Arts and Cultures of Modernity

Course Number
ACM-UF 9201 F01

Brightspace course site https://brightspace.nyu.edu/d2l/home/200103

Fall 2022

Please contact florence.academicsupport@nyu.edu if you have trouble accessing the Brightspace site.

Syllabus last updated on: 9/5/2022

Lecturer Contact Information
Scott Palmer

Units earned
4

Course Details
● Class meeting time: MW 12PM-1:15PM

● All times are Central European Time (CET). Please note that in Europe, Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, October 30th 2022 and clocks will be set one hour earlier.

● Location: Aula Firenze (Villa Ulivi)

● COVID-related details: In the interest of protecting the NYU Florence community, we are closely following CDC and local guidance around COVID-19 and adjusting our recommendations and policies accordingly. Your health and well-being are our top priority.

Course Description
The course theme for this semester is Empire of Technology: Art, Mobility, Innovation & Exchange in the Age of Modernity. This course will cover a range of literary, musical and visual materials, treating these works from around the globe as texts in their own right, as contexts for each other, and as ways of understanding the civilizations in which they were produced. We will investigate how and why these cultural artefacts were crucial when they were created and what their value is for the present. Throughout the semester, our primary objective will be to examine the way in which technological development and innovation have shaped cultural production from the 18th century to the present day via a sampling of influential works and movements.
As an intellectual community we will pose a number of questions, beginning with: what is art, and why do people produce it? Building on this starting point, we will ask (and answer) a series of additional questions: How do the definitions and functions of making and using art change across time and place? What does art allow us to do? How does art allow us to know? How did the interconnected global arts of the present develop out of contacts between and among past traditions?

**Course Objectives**

- Actively participate in an academic community.
- Improve the ability to think critically, engage in complex reasoning and express ideas clearly in written work.
- Acquire a basic understanding of how to study literature and visual arts through the identification of patterns, ideas and styles.
- Articulate a more complex understanding of the historically-documented interrelatedness of various cultures through the circulation of motifs, symbols and ideas.
- Apply theoretical knowledge to the works of art under study and interpret them in relation to aesthetic experiences outside of class.
- By using these texts, artworks and our classroom discussion of them as vehicles, engage with a variety of philosophical, cultural, aesthetic, political, and moral paradigms central to the LS Arts & Cultures course sequence.

**Assessment Components**

A student’s commitment will be evaluated based on active participation, involvement and contribution in the course either remote or in-person. This may include, but is not limited to, attendance at synchronous class sessions, timely submission of course assignments to the instructor, collaboration in group course work both during class time or independently outside of class time, individual oral or written contributions to synchronous course time, in person discussion, or in individual office hours with the instructor.

**Class Participation (15%)**

Regular participation is crucial to the successful completion of this course and thus active engagement in class discussions is mandatory. Reading assignments should be completed for the day indicated for that particular class session (i.e. if an assignment is scheduled for 9/10, read it before 9/10). Assigned readings form the basis for class discussion, so it is essential that each week’s assigned texts have been read. All group work produced in class should be saved in the course shared folder in Google Drive. This course will have a dedicated Google Chat room for class communications. Please refer to the Brightspace course site for more detailed information on assignments for each class session.

**The Playlist - Online Analyses (15%)**

The invention of recorded music is one of the key technologies that we will be studying this semester. Then and now, music has been both a vehicle for the most personal reflections and public commentary, including protest. For each assignment, students should choose a song and create a post in the appropriate Discussions thread in Brightspace no later than 10 PM on the date assigned (students must complete at least five playlist recordings). Each individual piece should include an
embedded recording or link to the song and a 250-500 word analysis that engages with the ideas and contexts being studied at that point in the semester. These responses must engage directly with course readings, bringing the texts we read in class into direct contact with the selected music. Analyses should be as specific as possible, avoiding general statements and assertions, and instead focusing on particular details and examples. These analyses are worth 15% of the final course grade.

**Class Roles (10%)**

In addition to being a regular participant in class activities during the semester, students will assume the following special roles for specific class sessions: historian or curator and archivist.

**Historian:** This role ensures that we have a clear sense of historical background and context, what came first and what came after, in order to understand the casual relationship between historical events and cultural production. The historian prepares a brief presentation (not more than 10 minutes) of the historical context being studied for a particular session. This may include a biography of an author/artist relative to his/her context, maps and other materials that offer a broader perspective on significant contemporary developments, such as scientific breakthroughs in other cultures or major sociopolitical or economic shifts.

**Curator:** This role is focused on producing a presentation that stimulates interest and curiosity. The curator may concentrate on interesting themes, motifs and comparisons found within or between cultural works. The Curator should also engage the class through group exercises, role playing, etc. in ways that generate discussion and debate.

**Archivist:** This role will assist in producing a transcript during a class session on the shared class notes document. The archivist will carefully edit them after class, to ensure accuracy and legibility. At the beginning of the next class, the Archivist will briefly present an oral summary of the main areas of discussion from the previous class. This document will be particularly useful for exam preparation.

Please sign up for these roles as soon as possible on the Roles signup sheet. Each presentation should be concise, convincing and illustrated with quotations, images, maps, etc. In addition to the importance of demonstrating the capacity to analyze and contextualize the material being presented, each presentation should seek to directly engage the class with ideas and questions that can further promote class discussion. *Intellectual curiosity and experimentation are warmly encouraged.*

**Essays (30%)**

Two essays (5-6 pages each) are required for this class. Students are encouraged to write creatively and to incorporate other forms of media (images, video, music). It is possible to revise an essay for a higher grade. However, all revisions must be substantively rewritten in order to be considered. An appointment with me to discuss these terms of revision is required. Detailed information for each individual essay will be made available in the Assignments section of Brightspace.

**Exams (30%)**

There will be one midterm exam (15%) which will cover material studied up that point in the semester, and a final exam (15%) which may cover any given text, artwork or theme encountered in the course.
Grading Summary
Participation 15%, Class Roles 10%, Playlist Analyses 15%, Essays 30%, Midterm Exam 15%, Final Exam 15%
Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

Attendance Policy
Studying at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. Since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is expected promptly when class begins. Attendance will be checked at each class meeting. Unexcused absences may be penalized with a two percent deduction on the participation component of the final grade for every week’s worth of classes missed. Four unexcused absences in one course may lead to a Fail in that course.

As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor and/or the Academics team by e-mail florence.academicsupport@nyu.edu immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, Moses Center accommodations, religious observance or emergencies. For two or more consecutive days of absences due to health reasons, a doctor’s note must be submitted in person or by e-mail to the Academics team.

*Please note that remote attendance will only be considered by the Office of Academic Support if for health reasons you are unable to attend class in person after two consecutive days of absence.*

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with the work that was missed by getting notes from a classmate or meeting with your faculty member during office hours.

Exams, tests and quizzes, oral presentations, and/or important deadlines that are missed due to illness always require a doctor’s note as documentation.

For a detailed explanation of the global attendance policy, see the NYU Florence Attendance Policy Flowchart.

The Global Attendance Policy is posted in the Academic Policies tab in Brightspace, on the NYU Florence Student Portal website, and is posted around campus. After you have read and reviewed the policies, if there is anything that still needs further clarification or raises a question, please reach out to florence.academicsupport@nyu.edu.

Final exams
Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Should there be a conflict between your final exams, please bring this to the attention of the Academics team. Final exams may not be taken early, and students should not plan to leave the site before the end of the finals period.

Late Submission of Work
Please refer to Academic Policies in Brightspace.

Required Text(s)
Kazuo Ishiguro *Klara and the Sun*

All additional readings are available online on the NYU Brightspace course site. Hard copies of some textbooks are available for consultation and semester-long loans in the Villa Ulivi Library. Please email florence.library@nyu.edu to reserve a copy. To request scans from books on reserve please fill out the Ulivi Library Book Scan Form.

**Class Assignments and Topics**

Please refer to the NYU Brightspace course site for more detailed information on assignments for each class session, including links to electronic resources.

**Session 1: Monday, September 5**

Course introduction and discussion of expectations

**Representation, Revolution & Industry**

**Session 2: Wednesday, September 7**

Organizing Knowledge


**Session 3: Monday, September 12**

Slavery & Abolition I

Assigned Content:  *Encyclopedia* “Slavery” “Colony” Begin Equiano *The Interesting Narrative* (1-30, 38-57, 74-104) View: Equiano Frontispiece  Clarkson, Description of the Slaveship Brookes (1788) Optional: Carey “Introduction to The Interesting Narrative” View images on the following site: http://interactive.britishart.yale.edu/slavery-and-portraiture/objects

**Session 4: Wednesday, September 14**

Slavery & Abolition II

Assigned Content:  Continue *The Interesting Narrative* 109-146, 181-194 Trentmann “Bittersweet” Playlist 1 Due 9/18 @ 10PM

**Session 5: Monday, September 19**

Frankenstein & Science

Assigned Content:  Begin Shelley *Frankenstein* (Introduction + Volume 1) Doctorow “I’ve Created a Monster! (And So Can You)” Townsend “Year Without a Summer”

**Session 6: Wednesday, September 21**

Frankenstein & Romanticism

Assigned Content:  Continue *Frankenstein* (Volume II) Burke “Selections from A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin Of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful” Shelley “Mont Blanc”
Session 7: Monday, September 26

Romantic Visual Art

Session 8: Wednesday, September 28

Frankenstein & Science Fiction
Assigned Content: Finish Frankenstein  Hitchcock “The Monster and His Myth Today”
Playlist 2 Due 10/2 @ 10PM

Optional Session: Thursday, September 29 (18:30-19:30 CET)
NYU Reads Webinar with with Klara and the Sun author Kazuo Ishiguro

Session 9: Monday, October 3

Representing Innovations: Steam Power & The Railroad

Session 10: Wednesday, October 5

Photography & Technology

Session 11: Monday, October 10

Slave Narratives & Self Representation

Session 12: Wednesday, October 12

The Railroad & Race
Playlist 3 Due 10/16 @ 10PM
Session 13: Monday, October 17
Photography & Empire

Session 14: Wednesday, October 19
Photography, Albums & The Archive - Visit to Acton Photograph Archive (Villa La Pietra)
Assigned Content: Kinks Picture Book  People Take Pictures of Each Other  Campt “Haptic Temporalities”  Essay #1 due 10/21 @ 10PM

Session 15: Monday, October 24
Midterm Exam

Imagining & Narrating The Future

Session 16: Wednesday, October 26
The Global Industrial Utopia of the World’s Fair
Assigned Content: Rydell World’s Fairs are Worth Remembering  Della Colletta Prologue to World’s Fairs  1851 London Exposition  1889 Paris Exposition  Adams “The Dynamo and the Virgin”  Additional Online Resource: World’s Fair Database  Playlist 4 Due 10/30 @ 10PM

Session 17: Monday, October 31
The Birth of Cinema
Assigned Content: Abel Early Film Programs Withall The Birth of Cinema  Muybridge Race Horse (1878)  Lumière Arrival of a Train into the Station (1897)  Melies A Trip to the Moon (1902)  Voyage to the Impossible (1904)  Edison Frankenstein (1910)  Itala Films Cretinetti che bello! (1909)

Session 18: Wednesday, November 2
Cubism & Cinema
Assigned Content: Rose Picasso, Braque and Early Film in Cubism  Picasso Les Desmoiselles d’Avignon (1907)  Braque Checkerboard Tivoli Cinema (1913)  Picasso and Braque Go to the Movies Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1920)

Sessions 19/20: Saturday/Sunday, November 5/6
Futurism & Cinema
Overnight Site Visit to Turin - National Museum of Cinema, Lo Scrigno
**Session 21: Monday, November 7**

**Recorded Music & Radio**

**Assigned Content:** Kenney Two Circles of Resonance  Cottini Gramophones, Radio and the New Language of Sound

Listen: Dacre/Favor Daisy Bell (1894)  Joplin Maple Leaf Rag (1899  Listening Chart)  Caruso E lucevan le stelle (1902)  Radio broadcast of Hindenburg Disaster (1937)  Welles War of the Worlds (1938)

**Session 22: Wednesday, November 9**

**Recording Technologies: From Analog to Digital - Site Visit to VLP**

**Assigned Content:** Krukowski Ways of Hearing - Time  Pathé Making a Record (1918)

**Playlist 5 Due 11/13 @ 10PM**

**Session 23: Monday, November 14**

**Assigned Content:** Ishiguro *Klara and the Sun* (Parts I-III)

**Session 24: Wednesday, November 16 6-8PM**

**Photography & Ecology: a Dialogue with Photojournalist Rocco Rorandelli**

**Assigned Content:** Rorandelli “Blackadia” “Bitter Leaves” Barker “Ripple: the unintended life of plastics in the sea”

**Session 25: Friday, November 18**

Site Visit to Palazzo Strozzi for Olafur Eliasson exhibition

**Playlist 6 Due 11/20 @ 10PM**

**Session 26: Monday, November 21**

**Assigned Content:** Finish Ishiguro *Klara and the Sun*  Tiku “A Google Engineer”

**Session 27: Wednesday, November 23**

**Visual Art NFTs & Dafen Art Village**

**Assigned Content:** Colla “The Dafen Experiment”  Wong “After the Copy”  Calma “The Climate Controversy Swirling Around NFTs”

**Playlist 7 Due 11/27 @ 10PM**

**Session 28: Monday, November 28**

**Future Culture**

**Essay #2 due 12/4 @ 10PM**

**Session 29: Monday, December 5**

**Final Exam Review**

**Session 30: Wednesday, December 14**

**Final Exam**
Your Lecturer
Scott Palmer has been teaching courses on writing and cultural studies at New York University Florence since 2005. His research interests focus on nineteenth-century literature and visual culture, especially the intersection between mobility, race and image-making. Dr. Palmer has both a BA and an MA in English from the University of Oregon as well as an MA in Anglo-American Literary Relations from University College London. He received his PhD in American Literature from Tufts University.

Academic Honesty & Plagiarism
As the University’s policy on "Academic Integrity for Students at NYU" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.

NYU takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form, and may check your assignments by using TurnItIn or another software designed to detect offenses against academic integrity.

The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images, or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

For guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:

NYU Academic Integrity Policies and Guidelines
NYU Library Guides

Inclusivity Policies and Priorities
NYU’s Office of Global Programs and NYU’s global sites are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In order to nurture a more inclusive global university, NYU affirms the value of sharing differing perspectives and encourages open dialogue through a variety of pedagogical approaches. Our goal is to make all students feel included and welcome in all aspects of academic life, including our syllabi, classrooms, and educational activities/spaces.

Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays
Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer and Office of Academic Support in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of
travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays.

Pronouns and Name Pronunciation (Albert and Zoom)
Students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to add their pronouns, as well as the pronunciation of their names, into Albert. Students can have this information displayed to faculty, advisors, and administrators in Albert, NYU Brightspace, the NYU Home internal directory, as well as other NYU systems. Students can also opt out of having their pronouns viewed by their instructors, in case they feel more comfortable sharing their pronouns outside of the classroom. For more information on how to change this information for your Albert account, please see the Pronouns and Name Pronunciation website.

Students, staff, and faculty are also encouraged, though not required, to list their pronouns, and update their names in the name display for Zoom. For more information on how to make this change, please see the Personalizing Zoom Display Names website.

Moses Accommodations Statement
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented and registered disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibilty (+1 212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. Accommodations for this course are managed through NYU Florence.

Bias Response
The New York University Bias Response Line provides a mechanism through which members of our community can share or report experiences and concerns of bias, discrimination, or harassing behavior that may occur within our community.

Experienced administrators in the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) receive and assess reports, and then help facilitate responses, which may include referral to another University school or unit, or investigation if warranted according to the University’s existing Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

The Bias Response Line is designed to enable the University to provide an open forum that helps to ensure that our community is equitable and inclusive.

To report an incident, you may do so in one of three ways:

- Online using the Web Form (link)
- Email: bias.response@nyu.edu
- Phone: 212-998-2277
- Local Telephone: 055 5007277