SOCIOLOGY 231

THE SOCIOLOGY OF ART, MEDIA, AND CULTURE:

COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVES

Prof. Peggy Levitt
Department of Sociology
Pendleton East 333 ext. 2186
plevitt@wellesley.edu
Office Hours –Mondays and Thursdays 10:00-11:00
or by appointment

FALL 2010

Course Overview

This course explores the changing relationship between art, culture, and society in our increasing global world. How do national artistic and cultural institutions change as nations change? What happens when artists and their work circulate globally? How is the role of galleries, publishers, museums, and the media transformed? We will begin with an overview of the sociology of the arts and culture. We will then explore how power influences who is represented and what voices are heard in the world of fine arts, the media, and literature. The rest of the semester will be devoted to reflections on how globalization affects artists, audiences, gatekeepers, and institutions. On several occasions, we will not meet during class but instead meet on or off campus for a museum visit, a movie viewing, or a special session with the Special Collections Librarian.

This course also has a larger, intellectual goal. I would like students to understand that there are many ways to ask and answer questions. I also want students to strengthen their analytical and critical thinking skills so they can evaluate different intellectual positions in a rigorous way. Many of the discussions we will have about the class readings will focus on the same set of questions - what is the question the author is trying to answer? What is the argument? What are his or her underlying assumptions? What is the evidence he or she brings to bear? What are the argument’s strengths and weaknesses?

I place great emphasis on students’ ability to write clearly and convincingly. We also work on public speaking. Organization, grammar and logic in writing and speaking count. There will be three short 3-5 page writing assignments -- more in-depth descriptions and guidelines will follow. Students will also be expected to attend and write short (1-2 page) responses to at least two lectures taking place on and off campus this semester. In addition, I expect everyone to attend class, complete the readings, come prepared to contribute to class discussion, and produce high-quality, well-written
responses to the assignments. Please bring a copy of the readings with you to class. I also ask that all students visit me at least once during my office hours before the middle of the term.

REQUIRED BOOKS

The following books are available for purchase at the WC bookstore and are on reserve at the library:


WEEK ONE (Sept. 7TH) – Introduction

WEEK TWO (Sept. 13th AND 16th) Globalization and Culture


WEEK THREE (Sept. 20th AND Sept. 23rd) Globalization and Culture

Sept. 20th - Nederveen, Pieterse, J.P. Globalization and Culture, Chapters 1-3

Sept. 23rd – NO CLASS

WEEK FOUR (Sept. 27TH AND Sept. 30TH) Conceptualizing Global Cultural Production and Consumption

Sept. 27th – NO CLASS

Sept. 30th - Nederveen Pieterse. Chapters 4-6.


ASSIGNMENT ONE DISTRIBUTED – REPRESENTING THE OTHER IN CHILDREN’S LITERATURE, DUE OCTOBER 20TH

OCTOBER 2ND (SATURDAY) VISIT TO MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS 10-12. MEET THERE AT 9:45.

WEEK FIVE - (Oct. 4th AND Oct. 7TH) The Sociology of Art


Oct. 7th - Alexander – Production of Culture

WEEK SIX (Oct. 12th AND Oct. 14th) – NO CLASS

WEEK SEVEN (Oct. 18th AND Oct. 21st) – Foundational Readings in the Sociology of Art (continued)

Oct. 18th - Alexander - Reception of Culture
Visit to the Davis Museum

SPECIAL CLASS MEETING OCTOBER 20TH 12:30-2 IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS ROOM IN LIBRARY TO PRESENT STUDENT PROJECTS.

Oct. 21st - Alexander - Art in Society

WEEK EIGHT (Oct. 25th AND Oct. 28th) – ARTISTS


Oct. 28th – Excerpts from Bomb Magazine – Palacio and Cozier, Galeano and Nasdor

ASSIGNMENT TWO DISTRIBUTED – DUE NOVEMBER 15TH

OCTOBER 28TH MOVIE AND PIZZA NIGHT “Bride and Prejudice” 6:00 PM IN PENDLETON 349

WEEK NINE (Nov. 1st AND 4th) – AUDIENCES


WEEK TEN – (Nov. 8th AND 11th) ARBITERS AND GATEKEEPERS

Nov. 8th - Prologue and Chapter 4 from The Ones that are Wanted: Communication and the Politics of Representation in a Photographic Exhibition by Corinne Kratz.


WEEK ELEVEN – (Nov. 15th and 18th) – TRAVELING NOTES, WORDS, AND IMAGES


WEEK TWELVE - (Nov. 22nd) – TRAVELING NOTES, WORDS, AND IMAGES (continued)

Nov. 22nd – Catch up and additional reading to be assigned.

WEEK THIRTEEN – (Nov. 29th and Dec. 2nd) MUSEUMS

Nov. 29th - The Art Museum, Introduction and Chapters 1-3.

Dec. 2nd - The Art Museum, remaining chapters

WEEK FOURTEEN – (Dec. 6th AND 9th )
Dec. 6th – Goswamy, B.N. “Another Past, Another Context: Exhibiting Indian Art Abroad.” In *Exhibiting Cultures, Karp and Lavine, eds.*

Duncan, Carol. “Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship.” In *Exhibiting Cultures, Karp and Lavine, eds.*

Dec. 9th – Wrap Up

**POSSIBLE TALKS TO ATTEND AT THE NEWHOUSE CENTER AND OTHER VENUES**

**September**

Tues 28 September / 4:30pm
Distinguished Writers Series—Peter Carey

**October**

Tues 12 October / 4:30pm
Distinguished Writers Series—Tomaz Salamun & Meena Alexander

Tues 26 October / 4:30 pm
Distinguished Writers Series—Russell Banks

**November**

Tues 9 November / 4:30pm
Distinguished Writers Series—Maryse Conde

**December**

Weds. 1 December / 12:30
Cornille Lecture – Deborah Klimberg-Salter (Library Lecture Room)