Course description

This course offers a cross-cultural and diachronic exploration of non-western visual art and society, focusing mainly on the communicative aspects of visual aesthetics. Loaded with meaning, the human body and items of material culture serve as powerful mediators that integrate myriad behaviors, and are deployed to explore the inner-self, foster social identities, lure into consumption, generate political propaganda, engage in ritual, render sacred propositions tangible, and chart the imagined view of the cosmos. The production and use of sculptures, masks, paintings, textiles, and architecture is seen as an inextricable aspect in the construction and reproduction of human social relations.

Learning Goals:
This course seeks to engage students in critical thinking about art in society and about materiality and aesthetics (object-subject relations) in diverse cultural and historical settings. Students will develop analytical skills in their assessments and interpretations of divergent historical and cultural contexts. The course fosters research skills by studying and contextualizing an aesthetically charged object in the ethnographic collection of the Anthropology department, enabling students to refine oral and writing skills by presenting in class the results of their research and by submitting an original research paper; the emphasis will be on combining clear organizational techniques with creative interpretive approaches to the material. The course also exposes students to the process of designing the script for an exhibit and installing a small display. This team effort is intended to foster skills as followers and leaders.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug W 29</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Session in the MCRC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept W 5</td>
<td>Art, Aesthetics, and Anthropology</td>
<td>Gell 1992; Svašek 2007</td>
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<td>Sept Th 6</td>
<td>Art, Structure, and Context</td>
<td>Levi-Strauss 1963; Seip 1999</td>
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<td>Sept T 25</td>
<td>Project session in the MCRC</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept W 26</td>
<td>Project session in the MCRC</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct W 3</td>
<td>Consecrations</td>
<td>López Luján 1998 and 1999</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct M 8</td>
<td>Iconoclasms</td>
<td>Freedberg 1989 chapter 14; Cane and Ashley-Smith 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct W 10</td>
<td>Art as Language</td>
<td>Uspensky 1972; Adorno 1979</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Midterm posted</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct M 15</td>
<td>Art and Memory</td>
<td>Küchler 1987; Rowlands 1987</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Midterm due</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct M 22</td>
<td>Technologies of art</td>
<td>Benjamin 1969; Lechtman 1975; Weiner 1997</td>
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<td>Oct W 24</td>
<td>Visuality and symbolic codes</td>
<td>Gombrich 1972; Morgan 1983; Bednarik 2003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct M 29</td>
<td>Art and Illusion</td>
<td>Gorman 2003; Edgerton 2009</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Film <em>Vision and Illusion: Renaissance Perspective</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct W 31</td>
<td>Style, stylish, stylistic, stylized</td>
<td>Shapiro 1953; Kubler 1970; Rowe 1962; Urton 1996</td>
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<td>Nov T 5</td>
<td>Survivals, Revivals, and Copies</td>
<td>Clifford 1988; Braun 1989</td>
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<td>Film- <em>Tim’s Vermeer</em></td>
<td>Umberger 1987</td>
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<td>Nov W 7</td>
<td>The Art of the faker</td>
<td>Meiland 1983; Jamieson 1999</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Nov M 12  Student presentations  (5 presentations)
Nov W 14  Student presentations  (5 presentations)
Nov M 19  Student presentations  (5 presentations)
Nov M 26  Student presentations  (5 presentations)
Nov W 28  Museographic project session  Myers 2004
Dec M  3  Museographic project session  None
Dec W  5  Museographic project session  None
Dec M 10  Museographic project session  None
Dec F 14  Final paper due, no later than 5pm

**Class Participation and Reading assignments**
Students are expected to attend and participate in class discussions. Throughout the semester, you will reflect critically on the readings and generate thoughtful questions about the material. Students will lead class discussions on a rotational basis. Each student should prepare two or three **typed** questions covering the assigned readings and these should be ready at the start of each class. Your questions should reflect your comprehension of the readings and highlight salient points that you think will contribute to the discussion of the readings. Because participation is integral to the course, students who miss classes need to justify their absence at least 24 hours in advance and if necessary present relevant evidence. No more than two unexcused missed classes will be accepted; otherwise the final grade goes down a third of a letter for each additional missed class.

**Midterm exam**
The midterm will be posted electronically on Wednesday October 10 and is due in electronic form on Wednesday October 17 before class time. The goal is for the student to read an article and write a 4–5 pages critical review of it.

**Research project**
Each student will select one object from the collection held in the Material Culture Research Center (Anthropology department room 230) and do **extensive** research on it, producing final paper 10-15 pages long of text. The paper should be supplemented with photographs, drawings, and maps. Both a printed and a digital version, including the visual aids, are due no later than Friday December 14 at 5pm.

**Museographic project**
Students will present in class a summary of their research (Nov 12 – Nov 26). This exercise will allow us to brainstorm on Wednesday November 28 on the script for an exhibition, focusing on a specific theme or themes. Three subsequent class sessions will be devoted to the physical installation of the exhibition in the Anthropology department.
Summary of Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in class</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research project</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Museographic project</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Use of Laptops, tablets, and other devices
You are welcome to use a personal Laptop or tablet for note taking and researching. If a student is found using a device for purposes other than those related to the class, his or her privilege for using it will be immediately suspended for the rest of the semester. The use of mobile phones (calls and text messaging) is not allowed.

Students with extra challenges
If you are a student with a documented disability at Brandeis University and if you wish to request a reasonable accommodation for this class, please see me immediately. Keep in mind that reasonable accommodations are not provided retroactively.

Four-Credit Course (with three hours of class-time per week)
Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

Course credit in LALS
This course can count towards a major or minor in Latin American and Latino Studies if the student writes a research paper on any topic dealing with the intersection of art and Latin America (past or present) or art and the Latin American diaspora in the USA.

Academic integrity
Academic integrity is central to the mission of educational excellence at Brandeis University. Each student is expected to be familiar with, and to follow, the University’s policies on academic integrity. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities (http://www.brandeis.edu/studentaffairs/srcs/rr/) for all policies and procedures. All policies related to academic integrity apply to in-class and take home projects, assignments, exams, and quizzes. Students may only collaborate on assignments with express permission. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university.
Class Readings in alphabetical order (posted on Latte)

Adorno, Rolena  

Bednarik, Robert G.  

Benjamin, Walter  

Braun, Barbara  

Bray, Tamara  

Cane, Simon, and Jonathan Ashley-Smith  

Clifford, James  

Edgerton,  

Elkins, James  

Freedberg, David  
Gell, Alfred  


Gombrich, H., E.  
1972 The Visual Image. *Scientific American* 227, September, pp. 82-96

Gorman, Michael John  

Hooper, Steven  

Houston, Stephen  
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-8243%28200110%2933%3A2%3C206%3ADBADPR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-5

Jamieson, Mark  
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=1359-0987%28199903%295%3A1%3C1%3ATPOCIR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-V

Kaplan, Flora (editor)  

Kubler, George  

Küchler, Susanne  
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0025-1496%28198706%2922%3A22%3A2%3C238%3AMAAMIA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-K
Lechtman, Heather

Levi-Strauss, Claude

López Luján, Leonardo
1998 Recreating the Cosmos: Seventeen Aztec Dedication Caches. In ***, pp. 177-187. **

Meiland, W. Jack

Morgan, N. Douglas

Myers, Fred

Pasztory, Esther

Rowe, H. John

Rowlands, Michael
Seip, P. Lisa  
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-8243%28199910%2931%3A2%3CTOMTLH%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Z

Shapiro, Meyer  

Svašek, Maruška  

Umberger, Emily  

Urton, Gary  

Uspensky, Boris  

Weiner, James, F.  
http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0011-3204%28199704%2938%3A2%3CTARAP%3E2.0.CO%3B2-S

Winter, Irene  