

ARTHI 5572: THE DESIGN OF POLITICS / THE POLITICS OF DESIGN

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Fall 2019: Mondays 9-12

Maclean 620

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class explores the intersections of design and politics. From the circulation of messages and materials related to revolutions, to personal habits of consumption and use, we will consider how design creates and responds to ideological programs and agendas. Students will develop their own paths of inquiry, selecting core issues to track in design history and culture. Our readings and writings will focus on the question, “do artifacts have politics?” as we consider design practices both official and subversive.

Learning Goals

Goal 1. Students will arrive at new insights through analysis of primary sources (objects, images, texts) relating to design history.

- Craft complex visual and textual interpretations of design from the standpoint of politics and power
- Contextualize works in relation to global, national, and local histories

Goal 2. Students will master tools developed by historians of design.

- Master skills and conventions of scholarly writing and oral presentation
- Make full use of all relevant research resources (museums, libraries, archives)
- Situate inquiries in relation to design historiography and critical theory

Goal 3. Students will contribute to the field of art and/or design history.

- Build sustained original arguments and demonstrate their originality by relating them to existing scholarly literature
- Make interesting or important claims persuasive by grounding them in interpretation of sources

READINGS: I have made most of the class readings in PDF form to this site.

There is one book that you will need to purchase (print or ebook) or access through Flaxman Library's Reserve desk (note that there is only one copy on reserve so plan ahead if you want to use it):

Beatriz Colomina, Annmarie Brennan, and Jeannie Kim, eds., *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture, from Cockpit to Playboy* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004). (for Oct 21)

For the book review project, you will need to find your book to read in full. Not all of these books are in the Flaxman collection, but all should be in the i-share system. If you are unable to track a copy down, let me know and I will request that Flaxman find or acquire it for us to use.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS (See Canvas for more detailed assignments)

>Attendance – 10 pts. please be present and prepared. This is a seminar style class in which I expect you to bring your own ideas and participate openly. Any more than 2 unexcused absences may be grounds for "No Credit" standing. Please let me know if you expect to miss class or other requirements.

>Weekly Responses – 20 pts: Each week you will post an informal response to the readings on our class discussion board by the evening before class (please post by 9 pm). This post should raise initial questions for discussion ("I found it interesting that.." "I wondered what the author would think of..." "What about ___", etc). You should address all readings, though you may focus on some more than others. You may find that current events correspond to issues in the readings: post links or comments as they come up. Responses are 2 points each and you can skip 1 week without penalty.

Art Institute Object Paper and Presentation – in the first month of class, students will select from the Art Institute's currently displayed design/decorative arts collections to research and write about one object from the historical period of Modernism, 1860-1960. Students will give short presentations on these objects in the museum galleries to share their research and observations with classmates.

>Book review and report – 20 pts. For one week, you will read one of the "related readings" books in entirety and write a review of 500-800 words. You will want to plan ahead for this assignment to give yourself time to acquire books (not all books will be in Flaxman but most should be in the i-share network) and read them. The written assignment should follow a standard academic book review format by summarizing the work and then offering an assessment of its contributions to scholarship and strengths/weaknesses as a work in its field. I suggest looking at the reviews section of academic journals (e.g. *Art Bulletin*, *Journal of Design History*, *Design and Culture*) for a sense of typical formats. Prepare to discuss the book in class as a way of sharing our class' bibliography: reports should be no more than 10 minutes and give a sense of key topics and your assessment of the effectiveness and relevance of the work to our class topics. Highlight at least one example of the material covered (e.g. an artwork, object/site, or historical event covered in the book). Note that it is often challenging to encompass an entire book in this short presentation; part of the assignment is to condense your summary and translate the book's scholarly contribution for your classmates.

>Research projects - 40 pts total. Students will propose topics for further study and discussion based on their own interests and paths of study. This assignment has three parts: a proposal with bibliography (to be developed over 2 assignments); a class presentation with peer comment; and a final paper of 15-20 pages.

Inclusion and Accommodations

Your success in this class is important to me, and I am open to discussion about the classroom and out-of-class strategies that would be most useful for you as you balance work and life in graduate school.

This statement concerns accommodations for students with disabilities. After decades of activism on the part of disabled students and their communities, U.S. law requires that schools and colleges make adaptations to curriculum and classrooms to include students who may have physical, psychological, sensory, learning, or other disabilities. Please discuss any accommodations that you would find useful for approaching in- and out-of-class requirements. No professor may ask for a diagnosis or explanation of an accommodations request when it is supported by a letter from the Disability and Learning Resource Center: (DLRC): 312.499.4278 or email at www.dlrc.saic.edu. The DLRC can also provide support for funding the right resources for learning, and can mediate with faculty if you need further support in securing rights to access School class materials and other activities.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

I take honesty and plagiarism VERY SERIOUSLY and will not tolerate students who misrepresent their work. Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft by presenting another's work as your own, even if you do not intend to; examples include failing to cite sources, copy/pasting text from sources without attribution, and the use of previous course writings as assignments in this class (i.e. plagiarizing yourself). The penalty for plagiarism may result in some loss of some types of merit funding or Scholars status, and repeat offenses can lead to expulsion from the School. To find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, see the Flaxman Library ("[Academic Integrity](#)") or Student Handbook.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 – September 9. The Politics of Artifacts: Theories and Things

Langdon Winner, "Do Artifacts have Politics?" from *The Whale and the Reactor: A Search for Limits in the Age of High Technology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986)

Alice Twemlow, "Introduction," *Sifting the Trash: A History of Design Criticism* (MIT Press, 2017).

assignment: bring in an object that you see as related to the argument of one of these readings.

Prepare to discuss the object in relation to the readings.

Week 2 – September 16. The Politics of Modern Style

Penny Sparke, "Consuming Modernity" and "Modernism and Design," *An Introduction to Design and Culture: 1900 to the Present* (Routledge, 2013)

Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of Commodities and the Secret Thereof," *Capital Vol 1*, (1863) – excerpt from *The Design Reader* (2011)

Louis Sullivan, "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered," *Lippincott's Magazine*, March 1896.

Week 3 September 23 Craft and Design for Society

William Morris, "The Arts and Crafts of To-Day" (1889)

Jane Addams, "Arts at Hull-House," *Twenty Years at Hull-House: With Autobiographical Notes* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1930).

Rafael Cardoso, "Craft Versus Design: Moving Beyond a Tired Dichotomy," in *The Craft Reader*, ed. Glenn Adamson (New York: Berg, 2010).

AIC Presentations – Group 1 (1860-1910)

Week 4 September 30 Designing Needs and Wants

Ellen Lupton and Cooper-Hewitt Museum, *Mechanical Brides: Women and Machines from Home to Office* (New York: Cooper-Hewitt, National Museum of Design, Smithsonian Institution, 1993).

Adolf Loos, "Ornament and Crime" (1909)

Le Corbusier, "Type-Needs: Type-Furniture," in *The Theory of Decorative Art: An Anthology of European and American Writings 1750-1950*, ed. Isabelle Frank (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2000), 84–89.

AIC Presentations – Group 1 (1910-1960)

Group 1 Object papers due

REVIEWS

Timothy Burke, *Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption, and Cleanliness in Modern Zimbabwe* / (Durham : Duke University Press, 1996).

Elsbeth H. Brown, *The Corporate Eye: Photography and the Rationalization of American Commercial Culture, 1884-1929* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

Kathy Lee Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998).

David Brody, *Visualizing American Empire: Orientalism and Imperialism in the Philippines* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

Week 5 October 7 Modern Design in the American City

Paul Schultze, "Mies van Der Rohe in America," in *Chicago Architecture and Design, 1923-1993: Reconfiguration of an American Metropolis*, ed. John Zukowsky and Mark Jansen Bouman (Munich, Germany : Chicago, Ill: Prestel and The Art Institute of Chicago, 1993).

Adrienne Brown, "Race in Three Dimensions," *The Black Skyscraper: Architecture and the Perception of Race* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2017).

Frank Marshall Davis, "Chicago's Congo," *Black Man's Verse*, 1927

Group 2 Object papers due

REVIEWS: Jessica Ellen Sewell, *Women and the Everyday City: Public Space in San Francisco, 1890-1915* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

Robin Schuldenfrei, *Luxury and Modernism: Architecture and the Object in Germany, 1900-1933* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2018).

Davarian L. Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, & Black Urban Life* (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

M. Cook, *Queer Domesticities: Homosexuality and Home Life in Twentieth-Century London* (Springer, 2014).

Week 6 October 14 Bodies in Modernism

Christina Cogdell, "Products or Bodies? Streamline Design and Eugenics as Applied Biology," *Design Issues* 19, no. 1 (2003): 36–53.

Victoria De Grazia, "Nationalizing Women: The Competition between Fascist and Commercial Cultural Models in Mussolini's Italy," in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, ed. Ellen Furlough and Victoria De Grazia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 433.

Jill Lepore, "The Last Amazon," *The New Yorker*, Sept 22, 2014.

"Introducing Wonder Woman," (1941) *All-Star Comics Archive Vol 2*

REVIEWS

Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood and Race from Slavery to Civil Rights* (NYU Press, 2011).

Jo Barraclough Paoletti, *Pink and Blue: Telling the Boys from the Girls in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012).

Marshall, Jennifer Jane. *Machine Art, 1934*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012.

Fabiola López-Durán, *Eugenics in the Garden: Transatlantic Architecture and the Crafting of Modernity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2018).

Week 7 October 21 Designing for War and Postwar

Designing for War and Postwar

Beatriz Colomina, Annmarie Brennan, and Jeannie Kim, eds., *Cold War Hothouses: Inventing Postwar Culture, from Cockpit to Playboy* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004). Read Intro + Choose 2 chapters

“Case Study Houses,” *Arts and Architecture*, 1945.

Art Institute of Chicago, [Six Modernists in Mexico at Midcentury](#)

REVIEWS

Betts, Paul. *The Authority of Everyday Objects: A Cultural History of West German Industrial Design*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Despina Stratigakos, *Hitler at Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

Dianne Suzette Harris, *Little White Houses: How the Postwar Home Constructed Race in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

Amy Fumiko Ogata, *Designing the Creative Child Playthings and Places in Midcentury America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

Week 8 October 28 Desegregating Design

Adam Green, “Selling the Race,” *Selling the Race: Culture, Community, and Black Chicago, 1940-1955* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

Abbott Miller, “White on Black on Grey,” in *Design, Writing, Research: Writing on Graphic Design*, ed. Ellen Lupton (New York: Kiosk, 1996), 102–19.

bell hooks, “Eating the Other,” *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston, Mass: South End Press, 1992.

FYI: Alison Miller, “[The World-Class Photography of Ebony and Jet Is Priceless History](#),” *Perspectives on History*, July 9, 2019.

REVIEWS:

Robert E Weems, *Desegregating the Dollar: African American Consumerism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

Noliwe M. Rooks, *Ladies’ Pages: African American Women’s Magazines and the Culture That Made Them* (Rutgers University Press, 2004).

Tanisha C. Ford, *Liberated Threads: Black Women, Style, and the Global Politics of Soul* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

Week 9 November 4 Reforming/Rethinking

Victor J Papanek, Preface, *Design for the Real World: Human Ecology and Social Change* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972).

Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour, excerpts from *Learning from Las Vegas* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1972).

Susan Sontag, “Notes on Camp” (1964)

Preview: [Camp: Notes on Fashion](#). Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2019 (& [Review by Victoria Pass](#))

REVIEWS:

Mateo Kries and Alison J. Clarke, eds., *The Politics of Design*, (Weil am Rhein: Vitra Design Museum, 2018).

Paul Shaw, *Helvetica and the New York City Subway System: The True (Maybe) Story* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2011).

Lift and Separate: Graphic Design and the Quote Vernacular Unquote., Writing/Culture Monograph (Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and art, 1993).

Fred Turner, *From Counterculture to Cyberculture: Stewart Brand, the Whole Earth Network, and the Rise of Digital Utopianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

Week 10 November 11 Who is Design for?

Aimi Hamraie, "Critical Access Studies" and "Design for All" *Building Access: Universal Design and the Politics of Disability* (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2017).

Kat Holmes, *Mismatch: How Inclusion Shapes Design* / (The MIT Press, 2018).

Preview: Sara Hendren and Brian Glenney, *Accessible Icon*, 2009

*Final Paper Proposal Due

REVIEWS:

Elizabeth Guffey, *Designing Disability: Symbols, Space, and Society* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017).

Elizabeth Ellcessor, *Restricted Access: Media, Disability, and the Politics of Participation* (New York: NYU Press, 2016).

Meryl Alper, *Giving Voice: Mobile Communication, Disability, and Inequality* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2017).

Week 11 November 18 Who is Design for? II: Luxury/Labor

David Brody, *Housekeeping by Design: Hotels and Labor*, Reprint edition (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2016).

Nicholas Paginelli, "[Custom Clothing Technology](#): Diffusion of Luxury Practices in Fashion," *Fashion Studies* Vol 1, Issue 2 (2019).

George Aye, "[Design Education's Big Gap: Understanding the Role of Power](#)," *Medium* (blog), June 2, 2017. & [Greater Good Studio](#)

REVIEWS

Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu, *The Beautiful Generation: Asian Americans and the Cultural Economy of Fashion* (Duke University Press Books, 2010).

Elizabeth Chin, *My Life with Things: The Consumer Diaries* / (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

Minh-Hà T. Phạm, *Asians Wear Clothes on the Internet: Race, Gender, and the Work of Personal Style Blogging* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

Week 12 November 25 Thinking and Speculating

Alice Twemlow, "Please Touch the Criticism: Design Exhibitions and Critical Design in the UK, 1998-2001," *Sifting the Trash: A History of Design Criticism* (MIT Press, 2017).

Anthony Dunne and Fiona Raby, "Design as Critique," *Speculative Everything: Design, Fiction, and Social Dreaming*, 2013.

Bas van Abel, ed., *Open Design Now: Why Design Cannot Remain Exclusive* (Amsterdam: BIS, 2011).

REVIEWS:

Lilly Irani, *Chasing Innovation: Making Entrepreneurial Citizens in Modern India* /, Princeton Studies in Culture and Technology. (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2019).

Barry Kätz, *Make It New: The History of Silicon Valley Design*/ (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2015).

Bruce M. Tharp and Stephanie M. Tharp, *Discursive Design: Critical, Speculative, and Alternative Things* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2019).

Dec 2 – NO CLASS – Crit Week

Dec 9 – Symposium 1: Papers and Comments

Dec 16 - Symposium 2: Papers and Comments
Papers due at 5 pm