

HUMN 2100-001: Arts, Culture and Media

Fall 2019

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N124. Office Building 1

Office Hours: Monday 11:30am-12:30pm and Wednesday 2:00pm-3:00pm or by appointment.

Course Description:

In this course we will investigate three key topics in contemporary humanistic inquiry: arts, culture, and media through the urgent topic of the environment and climate change. Indeed, we will consider the environment as a ubiquitous cultural phenomenon that is present throughout artistic and media production. The intersection of topics will offer you a wealth of information about how conceptions of what art, culture, and media have been historically, and what they are now. Similarly, we will investigate how art and media have built a culture of the environment from the culture/nature divide to recent critiques of anthropocentrism. The course focuses on art and media manifestations encompassing painting, poetry, classical music, pop culture, digital art and literature, and installation and performance art. We will examine them comparatively as well as individually. Our readings will sharpen and strengthen your scholarly skills in critical thinking, cultural critique, artistic and literary analyses; the assignments will push you to articulate complex ideas in writing and through visual means.

Schedule (Subject to change)

UNIT 1. The environment as a cultural and artistic problem

Week 1

M. 8/26. Introduction and class conversation. Arts, culture, and media. What do we mean when we talk about them? What do weather, the environment, nature, and climate change have to do with it?

W. 8/28. Syllabus and Raymond Williams. [Keywords: Arts, Culture, and Media.](#)

F. 8/30. Margaret Atwood. ["It's Not Climate Change — It's Everything Change."](#)

Week 2. The Environment in Everyday Life

M. 9/2. Labor Day. No Class

W. 9/4. Jonathan Franzen's ["My Bird Problem."](#)

F. 9/6. Barry Lord's ["What's energy got to do with it?"](#)

Week 3. The Kaleidoscope of the Weather

M. 9/9. John Burroughs' ["The Art of Seeing Things"](#)

W. 9/11. Andrew Blum's ["The Weather Machine"](#)

F. 9/13 [Marikou Awiakta's Poems and Wangari Maathai's "Noble Peace Prize Address"](#)

UNIT 1 Assignment. Visit the Mesa Lab. Write a 2 page report exploring these two questions: What are the various forms of discourse (paintings, photography,

sculpture, music, graphs, maps, etc.) offered in the exhibits? What do you learn or experience from each? ****Due September 30. Submission through Canvas****

UNIT 2. "What is Art?" And Representation of Weather in Art

Week 4. What is Art?

M. 9/16. Mary Anne Staniszewski's "What is Art?" and analysis of works of art and musical representations of rain.

W. 9/18. Mary Anne Staniszewski's "What is Art?" and analysis of works of art and musical representations of rain.

F. 9/20. Mary Anne Staniszewski's "What is Art?" and analysis of works of art and musical representations of rain.

Some examples of rain in art to be discussed:

- Leonardo Da Vinci [A Deluge](#) (1517-1518) Also [here](#).
- Gustave Caillebotte. [Paris Street. Rainy Day](#) (1877).
- Vincent Van Gogh. [Bridge in the Rain](#) (after Hiroshige) (1887).
- Childe Hassam. [Avenue in the Rain](#) (1917) and [Rainy Day in Boston](#) (1885).
- John Constable. [Rainstorm over the Sea](#) (ca.1824-1828).
- Vasily Kandinsky. [Landscape with Rain](#). (1913).
- Rene Magritte. [Golconda](#) (1953).
- Rembrandt [The Storm on the Sea of Galilee](#) (1633).

Some examples of rain in music to be discussed:

- Debussy's [Gardens in the Rain](#)
- Andrew Bird's [Weather Systems](#)
- Kate Bush's [Cloudbusting](#)

Week 5. Cultural Critique in Western Art

M. 9/23. John Berger's Ways of Seeing. Episodes [1](#) and [2](#)

W. 9/25. John Berger's Ways of Seeing. Episodes [3](#) and [4](#)

F. 9/27. Cultural critique of weather related artworks. A discussion

Week 6. Review and Unit 2 Exam

M 09/30. Review.

W. 10/2. Review.

F. 10/4. Exam UNIT 2

UNIT 3. Culture and Digital Culture

Week 7. What is Culture?

M. 10/7. Wendy Griswold's "[Culture and the Cultural Diamond](#)."

W. 10/9. Wendy Griswold's "[Culture and Connection](#)."

F. 10/11. Exercise in class. Bring a select object from home (it can be your cellphone, a shirt, a medal, a toy, a food item, etc.). In groups we'll discuss their cultural meanings.

Week 8. Art in the Digital Age and the Environment

M. 10/14. Roberto Simanowski's "Digital and Net Art" (on canvas), Lisa Swanstrom's "Animal, Vegetable, Digital" (on canvas). Explore: MTAA's [_Simple NetArt Diagram ca 1997](#) (on canvas) and Rafael Rozendaal. [Looking at something](#). Also [here](#).

W. 10/16. Janine Randerson's "Meteorological Art Instruments" (on canvas). Listen to: Richard Garret. ["Weather Songs"](#) and Andrea Polli's ["Sonic Antarctica."](#) Also on [YouTube](#).

F. 10/18. Explore and discuss: Baily and Corby's [Cyclone.Soc](#) and Random International's "Rain Room" ["Rain Room."](#)

Week 9. Interpreting Digital Art?

M. 10/21. Omar Kholeif's "Looking at Art in the Digital Age" (on canvas)

W. 10/23. James Bridle's "New Ways of Seeing" [Episode 4](#).

F. 10/25. J.R. Carpenter's [The Gathering Cloud](#).

Week 10. The Arts of the Cloud

M. 10/28. James Bridle's "Cloud" (on canvas), and "New Ways of Seeing" [Episode 1](#).

W. 10/30. John Constable. [Cloud Study \(1822\)](#) , [Cloud Study \(1830-1835\)](#) , [Cloud Study: Stormy Sunset \(1821-1822\)](#) , and Cory Arcangel's [Supermario Clouds](#).

F. 11/1. Robert Watts, David Behrman, and Bob Diamond's [Cloud Music](#). Dan Goods, Nik Hafermaas, and Aaron Koblin's [eCloud Project](#), and F4 Collective's [O-Tū-Kapua: my personal cloud](#).

UNIT 3 Assignment. Creative Project: Image series or short video. Record your encounters with nature, the environment IRL or through art, music, media. Reflect on the contexts that surround it in a 1000 word reflection. What are their cultural underpinnings or cultural critique? Use the texts we have read so far to guide you.

****Due November 15. Submission through Canvas****

UNIT 4. Media, Nature as Media, the Media of Nature

Week 11. What is Media?

M. 11/4. Marshall McLuhan. ["The Medium is the Message"](#)

W. 11/6. John Durham Peter's "Understanding Media" (on canvas)

F. 11/8. John Durham Peter's "Understanding Media" (on canvas)

Week 12. The Sea and/as Media

M. 11/11. Nicole Starosielski. Surfacing (on canvas) and [Interactive online](#).

W. 11/13. William Coleridge. "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and Chris Hayes's "The Rime of the Modern Mariner" (selection on canvas)

F. 11/15. J.R. Carpenter's [Ethereic Ocean](#) and Tuula Närhinen's [Sea Watercolors](#) and [Baltic Sea Plastique](#).

Week 13. Bodies as Media

M. 11/18. ORLAN's explore [Self-Hybridizations](#), and Surgeries. Watch [this lecture](#).

W. 11/20. Shelley Jackson's [Skin](#) and Octavia Butler's Bloodchild (on canvas)

F. 11/22. Keith Obadike's explore: [Blackness for Sale](#). Read Black Netart Actions (on canvas) and Nick Cave's [Soundsuits](#).

Fall Break (November 25-29)

Week 14. Posthumanism

M. 12/2. Rosi Braidotti's Posthumanism (on canvas)

W. 12/4. Rosi Braidotti's Posthumanism

F. 12/6. Rosi Braidotti's Posthumanism

Week 15. Unit 4. Exam Review

M. 12/9. Review.

W. 12/11. Review.