ARTHIST 164A/364A – FILMSTUD 164A/364A
TECHNOLOGY AND THE VISUAL IMAGINATION
WINTER 2015 :: TUES/THURS 12:35 – 2:05
CUMMINGS HALL :: ANNENBERG AUDITORIUM

Professor Beth Kessler
Building 100, Rm 102G
ekessler@stanford.edu
Office Hours: Thurs. 2:30 – 3:30 and by appointment

An exploration of the dynamic relationship between technology and the ways we see and represent the world. We will study the history of different technologies—from telescopes and microscopes to digital detectors—that have changed and enhanced our visual capabilities. The course will also examine technologies from the Renaissance through the present day that have introduced new modes of visuality and have shaped our visual imagination. We will also consider how these technologies influenced and inspired the work of artists. Special attention will be paid to how different technologies, such as linear perspective, photography, cinema, and computer screens, translate the visual experience into a representation; the automation of vision; and the intersection of technology with notions of time and space.

You will gain an understanding of the history of technologies of observation and representation from the Renaissance to the present, as well as explore the relationship between older technologies and those in use today. In addition, you will learn to think and write critically about the role of technology in image production, distribution, and reception.

POLICIES

HONOR CODE

Students are expected to act in accordance with the Stanford Honor code. http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/judicialaffairs/policy/honor-code

STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES

http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae/students
A student who has a disability that may necessitate an academic accommodation or the use of auxiliary aids and services in a class, must initiate the request with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC), located within the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). The SDRC will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend appropriate accommodations, and prepare a verification letter dated in the current academic term in which the request is being made. Please contact the SDRC as soon as possible; timely notice is needed to arrange for appropriate
accommodations. The Office of Accessible Education is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066; TDD: 725-1067).

ATTENDANCE

Paper assignments and quizzes will cover information presented during lectures as well as information contained in assigned readings. Also, participation is an important part of your final grade. To succeed in this class, it is therefore critical that you read the assignments and attend lectures and discussion sections regularly.

DUE DATES

All written assignments must be submitted on the due date. For each day a paper is late, one-half letter grade will be deducted from your final grade on that paper. (In other words, after one day a B+/89 becomes to a B/84, after two days it drops to a C+/79, etc...) If you are absent on the day a paper is due, you can deliver the paper to my office or submit it via email.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Most of the reading assignments are articles or excerpts from books, which are available through Coursework. In addition, you should purchase one book:


ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Class Participation – Attend class and film screenings; read texts closely and offer thoughtful questions, comments, and other contributions to class discussion; in-class quizzes. (10%)

Two short papers – 3-4 pages based on class readings and discussions; Paper 1 due Jan 29 and Paper 2 due Feb 19. (50%)

Final paper – 7-9 pages (10-15 for grad students) on a technology of your choice and its relationship to contemporary visual imagination. The paper should use at least one of the readings from the course. You are required to email me a one-paragraph description of your topic by Feb. 26. The final paper will be due during finals week. (40%)
**SCHEDULE**

NOTE: The instructor may make changes to the syllabus. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Coursework.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 1 :: VISION AND TECHNOLOGY</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JAN. 6</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| JAN. 8                           | Martin Heidegger, Excerpts from “Questions Concerning Technology”  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 2 :: SPACE AND SCALE - PERSPECTIVE AND PERSPECTIVE MACHINES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Antonio Manetti, Selections from “The Life of Filippo di ser Brunellesco” |  |
Rene Descartes, Discourses 4-6 from *Optics*, 165-175. |  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 3 :: EXPANDED VISION</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Robert Hooke, Selections from *Micrographia* (originally published in 1667). |  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 4 :: PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNOLOGY</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAPER ONE DUE</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 5 :: OPTICAL TOYS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
### WEEK 6 :: STOPPING TIME

**FEB. 10**

**FEB. 12**
Scott Bukatman, “Comics and the Critique of Chronophotography, or ‘He Never Knew When It Was Coming!’” *Animation* 1:1 (2006) 83-103

### WEEK 7 :: CHANGING SPEEDS

**FEB. 17**

**FEB. 19**

### WEEK 8 :: FILMIC VISION AND GOING DIGITAL

**FEB. 22** *(SUNDAY EVENING FILM SCREENING & DISCUSSION)*
Dziga Vertov, *Man with the Movie Camera* (film)
Dziga Vertov, Selections from *The Cine-Eyes: A Revolution*

**FEB. 24**

**FEB. 26**

### WEEK 9 :: VISUAL TECHNOLOGY AND DECAY

**MAR. 3**

**MAR. 5**

### WEEK 10

**MAR. 10**
NO CLASS

**MAR. 12**
NO CLASS