ENGL696/AMST 650: EARLY AMERICAN STUDIES: READING AND SEEING

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Graduate Seminar, Spring 2006, Heavilon 101  
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Course Description: What was (and is) the relationship between reading and seeing? Between word and image? Between image and self? Between a portrait, a face, and a person? Can we distinguish between visual and verbal representation? Ought we? Why are so many works of early American literature obsessed with portraits? What did the development of the photograph mean for the novel? This seminar is designed to address these and other questions as it introduces graduate students to three complex subjects at the same time: (1) the history and analysis of literary and visual cultural forms, especially the novel and the portrait, in America before 1850; (2) the relationship between those cultural forms and residual colonial and emergent democratic social forms; and (3) the terms and practice of interdisciplinary methodology through comparative historical analysis of the sciences, arts, and literature of the post-revolutionary period.

This seminar takes as its point of departure two recent critical developments in the humanities: the emergence of inter- and, at times, anti-disciplinary fields such as Cultural and Visual Studies within English departments in the United States and a renewal of interest in corporeality and materiality that followed the first wave of post-Foucault “body criticism.” We will begin by asking what is the relationship between literary and cultural study? between comparative studies of the arts (such as sister arts criticism) and interdisciplinary work? After considering the current status of interdisciplinary study, our seminar will approach the intersection between word and image by studying the construction and function of the face in the post-revolutionary American novel and the portrait. In particular, we will try to move “beyond comparison” by considering the significance of literary pictorialism to the development of the American romance as a response to the visuality of the post-revolutionary novel. Throughout the term we will explore the relationship between reading and seeing, literary and visual culture in early America. We will pay particularly close attention to the actual and imagined effects of reading early American novels and to the language of visualization critics used when they criticized novels. During the course of the semester, our readings will allow us to examine how literary forms intersected with other social forms (esp. gentility, race, and gender); how they maintained a variety of communities (imagined and actual; religious, local, ethnic, racial, or national); and how they negotiated a coherent sense of selfhood within those communities (with particular attention paid to how literary representations of the body helped to negotiate those social relations). Finally, we will consider how the revolution’s rejection of aristocratic political and social forms left America without a social form equivalent to the political form of democracy. How did these texts and images imagine a democratic social space? In what ways did the period’s emphasis on faces, particularity, looking as reading, and reading as looking shape a democratic social space?

Course Requirements:

1. Participation. The success of a graduate seminar in large part depends upon you. Preparation for and participation in class discussion constitute the single most important part of the course. As a graduate student, you are expected to have read the assignments for the meeting, including all secondary materials. If you are unable to attend a meeting (due to illness or family emergency) it is your obligation to contact me.

2. In Class Presentation/Discussion Leader: At the beginning of the semester, each student will sign up to present a short paper (~12-15 minutes/6-7 pages) addressing the primary and secondary material assigned for that date (from weeks 6 to 14). As part of this assignment, you will construct a five to ten entry annotated bibliography on the week’s readings or images.

3. Research Proposal and Seminar Paper. Sometime before week 10, each student will meet with me to discuss their specific research interest and begin formulating research ideas for the seminar paper. Your seminar paper should be a piece of original criticism on a relevant topic, text, or problem that will be designed in consultation with me during office hours. The paper should be around 15-20 pages and it should demonstrate sufficient secondary research for its argument. Papers are due April 29.
Course Web Page: This course will encourage you to take advantage of the digital resources available on the web for the study of early American culture. Throughout this course you will be required to read, view, and print out materials located on this course’s web page. It is imperative that you are able to access and print course content each week. If you are a registered student of this course, you will have access to all the content on the site (http://www.purdue.edu, click on WebCt). During the first week of class, you should access all content related parts of the site (especially the course documents and links in the course folders for each week). If you are unable to access or print any areas, you should contact me immediately during the first week of class.

Required Texts: The majority of our readings will be assigned from the books listed below. The books can be purchased from Von’s Bookstore, please let me know immediately if any books are unavailable. Additional readings will be distributed on-line or in class. Please purchase the editions ordered and always bring the day’s reading to class.

TENTATIVE SEMESTER READING SCHEDULE: Readings not obtained from Von’s bookstore will be distributed on-line through the WebCt website. Each week you will be responsible not only for the readings listed below, but also for that week’s visual/material culture located on-line. The reading schedule is tentative and subject to change.

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION: READING AND SEEING

WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION

H 1/10 INTRODUCTION

WEEK 2 INTERDISCIPLINARITY: FROM SISTER ARTS TO CULTURAL STUDIES

H 1/17 Reed Way Dasenbrock, “Toward a Common Market: Arenas of Cooperation in Literary Study” (2004)*
Joe Moran, “Introduction” and “Interdisciplinary English” from Interdisciplinarity (2002)*
William Germano, “Why Interdisciplinarity Isn’t Enough” (1999)*
Stuart Hall, “The Emergence of Cultural Studies and The Crisis of the Humanities” (1990)*
Michael McKeon, “The Origins of Interdisciplinary Studies” (1994)*
W.J.T. Mitchell, “The Pictorial Turn,” “Metapictures,” and “Beyond Comparison” (1994)*

WEEK 3 FRANKLIN, SPECTACLE, AND THE CULTURE OF PERFORMANCE

H 1/24 Benjamin Franklin, Autobiography (1771-90)
Joseph Addison, No. 86 Spectator (1711)*
Philip Dormer, 4th Earl of Chesterfield, Letters* (1774+)
"Remarks on Chesterfield's Letters" (1791)*

WEEK 3 IMAGES:
engravings from Ferdinand Nivelon, Rudiments of Genteel Behavior (1737)*
various illustrations from Franklin’s Autobiography*
Mason Chamberlain, Benjamin Franklin (1762)*
David Martin, Benjamin Franklin (1767)*
Charles Willson Peale, Benjamin Franklin (1789)*

WEEK 4 SEEING FACES: PORTRAITURE AND THE CULTURE OF PERFORMANCE

H 1/31 Jonathan Richardson, from An Essay on the Theory of Painting (1715)*
Joshua Reynolds, “Discourse Four” and “Discourse Seven” (1769-90)*
Philip Freneau, “The Picture Gallery” (1788)*
Paul Staiti, “Character and Class: The Portraits of John Singleton Copley” in Reading American Art (1998)*
Maragaretta Lovell, “The Empirical Eye” and “The Remembering Eye” from Art in a Season of Revolution (2005)*

WEEK 4 IMAGES
Freak portrait (1674)*
Peter Pelham, *Cotton Mather* (1728)*
engravings from Francois Nivelon, *Rudiments of Genteel Behavior* (1737)*
John Singleton Copley, *Nicholas Boylston* (1767)*
John Singleton Copley, *Paul Revere* (1768-70)*
John Singleton Copley, *John Hancock* (c. 1770-72)*
Ralph Earl, *Elijah Boardman* (1789)*
Ralph Earl, *Daniel Board*

**WEEK 5 READING FACES: PHYSIOGNOMY**

H 2/7
Susanna Rowson, *The Inquisitor; or Invisible Rambler* (1793)*
Henry Fuseli, from *Lectures* (1801/1848)*
Johann Kaspar Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy* (1775-89)*
various anecdotes from newspapers and periodicals*
Barbara Stafford, from *Body Criticism* (1991)*
Edward Schwarzschild, “From the Physiognotrace to the Kinematoscope: Visual Technology and the Preservation of the Peale Family” (1999)*
Wendy Bellion, "Heads of State: Profiles and Politics in Jeffersonian America" (2003)*

**WEEK 5 IMAGES**
various illustrations from Lavater*
Petrus Camper’s facial angle*
Charles B. F. Saint Mémin, *Payouska* (1804)*
Charles B. F. Saint Mémin, *George Washington* (c.1800)*
Charles B. F. Saint Mémin, Stephen Decatur, Sr. (1802)*
Joseph Delaplaine, *George Washington*

**WEEK 6 READING AS SEEING: 18C MORAL CRITICISM OF THE NOVEL**

H 2/14
Various selections of moral criticism*

**WEEK 6 IMAGES**
Samuel Hill, frontispiece to *The Power of Sympathy*

**WEEK 7 READING & SEEING 1: THE SEDUCTION NOVEL**

H 2/21
Hannah Foster, *The Coquette* (1797)

**WEEK 7 IMAGES**
TBD

**WEEK 8 READING & SEEING 2**

H 2/28
Tabitha Tenney, *Female Quixotism* (1801)
Gillian Brown, “The Quixotic Fallacy” (2001)

**WEEK 8 IMAGES**
illustrations to *Female Quixotism*
WEEK 9
READING AS NOT SEEING: VISION AND SENTIMENT

H 3/7
Charles Brockden Brown, *Ormond* (1799)
Johann Caspar Lavater, “The Influence of Countenance Upon Countenance”*
Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1936)*

WEEK 10

H 3/14
NO CLASS MEETING: SPRING BREAK

WEEK 11
SKETCHING

H 3/21
Washington Irving, *The Sketchbook* (1819-20)
Bryan Wolf, “Irving, Quidor, and the Catastrophe of Imaginative Vision” (1982)*
J. Hillis Miller, from *Illustration* (1992)*

WEEK 11 IMAGES
John Quidor, *The Return of Rip Van Winkle* (1829)*+
John Quidor, *The Money Diggers* (1832)*
John Quidor, *Antony Van Corlear …* (1839)*

WEEK 12
THE INVISIBLE ARISTOCRAT

H 3/28
James Fenimore Cooper, “Imagination”
James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers* (1823)
Michael T. Gilmore, “James Fenimore Cooper” (1994)*

WEEK 12 IMAGES
various engravings from *The Spy* and *The Pioneers**
Thomas Sully, *Thomas Jefferson* (1821)*

WEEK 13
ANTEBELLUM AFRICAN-AMERICAN VISUALITY

H 4/4
Secondary criticism TBD, most likely from Henry Louis Gates (ed), *In Search of Hannah Crafts* (2004)*
Various articles from 19c African American Newspapers

WEEK 13 IMAGES
Frontispiece portrait of Olaudah Equiano (1789)
Frontispiece portrait of Frederick Douglass (1845)
Louis Bail, “African Beauty” and “Caucasian Beauty” (1859)
Slave daguerreotypes
Additional visual material TBD

WEEK 14
THE ROMANCE AND THE PORTRAIT I

H 4/11
Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851)

WEEK 14 IMAGES
Silhouette of Nathaniel Hawthorne*
Louis Lander, portrait bust of Nathaniel Hawthorne (1858)*
Daguerreotype of Hawthorne by Whipple & Black*
Advertisement for William Henry Fox Talbot’s The Pencil of Nature (1845)*
Joseph Niepce, heliograph of balcony view (1826-27)*
Joseph Niepce, heliograph of a painting of Cardinal Ambroise (1826-27)*
Louis Daguerre, Still Life of Casts (1837)*
Louis Daguerre, “Boulevard du Temple, Paris” (1838)*
William Henry Fox Talbot, Breakfast Table (1840)*
William Henry Fox Talbot, calotype negative for portrait of Sir David Brewster (1841)*
Cover of William Henry Fox Talbot’s The Pencil of Nature (1844-46)*

WEEK 15  THE ROMANCE AND THE PORTRAIT 2

H 4/18  Herman Melville, Pierre (1855)
Samuel Otter, from Melville’s Anatomy (1999)*
Pierre Bourdieu, from Distinction (1984)*

WEEK 14 IMAGES
John Flaxman, illustrations of Homer
John Flaxman, illustrations of Dante
Beatrice Cenci, portrait formerly attributed to Guido Reni*
illustrations from Holden’s Dollar Magazine (c.1849-50)*
J. M. W. Turner, Ancient Italy--Ovid Banished from Rome (1838)*
J. M. W. Turner, Slavers Throwing overboard the Dead and Dying (1840)*
J. M. W. Turner, Shade and Darkness (1843)*
J. M. W. Turner, Light and Colour (Goethe’s Theory) ... (1843)*
J. M. W. Turner, The Angel Standing in the Sun (1846)*
J. M. W. Turner, The Hero of a Hundred Fights (1847)*
J. M. W. Turner, Mercury Sent to Admonish Aeneas (1850)*

WEEK 16  CONCLUSION

H 4/25  FINAL CLASS SESSION

FINAL PAPERS DUE APRIL 29
OPTIONS FOR TBD WEEK

WEEK A THEATRICALITY AND PERFORMANCE

Samuel Jackson Pratt, from The Pupil of Pleasure (1780)
Royall Tyler’s The Contrast (1787/90)
Frontispiece for Tyler’s The Contrast (1790)*
Secondary TBD

WEEK C THE CULTURE OF PERFORMANCE 1

Brown, Charles Brockden. Arthur Mervyn (1799)
David Shields, “Gaining Admission”
Larzer Ziff from Writing in the New Nation (1991)