

Comm. 5740 Seminar in Visual Rhetoric

Visualizing the Apocalypse

Thursdays 6-9pm

Instructor: Brian Lain

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Office Hours: T 11-12:30pm, W 1-2:30pm, and by appointment

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Materials for the Course:

Barthes, R. (1980). Camera Lucida New York: Hill and Wang.

Barthes, R. (1972). Mythologies. Trans. A. Lavers. New York: Hill and Wang.

de Saussure, F. (1965). Course in General Linguistics. Trans. W. Baskin. New York: McGraw Hill.

Hariman, R. and J. Lucaites (2006). No Caption Needed: Iconic Photographs, Public Culture, and Liberal Democracy. Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press.

Brummett, B. (1991). Contemporary Apocalyptic Rhetoric. New York: Prager.

Rehill, A. (2010). The Apocalypse is Everywhere: A Popular History of America's Favorite Nightmare. Santa Barbara: Praeger.

Rancierre, J. (2006) The Politics of Aesthetics. New York: Continuum Impacts.

Other readings available through DropBox or on Blackboard. All Essays will be on dropbox.

Goals of the Course:



It's the end of the world and I know it. It would be impossible to say that we are inundated with apocalyptic stories. For we have always been. It would be incredulous to say that 2012 marks some sort of continuum's end, because it doesn't. So what can we say of the time we are in? Only this, that images of the end of times is all around us. Our course is simple: Learn the basics of theories and approaches to visual culture and ground in the context of the year 2012 and the speculations of the apocalypse.

Assignments:

1. Class Presentations: Each participant is required to make three 15-minute presentations to the class on one or more of the assigned readings for that day. Each presentation should: (1) provide a short, cogent exegesis of the essay(s), (2) Contextualize the essay(s) as a part of a conversation, (3) critique the essay(s), and (4) present some discussion questions (photocopied for the class) to prod discussion in a particular direction. Students must turn in to me a script or detailed outline of their presentation NO LATER than the class session preceding their presentation



(1 week ahead of time). I strongly encourage students to discuss their presentations with me ahead of time.

2. Digital abstracts: Over the course of the semester, each participant will produce an “abstract” for each essay we read. All abstracts should be digital in word ,txt, some similar format. Each abstract should present the following information in this order:



- A. Author and Title of the Essay
- B. The Central Question(s) raised in the Essay (or Conversation)
- C. The Central Claim/Main Point/Thesis of the Essay
- D. Crucial Subordinate claims of the essay
- E. Relationships to other critics and theorists
- F. List potential points of contact with or implications for your particular project.

Abstracts need not be long and should not be complete outlines of the readings. Imagine about a half a page to do the entire process.

3. Production Project: We must be producers and not only consumers of images. Toward the middle of the semester, you will engage in the production of your own still, or set of visual images. You can use any medium (or media) but the final project must be submitted in a digital, photographic, filmic, or video format. Projects need not be long, but they must demonstrate the theme, and the production must be your own. Projects can be autobiographical, political, comedic, tragic, or otherwise. Think about what limitations you have working only with the visual, also think about what can be “said” in a visual that cannot be said in regular print. The theme will be “Apocalypse How?”



4. Research Project

Instead of working toward individual papers on independent projects, we will work together in two groups to produce 2 papers which will be submitted to publishers on December 14, 2012. Both papers will deal with the theme of visualizing the apocalypse in some way, but will discuss specific critical interventions each. In order to facilitate that, we will break into two research groups, brainstorm topics., work as research groups, write as research teams, and edit together. There are specific due dates and we will utilize a peer review system which will count for half of this grade. I will serve as the lead author on both of these projects and will be involved in researching, formulating, editing, and writing each of them.

5. Final Exam: At the end of the semester, we will all meet together for a group, oral exam. It will be cumulative. The format will be as follows: I will develop a series of questions that cover various concepts, theorists, and problems. When we convene together I will shuffle the questions and we will go around offering a question to everyone. You can pass on a question once, but everyone must eventually answer at least three questions. Once you accept a question, you have five minutes to compose your answer outside the room. Then you will present your answer to the class and entertain questions concerning your answer afterwards. You will be graded on both how well you answer your questions and how well you ask questions of others.



Grading

Grades are based on: Reading cards and class participation (10%), the In-class presentations (15%), Production Projects (20%), Research Projects (40%), and Final Exam (15%).

In order to receive a passing grade for the course, all assignments must be completed. As a rule, incompletes are not an option for this course.

Course Policies:

1. Class Participation

Students are expected to attend each class session, to have read and synthesized the material to be covered that day, and to be prepared to participate actively and intelligently in class discussions. It is impossible to participate intelligently if one has not completed the reading assignment for the day.

Class participation is an important part of your grade. Class participation includes attending class regularly, being on time, doing all assigned work outside of class as directed, and being prepared to take part in all in-class activities. These will include informal writing and speaking exercises, as well as large and small group discussions. Note that it is important to balance speaking and listening, to direct comments constructively to the subject at hand, and to show respect to all speakers.



2. Attendance

Much of your success in this course depends on your active participation in the daily class discussions. Not only is the material covered in class important to your success, but also your participation as an audience member and a participant in the daily activities of the class is crucial to achieving the course

objectives. Consequently, you are expected to attend every class session and to be on time.

3. Tardiness

Many times in this class, you will be making presentations in class. Entering during a speech or performance is a rude distraction to the performer and the class. If you are late for class, please listen outside the door to determine if someone is making a presentation. If you hear a speaker, please wait until the presentation has ended before entering. If you arrive after the roll has been taken it is your responsibility to inform us at the end of that class period. Absences will not be removed otherwise.



4. Assignments and Requirements

All assignments are due on the date specified and must be submitted prior to or during class (not by the end of the day). Late assignments are not accepted, and, excepting authorized absences, make-up assignments will not be scheduled. If you miss a presentation, workshop, or other schedules or informal class activities and you have a University Excused Absence (i.e. an excused absence from the Dean of Students or a receipt from the UNT Health Center), we will try to reschedule you at our earliest convenience. You should be prepared to perform whenever you are called upon, certainly the next time you come to class. When a reading assignment is listed in the syllabus for a given day, you should complete the reading assignment by that day.

5. Grading

The graded assignments are designed to allow the student to demonstrate proficiency in these areas. The following scale will be used:

A	90-100	Clearly Outstanding and exceptional work
B	80-89	Above Average Work
C	70-79	Average Work; Meets all the criteria for an assignment
D	60-69	Below Average Work
F	Below 60	Fails to Meet Minimal Expectations

6. Completing the Course

Students are expected to complete all assignments for this course during the semester. Assigning a grade of “incomplete” is rare, and in order to request an “I,” the student must meet these requirements: a) The student must have completed at least 75% of the course assignments; b) The student must be passing the course; c) There must be an unforeseen and compelling reason why the course cannot be completed on time; and d) The student must present a plan for completing the assignments within the time period specified in the catalog.



7. Disability Accommodation

The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112-The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation, entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens." We will cooperate fully with the University's Office of Disability Accommodation to provide reasonable accommodation to students who require help. Students who wish to self-identify should register with the ODA no later than the second day of class.

8. Student Conduct and Academic Honesty

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is



unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university

and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr

All students shall adhere to the Code of Student Conduct regarding academic dishonesty, including acts of cheating and plagiarism. Copies of the code are available in the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities (Union 319). It defines cheating as, "the willful giving or receiving of information in an unauthorized manner during an examination, illicitly obtaining examination questions in advance, using someone else's work or written assignments as if it were your own, or any other dishonest means of attempting to fulfill a requirement of this course." Plagiarism is "The use of an author's words or ideas as if they were your own without giving proper credit to the source including but not limited to failure to acknowledge a direct quotation." You should make yourself aware of the university's policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism, and you should know that any infractions of this policy will be dealt with seriously. The minimum penalty for a cheating or plagiarism is a grade of "F" for the course and a report to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

9. COMM Library Copier Use Policy

Students conducting research in the Communication Studies Library associated with departmental coursework have access to a printer/photocopier located in the office adjacent to the library. We encourage students to make use of this resource to print research accessed online in the library or to copy essays from any of the department's holdings. Students may not use this resource for other purposes, such as printing courses assignments, class notes, scripts, etc. Students who use the copier for uses other than those outlined above will lose copying privileges.

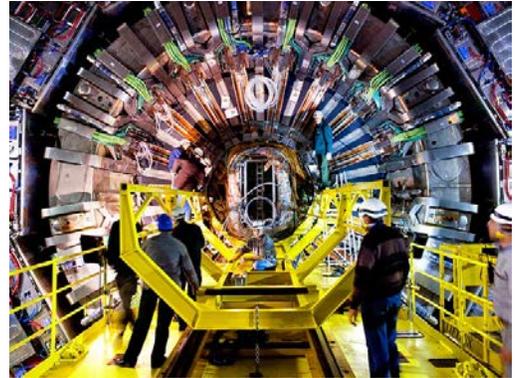
10. SETE

The Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness (SETE) is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. This short survey will be made available to you at the end of the semester, providing you a chance to comment on how this class is taught. I am very interested in the feedback I get from students, as I work to continually improve my teaching. I consider the SETE to be an important part of your participation in this class. You can access SETE through myUNT during the week of finals. Students who complete SETE will have access to their grades earlier than students who do not complete the survey.

11. Crisis Contingency.

In the event of the university closing for weather-related reasons or illness outbreak, e.g. flu, please you will be contacted through the email you give on turnitin.com.

This syllabus is not a contract. It is a guide and may be changed by the professor at any time without prior notice.



Tentative Reading Schedule
This schedule is going to change.

August 30- Intro to the Course/Intro to Visual Culture

September 6- Introductions to Visual Culture- 3 Stories

Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"



<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm>

Saussure, Course in General Linguistics

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/9925324/Saussure-Course-in-General-Linguistics> (Intro, part 1&2)

Barthes, "The Rhetoric of the Image" & Barthes, "The Photographic Message"



September 13- Interlude One, The Prevalence of the Apocalypse

Rehill, Anne. The Apocalypse is Everywhere

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/unt/docDetail.action?docID=10342138>

Alyssa Part I: Ubiquitous Cultural Expressions (pp. 1-58)

Noura Part II: How we inherited the Book of Revelation (pp. 59-152)

Kara Part III: Acting out the Apocalypse in the New World (pp. 153-226)

September 20- Structuralism and the Image

Ryan Barthes, "Myth Today," in Mythologies, (109-159)

Barthes Camera Lucida

Holli Part one

Dino Part two

Introduction and Statement of Problem DUE in Research Projects

September 27- Interlude Two: Apocalyptic Rhetoric

Cards Collected

Brummett, B. Contemporary Apocalyptic Rhetoric,



Derek Chapters 1 & 2 (The Real Apocalyptic; The Apocalyptic Context and Response: Order and Disorder)

Collin Chapter 3 & 4 (Premillennial and Postmillennial strategies; The Apocalyptic Rhetoric and the Grounding Texts)

Laura Chapter 5 & 6 (Critical Analysis of Premillennial Apocalyptic Rhetoric; Critical Analysis of Postmillennial Apocalyptic Rhetoric)

October 4: Michel Foucault and Poststructuralism

Alyssa Michel Foucault, "Panopticism" from Discipline and Punish & Michel Foucault, "Las Meninas" The Order of Things

Noura John Tagg, "Evidence, Truth, and Order: A Means of Surveillance"

Laura Michael Shapiro, "The Political Rhetoric of Photography"

Sam Alan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive"

Short Project 1 Proposals Due

October 11- Interlude Three- Theorizing Apocalypse

Collin Levene, Mark, (2010) "The Apocalyptic as Contemporary Dialectic: From Thanatos (Violence) to Eros (Transformation)" in Future Ethics: Climate Change and Apocalyptic Imagination, ed. Stefan Skrimshire, New York: Continuum International.

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/unt/docDetail.action?docID=10422470>

Dino O'Leary, Stephen (1994). "Toward a Rhetorical Theory of Apocalypse" in Arguing the Apocalypse, London: Oxford Univ. Press.

http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/ebookviewer/ebook/nlebk_23505_AN?sid=22e91351-2ae4-45f2-ac11-0ae1fe02feae@sessionmgr14&vid=1&lpid=lp_III

Sam Skrimshire, Stefan (2008) "Part II: Politics of Imagination (Chapters 4,5,6)" in Politics of Fear, Practices of Hope. New York: Continuum International.



October 18 - Iconic Photojournalism



Holli Robert Hariman and John Lucaites No Caption Needed "Intro" and "Public Culture, Icons and Iconoclasts"

Robert Hariman and John Lucaites No Caption Needed "The Borders of the Genre"

Derek Robert Hariman and John Lucaites No Caption Needed "Liberal Representation and Global Order"

Kara Robert Hariman and John Lucaites No Caption Needed "Ritualizing Modernity's Gamble" and "Conclusion"

October 25-Interlude Four: Research on the Apocalypse

Kara Sam Noura TBA 1- dependent on projects we are doing

TBA 2

TBA 3

November 1- Exhibition Night: Showing the Apocalypse

Production Projects Due, Gallery 5740 Night

November 8- Lacan and Psychoanalysis

Jacques Lacan in 1 minute

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wwlirZQLAAg&feature=related>

Lacan Speaks

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PxbhFPUFPDA&feature=related>

General Intro to Jacques Lacan,

<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/psychoanalysis/lacangaze.html>

Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage"

http://nosubject.com/The_Mirror_Stage_as_Formative_of_the_Function_of_the_I_Function

Alyssa Lauren Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

Literature Reviews on Research Projects DUE

November 15- NCA No Class

November 22- Thanksgiving- Say Goodbye to your families



November 29- Psychoanalysis and the Apocalypse: return of repressed interludes

Ryan Slavoj Zizek, “The Seven Veils of Fantasy”

Laura Slavoj Zizek, Selections from Living the in End Times.

Holli Peggy Phelan, “Broken Symmetries: Memory, Sight, Love”

Dino Renata Salecl, “The Cut in the Body: From Clitorectomy to Body Art”

December 6-Last Interlude:

Analysis portion of Research Papers DUE

Jacques Ranciere, The Politics of Aesthetics

Derek Part One

Collin Part Two

Ryan Jacques Ranciere, The Future of the Image “Are some things Unrepresentable?”

December 13- Final Exam, All Cards Collected
Final Projects

December 21, 2012- End of the World

