

Media Cultures of the Cold War
Communication 386/Art History 475
Winter, 2021
Thursdays, 2:30-5:20

Prof. Fred Turner, Communication
Office Hours: TBA
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Seminar Goals:

This course examines the intersection of politics, aesthetics and new media technologies in the United States between the end of World War II and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Topics include the aesthetics of "thinking the unthinkable" in the wake of the atom bomb; Abstract Expressionism and "modern man" discourse; game theory, cybernetics and new models of art making; the rise of television, intermedia and the counterculture; and the continuing influence of the early cold war on contemporary media aesthetics. Readings will be drawn from primary and secondary sources, and from the fields of art history, communication, and critical theory.

Assignments & Grading:

I've designed this course as a springboard for your own, independent research, during and after the quarter. Thus, you will need to do two kinds of work: first, you'll need to read and analyze course materials; second, you'll need to identify important questions and objects needing further research. The assignments are designed to help you accomplish both these goals.

1. Active and useful seminar participation. As part of this, you are asked to lead one (1) presentation at the start of a class meeting. 40%

Your presentations should be about 15 minutes long and should introduce an object, set of images or person through whom you can help us illuminate one or two of the key insights in that week's readings. They should include PowerPoint slides or other visuals, should be well-organized and concise, and should help your classmates enter into that day's discussions.

2. A Bibliographic Essay. 5-8 pages of text, plus notes. Due in class Week 6 (Feb. 18) (30%)

I'd like you to finish this course with a rich understanding of the major theoretical and historical debates in media studies and art history in this period, and with a map for a research project of your own. To get started, I'd like you to work from required and recommended course readings, as well as your own research in primary and secondary sources, to build and analyze a bibliography around an analytical question of your choice. Your bibliographic essay should map an intellectual debate related to media in the Cold

War period (1945-1989), outlining its key questions, texts and players. It should also identify the importance of that debate in shaping or potentially re-shaping our understanding of the era. Finally, it should identify and explain the likely significance of some object or objects that will become the basis of your final research proposal for the course.

3. Final assignment: Research Proposal for a Journal Article. 10-12 pages of text, plus notes. Due Exam Week (Precise date TBA). (30%)

I'd like you to identify a relevant journal (such as *Grey Room*; *OCTOBER*; *Critical Inquiry*; *Media, Culture and Society*; *The Information Society*; *Computational Culture*; *Technology and Culture*; *American Quarterly*; *Communication, Culture and Critique*) and write a detailed proposal for an article within it. The proposal will need to address how your topic and approach relate to the existing literature in the field, the primary and secondary source work you have done and still have to do, and the importance of your research project for the journal's audience and the relevant field more broadly. In contrast to the midterm bibliographic essay, this proposal will depend heavily on primary sources and archival work. (For example, Special Collections or the Hoover Institution archives.) *Note: Journals don't take proposals of course, just articles. But writing a proposal should help you think through the key issues for an article within the time frame we have for the course.*

Readings:

(Please buy the following online or through your local bookstore)

Norbert Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings* (2nd edition, MIT Press), 1950.

Tracy Davis, *Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Martin, Reinhold. *The Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media, and Corporate Space*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003.

Spigel, L. (1992). *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Turner, Fred. *The Democratic Surround: Multimedia & American Liberalism from World War II to the Psychedelic Sixties*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Fanon, Frantz, *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 2005

Medina, Eden. *Cybernetic Revolutionaries: Technology and Politics in Allende's Chile*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011.

Section One: Mass and Networked Models of Communication After World War II

Week 1— January 14: Mass versus Network Culture

Required:

Norbert Wiener, *The Human Use of Human Beings*. Ch's 1-3, 5.

Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception" Horkheimer, Max, Theodor W. Adorno, and Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*. Cultural Memory in the Present. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2002, 94-136.

Fouché, Rayvon. "Say It Loud, I'm Black and I'm Proud: African Americans, American Artifactual Culture, and Black Vernacular Creativity." *American Quarterly* 58.3 (2006): 639-61.

Recommended:

Hicks, Marie. *Programmed Inequality: How Britain Discarded Women Technologists and Lost Its Edge in Computing*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2017.

Kline, Ronald R. *The Cybernetics Moment: Or Why We Call Our Age the Information Age*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015.

Rosenberg, Bernard, and David Manning White. *Mass Culture; the Popular Arts in America*. Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957.

Mirowski, Philip. *Machine Dreams: Economics Becomes a Cyborg Science*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Week 2 – January 21: Abstract Expressionism and the Modern Man

Required:

Serge Guilbaut, "The Creation of an American Avant-Garde" and "Success: How New York stole the Notion of Modernism from the Parisians," in *How New York Stole The Idea of Modern Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005)

Clement Greenberg, "Avant-garde and Kitsch," in Frascina, ed. *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, pp 48-71

Eva Cockcroft, "Abstract Expressionism, Weapon of the Cold War," in Frascina, ed. *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, pp 125-133.

Belgrad, Daniel. *The Culture of Spontaneity: Improvisation and the Arts in Postwar America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998, chapters 1,4,8.

Recommended:

Jones, Caroline A. *Machine in the Studio: Constructing the Postwar American Artist*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Frascina, Francis. *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*. 2nd ed. London ; New York: Routledge, 2000.

Christine Mehring, "The Art of a Miracle: Toward a History of German Pop," in *Art of the Two Germanys: Cold War Cultures*, Los Angeles: LACMA

Paul Kaiser, "Symbolic Revolts in the 'Workers' and 'Peasants' State: Countercultural Art Programs in the GDR" in *Art of the Two Germanys*

Susanne Leeb, "Abstraction as International Language," in *Art of the Two Germanys*

Week 3 – January 28: The Bomb: Performance and Simulation

Required:

Tracy Davis, *Stages of Emergency: Cold War Nuclear Civil Defense*, pp 1-102

Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi, "Faith and Insight in War-Gaming," in *The Worlds of Herman Kahn* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005): pp 149-180

Herman Kahn, "Some Possible Sizes and Shapes of Thermonuclear War," in *Thinking about The Unthinkable* (New York: Horizon Press, 1962): pp 39-80

Recommended:

Lee, Pamela M. *Think Tank Aesthetics: Midcentury Modernism, the Cold War, and the Neoliberal Present*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2020.

Erickson, Paul, et al. *How Reason Almost Lost Its Mind: The Strange Career of Cold War Rationality*. Chicago; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Weart, Spencer R. *Nuclear Fear: A History of Images*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1988.

"Dr. Strangelove" (the movie)

Light, Jennifer S. *From Warfare to Welfare: Defense Intellectuals and Urban Problems in Cold War America*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

Week 4 – February 4: Systems of vision

Required:

Rosenblueth, Arturo, Norbert Wiener, and Julian Bigelow. "Behavior, Purpose and Teleology." *Philosophy of Science*, no. 10 (1943): 18-24.

Bateson, Gregory. "Minimal Requirements for a Theory of Schizophrenia" and "Double Bind, 1969," in Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. University of Chicago Press ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000 (pp.244-278)

Martin, Reinhold. *The Organizational Complex: Architecture, Media, and Corporate Space*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003, Chapters 1 & 2 (pp.3-79 & notes 234-252)

Recommended:

Bertalanffy, Ludwig von. *General System Theory: Foundations, Development, Applications*. Rev. ed. New York: G. Braziller, 1973. Introduction and Chapter 2 (pp.3-53)

Bowker, Geoff. "How to Be Universal: Some Cybernetic Strategies, 1943-1970." *Social Studies of Science* 23 (1993): 107-27.

Edwards, Paul N. *The Closed World: Computers and the Politics of Discourse in Cold War America, Inside Technology*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996.

Galison, Peter. "The Ontology of the Enemy: Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision." *Critical Inquiry* 21, no. Autumn (1994): 228-266.

Haraway, Donna J. "The High Cost of Information in Post-World War II Evolutionary Biology: Ergonomics, Semiotics, and the Sociobiology of Communication Systems." *The Philosophical Forum* 13, no. 2-3 (1981-82): 244-78.

Kline, Ronald R. *The Cybernetics Moment: Or Why We Call Our Age the Information Age*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015.

Slava Gerovitch, *From Newspeak to Cyberspeak: A History of Soviet Cybernetics*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002.

Peters, Benjamin. *How Not to Network a Nation: The Uneasy History of the Soviet Internet*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2015.

Mirzoeff, Nicholas. "The Right to Look." *Critical Inquiry* 37.3 (2011): 473-96.

Section Two: Media in Everyday Life, At Home and Abroad

Week 5 – February 11: Media at Home, Politics in the Living Room

Due: Bibliographic Essay

Required:

Spigel, L. (1992). *Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1-4.

Raiford, Leigh. "'Come Let Us Build a New World Together': SNCC and Photography of the Civil Rights Movement." *American Quarterly* 59.4 (2007): 1129-57.

Geoghegan, Bernard Dionysius. "The Family as Machine: Film, Infrastructure, and Cybernetic Kinship in Cybernetic America." *Grey Room* 66 (2017): 70-101.

Watch: Emile de Antonio, *Point of Order*

Recommended:

Burns, Jennifer. *Goddess of the Market: Ayn Rand and the American Right*. Oxford, England; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Hemmer, Nicole. *Messengers of the Right: Conservative Media and the Transformation of American Politics*. Politics and Culture in Modern America. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016.

McCarthy, A. (2001). *Ambient Television: Visual Culture and Public Space*. Durham, NC, Duke University Press.

McCarthy, A. (2002). "Urban Mobility and Cinematic Visuality: The Screens of Los Angeles -- Endless Cinema or Private Telematics." *Journal of Visual Culture* 1(2): 183-204.

Spigel, L. (2008). *TV by Design: Modern Art and the Rise of Network Television*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.

Week 6 – February 18: New Media Spaces

Required:

Martin, *The Organizational Complex*, Chapter 5, "Computer Architectures."

Spigel, Lynn. "Outer Space and Inner Cities: African-American Responses to NASA," in Spigel, *Welcome to the Dreamhouse: Popular Media and Postwar Suburbs, Console-Ing Passions*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001: 141-182.

Turner, Fred. *The Democratic Surround: Multimedia & American Liberalism from World War II to the Psychedelic Sixties*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013, chapters 1-3, 5-7.

Recommended:

Harwood, John. *The Interface: IBM and the Transformation of Corporate Design, 1945-1976*.

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Colomina, Beatriz. "Enclosed by Images: The Eames' Multimedia Architecture." *Grey Room* 2, no. Winter (2001): 6-29.

The films of Ray and Charles Eames (on DVD, at SUL)

Colomina, Beatriz. *Domesticity at War*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007.

Colomina, Beatriz, Annmarie Brennan, and Jeannie Kim. *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture from Cockpit to Playboy*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004.

Blakinger, John R. *Gyorgy Kepes: Undreaming the Bauhaus*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2019.

Week 7 – February 25: Decolonization and the "Third World"

Required:

Jean-Paul Sartre, "Preface," to Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York: Grove Press, 2005: 7-31

Fanon, "Concerning Violence," "On National Culture," and "Colonial War and Mental Disorders," in *The Wretched of the Earth*: 35-106; 206-310

Christopher J. Lee, "Introduction: Between a Moment and an Era: The Origins and Afterlives of Bandung," 1-42; and Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Legacies of Bandung: Decolonization and the Politics of Culture," 45-68, *Making a World after Empire: The Bandung Moment and its Political Afterlives*, ed. Christopher Lee, Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2010: 1-42; 45-48

Recommended:

Gillo Pontecorvo, dir., *The Battle of Algiers*, 1966

Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000: 31-64

Hurm, Gerd, et al. *The Family of Man Revisited: Photography in a Global Age*. London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2018.

Carl Sandburg, Edward Steichen, *The Family of Man*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1955

Fred Turner, "The Family of Man and The Politics of Attention in Cold War America," *Public Culture* 24.1 (April, 2012), 51-80.

Section 3: From Counterculture to Neoliberalism and Back Again

Week 8 – March 4: Early Counterculture and the Turn to Performance and Participation

Required:

Joseph, Branden W. "White on White." *Critical Inquiry* 27, no. 1 (2000): 90-121.

Fred Turner, *The Democratic Surround*, Chapter 8 "The Coming of the Counterculture"

Larry Neal, "The Black Arts Movement," *Tulane Drama Review*, Vol. 12, No. 4, Summer, 1968.

Caroline Jones, "Andy Warhol's Factory, "Commonism," and the Business Art Business," Chapter 4 of Jones, *The Machine in the Studio*, University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Lambert, Carrie, "Performance Demonstration," in *Being Watched: Yvonne Rainer and the 1960s*. Cambridge, MA: OCTOBER Books, 2008: 199-251

Recommended:

Grobe, Christopher. *The Art of Confession: The Performance of Self from Robert Lowell to Reality TV*. New York: New York University Press, 2017.

Kaprow, Allan. "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock (1958)" (pp. 1-9); "Happenings in the New York Scene (1961)" (pp. 15-26); "The Happenings Are Dead: Long Live Happenings! (1966)", all in Kaprow, Allan, and Jeff Kelley, eds. *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2003.

Banes, Sally. *Greenwich Village 1963: Avant-Garde Performance and the Effervescent Body*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.

Jones, Caroline A. "Finishing School: John Cage and the Abstract Expressionist Ego." *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. Summer (1993): 628-65.

Kostelanetz, Richard. *The Theatre of Mixed Means; an Introduction to Happenings, Kinetic Environments, and Other Mixed-Means Performances*. New York: Dial Press, 1968.

Scott, Felicity D. *Outlaw Territories: Environments of Insecurity/Architectures of Counterinsurgency*. New York: Zone Books, 2016.

Busbea, Larry. *The Responsive Environment: Design, Aesthetics, and the Human in the 1970s*. Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2019.

Week 9 – March 11: Media and Consciousness, at Home and Abroad

Required:

Kreiss, Daniel. "Appropriating the Master's Tools: Sun Ra, the Black Panthers, and Black Consciousness, 1952-1973." *Black Music Research Journal* 28, no. 1 (2009): 57-81.

Medina, Eden. *Cybernetic Revolutionaries: Technology and Politics in Allende's Chile*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011.

Recommended:

Scott, Felicity D. *Architecture or Techno-Utopia: Politics after Modernism*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007.

Gitlin, Todd. *The Whole World Is Watching: Mass Media in the Making & Unmaking of the New Left*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980.

Lee, Pamela M. *Chronophobia: On Time in the Art of the 1960's*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004.

Ross, Kristin. *May '68 and Its Afterlives*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Blauvelt, Andrew, et al. *Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia*. Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2015.

Week 10 – March 18: Neoliberalism and Postmodernism

Required:

Wendy Brown, "Neo-liberalism and the End of Liberal Democracy" *Theory and Event* 7, no. 1 (Fall 2003); rpt. Brown, Wendy. *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005, 37-59.

Brick, Howard. "Optimism of the Mind: Imagining Postindustrial Society in the 1960s and 1970s." *American Quarterly* 44.3 (1992): 348-80.

Jameson, Fredric. "Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism." *New Left Review*.146 (1984).

Brian Wallis, "What's Wrong with This Picture? An Introduction," in Wallis, Brian. *Art after Modernism: Rethinking Representation*. Documentary Sources in Contemporary Art. New York and Boston: New Museum of Contemporary Art; D.R. Godine, 1984, xi-xviii.

Recommended:

Slobodian, Quinn. *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018.

Harvey, David, *A Brief History of Neo-Liberalism*. New York and London: Oxford, 2007.

Foster, Hal. *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. 1st ed. Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press, 1983.