

AR330 Global Visual Politics

Prof. Hanan Toukan

Email: h.toukan@berlin.bard.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays 1-2 (or by apt)

Seminar times: T, Thu 2:00-3:30

Seminar venue: TBD

Description:

Film, photography, media, and art shape how we process and deal with political and social phenomena as diverse as war, disease, border violence, migration and displacement, the securitization of states, and global financial crises. While it is widely recognized that we live in a visual age, how we read our world visually and how our world shapes our visual reality are questions that require more attention. As “human experience is now more visual and visualized than ever before” -- as visual theorist Nicholas Mirzoeff observes -- it is crucial to learn how to “read” the visual as a site of power, struggle, order, and change.

This OSUN course aims to give students the tools and theoretical know-how to understand how institutions as diverse as governments, museums, political and humanitarian organizations, the culture industry, and civil society shape what images people see and how they make sense of them. The course aims to train students in looking, noticing difference and judging critically. Bringing together theory and insight the subjects of politics, global studies, postcolonial studies, visual art, as well as media and cultural studies, the course will introduce students to the key tools of visual analysis that will allow them to think through questions of race, identity, empire, nation, colonization, and sovereignty through an interdisciplinary lens.

The course is envisioned as a site of shared learning and knowledge-production between students across campuses. Participating students will be expected to do research on cultural organizations, NGOs and other civil society initiatives that take image-making, circulation, and/or reception to be at the core of their missions for their final papers. Participating students will also be expected to work in collaboration with students in Beirut and Jerusalem on at least one assignment for the course.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Syllabi should note that, instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct. All written assignments must be worked from the beginning and submitted on a Google document to the instructor by email.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

To plagiarize is to “steal and pass off as one’s own the ideas, words, or writings of another” (Merriam-Webster). This dictionary definition is quite straightforward, but it

is possible for students to plagiarize inadvertently if they do not carefully distinguish
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between their own ideas or paper topics and those of others. It is also possible for students to think that they can use technology such as ChatGPT. This is NOT permitted and is considered Plagiarism as it steals the ideas of another, whether human or object. Listed below are guidelines on format to help students avoid committing plagiarism:

phrases, sentences, and excerpts that are not the author's must be identified with quotation marks or indentation.

Footnotes, endnotes, and parenthetical documentation (called in-noting) must identify the source from which the phrases, sentences, and excerpts have been taken. All ideas and data that are not the author's must also be attributed to a particular source, in either a footnote, endnote, or in-note (see above).

Bibliographies must list all sources used in a paper. Students who have doubts as to whether they are providing adequate documentation of their sources should seek guidance from their instructor before preparing a final draft of the assignment

Attendance

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the participation grade for the course. Also please consult the BCB Student Handbook for regulations governing periods of illness or leaves of absence.

Class Conduct

“Active” participation is a significant component of your grade; you should come to class prepared to discuss the readings. This means bringing a copy of your weekly diary response as well as any questions you may have. Your contribution to the discussion should be based on the material you have read (and thought) about. Identify important passages while reading for closer examination in class.

Do not take out your cell phones, laptops or other devices and do not allow them to interrupt class.

Assessment and Grade Breakdown

Class Participation (20%): Participation will be evaluated at the end of each session. Students will be assessed based on the general enthusiasm, frequency and quality of the questions they raise. Regular attendance and completion of all reading assignments is also required. Recurrent absences will substantially decrease the final grade. (up to two unexcused absences are allowed).

Class Presentations (15%): Each student will be expected to make one 20- minute presentation about a particular week's readings of their own choice. Presentations should address the author, central question and argument of the work, methodology used, and any links to other themes and authors covered in the course. The presentation should end with three critically engaging questions and concluding thoughts posed to the class to spark discussion. Presentations should include visual material, such as, blogs, advertisements, photography, artworks, news clips, movies

and short film in their analyses. Class presentations will take place in the **Tuesday 2** class and students can sign up to present on the week of their choice in the second week of classes.

Exploration Assignment-Walking Tours of the city (15%)

The purpose of this assignment is to think about walking in the city as a tactical modality for reflecting on the individual/group body-subject and its relationship to the city within the context of an increasingly virtualized social interaction. Students are expected to go in groups of 3-4 on a walking tour of an area of Berlin of their choice that is known for having its bustling streets, markets, cultural and governmental landmarks and diverse communities. Students are responsible for delineating a neighborhood of their choice for their tour that is both physically achievable and content driven. Students are expected to research the neighborhood using newspapers, histories of the community and by interviewing people living in the neighborhood and doing participant observation about how they and other people social interact with the urban infrastructure around. The plans will be discussed in class before the students head out. Students are also expected to share their walking tours with the class by presenting their experience of identifying the different stops on their walking tour and explaining their historical significance. In the classroom we will all reflect on each other's walking tours. Questions for the groups to answer include: Why was this neighborhood chosen? Where is it? Why is it significant? Are there historic places in this neighborhood that are not public or visible? Why? Why not? What historical and contemporary features of the neighborhood and its communities are visible? What is less visible or not visible at all? Are there any visual cues that are encoded that we could decode? The walking tour should have detailed descriptions of 3-5 sites on the tour. **These tours should take place during weeks 6 and 7. Presentations will be made in class on the Tuesday class of Week 7.**

Essay: (30%)

For the final assignment students are required to write 6 pages (double-spaced font times new roman 12 excluding bibliography and footnotes) in answer to a series of pre assigned essay questions of which they choose one. **Due May 12, 2023.**

Final Project and Exhibition: (20%)

Students are expected to produce in groups a short essay film about any topic in the news that they feel they need to respond to (as long as it fits with one of the key thematic areas discussed in the course). The assignment is open and completely free, it asks only that students think critically about historical moments they are witness to and their role as spectators in the writing of history, its documentation and archive.

Due: April 13, 2020

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24

hours late. Any essay submitted within four weeks of the deadline cannot receive a grade of higher than C. *Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment*

Course Material

Students are expected to download articles from JSTOR or EBSCOHOST which can be accessed from the BCB library website anywhere on campus.

Book chapters and inaccessible material that is * will be sent to google classroom.

Course Schedule

This syllabus is subject to change. All changes will be announced in

class. **Communication**

- Please treat email as a **formal** means of communication. As such use appropriate language and form. Templates and guidelines are available here: <http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>
- Please note that I do not respond to questions for which the answer can be found here in the syllabus or through a simple internet search.
- Unless urgent, please allow me **48 hours** to respond to your email.
- Do not expect a response between **Friday 5pm** and **Monday 9am**.
- You are responsible for any work you miss. If you are absent, you are encouraged to make your colleagues your first point of contact to find out about missed work. Make sure you have the contact information of **at least two classmates**.

Classes and Readings:

1.WEEK 1 (Jan 31-Feb 2)

Can visual production be used to study the culture, society and politics of a people? How does one 'see' through an interdisciplinary framework? What does it mean to 'see' politics, visually? Why do we need to learn to understand politics through a visual methodology?

Tuesday Seminar

Introduction to the Course

Thursday Seminar

Nicholas Mirzoeff, "The Subject of Visual Culture," in *The Visual Culture Reader* (2nd edition), edited by Mirzoeff. London and New York: Routledge, 2002. Pages 3-

2. WEEK 2- February 7, 9***How do we see?***

Politics and visual studies may seem not to intersect, given their independent growth and institutional separation in departments of art and government, yet they are inextricably connected. How is that? Why is visual culture important in politics?

Tuesday Seminar

Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. (London: Penguin, 1972). Chapter 1.

Thursday Seminar

W.T.J Mitchell, "Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture." *Journal of Visual Culture* 1.2 (2002): 165-181.

3. WEEK 3- February 14, 16***The "Political" and the "Aesthetic"***

Is there a distinction between the political and the aesthetic? How can we define each of these terms within the context of visual politics and visibility more specifically? Are there certain modes and methods of visualization that force a re-thinking of the political?

Tuesday

Mouffe Chantal (2001). "Every Form of Art Has a Political Dimension". *Grey Room* 1 (2): 98-125.

Thursday

Ranciere, Jacques (2006), "The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible (London: Continuum) pages 12-19 and 47-49.

4.WEEK 4- February 21, 23**The Culture industry and the Society of the Spectacle*****Tuesday***

Adorno, Theodore and Horkheimer, Max (1944) *The Culture Industry: Industry as Mass Deception in the Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

<http://faculty.georgetown.edu/irvinem/theory/Adorno-Horkheimer-Culture-Industry.pdf>

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Thursday

Debord, Guy (1968). *The Society of the Spectacle*. Sections 2 and 3 (small chapters written in note form).

http://www.antiworld.se/project/references/texts/The_Society%20Of%20The%20Spectacle.pdf

5. WEEK 5- February 28, March 2

The Media, Representation and Signifying Practices

Tuesday

Stuart Hall ed. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. (London and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1997). Read “The Work of Representation”.

Students should come to class with an image of their choice that they would like to contextualize and “decode” with their classmates in a discussion. The image (and accompanied text) could be from a street ad, or street art, an article, news coverage, a film, a commercial or art exhibit about migrant and/or other ethnically diverse communities living in Europe.

Thursday

Benjamin, Walter. The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction in *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt, tr by Harry Zohn, from the 1935 essay New York: Schocken Books, 1969. <http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/benjamin.pdf>

Said, Edward (1981) *Covering Islam*. New York: Vintage Books, 1997. Read Chapter 1.

In class viewing- Introduction to the end of an argument (1990), Jayce Salloun and Elia Suleiman. <https://vimeo.com/72835443> (first 15 min)

6. WEEK 6- March 7, 9

Walking/Seeing As a Tactical Modality: The visual politics of urban space

Which potentials, dilemmas and challenges characterize visual culture’s role in transforming urban landscape towards the formation of an inclusive political culture and inclusive urbanism? **What role are urban arts playing in social justice, "right to the city" and environmental movements around the world? Could aesthetics of occupation, communing and communality deployed in urban social movements be the arena and context for political transformations? How can art in the urban space be used as a tool of collaboration and a means of 6 imagining alternative political communities?**

Tuesday

De Certeau, Michel (1980) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Read Walking in the City Kallus, Rachel and Kolodne Ziva, “Politics of Urban Space in an Ethno-Nationally Contested City: Negotiating (Co)Existence in Wadi Nisnas”. *Journal of Urban Design* 15(3):403-422

Thursday

Walking Tours

7. WEEK 7- March 14,16

Tuesday

Walking Tour in-class presentations

Thursday

Walking Tour in-class presentations

8. WEEK 8- March 21, 23

The Gaze and the Other: A Historical Perspective

Tuesday

Edward Said, *Orientalism*. Penguin Books, 1978. Read pp. 1-28.

Thursday

Timothy Mitchell. *Colonizing Egypt*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. Read Chapter 1.

9. WEEK 9- March 28, 30

Museums, Visual Practices and the Archive

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What role can the archive play in developing and sustaining a critical and culturally located history and its visual representation? Can the archive be both a “project” and a “process”? How does visual media and its systems of mediation allow for a self representation that was previously not so visible in the same way, through the archive?

Tuesday

Visit to Humboldt Forum

Thursday

Hal Folster. "An Archival Impulse" October 110 (110): 3-22. October 2004

Ann Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Chapter 2. The Pulse of the Archive. Online.

10. WEEK 10- April 4, April 6: NO CLASSES -SPRING BREAK

11. Week 11- APRIL 11, 13

Gender, Citizens, Non-Citizens and the Politics of Visual Representation

How does visual cultural production negotiate the relationship between state and citizen? How have do states use feminized visual branding techniques to redefine and reposition themselves within the master narrative of globalization?

Thursday

Mourad Sara. "The Naked Body of Alia: Gender, Citizenship, and the Egyptian Body Politic". *Journal of Communication Inquiry*. 38(1):62-78

Workshop with American University of Beirut (Prof. Sara Mourad) ***Tuesday***

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Sukarieh, Mayssoun. The First Lady Phenomenon: Elites, States, and the Contradictory Politics of Women's Empowerment in the Neoliberal Arab World. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* (2015) 35 (3): 575–587.

12. Week 12-April 18, 20

Social Media and the Aesthetics of Identity Politics

What is the online self? How, if at all, is online surveillance shaping the way in which we express political discontent? Do hacker groups, gaming platforms and art objects in the culture industry's hegemonic role in shaping dissent to power through social media platforms?

Tuesday

Alhourani, Rabiha Ala. "Aesthetics of Muslim-ness: Art and the Formation of Muslim Identity Politics." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 28 (2018): 185-203.

Cann, Stacey Elizabeth and Castro, Juan Carlos (2022). "It's Just a Joke: "Challenging Sexism through Counter-narrative Memes". *Visual Culture and Gender. Volume 17* (2022).

Thursday

Workshop with Bard Al Quds (Prof. Said Hammad)

13. Week 13- April 25, 27

How is state-led political violence also an environmental phenomenon? What political claims are material cultural practitioners making in the face of the ecological disasters that are shaping the lives of diverse vulnerable communities around the world? How do visual cultural practices bear witness but also resist the environmental damage that natural disaster capitalism has historically caused?

Tuesday

Guest Lecture by artist and sculptor Jumana Manaá on her film "The Foragers"
(please watch the film in preparation for the lecture, link will be provided)

Thursday

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Cayli, Eray et al. (2022). "Testifying to Violence Environmentally: Knowing, Sensing, Politicizing". *Journal of Visual Culture*. Special Issue. 20 (3). Introduction.

14. Week 14-May 2,4

Borders, Walls and Displacement

How are the crossings, permeations and constructions of cultural and political borders between displaced peoples and territories intensified or reduced by the visual dimension of walls, borders and boundaries? How do technologies of the visual, such as photography, video, or digital media, render displacement (in)visible in the global field in different ways than the written word might? Can displaced persons participate on their own terms in the production of visual knowledge about themselves because of the

accessibility of the material needed to do so?

Tuesday

Anna Ball (2012) Impossible Intimacies: Towards a Visual Politics of “Touch” at the Israeli-Palestinian Border, *Journal for Cultural Research*, 16:2-3, 175-195

Tuesday Seminar

Arthur Kleinman and Joan Kleinman, “The Appeal of Experience, the Dismay of Images: Cultural Appropriations of Suffering in Our Times.” *Daedalus* 125.1(1996): 1- 23

Terrence Wright, “Collateral Damage: Media Images of Afghan Refugees, 2001.” *Visual Studies* 19.1 (2004): 97-111

Week 15-May 9,11

Course conclusion and final exhibition of essay film (venue TBD).