Enlightenment," *Church History* 67 (June 1998): 274-304.

Classen, Constance. "Sweet Colors, Fragrant Songs: Sensory Models of the Andes and the Amazon," *American Ethnologist* 17 (November 1990): 722-735.

Feld, Steven. *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression* (1982;1990). Intro and Ch 2: To You They Are Birds, To Me They Are Voices in the Forest." Pp 3-19; 44-85 + references.

#### **WEEK 5: Print, Vision, Orality and "The Great Divide"**

McLuhan, Marshall. "Inside the Five Sense Sensorium." pp. 43-52 in Howes, David, ed. *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader* (Berg, 2005). Originally in *The Canadian Architect* 6 (June 1961): 49-54.

McLuhan, Marshall. "The interiorization of the phonetic alphabet transpates man from the magical world of the ear to the neutral visual world"; Schizophrenia may be a necessary consequence of literacy"; Does the interiorization of media such as LETTERS alter the ratio among our senses and change mental processes?"; "Civilization give the barbarian or tribal man an eye for an ear and is now at odds with the electronic world," pp. 21-33 in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962; Toronto, 2011).

Ong, Walter. *The Presence of the Word* (1967; Yale, 2012), Ch 1: The Word and the Sensorium, and Ch 2: Transformations of the Word; pp. 1-110.

Sterne, Jonathan. "The Theology of Sound: A Critique of Orality." *Canadian Journal of Communication* 36 (2011): 207-225.

Eisenstein, Elizabeth. *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1983). Ch 1: An Unacknowledged Revolution; Ch 2: Defining the Initial Shift; Ch 3: Some Features of Print Culture; Conclusion: Scripture and Nature Transformed, pp. 3-91, 255-278.

Bruce Smith. "Listening to the Wild Blue Yonder: The Challenges of Acoustic Ecology," pp. 21-41 in Veit Erlmann, *Hearing Cultures: Essays on Sound, Listening, and Modernity* (Berg, 2004).

Jay, Martin. "Scopic Regimes of Modernity" (+ discussion), pp. 3-28 in Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality* (DIA, 1988).

Crary, Jonathan. "Modernizing Vision" (+ discussion), pp. 29-50 in Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality* (DIA, 1988).

## **WEEK 6: Space, Self, and the Senses**

Corbin, Alain. *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the 19th-Century French Countryside* (1994; Columbia, 1998). Preface; Ch 1: An Impossible Revolution in the Culture of the Senses; Ch 4: The Auditory Markers of the Village, pp. xiii-xx; 3-44; 95-158.

Valencius, Conevery Bolton. *The Health of the Country: How American Settlers Understood Themselves and Their Land* (Basic, 2002). Intro, Ch 1-3: Healthy Country; New Country; Body; Places, pp. 1-108.

Keyes, Sarah. "Like a Roaring Lion: The Overland Trail as Sonic Conquest." *Journal of American History* 96 (June 2009): 19-43.

Upton, Dell. *Another City: Urban Life and Urban Spaces in the New American Republic* (Yale, 2008). Intro, Part I: The Lived City, pp. 1-110.

ADDITIONAL: CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

Connor, Steven. "The Modern Auditory I." pp. 203-223 in Roy Porter, ed., *Rewriting the Self: Histories from the Renaissance to the Present* (Routledge, 1997).

Atkinson, Niall. "Sonic Armatures; Constructing an Acoustic Regime in Renaissance Florence." *Sense and Society* 7: 39-52.

Birdsall, Carolyn. *Nazi Soundscapes: Sound, Technology, and Urban Space in Germany, 1933-1945* (Amsterdam, 2012). Ch 1: "Affirmative Resonances in Urban Space," pp. 31-63 and website: <http://soundclips.humanities.uva.nl/>

## **WEEK 7: The Capitalist Sensorium**

Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (1977; California, 1986) Ch 3-5, 10: Railroad Space and Railroad Time; Panoramic Travel; The Compartment; Stimulus Shield: or, the Industrialized Consciousness. Pp 33-44; 52-88; 159-170.

Howes, David. "The Material Body of the Commodity: Sensing Marx," pp. 204-234 in *Sensual Relations* (2003).

Smith, Kate. "Sensing Design and Workmanship: The Haptic Skills of Shoppers in c18 London." *Journal of Design History* 25 (March 2012): 1-10.

Mack, Adam. "Speaking of Tomatoes: Supermarkets, the Senses, and Sexual Fantasy in Modern America." *Journal of Social History* 43 (Summer 2010): 815-842.

Leach, William. "Strategies of Display and the Production of Desire," pp. 99-132 in Simon Bronner, Ed., *Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America, 1880-1920* (Norton, 1989).

Lears, T.J. Jackson. "From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930," pp 3-38 in Richard Wightman Fox and Lears, Eds., *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980* (Pantheon, 1983).

Thompson, Emily. "Machines, Music, and the Quest for Fidelity: Marketing the Edison Phonograph in America, 1877-1925." *Musical Quarterly* 79 (Spring 1995): 131-171.

#### **WEEK 8: Sense and Social Order**

Corbin, Alain. *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odor and the French Social Imagination* (Harvard 1986): Intro and Part 2: "Purifying Public Space," pp. 1-8; 89-135.

Smith, Mark. *How Race is Made: Slavery, Segregation, and the Senses* (UNC, 2006). Intro, Ch 1-3, pp. 1-65.

Rath, Richard. *How Early America Sounded*. Excerpt of Ch 2, "From the Sounds of Things," on creolization, pp. 68-94.

Gabaccia, Donna. "Colonial Creoles: The Formation of Tastes in Early America," pp. 79-85 in Carolyn Korsmeyer, Ed. *The Taste Culture Reader* (Berg, 2005).

#### PHONOGRAPHIC SUB-TOPIC:

Brady, Erika. *A Spiral Way: How the Phonograph Changed Ethnography* (Mississippi, 1999). Ch 4: "Performers and the Phonograph," pp 89-117.

Gitelman, Lisa. "Reading Music, Reading Records, Reading Race: Musical Copyright and the U.S. Copyright Act of 1909." *Musical Quarterly* 81 (Summer 1997): 265-290.

Suisman, David. "Co-Workers in the Kingdom of Culture: Black Swan Records and the Political Economy of African American Music." *Journal of American History* 90 (March 2004): 1295-1324.

#### **WEEK 9: NO READINGS THIS WEEK: INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH PROFESSOR**

#### **WEEK 10: Methodological Critique I: Sense or Sensorium?**

Thompson, Emily. *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933*. (MIT, 2002)

INFORMAL ASSIGNMENT: IDENTIFY A HISTORICALLY-ORIENTED WEBSITE FOR THE CLASS TO EXAMINE AND DISCUSS AT WEEK 12 MEETING. [EMAIL TO PROFESSOR BY FRIDAY, 30 NOVEMBER]

## **WEEK 11: Methodological Critique II: Sensorium or Sense?**

Parr, Joy. *Sensing Changes; Technologies, Environments, and the Everyday, 1953-2003* (UBC, 2010) + <http://megaprojects.uwo.ca>

## **WEEK 12: Digital History and Sensory History: Opportunities and Challenges**

### WEBSITES:

- Professor Thompson's website-in-progress, "The Roaring 'Twenties"
- Historical websites of interested identified by class participants  
See email for links and brief descriptions

### THINK ABOUT:

- Practical matters: Ease of navigation, comprehensibility of structure/organization, aesthetic design
- Rigor: How does it compare to print wrt citations, knowing "what" you are looking at/listening to?
- Agenda: Does the site have an "argument"? What kind of scholarly "work" is it accomplishing (or attempting)?
  - is this work that could not be done in print form?
- IN RE SENSORY HISTORY: Does the web offer particular opportunities for the kind of history we've been studying this term? What are the dangers of web history, sensory or otherwise?
- BIG QUESTION: Does the web (compared to books) offer historians an enriched or impoverished sensory experience?

### READING ASSIGNMENT (pdfs posted to Blackboard):

"Humanities to Digital Humanities," Ch 1 (pp 3-26) in Burdick, Ann, and Johanna Drucker and Peter Lunenfeld and Todd Presner and Jeffrey Schnapp, Eds. *Digital Humanities* (The MIT Press, 2012).

Rieder, Bernhard and Theo Rhle, "Digital Methods: Five Challenges," Ch 4 (pp 67-84) in Berry, David, Ed. *Understanding Digital Humanities* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

### ADDITIONAL MATERIAL (FOR REFERENCE):

Vertesi, Janet. pdf of slide presentation to History of Science Program Seminar, 8 Oct 2012 (a range of URLs exemplifying different approaches to digital humanities - posted on Blackboard)

Rosenzweig, Roy. *Clio Wired: The Future of the Past in the Digital Age* (Columbia, 2011) - collection of essays by the late author, a leader in history-on-the-web.

Cohen, Daniel K. and Roy Rosenzweig, *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web* (Penn, 2006). - a practical guide

Gold, Matthew, Ed. *Debates in the Digital Humanities* (University of MN Press, 2012).