Syllabus
ANTH 380V Visualizing Differences
Spring 2003

Pam Smart
Office: S1-329
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 1:30-3:00 or by appointment
Email: psmart@binghamton.edu
Lectures: Monday and Wednesday 4:40-6:05, LH 004

Course Description:
This course explores the power of the visual to produce gender, racial, and ethnic differences. We will focus particularly on three interlinked spheres of imagery – ethnographic film, world’s fairs, and museums – to explore the ways in which ‘difference’ is produced and rendered intelligible. Attention will be paid to the ways in which specific anthropological approaches have been taken up within each of these domains.

Aims:
• to introduce students to the idea that specific visual regimes both express and generate very particular engagements with the world
• to introduce students to aspects of ethnographic film, world’s fairs, and museums as distinctive sites for the production of meaning and affect
• to analyze particular examples of each of these forms in light of the contexts out of which each emerged and has subsequently been received
• to examine these phenomena with reference to key theoretical approaches
• to further students’ understanding of the complex relationships between academic theory and popular imagination.

Objectives:
By the end of the course students should have a grasp of the distinctive impact of the visual in the production of meanings and sensibilities. Students should most importantly have had practice in developing written and verbal arguments, and should be able to critically engage with visual and theoretical material.

Required texts:
Three books have been ordered for this course and are available at the Campus Bookstore.

• Maxwell, Anne, 1999 Colonial Photography & Exhibitions: Representations of the
Informed Participation. Students are expected to come to class having read the assigned material and should be prepared to make an informed contribution to class discussion. The grade will be assigned on the basis of the consistency and quality of participation.

Take-home Test. An essay question will be distributed in class and your essay will be due in 5 days later. The question is designed to allow you to reflect on the ideas addressed in Part 1 of the course, on ethnographic film.

Exhibition Project. This project involves the conceptualization of an exhibition. The topic and focus of the exhibition, its message, the audience to which it is addressed, and its location are up to you to decide on. So too are questions of how the exhibition should engage its audience and convey its meaning. The point of the exercise is not to design a faultless exhibition but to develop a critical understanding of the ways in which exhibitionary practices establish particular terms of engagement and meaning. Key to the project, therefore, is the critical analysis of the issues that arose throughout the process of exhibition planning, explaining why, at each stage in the process, the decision was made to do things in one way rather than another. This discussion will engage with course material and with supplementary readings. It should be presented in the form of a written document, though visual supporting material is welcomed. A fuller description of the project will be circulated.

Final Exam. Questions for this will be distributed in advance of the exam to enable you to focus your revision and to prepare responses in advance.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Students are expected to abide by the rules of academic honesty. Under no circumstances will plagiarism and/or cheating be tolerated in this course. They are punishable though university regulations. If you are unsure of what constitutes plagiarism consult a copy of the University Rules and Expectations, or speak with me.
Week 1
22 Jan  
Introduction

Week 2
27 Jan  
Appearance and Knowledge – Looking at Faces

Part 1: Ethnographic Film

29 Jan  
Screening: Nanook of the North, Robert Flaherty, 1922 (79 mins.)

Required Reading:


Week 3
3 Feb  
Visual Narrative and the production of Difference
Required Reading:


5 Feb  

**Screening:** *Les Maîtres Fous*, Jean Rouch, 1955 (35 mins)

Required Reading:


**Week 4**

10 Feb  

**Speaking For and Speaking As**

**Screening:** *N!ai, the story of a !Kung woman*, Adrienne Miesmer and John Marshall, 1980 (59 min.)

Required Reading:


12 Feb  

**Personal Testimony**

Required Reading:


**Week 5**

17 Feb  

**Critical Poetics**

**Screening:** excerpts from *Reassemblage*, Trinh T. Minh-Ha, 1985 (135 mins.)

Required Reading:


19 Feb  
**Reflexivity and Other Others**

**Screening:** *Incidents of travel in Chichen Itza*, Jeffreye Himpele and Quetzil Castaneda, 1997 (90 min.).

Required Reading:


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**Take-home Test**

**Distributed Wednesday 19th Feb – Due Monday 24th Feb**

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**Week 6**

24 Feb

Required Reading:


**Part 2: World’s Fairs**

26 Feb  
**The Exhibitionary Complex**

Required Reading:


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**Week 7**

3 Mar  
**World’s Fairs, Colonialism and Imagined Others**

Required Reading:


5 Mar

**Required Reading:**


**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 8**

17 Mar  **The World As Exhibition**

**Required Reading:**


19 Mar  **Primitives**

**Screening:** The Couple in the Cage, Coco Fusco and Paula Heredia, 1993 (30 min).

**Required Reading:**


**Week 9**

24 Mar  **Ctd.**

**Part 3: Museums**

26 Mar  **Exhibition Project**

**Required Reading:**

**Week 10**

31 Mar  **Narratives of Species, Race, and Gender**

Required Reading:


2 Apr  **Ctd.**

**Week 11**

7 Apr  **Narratives of History: Identification and Audience**

Required Reading:


9 Apr  **Exhibiting Universality: “The Family of Man”**

Required Reading:


**Week 12**  **Diversity**

14 Apr  **International Festivals**

Required Reading:


16 Apr  **No Class – Passover, Easter Break**

**Week 13**

21 Apr  **No Class – Passover, Easter Break**
23 Apr 'Magiciens de la Terre'

Required Reading:


Week 14

28 Apr The ‘Art-Culture System’

Required Reading:


30 Apr Reimagining Museums

Required Reading:


Week 15

5 May Review

7 May Review

Exhibition Project Due
Wednesday May 7th