Expressive Cultures: Images Between East and West

Prof. Barry Flood (Fine Arts)  
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Office Hours: Mon. 3-5

V.55.0720.001/Spring 2004  
Lectures: M/W 12.30-1.45  
300 Silver Center  
Sections: 302 Silver Center

Preceptors:  
Ms. Marika Sardar, ms927@nyu.edu  
Office Hours: Wed. 2.30-4  
Sections: Tuesdays 12.30-1.45 & 4.55-6.10

Ms. Adele Nelson, adeleenelson@hotmail.com  
Office Hours: Mon. 10-12  
Sections: Tuesdays 9.30-10.45 & 11-12.15

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES
What can art contribute to contemporary debates about the relationships between cultures? This course will address the question by looking at the ways in which images and the ideas associated with them travel in time and space and are translated and transformed in the process. The aim of the course is to provide students with a critical vocabulary to discuss both the making and consumption of images and some of the problems associated with cross-cultural dimensions of art-works.

Among the topics we will discuss will be definitions of art and theories of representation, taboos on image-making, differences in the value of artistic media in different cultures, images and the formation of ethnic, political and religious identities, the role of images in struggles for political or cultural dominance, the importance of technologies in the circulation of images, and the role of the museum or gallery in the representation of cultural differences and similarities.

The primary focus of the course will be on the movement of artists, ideas and images between Asia, the Middle East and Europe over the course of the past millennium.

COURSE WEBSITE:
We are using NYU Blackboard for the course. By accessing Blackboard you will find copies of the syllabus, general announcements (please check for these regularly) and, after week 4, the images that you are expected to know arranged by lecture number.

To Access an NYU Blackboard Course Site:
1. Log in to NYU Home at http://home.nyu.edu with a valid NYU NetID and password.
2. Click on the "Academics" tab and look under the "Classes" channel for the course name.
3. Click on the course name to enter the NYU Blackboard course site.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance: Attendance at all lectures and sections is mandatory.

Sections: Attendance and participation in sections — through discussion of readings and lectures as well as informal writing assignments — will form part of your grade. It is ESSENTIAL to the success of your participation that you do the assigned readings before each lecture and section, and bring the required short written responses to class. Key images will be posted on the course website.

Papers: Paper 1 (2-3 pages), design for a monument quoting the Washington Square Arch, due Wednesday Feb. 11th
Paper 2 (2-3 pages), converting a secular space to religious use, due Monday March 8th
Paper 3 (2-3 pages), comparing the Islamic and African galleries in the Brooklyn Museum of Art, due Monday April 7th. Please attach a receipt for entry to the museum to your paper.
Paper 4 (4-5 pages), writing an entry for the Dictionary of Art, due Wednesday April 28th

All papers must be typed (12-pt. Font), double-spaced, paginated, and stapled. Papers should be checked for spelling and grammar before being handed in. Please consult the attached “Writings dos and do nots” sheet in order to avoid common mistakes. Amy Tucker’s Visual Literacy for hints on writing about art.

Any late papers submitted without a written note from a doctor or guardian will be subject to a grade penalty.

Exams: Mid-term exam, Wednesday March 10th, full class period
Final Exam, Monday May 3rd, full class period

Make-up policy for exams: In the case of the mid-term exam, make-ups will be given only in cases of proven, documented medical or personal emergencies (doctor’s note or note from guardian required). You must contact your preceptor within 48 hours of the missed exam to schedule a make-up, otherwise you will receive a grade of ‘F’.

There are NO make-ups for final exams.

NOTE: ALL WORK MUST BE COMPLETED TO PASS THE COURSE

Plagiarism: Cases of cheating of plagiarism will be dealt with severely. Please see the attached “Statement on Academic Integrity.”

Other: Please keep all cell phones and pagers turned off in class.
Students may not record lectures or sections.
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REQUIRED READINGS:
Unless listed as recommended, all readings for each section are required.

Amy Tucker, Visual Literacy: Writing About Art (New York, 2002). In addition to the readings that are mandatory, this text provides lots of useful tips on how to write about art.

Course-pack of readings available at Unique Copy Center (Greene St. bet. Waverley & 8th Streets). 3 copies of the course-pack are on reserve in Bobst

Recommended:
A good introduction to the work of art historians and some of the problems of accommodating non-western art within the traditional structures of art history.

I. Images: An Introduction

January 21st  Images, Imaging and Art History
Laura Schneider Adams, The Methodologies of Art (New York, 1996), 1-16


Recommended:
James Elkins, Stories of Art (New York, 2002), chapter 1, "Intuitive stories."

January 26th  Patronage and Style, Iconography and Medium
Laura Schneider Adams, The Methodologies of Art (New York, 1996), 36-57


January 28th  What is a Representation?

February 2nd  Artistic representations and cultural values


Recommended:
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February 4th: How images travel: Copying Paintings, Sculpture and Buildings


1st paper to be assigned

II. Images, Identity and Cultural Difference

February 9th Imaging the Divine


February 11th The Royal Image


1st paper due

February 16th – No class, Presidents’ Day

February 18th Iconoclasm between East and West

David Freedberg, Iconoclasts and their Motives (Groningen, 1995).

February 23rd Inscriptions: Texts, images or ornament?


February 25th Conceptions of Pictorial space

Susan Woodford, Looking at Pictures (Cambridge, 1983), 83-89.

March 1st  Conceptions of Sacred Space

2nd paper assigned

March 3rd  Conceptions of Urban Space
E.J. Owens, *The City in the Greek and Roman World*, readings to be assigned.


March 8th  Images and Others: Maps and Monsters

2nd paper due

March 10th  Mid-term Exam

March 15th – No class, Spring Recess

March 17th – No class, Spring Recess

III. Images and Cross-Cultural Encounters in the Pre-Modern Era

March 22nd  Cross-cultural encounters and Elite Self-Representations

March 24th  Art and the Epic: Stories of Cross-Cultural encounters
No Reading

March 29th  Portraiture Between East and West: The Ottomans and the Italian Renaissance

3rd paper assigned
March 31st  
Rembrandt and the Mughals: Europe and the East in the 16th and 17th centuries 

IV. Technology, Modernity and Orientalism

April 5th  
The Picturesque and the Sublime in the 18th century 

Partha Mitter, Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art (Chicago, 1992), 120-130 (end of first paragraph).

April 7th  
Images and Archives: The Rise of the Museum and Gallery 


3rd paper due

April 12th  
Race, Gender, and Politics in 19th-century European art 

Coursepack: Zeynep Çelik, “Speaking back to Orientalist Discourse,” in Jill Beaulieu & Mary Roberts (eds), Orientalism’s Interlocutors (Durham, 2002), 19-26

April 14th  
Photography and Travel 


4th paper assigned
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April 19th

Primitivism, Abstraction, and the impact of non-western art


April 21st

The Sheik: Images of the Exotic in 20th century Popular Culture
No Reading

V. Post-Colonial Encounters

April 26th

The Art of Diasporas

April 28th

The Global Art Market

4th Paper due

May 3rd

Final Exam, full class period
Writing Dos and Do nots

1. Be concise in your writing style – avoid verbosity or sentences with too many clauses.

2. Be consistent in your terminology.

3. Be precise – refer to a subject/object as ‘it’ (or ‘she/them/they’ etc.) only if you have referred to it by name earlier in the same sentence.

4. Be clear – be specific to avoid any possible confusion.

5. Articulate your instinctive reactions to ideas(objects/processes in a way that renders them accessible to a reader who may not share them. Writing is a medium of communication, so write to render your thoughts as transparent as possible to the reader (who does not have direct access to them!).

6. Use examples to illustrate the points that you make. Locate them in place and time. Avoid sweeping or unsubstantiated generalizations.

7. Do not make throw-away comments – every sentence should fulfill a function, contribute to the structure that you are building, and lead the reader to your conclusion.

8. Avoid contractions (e.g. can’t, don’t) and abbreviations (e.g. cent. for century etc.).

9. Know the difference between ‘its’ (possessive) and ‘it’s’ (the contraction of ‘it is’, to be avoided).

10. Verbs must agree in number with their subjects (e.g. ‘he runs’ not ‘he run’)

11. Avoid making verbs of nouns (e.g. ‘romanticism impacted Delacroix’)