

SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY: COURSE OUTLINE 2019/20**THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF
VISION, MEMORY & THE SENSES****UNDERGRADUATE SOAN 30811
POSTGRADUATE SOAN 70591**

- Time and Venue:** Thursdays 09.00-13.00
Lecture Theatre G6: Humanities Bridgeford Street
- Convener:** Professor Andrew Irving
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- Room:** 2.055 Arthur Lewis Building
- Office Hours:** Tuesdays: (by email appointment).
Wednesdays: 1 to 2pm
- Administrators:** U/grad: Kellie Jordan, G.001 Arthur Lewis.
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	UNDERGRADUATE	POSTGRADUATE
Assessment	5000 word essay (100%)	4000 word essay (100%)
Credit	20	15
Deadlines	2pm: 13th January 2020	2pm: 16th January 2020

Visual and other material can be included within the essay or online.

Please read the following information sheet in the Assessment Section on Blackboard, in connection with Coursework and Examinations: INSTRUCTIONS FOR SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY UNDERGRADUATE ESSAYS AND COURSEWORK

NB This course outline was prepared in July 2019 and may be subject to changes

THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF VISION, MEMORY & THE SENSES



The Anthropology of Vision, Memory and The Senses opens by exploring the evolution of our human and non-human ancestors in order to better understand the human body and the foundations of visual perception, memory and sensory experience. This allows us to grasp both the possibilities and limits of perception, including how humans see and understand the world in ways that are both similar and different to other animals. However, vision, memory and the senses cannot simply be reduced to the mechanics of cognition, perception or biology given they are simultaneously social, political and historical phenomena that change over time in relation to different social, cultural and material environments. If we are to better understand the diverse ways of being encountered around the world then we must consider the relationship between the human eye, brain and body in relation to things such as language, art and the imagination; media, advertising and technology; race, gender and power; everyday life and performance; architecture and cities; war, illness; and death.

Approaching vision, memory and the senses from an anthropological perspective allows us to understand their vital role in people's everyday lives. The course introduces a range of scientific, artistic and practical perspectives. By considering how relations between persons are framed by discourses of power, gender and ethnicity—and how these are embedded within different ways of looking, sensing and understanding—the course takes us beyond the mechanics of perception to form a better understanding of social life.

The course is conceived of as a journey through time and place. It is a journey that draws on ethnographic examples from around the world including Africa, India, Japan, Melanesia and America that takes us from the art and early cave paintings of early humanity to the abstractions of Picasso and mass reproductions of Warhol; from aesthetics to anaesthetics; from regimes to resistance; from modernity to postmodernity to the contemporary world, from the power of 'the gaze' to that of 'glance'; from the real to the hyper-real and the realms of imagination, hallucination and trance.

AIMS & SUMMARY

The course is taught with certain overall aims in mind to:

1. Convey the content of classic and contemporary understandings about vision, memory and the senses.
2. Support the development of your own visual, sensory and ethnographic engagement with the world we live in.
3. Create a space to form new theoretical connections between different disciplinary perspectives on vision and the senses.

A better understanding of the place and power of vision within contemporary societies not only constitutes a type of ethical choice/political action but is a preliminary to understanding the world we live in and carrying out effective ethnographic research.

- 1) **Setting the Stage: The (R)evolution of Vision and the Senses.**
- 2) **Art That Made the World: From the Cave to Mechanical Rep.**
- 3) **The Modern Eye: Knowledge, Power and Vision.**
- 4) **Postmodern Images and Transformations of Vision.**
- 5) **Surfaces of the World I: The Skin of the City.**

READING WEEK

- 6) **Surfaces of the World II: Body Image and Skin.**
- 7) **The Phenomenological Body: Perception, Memory and Imagination.**
- 8) **Empire of The Senses: Negations of Vision and Hearing.**
- 9) **Images of Death.**
- 10) **Rethinking Visual Anthropology.**

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES

Final assessment essays should aim to use a range of relevant ethnographic sources to illustrate claims and support theoretical arguments. Visual material can be included within the essay or accompany the text by way of an online link or accompanying material.

Essay titles will be distributed at the end of November/beginning of December.

Students should upload their essay on **TURNITIN**.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES

Online Collections

Students are also able to view and access films online via *Alexander Street Press*; *Box of Broadcasts* and *Kanopy*.

Students can watch 100 former Granada Centre student MA films online via Alexander Street Press, which can be accessed via Manchester library here:

http://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=MU_VU1&search_scope=BLEND&docId=44MAN_ALMA_DS51304839130001631&fn=permalink

There are over currently 300 films available in the **Alexander Street Press** collection. In addition to the Granada Centre films there are also films from Filmmakers Library and Berkeley Media plus a selection of ethnographic film festival award winners from the

Margaret Mead Film Festival, the Society for Visual Anthropology Festival and the Nordic Anthropological Film Association Festival.

The university also has access to **Kanopy**, which hosts a wide range of films, including ethnographic films and can be accessed here:

http://www.librarysearch.manchester.ac.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/dlDisplay.do?vid=MU_VU1&search_scope=BLEND&docId=44MAN_ALMA_DS61301599590001631&fn=permalink

Web Support:

Various e-readings, journal articles, book chapters, film clips and other kinds of multi-media material will be posted throughout the course on **Blackboard** (<https://blackboard.manchester.ac.uk>)

Journals

Articles concerning vision and the senses are found across the whole spectrum of anthropological journals and so it is worth periodically checking and browsing for articles. However, there are also specialised journals, such as **Visual Anthropology Review**, **Visual Studies** and **Visual Anthropology** that aim to promote visual anthropology; the **Journal of Material Culture** that frequently addresses visual culture; and the newly formed **Senses and Society** that seeks to promote interdisciplinary thinking about the study of vision and the senses.

Selected Readers

For those without a background in Visual Anthropology may find the following texts useful for understanding the history and current state of the discipline:

- MacDougall, D. 2019. *The Looking Machine: Essays on Cinema, Anthropology and Documentary Filmmaking*. Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Grimshaw, A. 1999. *The Ethnographer's Eye: Ways of Seeing in Modern Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, L. (ed) 1994 *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays from Visual Anthropology Review* New York: Routledge

The following readers offer an overview of readings concerning the anthropology of vision, art, aesthetics and the senses. They are good value and highly recommended and might also be worth buying for other courses and for general interest.

- Mirzoeff, N. 2015. *How to See the World*. London: Pelican.
- Edwards E & Bhaumik, K (eds) 2008. *Visual Sense: A Cultural Reader*. Oxford and New York: Berg
- Morphy, H and Perkins, M. (eds) 2006 *The Anthropology of Art: A Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Howes, D. (ed) 2004 *Empire of the Senses*. Oxford and New York: Berg
- Jay, M 1994 *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French Thought*. Berkeley and London: University of California Press

1: Setting the Stage: The (R)evolution of Vision and the Senses.



"We depend on vision more than any other sense to help us negotiate the world about us. Our eyes provide us with a continual stream of information concerning the appearance and movement of people and objects that make up the vast backdrop of our lives out there. [...]. It turns out that we humans, and indeed all other animals, see not with our eyes but with our brains" (Susan Greenfield)

"The Forming of the five senses is a labour of the entire history of the world down to the present" (Karl Marx)

The opening week begins with a general overview of the evolution and history of the eye in order to understand how vision has developed within different social and cultural epochs. In doing so, it explores the phylogenetic possibilities and constraints of vision and how these have been understood through the lenses of cognitive science, art history and anthropological theory. We journey from the early aesthetics of vision in the form of Acheulean Hand-axes, Entoptic Forms, Hallucinations, Dreams and Sub-Saharan Rock Art to consider a comparison of Ancient Egyptian, Cartesian, Chinese and Renaissance Perspectives.

This raises one of the central tensions of Visual Anthropology that will be explored throughout the course; namely how vision is a pan-human, universal phenomenon but at the same time embodies culturally different ways of seeing, experiencing and understanding the world.

Key Readings:

- Gregory, R 2005 "Visions of Vision" in *Eye and Brain: The Psychology of Seeing* (5th Ed). Oxford: OUP
- Greenfield, S. 2000 "The Mind's Eye" in *Brain Story*. London: BBC Worldwide
- Leakey, R. 1995 "The Language of Art" and "The Art of Language" in *The Origins of Humankind*. New York: Basic Books.
- Howes, D. 2019. "Multisensory Anthropology" in *the Annual Review of Anthropology* 48:17-28

Further Readings: Semiotics

- O' Shaughnessy, M. 1999 "Semiology" and "Reading Images" in *Media and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hawkes, T. 1977 *Structuralism and Semiotics*. London: Routledge.
- Manning, P. 2010. "The Semiotics of Brand" in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 39(1)

Ancient Visions, Evolution, Truth, Senses and Hallucinations

- Hodder, I. 2018, *Where are we Heading? The Evolution of Humans and Things*. Newhaven: Yale University Press.
- Levin, D 1997. "Introduction" in *Sites of Vision: The Discursive Construction of Sight in the History of Philosophy*. MIT Press
- Marx, K. 1844 "Private Property and Communism" (page 157-167) in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*.
- Luhmann, T 2011, Hallucinations and Sensory Overrides in *Annual Review of Anthropology*
- Mithen, S. 2006. *The Singing Neanderthals: The Origins of Music, Language, Mind and Body*. Phoenix; New Ed
- Berger, J. 2002 "Towards a New Theory of the Visible" and "The Chauvet Cave" in *The Shape of a Pocket*. London: Bloomsbury
- Lewis Williams, D. 2004 *The Mind in the Cave*. London: Thames and Hudson
- Lewis Williams, D. 1986. Cognitive and Optical Illusions in San Rock Art Research. In *Current Anthropology*. 27.2
- Engelke, M 2008 *The Objects of Evidence: Anthropological Approaches to the Production of Knowledge*. Special Issue of Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute.

Week 2: Art That Made the World: From the Cave to Mechanical and Digital Reproduction



"An object reflects a pattern of light on to the eye. The light enters the eye through the pupil, is gathered by the lens, and thrown on the screen at the back of the eye, the retina. On the retina is a network of nerve fibres which pass the light through a system of cells to several millions of receptors, the cones. The cones are sensitive both to light and to colour, and they respond by carrying information about light and colour to the brain. It is at this point that human equipment for visual perception ceases to be uniform from one man to the next" (Michael Baxandall)

The extent to which visual perception, art and aesthetics are cross-cultural categories forms part of a long-standing debate about the universality or otherwise of perception and material forms. There is probably an aesthetic dimension to all activities, however the role it plays will vary from culture to culture, if only because the "aesthetic" is not necessarily a distinct category of appreciation in every society and may understood in some other fashion: in terms of beauty, but also medicine, in terms of religious/sacral quality or ritual efficacy. It is useful to recall the etymology of the word 'aesthetics' because we often find ourselves returning to this originary, or at least earlier, understanding of the term. Aisthitikos is the ancient Greek word for that which is 'perceptive by feeling' thereby suggesting that the original semantic field of aesthetics was not art but reality –or rather a corporeality: a discourse of the body and form of knowledge whereby sight, taste, touch, hearing, and smell are the means by which we come to know and understand the world. In this week we will begin to explore the role of visual aesthetics in different cultures vis-à-vis classical debates on the relations between vision, cognition, language and relativity so as to better locate the visual artefacts and practices of different cultures.

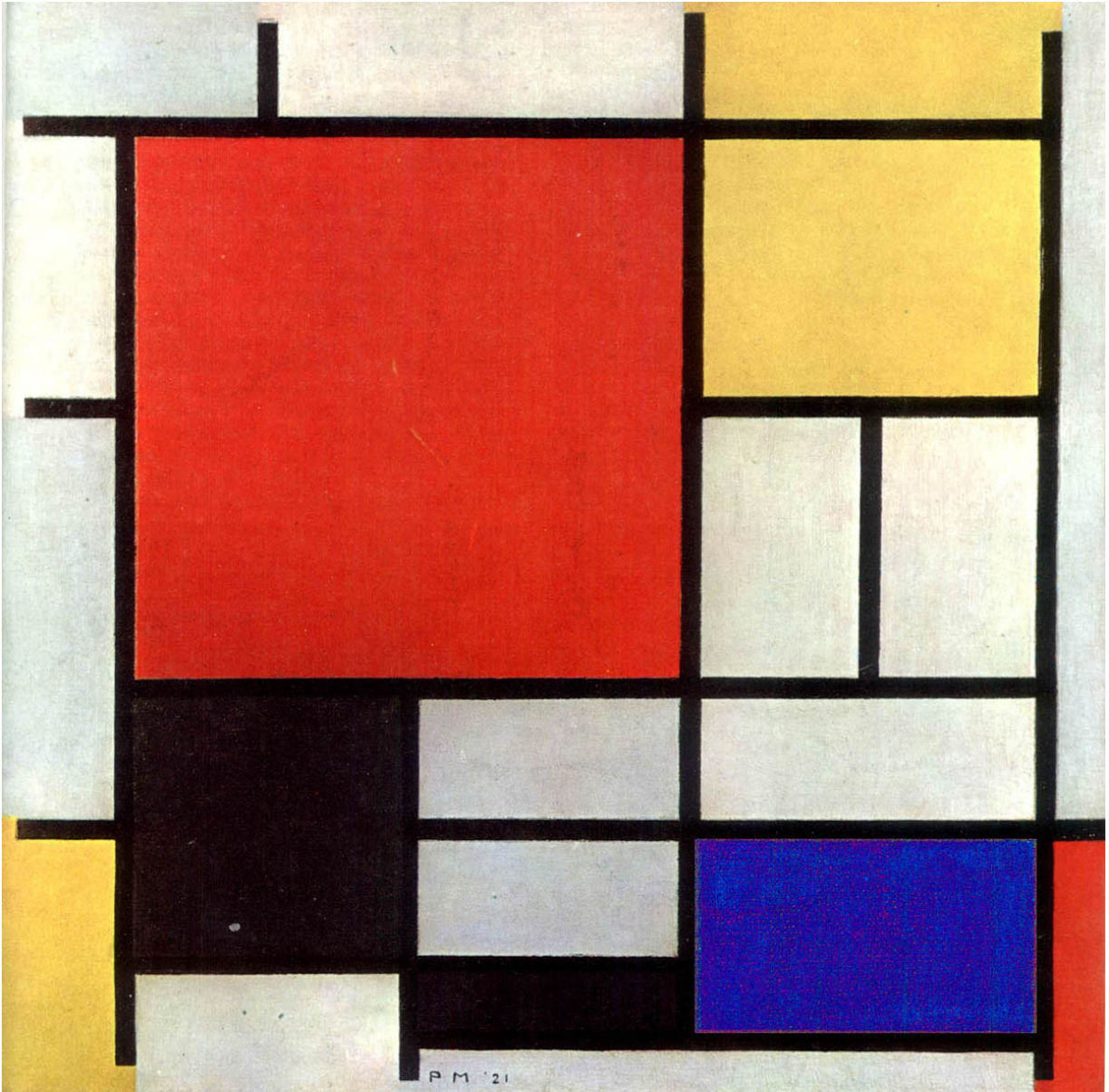
Key Readings:

- Berger, J 1973 "Chapter One" in *Ways of Seeing*. London: BBC Books.
- Ong, W. 1995 "Writing restructures consciousness" in *Orality and Literacy: The technologizing of the word*. London: Routledge
- Benjamin, W. 1999. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in *Illuminations* London, Pimlico.
- Seymour, R. 2019. "We are All Connected" in *The Twittering Machine*. London: Indigo Press

Further Readings: On Art and Aesthetics

- Plato (c. 427-347 BC) 'The Good as the Ultimate Object of Knowledge' 'The Divided Line' 'The Simile of the Cave' and Part X 'Theory of Art' in *The Republic*. London: Penguin
- Sontag, S. 1990. *Against Interpretation*. New York: Anchor Books
- Baxendall, M 1988. "The Period Eye" in *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- hooks, b. 1995. *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*. New York: The New Press.
- GDAT Debate 'Is aesthetics a cross-cultural category' In (ed.) T. Ingold. 1996. *Key Debates in Anthropology*: London: Routledge.
- Morphy, H 1994 "From Dull to Brilliant: The Aesthetics of Spiritual Power among the Yolngu" in Morphy, H & Perkins, M (eds) *The Anthropology of Art*: Oxford: Blackwell (also in Coote, J & Sheldon, A *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*. Oxford Clarendon Press).
- Coote, J 1994 "Marvels of Everyday Vision: The Anthropology of Aesthetics and the Cattle-Keeping Nilotes" in Coote, J & Sheldon, A *Anthropology, Art and Aesthetics*. Oxford Clarendon Press, (also in Morphy, H & Perkins, M 2006 (eds) *The Anthropology of Art: A Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell).
- Forge A. 1970 "Learning to See in New Guinea" in Philip Mayer (ed.), *Socialization: The Approach from Social Anthropology*. ASA Monographs No. 8. London: Tavistock, 269-91
- Gregory, R 2005 "Realities of Art" in *Eye and Brain: The Psychology of Seeing (5th Ed)*. Oxford: OUP

Week 3: The Modern Eye: Knowledge, Power and Vision



"There is a mode of vital experience – experience of space and time, of the self and others, of life's possibilities and perils – that is shared by men and women all over the world today. I will call this body of experience 'modernity'. To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises adventure, power, joy, growth, transformation of ourselves and the world – and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are" (Marshall Berman)

"We have never been modern" (Bruno Latour)

Modernity, it has been suggested, is based on an empirical contract between vision and reality whereby what we see is accorded the status of truth. By contrast those things that we cannot see—and are not independently or objectively verifiable—such as gods, spirits, beliefs, feelings and emotions are called into question and are seen as unreliable and insufficient foundations upon which to establish facts and build up a 'picture' of reality. Likewise, within western epistemologies the other senses are frequently seen as less reliable and less accurate markers of truth, creating a clear hierarchy of the senses.

Power and vision are interlinked on many levels, from the epistemological correlation of vision and reality that underpins science, biomedicine and rationality to modern forms of hyper-surveillance and the seductions of advertising. How do the different forms of vision combine to 'construct' a reality that shapes behaviour and controls society? How are vision, power and politics linked to the body? At what point does reality turn into surreality? Is the denigration of the eye and more recent 'sensory turn' within the social sciences a belated, even reactionary, attempt to redress the balance between the eye and the other types of knowledge that are embodied and distributed throughout the senses?

Key Readings

- Sartre, JP 1996 "The Look" pages 252-302 in the section on 'The Existence of Others' in *Being and Nothingness*. London: Routledge.
- Foucault, M 2001 "Las Meninas" in *The Order of Things* London: Routledge
- Ahmed, S, 2006. "Orientations toward a Queer Phenomenology" in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 12: 4, pp. 543-574.
- Parkin, D. 1985. "Reason, Emotion and the Embodiment of Power". In *Reason and Morality* (ed.) J. Overing. London: Tavistock

Further Readings: Modernism and the Eye, Power and Truth

- Descartes, R. 1968 [1641] "Meditations No.1 Of the Things of which we may Doubt"; "II: Of the Nature of the Human Mind and that it is more easily known than the Body", and "VI: Of the Existence of Material Things, and of the Real Distinction between the Mind and Body of Man". in *Discourse on Method and The Meditations*. London: Penguin.
- Harvey, D. 1989 "Introduction" "Modernity and Modernism" in *The Condition of Postmodernity. An Enquiry Into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Marcus, G. 1994. The Modernist Sensibility in Recent Ethnographic Writing and The Cinematic Metaphor of Montage. In *Visual Anthropology Review*
- Taussig, M. 1992. "Physiognomic Aspects of Visual Worlds" in *Visual Anthropology Review* Vol. 8, No. 2 London: Academic Press.
- Descartes, R. 2002. "Optics" in Mirzoeff, N (ed) *Visual Culture Reader*. London: Routledge
- Jay M 1991 "The Disenchantment of the Eye" In *Visual Anthropology Review* Vol. 7, No. 1
- Foucault, M 1990 "Preface", "Signs and Cases" & "Seeing and Knowing" in *Birth of the Clinic*. London: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. 1979. "Panopticism" in *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Vintage.
- Jay, M. 1988. "Scopic Regimes of Modernity". In *Vision and Visuality*. (ed.) H. Foster. Seattle: Bay Press
- Heidegger, M 1977 "The Age of the World Picture" in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. NYC: Harper.
- Salmond, A 1982 "Theoretical Landscapes" in Parkin, D (ed) *Semantic Anthropology*.

Week 4: Postmodern Images and the Transformations of Vision



"What is postmodernism? The term first appeared to describe new forms of architecture in which the rational aesthetics of modernist buildings gave way to more diverse, fragmented, unstructured forms. However, it can be argued that it was not just modernism's buildings that fell apart and were torn down but reason, certainty and faith in science, for the advent of postmodernism not only signals the death of the modernist project and its quest for knowledge through the application of reason and rationality but the marks an end to the idea of a single over-arching reality or truth that dominates the world. The god-like and all seeing 'gaze' of western science is replaced by the partial, fragmented, ironic and playful post-modern perspective that is perhaps best summed up as a 'glance' and the shift towards 'voice'. Voices from down on the ground rather than high above that encompass and legitimate the perspectives of people previously defined as 'Others' non-Europeans, Women, Colonised Peoples, Gays who previously occupied social and global margins and lurked in the shadows of modern consciousness.

However when we come to define postmodernism it is not simply a question of what is postmodernism but who, when and where. For who does the postmodern condition apply to? Does it include all of humanity or is it restricted to metropolitan elites? Does the visual culture and aesthetic practices of postmodernity represent a break from modernity or are they merely the continuation, extension and reformulation of existing visual culture rebranded for C21st, the logic of late capitalism, if you like? And if so what possibilities are there for a politically engaged, ethically based flavour of postmodernism that does not use merely use the image merely as a call to consume?

If so then we must ask what is at stake in establishing control in the visual arena in the postmodern world. 'Control the means of production...' the old adage goes and one essentially controls the means of shaping society. This raises the question of whether it is the control of images, the means of representation and the production of desire that is where the (hyper)real power lays. What role do images play in marketing and the public sphere? What is the relationship between race, gender and the gaze? How can we use images to trace the theoretical and ethnographic trajectory of production through consumption to seduction?

Key Readings:

- Grimshaw, A. 2001. "The Modernist Moment and After" in *The Ethnographer's Eye: Ways of Seeing in Modern Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Harvey, D. 1989 "Postmodernism" in *The Condition of Postmodernity. An Enquiry Into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Haraway, D 1991 "The Biopolitics of Postmodern Bodies: Determinations of Self in Immune System discourse" in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York and London, Routledge. (Also reprinted in Lindenbaum, S and Lock M (eds.), *Knowledge, Power and Practices: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life*. Berkeley and London, University of California Press).
- Baudrillard, J 1983 "Simulations". New York: Semiotext

On Postmodernism

- Doy, G. 1999 *Black Visual Culture: Modernity and Postmodernity* London and New York: I.B. Tauris
- Jameson, F 1985 "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" in Foster, H (ed.), *Postmodern Culture*. London and Sydney, Pluto Press
- Jameson, F 1991 *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London: Verso.
- Lyotard, J. 1984 *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Manchester, Manchester University Press
- Carroll, D. 1987. *Paraesthetics*. London: Meuthen.
- hooks, b. 2001 "Postmodern Blackness." In *The Norton Anthology: Theory and Criticism*. Ed. Vincent B. Leitch. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

On the 'traffic' in global culture

- Tsing, A, 2005. *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Appadurai, A 1990 "Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy" in *Public Culture* 2(2): 1-24.
- Kulick, D & Wilson M 1994 "Rambo's Wife Saves the Day" in *Visual Anthropology Review*. Vol. 10 No.2.
- Liebes, T and Katz, E, 1990: *The Export of Meaning: Cross-Cultural Readings of 'Dallas'*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Parkin, D 1993. Nemi in the Modern World: Return of the exotic? in *JRAI/Man* 28 79-99

Week 5: Surfaces of the World I: Cities



"The metropolis exacts from man as a discriminating creature a different amount of consciousness than does rural life. Here the rhythm of life and sensory mental imagery flows more slowly, more habitually, more evenly. In this connection the sophisticated character of metropolitan psychic life becomes understandable—as over against small town life which rests more upon deeply felt and emotional relationships" (Georg Simmel)

"The landscape has no deeper meaning" (Werner Herzog)

Space, place and landscape are not neutral phenomena but are overlaid with layers and layers of meaning, memory and emotion. In what ways do we read and relate to the familiar and unfamiliar landscapes that we encounter. Fields, deserts, rivers and stones create different atmospheres and have witnessed different histories. How do these embody meaning? What visible traces are left on the material world and physical

environment? How are memories stored in objects, buildings and bits of old ground? Meanwhile the impressive surfaces and imperial facades of C19th Manchester told of the city's colonial trade links and the advent of industrialisation but they also served to mask and disguise the hovels of the poor and downtrodden that lived 'behind the scenes' and which Engels famously wrote about.

An important demographic transition is underway and shortly after the turn of the C21st statistics showed that for the first time in human history more people living in cities than not. The city-states of Ancient Greece numbered around 10,000 citizens; in 1950 there were only 86 cities in the world with a population of more than a million but by 2025 there will over 550 cities with million plus populations. The size, scale and diversity of the modern city has created a type of citizen of the senses who is not just a political subject but also a phenomenological subject who is continually subjected to different types of visual and sensory stimulus, otherness and ideology. Modern cities, from Manchester to Mumbai, from Beirut to Belfast offer a vast semiotic cityscape and are encountered as a postmodern system of signs linked to class, history and economy. Today the meanings of contemporary urban surfaces tell of a different story and are now viewed from a postcolonial perspective.

Key Readings

- Low S. 1996. "The Anthropology of Cities: Imagining and Theorising the City". In *Annual Review of Anthropology* 25 387-399
- Jarman, N 1998 "Painting Landscapes: The place of murals in the symbolic construction of urban space" in Buckley, A (ed) *Symbols in Northern Ireland*. Belfast: The Institute of Irish Studies
- Irving, A. 2010 "Everyday Adventures in London" in *Reveries of Home: Nostalgia, Authenticity and the Performance of Place*. Rapport, N & Williksen, S. Cambridge Scholars Press
- Casey, E. 1996. "How to get from space to place in a very short time". In (eds.) S. Feld, and K. Basso, *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe School of American Research of Minnesota Press

Further Readings

The Urban Environment

- Coverley, M 2006 *Psychogeography* Harpenden: Pocket Essentials
- De Certeau, M. 1986. "Practices of Space". In *On Signs*. (ed.) M. Blonsky. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Legates, R.T. & F. Stout (eds.) 2000 *The City Reader*. London: Routledge.
- The following are recommended: Kitto "The Polis", Lynch "The City Image"; Davis "Fortress LA"; Le Corbusier 'A Contemporary City'; Zukin 'Whose Culture? Whose City?
- Sennett, R. 1994. "Introduction: Body and City" in *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilisation*. London: Faber.
- Simmel, G. 2002. "The Metropolis and Mental Life". In Bridge, G & Watson, S (eds) *The Blackwell City Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell
- Jarman, N 1997 *Material Conflicts Parades and Visual Displays in Northern Ireland*. Oxford: Berg
- Irving, A 2010 "Dangerous Substances and Visible Evidence: Tears, Blood, Alcohol, Pills" in *Visual Studies* 25 (1)
- Niedhart, C. 2002 "Introduction" in *Russia's Carnival: The Smells, Sights and Sounds of Transition*. Rowman & Littlefield Publ.
- Edensor, T and Jayne, M. eds 2012. *Urban Theory Beyond the West: A World of Cities*. London: Routledge.

Week 6: Surfaces of the World II: Body Image and Skin



"All art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril" (Oscar Wilde)

"Eluding the imaginary totalisations of the eye, there is a strangeness in the commonplace that creates no surface, or whose surface is only an advanced limit, an edge cut out of the visible" (Michel De Certeau)

"Nothing is deeper in ~~man~~ than ~~his~~ skin" (Paul Valery)

We encounter the world through the surface semiotics of appearances, of skin colour, of age, gender, of clothing, fashion and advertising, and of course body image. Visual differences between persons detectable to the eye form the basis of social classification, action and behaviour that ascertain identity, establish commonalities as well as distinguish between different types of person. For Sander Gilman the line that distinguishes between self and other is unstable and so is symbolised and perpetuated through stereotypes (a term that comes from a printing machine invented in C18th and applied to human beings and their behaviours). Visual stereotypes become a way of categorising and understanding a world which is Other to the self, and therefore is a process by which unstable differences, such as those of race, class, gender and sexuality,

are created and maintained. For example, for psychiatrist Franz Fanon being black in a European country—especially in the colonial times he was writing in—meant becoming an object amongst other objects in other people's gaze. His identity was created for him before he was born and is later visited upon him, as a visual category or type that is woven out of a thousand glances, anecdotes and comments articulated in his presence.

Key Readings

- Fanon, F 1967 "The Fact of Blackness" in *Black Skin White Masks: The Experiences of a Black Man in a White World*. New York; Grove Press.
- Butler, J. 1999 "From Parody to Politics" in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.
- Jablonksi, N 2004 The Evolution of Human Skin and Skin Color in *The Annual Review of Anthropology* 33: 585-623
- Connor, S. 2004 "Complexion" in *The Book of Skin*. London: Reaktion Books

Further Readings: Skin and Body

- Strathern A. 1975. Why is shame on the skin? In *Ethnology*, Vol. 14, No. 4 pp. 347-356.
- Strathern M. 1979. 'The self in self-decoration'. in *Oceania* 49:241-57
- Thomas, N. 2006 "The Case of Tattooing" in Schneider A and Wright C (Eds) *Contemporary Art and Anthropology*. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Mercier, J. 1997. *The Art that Heals: The image as medicine in Ethiopia*. New York: Museum of African Art
- Gremillion, H. 2005. The Cultural Politics of Body Size in *Annual Review of Anthropology*
- Ahmed S and Stacey J, ed. 2001. *Thinking Through the Skin*. London: Routledge.
- Connor, S. 2004 "Exposition" & "Disfiguring" in *The Book of Skin*. London: Reaktion Books
- Gilman, S. 1985. *Difference & Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race and Madness*. Ithaca; Cornell University Press.
- Ronzon, F 2006 Icons and Transvestites: Notes on Irony, Cognition and Visual Skill In Grasseni C. (ed) *Skilled Visions*. Oxford: Berghahn Books

Questions of Race

- Hurston, Z.N. 2018. *Barracoön: The Story of the Last Slave*. London: Harper Collins.
- Hall, S. 1996. "The after-life of Frantz Fanon. Why Fanon? Why now? Why Black Skin, White Masks?" In *The fact of blackness: Frantz Fanon and visual representation*, edited by Alan Read. London: Institute of Contemporary Arts.
- Kondo, D. 2018. *Worldmaking: Race, Performance and the Work of Creativity*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Sheriff, R. 2001. *Dreaming equality: color, race, and racism in urban Brazil*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Edmonds, A. 2007. "Triumphant miscegenation: reflections on beauty and race in Brazil". *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 28 (1): 83 - 97.
- Rahier, J 1999. "Body politics in black and white: señoras, mujeres, blanqueamiento". In *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 21:103-119.
- Stone, J. and R. Dennis. 2003. *Race and ethnicity: comparative and theoretical approaches*, Oxford: Blackwell.
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Week 7: The Phenomenological Body: Perception, Memory and Imagination



"According to an ancient etymology, the word *image* should be linked to the root *imitari*. Thus we find ourselves immediately at the heart of the most important problem facing the semiology of images: can analogical representation ('the copy') produce true systems of signs and not merely simple agglutinations of symbols? Is it possible to conceive of an analogical 'code' (as opposed to a digital one)? (Roland Barthes).

"Often when I shut my eyes, faces appear before me. What is remarkable about them is their definition. Each face has the sharpness of an engraving" (John Berger)

Perception, memory and imagination are central to all human experience and are essential in understanding and interpreting the social and material world. The interplay between vision, imagination and memory challenges classical notions in which the imagination was understood as a degraded, lesser form of perceptual experience that was peripheral to social life and a distortion of truth. The imagination brings different worlds into being and mediates not only what we see but also what we feel, hear, taste and touch.

When thinking about the role of the imagination in social life and visual culture we must also consider the role of those things that are not present to the senses such as those contained in memory. Mnemosyne is the goddess of memory, while Lesmosyne is the goddess of forgetting. As in life and myth Mnemosyne is in perpetual struggle with Lesmosyne. That is to say memory is involved in an eternal struggle with forgetting. To some extent 'whatever one represents, one inscribes in memory' and so the question is what aspects of people's lives are remembered and forgotten through the visual practices and material culture of different cultures.

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Week 8: Empire of The Senses: Negations of Vision and Hearing



"ALL ~~men~~ by nature desire to know. An indication of this is the delight we take in our senses; for even apart from their usefulness they are loved for themselves; and above all others the sense of sight. For not only with a view to action, but even when we are not going to do anything, we prefer seeing (one might say) to everything else. The reason is that this, most of all the senses, makes us know and brings to light many differences between things (Aristotle)

"The great object of life is sensation – to feel that we exist, even though in pain" (Lord Byron)

"A poet makes himself a visionary through a long, boundless, and systematized disorganization of all the senses" (Arthur Rimbaud)

The study of the senses has traditionally been the preserve of psychologists and neurobiologists, who have focussed on the cognitive and neurological aspects of sense perception and disregarded its cultural elaboration or existential components. However, following anthropology's engagement with visual and material culture, the discipline is now turning to the senses to better understand how images and objects are embedded within different cultural sensory modalities. The senses and aesthetic engagement are obviously not the exclusive preserve of filmmakers, photographers and visual artists. By simply being alive is to have one's nervous system subjected to different sensory experiences and so the question is how best can we represent and better understand this through art and anthropological practices. This relationship between people's nervous systems and the worlds in which they dwell, explicitly links people's sensory nervous systems to wider social, economic and political aspects in the world, and we will explore the relationship between vision, sound, taste, touch and smell which are closely interrelated experientially, politically, linguistically and culturally. It is equally important to consider how the world is encountered in the absence of sight or hearing or touch, including the sensorial experiences and lifeworld of people who are blind or deaf. Considering people's different ways of being and the many and varied ways people sense and engage with social allows us to contextualise and understand vision and the other senses much better and bring a more informed critical 'perspective' to touch, sound, vision and their relationship to the world.

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Week 9: Images of Death



"And the plain sight of our destiny is the cruellest thing of all" (Euripides)

"All those young photographers who are at work in the world, determined upon the capture of actuality, do not know that they are agents of Death. We should also inquire as to the anthropological place of Death and of the new image. For Death must be somewhere in a society; if it is no longer (or less intensely) in religion, it must be elsewhere; perhaps in this image which produces Death while trying to preserve life. With the Photograph, we enter into flat Death." (Roland Barthes).

"There is no better means to familiarize yourself with death than to unite it with a licentious idea" (Marquis de Sade)

Death exists in all the senses; sight, taste, smell sound and touch, as well as in the sixth sense(s) whereby omens or extra-sensory give rise to feelings of foreboding as people detect a 'deathliness' is in the air. However, as many philosophers and writers have noted, the relationship between death and the image is a particularly curious and paradoxical one that subverts seemingly intuitive understandings of life and death while also displacing conventions of presence and absence.

The discrepancy that emerges, for example between seeing the inanimate body of a deceased person and the living person one knew creates an odd juxtaposition whose traces are carried over into the photograph when viewing people who seem so alive but are no more. In an age of mass-media and television images of death are ever more common, entering into 'living' rooms around the world at the very moment in which (in western societies) death and the diseased body have been banished from the home and into the hospice and hospital.

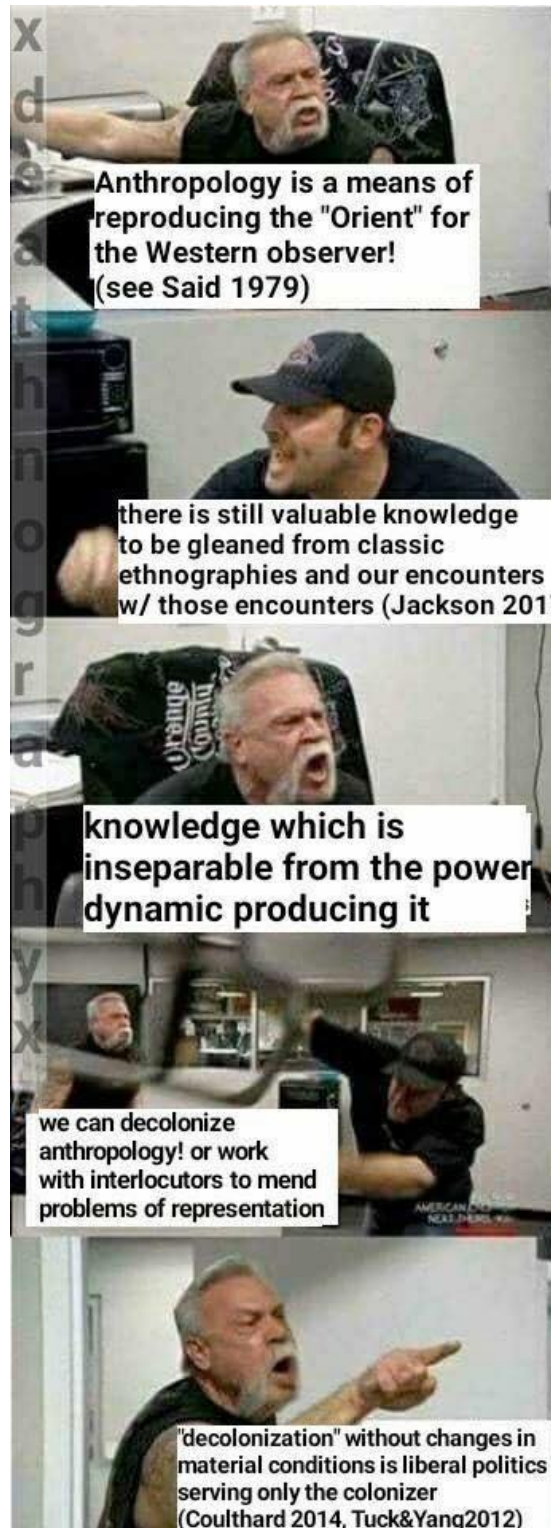
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Week 10: Rethinking Visual Anthropology



Recent research has explicitly addressed the potential of visual material not simply as a means of documentation or public information but in terms of experimentation or as a methodology that allows socially inclusive collaborations with informants who become involved in telling the story they want to tell through photographs and video. The use of cameras and video for self representation is now becoming a standard anthropological research practice. The STEPS for the Future Project, is a collection of 36 films made across seven Southern African countries, with varying degrees of participation and collaboration, interweaves individual stories of living with HIV/AIDS that “provide a forum for those affected by HIV to discuss, debate and exchange information and opinions at an individual and community level” (STEPS Project Staff special introduction to Visual Anthropology Review ed Biella 2003). Such collaborative projects, using visual and other media, allow different possibilities for persons living with HIV/AIDS to establish a presence amidst academic literature and here we will use STEPS as a case study with which to think about the possibility of Applied Visual Anthropology. Among the questions to be raised are: What is the relation between visual and verbal representation? Is the perceptual realm of sight and visual representations necessarily sub-ordinated to rationality and the written text? What ethical questions are involved?

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