Rob Lewis
Mosse Lectureship: Teaching Syllabus
March 31, 2005

The European City and the Transformation of Visual Culture, 1850-present

While the existence of cities stretches back to antiquity, the nineteenth century and twentieth centuries are fundamentally associated with urban life. This course analyzes the transformation of the European urban landscape from the middle of the nineteenth century up through the Second World War and into the postmodern era, and focuses on the relationship between cities and the creation of new practices of "seeing," whether at the cinema, the World's Fair or the stadium. The course will link the architectural transformation of the city – from Baron Haussmann's work in Paris in the 1860s to the proposed monuments of Nazi Germany to the growth of suburbia in the 1960s – to the "spectacular" nature of urban existence, from "morgue tourism" in 1870s Paris through street theater in 1930s Berlin. The course will concentrate geographically on three European capital cities - Paris, London and Berlin - but will also examine the urban visual culture that characterized Fascist Rome, Hapsburg Vienna, Ottoman Istanbul and Soviet Moscow to give a broader sense of the aesthetics of European urban life.

Requirements:
Students are responsible for all material covered in lecture and in the readings for weekly discussion sections. Attendance in discussion section is mandatory, and absences will cause a significant reduction of your overall grade. Grading will be based on the mid-term and final examination, the two papers, as well as participation in discussion section. The mid-term counts for 20% of your final grade; the final is worth 25%. The papers are worth 35% (15% for the 5-to-7 page paper, and 20% for the 8-to-10 page paper) of your overall mark), and discussion counts for 20%. Your discussion grade will be based on attendance and participation in discussion.

Paper Topics:

For the first paper (five to seven pages in length), students will have the option of answering one of the following questions:

1) How do different observers (Baudelaire, the Communards, visitors to the wax museum) "read" the Parisian landscape after Haussmann?
2) Who constitutes "the crowd" in the late-19th century city? Does the "crowd" have its own spaces? How are they configured? What do they look like?
3) How does Zola's *Au Bonheur des Dames* depict the developing visual culture of city spaces like the department store? How do you read the position of women, in particular, in relationship to this new visual landscape?

For the second paper (eight to ten pages in length), students will again have the option of answering one of the following questions.

1) What do you think Benjamin means by the "aestheticization" of politics? What were the urban aesthetics of fascism, and how did they relate to other visions (or critiques) of modernity in the 20th century?

2) How is urban spectatorship part of the transformation of mass leisure in the 19th and 20th centuries? What do urban leisure practices suggest about how people constructed collective identities in the 20th century?

Readings:
The following books are required and are available for purchase at the University Bookstore. In addition, a **course reader (R)** with all other readings can be purchased from the Humanities Copy Center.

Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy*
Simone des Beauvoir, *Les Belles Images*
Vanessa Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris.*
Emile Zola, *Au Bonheur des Dames*

Week 1: Introduction to Urban History
Tues 3 September Introduction
Thurs 5 September Cities and the Crowd in the early 19th century

Readings:
R: "Visual Culture's History: 21st-Century Interdisciplinarity and its nineteenth-century objects"

Week 2: From Haussmann to the Commune
Tues 10 September Haussmann and the architectural transformation of Paris
Thurs 12 September The Paris Commune of 1871

Readings:
R: Charles Baudelaire, *Paris Spleen* (selections)
R: Roger Gould, *Insurgent Identities: Class, Community and Protest in Paris from 1848 to the Commune* (pp. 1-26, 64-120)

Week 3: Social reality in the New City
Tues 17 September Fighting disease in London and Paris
Thurs 19 September The "Dangerous Crowd": Prostitutes and Criminals

Readings:
R: Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in late-Victorian London* (initial chapters)
R: Gustave Le Bon, *Psychology of Crowds* (excerpts)

Week 4: Urban Life as Spectacle
Tues 24 September Painting the city: Artists and Museums
Thurs 26 September Mass entertainments: From the Wax Museum to the Cinema

Readings:
Vanessa Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (1-13, p. 45-150)
R: TJ Clark, "The View from Notre Dame"

Week 5: Interiors and Exteriors: Urban Consumption's visual logic
Tues 1 October Shopping culture and the department store
Thurs 3 October Private displays: the history of city interiors

Readings:
Emile Zola, *Au Bonheur des Dames* (start)

Week 6: Dreamworlds : Aestheticism and Orientalism
Tues 8 October Aestheticism and Art Nouveau
FIVE-PAGE PAPER DUE
Thurs 10 October World's Fairs and Imperial Cities

Readings:
Zola, *Au Bonheur des Dames* (finish)

Week 7: Modernism and World War I

Tues 15 October Reshaping and Redesigning the Modern City: Vienna and Istanbul
Thurs 17 October World War I: From Airplane Factories to War Monuments

Readings:
R: Carl Schorske, "The Ringstrasse, Its Critics, and the Growth of Urban Modernism"
R: Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (1-43, 80-115

Week 8: Urban Utopias, Part 1, and Midterm
Tues 22 October Bauhaus and Modern Functionalism
Thurs 24 October **MIDTERM**

Readings:
R: Le Corbusier, *Radiant City* (excerpts)

Week 9: Urban Utopias/Distopias
Tues 29 October Critiquing America: Fordism and the Industrial Landscape
Thurs 31 October **FILM: METROPOLIS (1927, Fritz Lang)**

R: Georges Duhamel, *America the Menace, or Scenes from a Future Life* (excerpts)
R: Stefan Zweig, "The Monotonization of the World"

Week 10: Spectacles and mass entertainment
Tues 5 November Jazz, Race and Cabaret culture
Thurs 7 November Sport and spectatorship in the City

R: Erik Jensen, "Crowd Control: Boxing Spectatorship and Social Order in Weimar Germany"
R: Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin* (initial two chapters)

Week 11: Chaos in the Streets
Tues 12 November Urban protest space in the interwar era
Thurs 14 November From Futurism to Fascism

Readings:
Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi, *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy* (pp. 1-118)
R: Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"

Week 12: Fascist Aesthetics, War, and Reconstruction

Thurs 19 November The "Beautiful Look" of the Third Reich (and the Nazi Olympics)
Tues 21 November Reconstructing Cities, Reconstructing Nations

Readings:
R: Thomas Zeller, "'The Landscape's Crown': Landscape, Perceptions, and Modernizing Effects of the German Autobahn System, 1934 to 1941"
R: Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity After Hitler* (two initial chapters)

Week 13: Social Change in the Suburbs
Tues 26 November Immigration, *Bidonvilles*, and HLMs: suburbia in Western Europe **(SECOND PAPER DUE)**
Thurs 28 November **THANKSGIVING RECESS**

Readings:
Simone de Beauvoir, *Les Belles Images* (start)

Week 14: Urban Protest and Redefining East Germany
Tues 3 December May 1968: Social Protest in the streets
Thurs 5 December Casting Revolution in Concrete: Berlin and Communist aesthetics

Simone de Beauvoir, *Les Belles Images* (finish)

***Optional Movie Night*: PLAYTIME (1967, Jacques Tati)**

Week 15: Toward Postmodernity?
Tues 10 December Post-1989 Monuments: From La Défense to the London Eye
Thurs 12 December The Postmodern city?

Readings:
R: Brian Ladd, *Ghosts of Berlin* (selections)

FINAL EXAMINATION: 18 DECEMBER, 5 p.m.