

Images, Visual Rhetoric, & Graphic Evidence in Biomedical Cultures

Humanities & Social Sciences Seminar (Medicine)
& Anthropology 897-072 / Religious Studies 734 (Graduate)

Fall 2006
Tuesdays, 1:00-3:50 p.m.
357 Wing C, School of Medicine

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Seminar Description

This seminar will explore the rise of imaging and graphic representation in medicine. The course will be anthropological and philosophical – though our readings will come from a range of disciplines. In tracing the rise of imaging technologies, we will place autopsy (seeing for oneself), as well as optical technologies like photography, cinema, and surveillance, in broader historical contexts. We will compare hospitals with other institutions dedicated to observation. We will consider philosophical dimensions of perception and representation – including ways in which even “ordinary” seeing is bound up with historical conventions, and with the exercise of power. In analyzing medicine’s embrace of visual observation, we necessarily engage lay/popular conceptions of truth and believability. In the last segment of the course, each student will present independent research on cultural dimensions of a particular mode of seeing or category of images.

Objectives

This seminar should develop appreciation of powers of ocular witnessing and visual prostheses, and of rhetorical functions of images and graphic representation, in the making of medical evidence. Most of the readings come from outside biomedicine. Students are invited to think comparatively and correlatively. By the end of the term, students should be able to discuss:

- Exemplary developments in “visual cultures” in and out of biomedicine since the 19th century;
- Relations of scientific modes of observation and representation to popular and “other” modes;
- How images and graphical evidence can serve projects of managing difference and deviance;
- How practices of medical imaging continue to draw upon a complex history of visual powers and conventions;
- How new technologies can change the contours of our practice and our experience.
- How extramedical disciplines contribute to reflections on medical practice and knowledge.
- Why medicalized embodiments solicit critical engagement by humanities scholars and social scientists.

Structure

This seminar brings together medical students (in their second year of study) with graduate students from various disciplinary corners of the University (anthropology, literature, religious studies, communication and media studies...). In addition to shared seminar time (usually 2:00-3:50), graduate students will also be involved in supplemental discussions each week (usually from 1:00-1:50) and in several additional sessions – another 20 hours total over the semester. These discussions will address additional reading each week. Medical students are welcome (but not expected) to attend any graduate seminar discussions for which they do the additional reading.

Requirements

The first seminar requirement is participation, based on engagement with readings. Success of discussion depends on verbal contribution. Students should be mindful of differences of disciplinary background. (At times these differences will themselves be worth discussing.)

Weekly med student reading assignments will average 20-30 pages. Certain readings will be “must-read” items for all seminar participants. Some weeks there will be a choice of readings for med students – such that everyone will do one and come to class prepared to unpack it for the rest. Grad students will be doing considerable additional reading each week, and reporting on that as well. Some shorter readings are linked online and others will be shared in advance.

We will sometimes undertake in seminar to re-read particular passages, alone or together. Toward that possibility, students should bring printed readings to class. Laptops should be opened infrequently if at all: they do not serve well as props for discussion.

Each student is required to submit, by October 24, one 3-4 page paper that responds thoughtfully and critically to one of the readings of the course, or to some cluster of 2-3 readings.

Each student is also required to submit, by December 5, an 8-10 page research essay synthesizing historical, philosophical, and/or sociocultural perspectives on vision in medicine: on a particular visualization technique, on ways of seeing a particular disease or organ, or on ways of seeing proper to particular specialists. The topic chosen for this paper should be discussed with me by late September. Bibliographic research must make use of Davis or Perkins Library print resources (*not* just HSL and WWW). Observation of particular imaging practices in clinical settings is encouraged. Collaborative research is also welcomed (with a more substantial paper).

Each student will make a ten-minute presentation of work-in-progress, based on his/her researches, during one of the last three shared seminar sessions (October 31 or after). Discussion and feedback from peers and instructor can be incorporated into the final paper. Presentations will be scheduled by choice or lottery.

Graduate students may be asked to serve as consultants for med students developing research topics and literatures in unfamiliar archives.

Written work should be thoughtful, carefully-edited, and well-organized. Essays will be evaluated for vigor and care of their handling of ideas, and quality of writing – as well as for research effort, particularly in humanities and social science literatures, and associations (including frictions) developed with topics discussed in seminar.

Schedule

| | Grad 8 students | HSS+Grad 17 students |
|---------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Aug 29 | | 2-4 |
| Sept 5 | 1-2 | 2-4 |
| Sept 12 | 1-2 | 2-4 |
| Sept 19 | 1-2 | 2-4 |
| Sept 26 | 3-4 | 1-3 |
| <i>Oct 3</i> | <i>1-4</i> | |
| <i>Oct 10</i> | <i>1-4</i> | |
| Oct 17 | 1-2 | 2-4 |
| Oct 24 | 1-2 | 2-4 |
| Oct 31 | 3-4 | 1-3 |
| Nov 7 | 3-4? | 1-3 |
| Nov 14 | 1-2? | 2-4 |
| <i>Nov 21</i> | <i>1-4?</i> | |

+ One additional combined session, date/place TBA, perhaps potluck supper?

Sessions, Topics, and Readings

- * reading required for all students
- △ reading/s to be chosen/divided among med students
- ♣ reading for grad students

Session 1 (August 29):

Diagnosis & Detection

- suspicion and the gaze
- abductive reasoning
- graphics, bodies, death

- * Poe, “The Gold-Bug,”
<http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/PoeGold.html>
- ♣ [snippet from] Ginzburg, “Clues: Roots of an Evidential Paradigm” from *Clues, Myths, and the Historical Method*: 102-106

Session 2 (September 5):

Phenomenologies of Perception

- concept and percept
- tutoring vision
- impacted shadows
- sight among other senses
- stereoscopies

- * Kundel and Nodine, “A Visual Concept Shapes Image Perception” from *Radiology*, 363-68, <http://radiology.rsna.org/cgi/reprint/146/2/363>
- △ ♣ Law and Lynch, “Lists, Field Guides, and the Descriptive Organization of Seeing: Birdwatching as an Exemplary Observational Activity” from *Representation in Scientific Practice*, 267-99.
- △ ♣ Lerner, “The Perils of ‘X-Ray Vision’: How Radiographic Images Have Historically Influenced Perception” from *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, 382-97.
- ♣ Crary, “Subjective Vision and the Separation of the Senses” and “Techniques of the Observer” from *Techniques of the Observer*, 67-136.
- ♣ Merleau-Ponty, “The Intertwining: The Chiasm” from *The Visible and the Invisible*, 130-55.

Session 3 (September 12):

Surveillance, Discipline, Culprits, and Others

- archival power, surveillance
- rogues' galleries

- * Cartwright, "Women, X-Rays, and the Public Culture of Prophylactic Imaging" from *Camera Obscura*, 18-54.
- ♣ Van Dijk, "The Operation Film as a Mediated Freak Show" from *The Transparent Body*, 20-40.
- ♣ Latour, "Visualization and Cognition: Thinking with Eyes and Hands" from *Knowledge and Society*, 1-40.
- ♣ Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order" from *The Visual Culture Reader*, 293-303.
- ♣ Sekula, "The Body and the Archive" from *October*, 3-64
<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0162-2870%28198624%2939%3C3%3ATBATA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-P>

Session 4 (September 19):

Commodity-Images

- display & commodification
- images and desire
- commodity fetishism

- * Haraway, "When Man is on the Menu" from *Incorporations*, 39-43.
- △ ♣ Metzl, "The Pharmaceutical Gaze: Psychiatry, Scopophilia, and Psychotropic Medication Advertising, 1964-1985" from *Cultural Sutures*, 15-35.
- △ ♣ Goldfield, "Drive-By Medicine" from *Cultural Sutures*, 109-28.
- △ ♣ Van Dijck, "Bodyworlds: The Art of Plastinated Cadavers" from *The Transparent Body*, 41-63.
- ♣ Benjamin, "Exposés" and "The Arcades of Paris" from *The Arcades Project*, 3-26 & 873-84.
- ♣ Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" from *Illuminations*, 217-54.
- ♣ Friedberg, "The Mobilized and Virtual Gaze in Modernity: Flâneur/Flâneuse" from *Window Shopping*, 15-38.
- ♣ Tagg, "A Democracy of the Image" from *The Burden of Representation*, 34-59.

Session 5 (September 26): **PET & Persons**

* Dumit, "Ways of Seeing Brains as Expert Images" from *Picturing Personhood*, 109-33.

Δ Dumit, "Thinking about Reading" from *Picturing Personhood*, 19-21.

Δ Dumit, "Reading Function" from *Picturing Personhood*, 50-52.

Δ Dumit, "Who Can Read Other Minds?" from *Picturing Personhood*, 106-8.

Δ Dumit, "Reading into Images" from *Picturing Personhood*, 134-38.

♣ Dumit, *Picturing Personhood*.

* Discuss research topic with Saunders by this week.

Grad Session (October 3) **Virtuality & Embodiment I**

♣ Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*.

Grad Session (October 10) **Virtuality & Embodiment II**

♣ Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual* (continued).

Session 6 (October 17) **Endoscopies and "Noninvasion"**

* van Dijck, "Fantastic Voyages in the Age of Endoscopy" from *The Transparent Body*, 64-82.

Δ ♣ van de Vall, "Between Battlefield and Play: Art and Aesthetics in Visual Culture" from *Contemporary Aesthetics*.

Δ ♣ Lammer, "Horizontal Cuts and Vertical Penetration" from *Cultural Studies*, 833-47.

Session 7 (October 24)

Graphing Physiology

- cinema and science
- nonpictorial representation
- clinical order and the chart

* Reiser, “The Translation of Physiological Actions into the Languages of Machines” from *Medicine and the Reign of Technology*, 91-121.

♣ Cartwright, chapters 1-4 of *Screening the Body*.

* *Response paper due*

Session 8 (October 31):

Operating at the Digital Interface

* Lenoir, “Fashioning the Military-Entertainment Complex” from *Correspondence*, 14-16.

* Lenoir, “The Virtual Surgeon” (& response) from *Semiotic Flesh*, 28-51.

♣ Hayles, “Flesh and Metal” (& response) from *Semiotic Flesh*, 52-71.

♣ Lenoir and Lowood, “Theaters of War: the Military Entertainment Complex,” from *Kunstkammer, Laboratorium, Bühne — Schauplätze des Wissens im 17. Jahrhundert*, 432-64.

Sessions 9-11 (November 7, 14 & TBA): **Student Presentations**

Grad Session (November 21) **Mimesis and Alterity**

♣ Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity*.

(December 5):

Research Papers Due