“People are … aroused by pictures and sculptures; they break pictures and sculptures; they mutilate them, kiss them, cry before them, and go on journey’s to them; they are calmed by them, stirred by them, and incited to revolt. They give thanks by means of them, and are moved to the highest levels of empathy and fear.


This seminar explores the production and consumption of global visual cultural images and “ways of seeing.” How do some images (but not others) captivate our attention and enter our hearts and minds? How do visual images influence our imagination of others and ourselves? How do visual technologies influence the ways we practice science, politics, sex, war, gender, ethics, religion, economics, and love? In what ways do visual images shape our desires and fears, what (or who) we are attracted to or repulsed by? How do images influence the ways we dress, eat, stand, walk, work, play, give birth, speak with God, or grow old at specific moments in history? Why is it that some images fascinate us, while others put us to sleep? How do visual images affect our habits and fantasies, beliefs and doubts, pleasures and anxieties? How do images affect what we imagine to be possible or not possible?

Visual cultural images are today everywhere entangled within a pulsating web of global electronic flows of information. Some of these enchant us. Others make us close our eyes. Most images capture our attention in ways that are gendered, racialized territorialized, militarized, and class-driven. Many are also hooked-up to high-tech machineries of global warfare, surveillance, and the corporate marketplace. Power-saturated images promise profit, control, and strategic advantage. Other images (or other ways of practicing vision) invite more prayerful pathways into what is sacred.

How might the power of visual images be understood from a sociological perspective committed to the pursuit of social justice? How, moreover, might unjust and damaging visual images be subverted, transformed, or remade in more equitable, mutually empowering, and life affirming ways? In exploring questions such as these, the seminar encourages participants to engage in reflexive way with the making and remaking of visual images in a social context.

As resources for engaging critically with the complex contours of contemporary visual culture, the seminar also introduces participants to a variety of artful “power-reflexive” styles of both sociology and visual cultural practices. These include Dadaist, constructivist, surrealist, feminist, Marxist, social psychoanalytic, Situationist, queer, postcolonial, radical multicultural and anti-racist, anti-systemic and other critical approaches to the construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of images.
Topics and Readings.

1. Sept. 2\textsuperscript{nd} \textit{Introduction}.

2. Sept. 9\textsuperscript{th} \textit{Ways of Seeing}.

3. Sept. 16\textsuperscript{th} \textit{Dreaming Images: Seeing Symptoms: Visual Culture}.

4. Sept. 23\textsuperscript{rd} \textit{Picture it: I See/He Flies/She Questions!}

5. Sept. 30\textsuperscript{th} \textit{The Magical Ad and the Mesmerized Ego: Consumer Culture}.


6. Oct. 6th  **Window on the World: Finger on the Screen.**


7. Oct. 13th  **Aestheticizing Bodily Relations: Eating the Other.**


8. Oct. 20th  **Panoptic Modernity, Mechanical Reproduction, Simulation.**


9. October 28th  
**History in Ruins and Bodies in Ads.**


10. Nov. 4th  
**The Abandoned Body and its Eroticized Return.**


11. Nov. 11th  
**Dreamworld and Spectacle.**


12. Nov. 18th  **Seeing Otherness: Decolonizing the Eye/"I" Want To Burn.**


13. Nov. 25th  **Reframing the Photographic Eye/I of White Northwestern “Man.”**


14. Dec. 2nd  **Methods of the Marvelous: The Subversions of Surrealism**


   [The class will also visit the *Wifredo Lam: Imagining New Worlds* exhibit at Boston College’s McMullen Museum.]

15. Dec. 9th  **Re-dreaming Images, Remaking Power**


**Course Requirements.**

1. **Active preparation for and participation in seminar discussion.** While there are various styles of active seminar participation, all participants enrolled for credit must, with at least one fellow student, share responsibility for opening and leading class discussion of assigned texts during two meetings of the seminar. (10%)

2. **Construction of semester-long JOURNAL-ART-NOTEBOOK.** Journal-art-notebooks involve written and visual meditations and short essays on specific course materials, readings, themes, and discussions. Journal-art-notebooks should also include analytic applications of course materials to found images and everyday (sociological) sightings. Journal entries are to be typed (or handwritten neatly) and journal-art-notebooks must include a minimum of eight 2-3 page entries over the course of the semester. Journals will be reviewed twice during the semester. Journals are due for review on October 28th and again no later than noon on December 20th. (60%)

3. **MIXED MEDIA ANALYSIS OF VISUAL CULTURE.** This project involves critical inquiry into the use of images in contemporary social life. Participants are asked to sociologically explore aspects of images and power involving a specific visual cultural event, event series, object, social technology or social practice. Final project is to include both written text (approximately 15-20 pages) and 15-20 minute multi-media presentation at class performance session(s) to be scheduled near end of semester. One page statement of proposed projects are due on October 14th. Proposals should include brief statement of visual cultural topic to be studied, methods to be used, and likely form of mixed-media presentation or performance. Students are invited to collaborate on these ethnographic projects. Written components of this project are due no later than noon on December 20th. (30%)