Visual Evidence in Modern China (ANS 385, 31230)

Fall 2009, TH 3:30-6:30 PM (PAR 214)

Instructor: Chien-hsin Tsai, (WCH 5.105),
chtsai@mail.utexas.edu
Office Hours: TBA

Description:

How do we see? Why do we see? Are visions always reliable? How does our visual experience add to, or on the contrary, challenge our perception of the world? These are only but a few questions that puzzle writers and thinkers since Plato: for Plato vision is illusion whereas for a Chinese writer like Lu Xun, vision has the power of turning a spectator into spectacle.

Through a broad reading of literary texts and critical writings on photography, pictorial press, advertisement, cinema, and fashion, this course explores the interactions of social context, technology, and culture in modern China. Students will be guided to think more extensively and contextually about the role material media plays in changing epistemological formations, and in defining the "modern" in Chinese literary and cultural fields. The class uses mainly fiction for the literary texts. In many cases, literary text itself becomes a pictograph with careful design and printing, a manifestation of modern, or modernist, sensibility. For critical writings, students will read and discuss theoretical and methodological treatises of ranging from photography to museum exhibitions.

Expectations and Requirements:

Students are required to attend all the seminars, complete the assigned reading, and present a short introduction to one or more of the readings in class, facilitating discussion by directing our attention to a particular segment of the reading for that day by raising a specific issue, question, or link to other texts. A fairly detailed prospectus (5 pages) or draft with preliminary bibliography will be due in class, week 15.

Since Visual Evidence is an interdisciplinary research seminar, students are encouraged to set to work as soon as possible on their individual projects, that first, will be presented for group discussion, and subsequently, will be elaborated into a full-length research paper (20-25 pages). Projects may be individual or collaborative—and, if the latter option is chosen, the length of the seminar paper or scope of the project (such as a website) should reflect the number of students working collaboratively.

We will be presenting our ideas to each other in workshop format at our final session, so students are expected to have preliminary materials on their projects ready for circulation to the other members of the class, either in the form of a prospectus or a preliminary draft of their paper.

Grading:
Weekly Reading Responses 15%—Due every Wednesday at 5 PM.
Class participation and oral report 20%
Final Presentation 20%
Prospectus 10%
Final Project 35%--Due December 15 at 5 PM

Week One: Introduction—August 27

The logistics

Week Two: What is Visual Culture?—September 3

Nicholas Mirzoeff, "Introduction: What is Visual Culture?"
W.J.T. Mitchell, "What is an Image?"
Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"
Pang Laikwan, "Introduction" in *The Distorting Mirror*.
Guan Zengjian, "Zhongguo gudai shijue lilun tansuo" (An exploration of visual theory in ancient China)

Week Three: Photography—September 10

Lu Xun. "Preface" in *Call to Arms*.
Eileen Chang. "Contrasts" 對照記.

Select Essays from *Classic Essays on Photography*.
Susan Sontag. "In Plato's Cave" from *On Photography*.
Roland Barthes. *Camera Lucida*.
Lu Xun. "On Photography" 論照相之類 .

Week Four: Pictorials and the Mass—September 17

Wu Youru huabao 吳友如畫寶 NC 990.6 W8 A4 1983 On reserve at the Fine Art Library

Harold Kahn, "Drawing Conclusions: Illustration and the Pre-history of Mass Culture."
Li Hsiao-t'i. Chapter 2 and 4 in *Shanghai jindai chengshiwenhua de chuantong yu xiandai* 1880-1930 上海近代城市文化的傳統與現代.
Leo Lee and Andrew Nathan. "The Beginnings of Mass Culture: Journalism and Fiction in the Late Ch'ing and Beyond."
Richard Terdiman, "Newspaper Culture: Institutions of Discourse; Discourse of Institutions" from *Discourse/Counter-Discourse*.

Week Five: Women, Magazines, and Advertisements—September 24

Linglong 玲瓏 (http://www.columbia.edu/dlc/linglung)

Zhang, Yingjin. "Artwork, Commodity, Event: Representations of the Female Body in Modern Chinese Pictorials." In Jason C. Kuo ed., *Visual Culture in Shanghai 1850s-1930s*. Washington, DC: New Academia, 2007.
Carrie Waara. "The Bare Truth: Nudes, Sex, and the Modernization Project in Shanghai Pictorials. In Jason C. Kuo ed., *Visual Culture in Shanghai 1850s-1930s*. Washington, DC: New Academia, 2007.
Shih, Shu-mei. "Shanghai Women of 1939: Visuality and the Limits of Feminine Modernity" In Jason C. Kuo ed., *Visual Culture in Shanghai 1850s-1930s*. Washington, DC: New Academia, 2007.
Ellen Johnston Laing. "Introduction" in *Selling Happiness: Calendar Posters and Visual Culture in Early Twentieth Century Shanghai.*

Week Six: Cities—October 1

Dong, Qizhang 董啓章. *Atlas* 地圖集 selections.
Chen, Danyan 陳丹燕. *Shanghai de fenghua xueyue* 上海的風花雪夜 selections.

Walter Benjamin. "Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century" from the *Arcades Project*.
Michel De Certeau. "Walking in the City" from *The Practice of Everyday Life*.
Wang Der-wei. *Xianggang: Yizuo chengshi de gushi* 香港：一座城市的故事.
Leo Lee. "The Urban Milieu of Shanghai Cinema, 1930-1940." *Shanghai Modern*.

Week Seven: Exhibiting Cultures—October 8

Tony Bennett, "The Exhibitionary Complex"
Carol Ann Christ, ""The Sole Guardians of the Art Inheritance of Asia': Japan and China at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair." *Positions 8:3,* pp. 675-709.
Tamara Hamlish, "Preserving the Palace: Museums and the Making of Nationalism(s) in Twentieth-Century China. *Museum Anthropology*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 20-30.
Curtis Hinsley. "The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893."
Lu, Shao-li 呂紹理. *Zhanshi Taiwan* 展示臺灣, pp. 152-160.

Week Eight: Fashion, Vision, and Everyday Life—October 15

Eileen Chang. *Changing Clothes* 更衣記.
Chu T'ien-wen. *Fin-de-siecle Splendors* 世紀末的華麗.

"China Chic: East Meets West" in Valerie Steele and John Major, eds. *China Chic.*

Antonia Finnane. "Military Culture and Chinese Dress in the Early Twentieth Century" in *China Chic*.
Christopher Breward. "Cultures, Identities, Histories: Fashioning a Cultural Approach to Dress." *Fashion Theory,* Vol. 2 No. 4, pp. 301-314.
Chang, Hsiao-Hung. "Chengshi shi jian huayishang" 城市是件花衣裳. *Chuang-wai Wenxue Literary Monthly* 34:10, pp. 167-186.

Recommend: Chang, Hsiao-Hung. "Xiandaixing de quxian" 現代性的曲綫. *Chung-wai Wenxue Literary Month* 36:3, pp. 171-200.

Week Nine: Face—October 22

http://www.orlan.net/
Reality TV. *The Extreme Makeovers.*

Suzanne Fraser. *Cosmetic surgery, gender and culture.* New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2003. Chapter 3.
Sander Gilman. *Creating Beauty to Cure the Soul: Race and Psychology in the Shaping of Aesthetic Surgery*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1998. Select chapters.
Cressida J. Heyes. "Cosmetic Surgery And The Televisual Makeover" in *Feminist Media Studies*, Vol. 7, No.1, pp. 17-32.
Jonathan Watts. "China's Cosmetic Surgery Craze." *The Lancet*, Vol. 363, No. 9413, pp. 958-958.
Eugenia Kaw. "Medicalization of Racial Features: Asian American Women and Cosmetic Surgery." *Medical Anthropology Quarterly, New Series,* Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 74-89.

Week Ten: Revolutionary Aesthetics—October 29

Mao Zedong, "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art" excerpts.

Chang-Tai Hung, "Popular Culture in the Communist Areas" from *War and Popular Culture.*
Harriet Evans and Stephanie Donald eds. "Introducing China's Posters of Cultural Revolution" in *Picturing Power in the People's Republic of China.*
Melissa Schrift, "Manufacturing Mao," "An Iconography of Mao Badges," from *Biography of a Chairman Mao Badge: The Creation of Mass Consumption of a Personality Cult.*
Verity Wilson, "Dress and the Cultural Revolution" in Valerie Steele, ed., *China Chic.*

Week Eleven: Trauma, Photojournalism, Ethics—November 5

Chang, Hsiao-Hung. "Kan, bujian Jiu Er Yi: Zainan, Chuangshang yu shijue xiaofei" 看．不見九二一：災難、創傷與視覺消費. *Chung-wai Wenxue Literary Monthly* 35:6, pp. 83-131.
Julianne Newton. *The Burden of Visual Truth : The Role of Photojournalism in Mediating Reality.* Chapter 2. **Netlibrary.**

Roger Simpson and William Coté. *Covering Violence: A Guide to Ethical Reporting About Victims and Trauma.* Selections.

Douglas Kellner. "9/11, Spectacles of Terror, and Media Manipulation." *Critical Discourse Studies*. Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 41-64.

Week Twelve: Fiction Break/Workshop with the Writers—November 9

Chu, T'ien-wen. *Wu yan* 巫言. *Huangren shouji* 荒人手記, (The Notes of a Desolate Man) selections.

Ko, Yu-fen 柯裕棻. *Tianmei de chana* 甜美的剎那 Selections.

Liu, Ke-hsiang 劉克襄. Selected writings.

Week Thirteen: Prospectus Writing and Preparation for Final Presentation—November 16

No class meeting. Instead, we will have a slightly longer seminar in our last meeting.

Week Fourteen: Thanksgiving Holidays—No Class

Week Fifteen: Final Presentation—December 3

Prospectus Due in the beginning of the class.

Our final session will be in the form of a mini-conference/workshop which. Students will give brief presentations (no to exceed 20 minutes;15 minutes ideal) of their final projects, followed by discussion from others. As the time approaches, we can decide as a group whether the workshop should be publicized and/or open to an outside audience.

<u>Final Paper Due—5 PM, December 15</u>

<u>Official Policies</u>

- Academic integrity: You are expected to adhere to university requirements on academic honesty and integrity. Behaviors, **such as plagiarism, copying of another student's work**, are serious offenses that will result in the grade of an "F" for the course and will be reported to the office of Student Judicial Services, where further disciplinary action may be taken. Please refer to the following website for information on how to avoid plagiarism in your work and/or discuss this with the instructor: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

- University Electronic Notification Mail Policy: In this course, e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class announcements and assignments. As per the University Electronic Notification Policy (please see http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html), it is your responsibility to update your email address and to check your e-mail regularly.

- Accommodations for Students with Documented Disabilities: Students who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6529 voice or 471-4641 TTY). This letter should be presented to the instructor at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made at that time. For more information, please see: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/

- Use of Blackboard in Class: **Most of our readings are available on blackboard**. You should print out and bring your readings to class. Please allow yourself enough time before an assignment is due. As with all computer systems, there are occasional scheduled downtimes as well as unanticipated disruptions. Blackboard is available at http://courses.utexas.edu. Support is provided by the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400 during business hours on weekdays.

- Religious Holidays: If you will need to miss class, tests, or other assignments due to the observance of a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the work you have missed provided you notify me **at least one week prior** to the absence.