

HUM 376-01 | SF: Biography of a City

Spring 2017 | Dr. Robert C. Thomas

Tuesday 6:10 PM – 8:55 PM Classroom: HUM 133

Office: HUM 416, Office Hour: Saturday 5:10 – 6:10 PM or via Zoom (see schedule)

E-mail: theory@sfsu.edu | Office Phone: 415-338-1154 (no voice mail)

Course Website: <http://invisiblesf.com/>

This course meets the following requirements: Upper Division UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities, SF State Studies: Environmental Sustainability, GE Segment 3.

Course Description

This course explores the unique cultural history of San Francisco, particularly with respect to modernism / modernity. (What is San Francisco Modernism?) How do we read the unique forms of human expression, such as art, architecture, music, literature, photography, film, and politics associated with the city and their relation to modern life? We will explore these and other questions by tracing our own unique history of the present of San Francisco. Rather than a simple chronological re-telling of dates, facts and major events, we will endeavor to creatively enter into the historical life of the city, thereby changing and expanding our conception of San Francisco. Close attention will be paid to major historical events and cultural locations in the life of the city, such as the gold rush, immigration, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, Chinatown, the Chinese Exclusion Act, modernity, World's Fairs, censorship and the Beat Generation, vice and sin, cinema and literature, photography and music. By the end of the semester, students should come away from the course with a greater knowledge of the cultural history of San Francisco, and, hopefully, a new experience of the city in relation to its past.

This will be a blended online course: part online and part in class. All of the online materials will be available on iLearn. There will be an additional cost of \$5.98 to watch two films online (*Vertigo* and a film noir of your own choosing).

Required Books (available at the bookstore):

- Barbara Bergland – *Making San Francisco American: Cultural Frontiers in the Urban West, 1846-1906*
- Allen Ginsberg – *Howl: Original Draft Facsimile, Transcript, and Variant Versions*
- Jessica Ellen Sewell – *Women and the Everyday City: Public Space in San Francisco, 1890-1915*
- Clare Sears – *Arresting Dress: Cross-Dressing, Law, and Fascination in Nineteenth-Century San Francisco*

Required Essays and Book Selections (will be available as PDF files at course website/iLearn, listed alphabetically):

- Borde and Chaumeton, *A Panorama of American Film Noir* (selections)
- Rachel Brahinsky – “‘Hush Puppies’ Communalist Politics and Demolition Governance: The Rise and Fall of the Black Fillmore”
- Jonathan Crary, “Modernizing Vision”
- Celesete Olalquiaga, “The Crystal Palace” from the *Artificial Kingdom*
- Nancy J. Peters – “The Beat Generation and San Francisco's Culture of Dissent”
- Mary Jean Robertson – “Reflections from Occupied Ohlone Territory”
- James R. Smith, “California Midwinter International Exposition”

- Rebecca Solnit – *Infinite City* (selections)
- Rebecca Solnit – *River of Shadows: Eadweard Muybridge and the Technological Wild West* (selections)
- John Kuo Wei T'chen – “Introduction: Tangrenbu-The Streetlife of San Francisco's Chinatown, 1895-1906” from *Gentle's Photographs of San Francisco's Old Chinatown*
- Ken Wark, [“Vectoral Cinema”](#)

Required Films (viewed in class):

- Rick Butler – *Hidden Cities of San Francisco: The Fillmore* (1999)
- Dellmer Davies – *Dark Passage* (1947)
- Felicia Lowe – *Carved in Silence* (1987)
- Felicia Lowe – *Hidden Cities of San Francisco: Chinatown* (1996)
- Arthur Dong – *Forbidden City, USA* (1989)
- Alfred Hitchcock – *Vertigo* (1958)
- Jill Nicholls, *The Weird World of Eadweard Muybridge* (2010)
- Riff and Roberts – *Ishi: The Last Yahi* (1992)
- Michael Rohde – *Madams of the Barbary Coast* (2008)
- Pam Rorke – *Hidden Cities of San Francisco: The Mission* (1994)
- Jeffrey Schon, *American Cinema: Film Noir* (1995)
- or, Gary Leva, *Film Noir: Bringing Darkness to Light* (2006)
- Stryker/Silverman – *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria* (2010)
- "Muybridge's Zoopraxiscope: Setting Time in Motion" (2010) (short)

ASSIGNMENTS

Students are responsible for completing all the assigned course work and are expected to regularly attend and participate in course discussions. Students are expected to come to class **prepared**. Prepared means that you have done the assigned reading, have thought about it, and have something relevant to say. Always bring the assigned reading material (for each particular day) to class. **Always take notes**. My lectures, comments, and rants constitute an important “text” for the course. Be aware that my style is casual and approachable—this should not detract from the seriousness of the work we do together (this style of presentation is meant to make it easier for you to grasp the material). There will be 2 “formal” papers required (following the requirements for segment III, see below). There will be a mid-term essay 5-pages in length, and a final essay 5-pages in length (typed and double spaced). There will be a handout on the essay assignments two weeks before each essay is due. (And additional information on iLearn regarding the final paper.) Each essay must contain 5-pages of formal *college level writing*. Your essays must demonstrate *mastery of the reading material and course lectures* for the assignments (your grade will be based on this). *All essays must be critical. No grade will be awarded for non-critical writing.* No papers will be accepted via e-mail. No rewrites of written work. No late papers accepted. *Plagiarism in any of the course assignments, in any form, will be dealt with harshly and will be forwarded to the Dean's Office for appropriate action.* Plagiarism on any assignment will also result in a grade of F for the assignment. (Please note that Wikipedia is NOT a critical source and cannot be used for college writing. The same is true of IMDB.) Students are responsible for all of the course content and materials even if they are absent (absences of more than

two class sessions can result in your final grade being substantially lowered). No incomplete grades will be given.

FINAL EXAM

There will be a final exam for the course. The final exam will consist of 10 questions and may cover all of the material from the course. The questions will be short answer questions. Generally, it should take no more than 20 minutes to complete the exam.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

If you are caught engaging in any non-course related activity, you will be required to leave the classroom. **No eating in class** (unless you bring enough to share with everyone). No electronic recording in the classroom. Enrollment in this course constitutes your agreement to abide by all of the above rules and policies.

SEGMENT THREE WRITING REQUIREMENT

To meet the segment III writing requirement, you will be required to write 10 pages of writing. These papers are "formal" and will be read and graded by the professor. You will be expected to argue coherently, to support your arguments with detailed examples from the works analyzed, to edit your papers for spelling, grammar punctuation and agreement, and to meet recognized standards for notes and bibliography when relevant. All of the above will be taken into account in the grading of these assignments. This course satisfies part of the General Education, Segment III requirement. Ten pages of formal critical writing, which will be graded by the professor for style and content, will be required (see below).

STATEMENT ON DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email: dprc@sfsu.edu

STATEMENT ON SEXUAL ASSAULT

SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Dean of Students. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact: The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/ Counseling and Psychological Services Center - (415) 338-2208; <http://psyservs.sfsu.edu/> For more information on your rights and available resources: <http://titleix.sfsu.edu>

STUDENT DROPS

Students who do not attend the first class meeting will be dropped. It is the students' responsibility to drop the course after the first class session. Students who stop attending but do not drop will be given a WU grade. Please be aware that a WU grade is counted as an F for GPA purposes.

GRADING

Attendance and participation: 10% | Midterm Essay: 40% | Final Essay: 40% | Final Exam: 10%

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE SPRING 2017
(Instructor Reserves the Right to Modify)

- Jan 24 We will introduce ourselves and go over the scope and aims of the course and the syllabus. Because this will be a blended course—part online instruction, part in class instruction—**YOUR ATTENDANCE AT THE INITIAL MEETING IS REQUIRED.**
- You are expected to have read the syllabus and preparatory materials on iLearn prior to this class meeting. The assignment for today's class is very short:**
- READ (PRIOR TO CLASS):** Rebecca Solnit, *Infinite City*, vii – 22
Study Questions for *Isbi: The Last Yabi* (we will go over these in class)
Film – *Isbi: The Last Yabi* (viewed in class)
- Jan 31 **THIS IS AN ONLINE DAY. DO NOT COME TO CLASS.**
Read: Solnit, *River of Shadows*, 3-24, 103-124
Watch two short documentaries:
"Muybridge's Zoopraxiscope" and *The Weird World of Eadweard Muybridge* (iLearn)
Rebecca Solnit's lecture/slide show includes readings from passages in *River of Shadows* assigned for this class. This is an **optional** viewing. (iLearn)
POST ON THE ILEARN FORUM.
- Feb 7 **THIS IS AN IN CLASS SESSION. ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED.**
River of Shadows, 127-152
Cracy, "Modernizing Vision"
(Bring previous weeks' Solnit readings to class)
- Feb 14 **THIS IS AN ONLINE DAY. DO NOT COME TO CLASS.**
Watch *Madams of the Barbary Coast* (iLearn)
Read: *Making San Francisco American*, ix – 57
POST ON THE ILEARN FORUM.
- Feb 21 **THIS IS AN IN CLASS SESSION. ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED.**
Midterm Paper Prompt Handed Out In Class
Read: *Making San Francisco American*, 58 – 94
Read: Olalquiaga – "The Crystal Palace"
Film – *Sutro's: The Palace at Lands End*
- Feb 28 **THIS IS AN ONLINE DAY. DO NOT COME TO CLASS.**
Watch *Hidden Cities of SF: Chinatown* and *Carved in Silence* (iLearn)
Read: John Kuo Wei Tchen – "Introduction: Tangrenbu: The Street Life of San Francisco's Chinatown, 1895-1906"
POST ON THE ILEARN FORUM.
- Mar 7 **THIS IS AN IN CLASS SESSION. ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED.**
Making San Francisco American, 95 – 136
- Mar 14 **THIS IS AN IN CLASS SESSION. ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED.**
Film – *The Fantastic Fair*

Making San Francisco American, 171 – 217, 218-226
James R. Smith, “California Midwinter International Exposition”

- Mar 21 **SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**
- Mar 28 **THIS IS AN ONLINE DAY. DO NOT COME TO CLASS.**
MIDTERM PAPER DUE VIA TURNITIN.
Study Questions on *Vertigo* (iLearn)
Watch Instructor video into to *Vertigo* (iLearn)
Watch *Vertigo* (watch online or at home). There is a 2.99 charge to watch on YouTube.
AFTER WATCHING *VERTIGO*, watch “How Alfred Hitchcock Blocks a Scene” and an excerpt from *The Perverts Guide to Cinema* (Slavoj Zizek on *Vertigo*)
Save your questions on Vertigo for next weeks’ class session
Ken Wark “Vectoral Cinema” (optional)
<http://www.sensesofcinema.com/2000/6/vectoral/>
- Apr 4 **THIS IS AN IN CLASS SESSION. ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED.**
Women and the Everyday City xi-23, 127-172.
- Apr 11 **THIS IS AN IN CLASS SESSION. ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED.**
Read *Arresting Dress*, 1-60
Film – *Screaming Queens*
- Apr 18 **THIS IS AN ONLINE DAY. DO NOT COME TO CLASS.**
Read: *Panorama of American Film Noir* vi-13
Study Questions on Film Noir
Short instructor video on film noir (iLearn)
Watch either:
PBS American Cinema: Film Noir (Recommended) (iLearn)
Or, *Film Noir: Bringing Light to Darkness* (2006) (iLearn)
Take notes for future reference.
Consult iLearn for additional instructions.
POST ON THE ILEARN FORUM.
- Apr 25 **THIS IS AN ONLINE DAY. DO NOT COME TO CLASS.**
Film: Choose a San Francisco film noir of your own choosing and watch online or at home. There may be a 2.99 charge to do so. The course website has 16 film noirs posted to it at <http://www.invisiblesf.com/2016/12/30/san-francisco-noir/>
The iLearn page also has a list of noirs to choose from.
Consult iLearn for additional instructions.
- May 2 **Final Paper Prompt Handed Out**
THIS IS AN ONLINE DAY. DO NOT COME TO CLASS.
Read: Ginsburg – *Howl* (look up significant meanings of sections you are drawn to in preparation for class)
Nancy J. Peters, “The Beat Generation and San Francisco’s Culture of Dissent” in 199-216
POST ON THE ILEARN FORUM
FINAL PAPER PROMPT WILL BE POSTED ON ILEARN.

- May 9 **THIS IS AN IN CLASS SESSION. ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED.**
Film – *Hidden Cities of SF: The Filmore*
Read: *Infinite City*, 37–44, 57–73
Rachel Brahinsky, “Hush Puppies’ Communalist Politics and Demolition
Governance”
- May 16 **THIS IS AN IN CLASS SESSION. ATTENDANCE IS REQUIRED.**
Film – *Forbidden City, USA*
Final course discussion
FINAL EXAM
Last 20 Minutes of Class
- May 23 **FINAL PAPER DUE VIA TURNITIN**