VISUAL CULTURE IN LITERATURE, DRAMA AND FILM
ENCR 4500/AMST 4500
Fall 2017
Wednesdays, 3:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.
Maury Hall 110

Instructor: Edward Barnaby
Office: New Cabell 577
E-mail: edward.barnaby@virginia.edu

PROSPECTUS

This seminar explores the premise that the visual culture of post-industrial society has transformed us into alienated spectators of reality. We will examine novels, plays and films in which characters' individual encounters with architecture, landscape, painting, photography, pageantry, freak shows, cinema and museums alert the audience to the transformation of social relationships by imperialism, urbanism, tourism, aestheticism, materialism, rationalism, voyeurism, realism and commodification. By depicting the frustrated pursuit of authentic interactions and consciousness within a mass culture mediated by images, do these texts allow us to inhabit our realities more fully or do they, instead, inscribe us further in the role of spectator?

TEXTS
The following texts are available in the UVA Bookstore. Films and all other readings will be available on Collab. Guy Debord's Society of the Spectacle is available online at http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/tsots00.html.

Julian Barnes, England, England
Edward Carey, Observatory Mansions
E.M. Forster, A Room with a View
Brian Friel, Molly Sweeney
Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure
Bernard Pomerance, The Elephant Man
Yasmina Reza, Art
Salman Rushdie, Midnight's Children
Virginia Woolf, Between the Acts

SCHEDULE

The Spectacle

Wednesday, August 23
Wednesday, August 30
Guy Debord, “Environmental Planning,” “Negation and Consumption in the Cultural Sphere,” and “Ideology in Material Form” from Society of the Spectacle
David Fincher, Fight Club (film)

Medievalism, Aestheticism and Tourism

Wednesday, September 6
Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure (Parts I & II)
Victor Hugo, “Notre Dame,” “A Bird’s Eye View of Paris” and “This Will Kill That” from Notre-Dame of Paris
John Ruskin, “The Nature of the Gothic” (sections I through XL) from Stones of Venice

Wednesday, September 13
Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure (Parts III, IV, V & VI)
Walter Pater, “Preface,” “Pico della Mirandola,” “Winckelmann” and “Conclusion” from The Renaissance

Wednesday, September 20
Sofia Coppola, Lost in Translation (film)
E.M. Forster, A Room with a View
Ken-Ichi Sasaki, “For Whom is City Design? Tactility versus Visuality”

Exhibitions, Imperialism and Voyeurism

Wednesday, September 27
Woody Allen, Zelig (film)
Virginia Woolf, Between the Acts

Wednesday, October 4
Walter Benjamin, “What is Epic Theater?” from Illuminations
Bertolt Brecht, “A Dialogue About Acting”
David Lynch, The Elephant Man (film)
Bernard Pomerance, The Elephant Man

Friday, October 6
Midterm Essay Due 5 p.m.

Wednesday, October 11
W.J.T. Mitchell, “Imperial Landscape” from Landscape and Power
Salman Rushdie, Midnight’s Children (Book I; Book II through “At the Pioneer Café”)
Susan Sontag, “In Plato’s Cave” from On Photography

Wednesday, October 18
Salman Rushdie, Midnight’s Children (Book II from “Alpha and Omega”; Book III)
Memory, Realism and Rationalism

Wednesday, October 25
Jonathan Crary, “The Camera Obscura and Its Subject”
Brian Friel, Molly Sweeney
E. Elias Merhige, Shadow of the Vampire (film)

Wednesday, November 1
Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” from Illuminations
Gilles Deleuze, “The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy” from The Logic of Sense
Gilles Deleuze, “Strata and Historical Formations: The Visible and The Articulable” from Foucault
Christopher Nolan, Memento (film)

The “Museum-as-Habitation”

Wednesday, November 8
W.J.T. Mitchell, “The Rhetoric of Iconoclasm: Marxism, Ideology and Fetishism” (excerpt) from Iconology
Spike Jonze, Being John Malkovich (film)
Yasmina Reza, Art

Prospectus for Term Paper Due in class

Wednesday, November 15
Julian Barnes, England, England
Richard Kuhns, “The Last Manifesto”
Raphael Samuel, “Theme Parks – Why Not?”

Wednesday, November 29
Edward Carey, Observatory Mansions
Charlie Kaufman, Synecdoche, NY (film)

Friday, December 8
Term Paper Due 5 p.m.

Requirements

Attendance
Attendance at all meetings of the seminar is essential. The final grade is reduced by one step (e.g., A to A-) for each unexcused absence.

Participation
The success of the seminar derives from the commitment of participants to come to each session prepared to discuss the assigned readings in depth. The participant’s overall contribution to the discourse of the seminar comprises 20% of the final grade.
**Mid-Term Essay**
Each seminar participant must submit an essay of between six and eight pages (double-spaced, 10-point, 1” margins) that analyzes a specific scene from *Jude the Obscure, A Room with a View* or *Between the Acts* in light of at least one secondary reading from the syllabus (in addition to *Society of the Spectacle*). The paper comprises 20% of the final grade.

**Oral Presentation**
Each seminar participant will select one class meeting at which to present a ten-minute analysis of an instance of visual culture in contemporary society in light of readings and themes from the seminar. The student must meet with the instructor no later than the Monday before the presentation in order to confirm and discuss the topic. The presentation comprises 20% of the final grade.

**Term Paper**
Seminar participants must submit an essay of between fourteen and sixteen pages (double-spaced, 10-point, 1” margins) that analyzes one piece of literature (novel or play), one film and several pieces of criticism in light of Debord’s concept of “spectacle.” Students may select previously unassigned materials for this analysis. Students must submit a one-page prospectus on November 8 specifying the materials to be covered and a preliminary summary of the thesis, as well as schedule an appointment to discuss it with the instructor before the final seminar meeting on November 29. The paper comprises 40% of the final grade.