

# ART HISTORY 3701 - 001

## READINGS IN POSTMODERNISM

### Spring 2012

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Please turn off all pagers and cellphones.  
Students with learning disabilities or other issues see instructor.

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Text: *Postmodernism, A Reader*, edited by Thomas Docherty, Columbia University Press, 1993

Synopsis: Course will consist of close-readings of primary postmodernist texts dealing with the problems of the foundation of knowledges, cultural practices, the avant-garde, feminism, and multiculturalism. Discussion of readings will be integrated with the viewing of visual material pertinent to the texts under critical examination. Students are encouraged to relate the material to their own studio or scholarly practice by sharing their endeavors within the context of the course.

Evaluation: Two short papers of six pages each OR one research paper of fifteen pages in length due at final class meeting (**grad level students will do a class presentation as well**):

- 1) **Midterm paper** in which you will either: a) do a synopsis of key points in the readings; or b) do a critical response to one or more of the essays read to date. **Six page minimum.**
- 2) **Final paper** in which you will either: do a synopsis of key points in the readings from the midterm to the end of the course; or b) do a critical response to one or more of the essays from the midterm on. **Six page minimum.** Or submit the fifteen page research paper.
- 3) **Class participation and attendance:** ask questions, make observations, agree or disagree, but participate in class! Miss more than 3 classes without valid medical excuse = NCR.

**NOTES:**

WEEK #	DESCRIPTION/READINGS
1	<p><b>INTRODUCTION</b> to course material; discussion of slides of Post-modernist artworks.</p> <p>HAVE READ: not applicable</p>
2	<p><b>MODERNITY.</b> What is Modernism? Discussion of Clement Greenberg and Jürgen Habermas's thinking; viewing slides of modernist artworks. Showing of video tape: Norie Sato's <i>On Edge</i>, Richard Serra's tape <i>Boomerang</i>.</p> <p>HAVE READ: "Modernity—An Incomplete Project," Jürgen Habermas (p. 98-109)</p>
3	<p><b>TOWARD THE POST-MODERN I.</b> The problematization of modernist master narrative; Michael Fried versus Minimal Art's theatricality; view slides of Pop, Minimal, Conceptual Art. Showing of video tape interview with <i>Les Levine</i>.</p> <p>HAVE READ: "The Fall of the Legislator," Zygmunt Bauman (p. 128-145), J.-F. Lyotard from p. 44, the section titled "The Postmodern," to p.46.</p>
4	<p><b>TOWARD THE POST-MODERN II.</b> Jean-Francois Lyotard and Ihab Hassan on what is postmodernism.</p> <p>HAVE READ: Lyotard's "Note on the Meaning of 'Post-'" (p. 47-50) and Ihab Hassan's "Toward a Concept of Postmodernism" (p. 146-156).</p>
5	<p><b>THE CULTURAL LOGIC OF LATE CAPITALISM AND PHOTOGRAPHIC PRACTICE.</b> Marxism and Postmodernism; the theories of Fredric Jameson. Showing of the video: Dara Birnbaum's <i>Program 4, Dara Birnbaum "Wonder Woman," etc.</i></p> <p>HAVE READ: Fredric Jameson's "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (p. 62-66, 73-77) and Douglas Crimp's "The Photographic Activity of Postmodernism" (p. 172-179).</p>
6	<p><b>BAD IMAGES: THE CRITIQUE OF THE MEDIA.</b> Discussion of Jean Baudrillard and Umberto Eco's theories. Showing of the video tape <i>Easy Living</i> by Chip Lord and Mickey McGowan.</p> <p>HAVE READ: Jean Baudrillard's "The Evil Demon of Images" and Umberto Eco's "The City of Robots" (p. 194-205).</p>
7	<p><b>THE CRISIS OF THE AVANT-GARDE.</b> Peter Bürger and Achille Bonito Oliva's theories. Viewing of slides and video tape interview with <i>Stan Brakhage</i>.</p> <p>HAVE READ: Editor's "Introduction" (p. 217-219), Peter Bürger's "The Negation of the Autonomy of Art by the Avant-Garde" (p. 237-243), and Achille Bonito Oliva's "The International Trans-Avant-Garde" (p. 257-262).</p>
8	<p><b>MIDTERM PAPERS DUE. VIEWING DAVID BRYNES' TRUE STORIES</b></p> <p>HAVE READ: NO READING ASSIGNMENT, WORK ON PAPER.</p>

- 9                   **POSTMODERNISM AND ARCHITECTURE I.** Modernist architecture versus postmodernist; view slides of modernist and post-modernist architecture; contending notions of the Post-modern: Frampton vs. Jencks.  
  
HAVE READ: Editor's "Introduction" (p. 265-267), Kenneth Frampton's "Toward a Critical Regionalism: Six points for an architecture of resistance" (p. 268-280), and Charles Jenck's "The Emergent Rules" (p. 281-294).
- 10                   **POSTMODERNISM AND ARCHITECTURE II.** Can we learn from Las Vegas? Robert Venturi's populism or Derridean Deconstructivism? Viewing of slides of postmodern and decon-strutive architecture.  
  
HAVE READ: Robert Venturi's "The Duck and the Decorated Shed" (p. 295-307) and Paolo Portoghesi's "Postmodern" (p. 308-315).
- 11                   **THE POLITICS OF POSTMODERNISM I.** Foundations and politics, a spectrum of positions. Ernesto Laclau and post-Marxism. Viewing of video tape interview with *Benjamin Buchloh*.  
  
HAVE READ: Editor's "Introduction" (p. 319-322) and Ernesto Laclau's "Politics and the Limits of Modernity" (p. 329-343).
- 12                   **THE POLITICS OF POSTMODERNISM II.** The condition of the Post-Marxist Subject. Viewing of video tape interview with *Alfredo Jarr*.  
  
HAVE READ: André Gorz's "The Condition of the Post-Marxist Man" and Jean Baudrillard's "Toward a Principle of Evil" (p. 344-361).
- 13                   **FEMINISM.** Feminism, "inoculation" (Baudrillard) or revolution (Kristeva)? Feminism, if not essentialism, then what? Viewing of video tape interview with *Barbara Kruger*.  
  
HAVE READ: Editor's "Introduction" (p. 365-367) and Nancy Fraser, Linda Nicholson's "Social Criticism without Philosophy: An encounter between feminism and postmodernism" (p. 415-432).
- 14                   **CRITIQUE WEEK, NO CLASS.**
- 15                   **CONCLUSION: CENTER & MARGINS.** Periphery and post-modernism, colonizer and colonized. **FINAL PAPERS DUE.**  
  
HAVE READ: Editor's "Introduction" (p. 445-447) and Simon Durning's "Postmodernism or Post-colonialism Today" (p. 448-462).