



### **cultural violence: reading violence in the 20th century**

What is violence? We have come to understand violence in its most physical forms, yet there are many underlying and synchronous spaces of violence that often lead to or reinforce physical violence. Moreover, there are constructs of violence that are not often regarded as “violent” *per se*, such as “cultural violence”: political resistance, political and economic domination, hate speech, tendentious art, “bad” art, body surgery, and disease. This course will focus upon the rhetoric of linguistic, religious, economic, political, and physical violence through studying various paradigms of “aggression” throughout the 20th century. Through narrative, print media, art, fashion, video, and film, we will examine various forms of violence such as: hate speech in the United States, Muslim veiling practices in Islam, political repression in Latin America, racial violence in the United States, corporeal violence of AIDS, political repression in the America, and film noir violence. In conjunction with these foci, we will also read various essays on violence as proposed by various philosophers and social theorists.

#### **course requirements**

**class participation and preparation:** You need to be prepared for class by completing all of the readings and viewings scheduled for each meeting. As well, you are expected to share your ideas and critiques with the class through the many discussions which depend upon your interpretation and dialogue.

**oral presentations:** During the semester you are expected to give a 10–15 minute oral presentation on violence related to the theme of violence relevant to that session. This presentation should take a look at art, architecture, or design as related to the focus of violence bringing into focus theoretical questions associated

**position essays:** Each week during the semester, you are required to write a one to two page essay in response to the material listed for that session. This will serve as an exercise for you to contemplate and articulate in writing your individual interpretations of the material at hand. It is important to note that these essays are *not* reviews of the entire readings and viewings, but are concise arguments that set out to specifically analyze and critique certain concepts, discourses, or methods of somatic representation.

**research papers:** You are required to complete a research paper of eight to ten pages in length observing MLA standards. For this paper, you are to critically investigate a theme of body and representation in the contemporary setting of the media using secondary sources to develop your argument. Although you may choose your topic, you are required to hand in a one page typed proposal by 30 October after which we may then individually discuss your proposed work during my office hours. The final paper is due no later than 18 December.

**office hours:** I have office hours on Thursdays from 7:45 through 9:45 p.m. This is time for you to discuss your work individually. Try to come by my office hours twice during the semester. If, for any reason, you cannot come to see me during my office hours, please talk to me after class and I will gladly set aside a time which is more convenient for you. You may also contact me by e-mail at: [vigoj@is3.nyu.edu](mailto:vigoj@is3.nyu.edu)

#### **evaluation**

Class participation, preparation, and attendance	30%
Position Essays	30%
Research Paper	40%

## fall 1997 class schedule

### 4 september: introduction

#### geopolitical violence

#### 11 september: violences of discipline

*Procedure 769: The Witnesses to an Execution.* (1995, 85 min) Dir. Jaap van Hoewijk.

*Zero de conduite.* (1933, 50 min) Dir. Jean Vigo.  
Foucault, Michel. "The Spectacle of the Scaffold."

#### 18 september: terrorism/terrorized: guerilla warfare & resistance

*Up to the South.* (1993, 60 min) Dir. Jayce Salloum and Walid Ra'ad.

*La boca del lobo.* (1990, 111 min) Dir. Francisco J. Lombardi.  
Herman, Edward S. "Terrorism: Misrepresentations of Power".

#### 25 september: colonial violences & responses

*Battle of Algiers.* (1967, 122 min) Dir. Gillo Pontecorvo.

*Trobriand Cricket: An Ingenious Response to Colonialism.* (1976, 54 min) Dir. Jerry Leach

Fanon, Frantz. "Concerning Violence."

#### 2 october: memories of violence

*L.A. is Burning: Five Reports from a Divided City.* (1993, 87 min) Dir. Karyn J. Taylor.

*Las madres de plaza de mayo.* (1986, 64 min) Dir. Lourdes Portillo & Susana Muñoz.

Menchu, Rigoberta. Selections from *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala.*

#### violence as a discourse

#### 9 october: art violence

*Karen Finley.* (1989) Dir. Tom Jaremba.

*Cindy Sherman.* (1981, 10 min) Dir. Michael Owen and Carole Ann Klonarides.  
Bersani, Leo. "Narrativity and Violence."

#### 16 october: in "bad taste": violent aesthetics in fashion and architecture

*Dressed to Kill.* (1980, 105 min) Dir. Brian DePalma.

Venturi, Robert, et al. "Ugly and Ordinary Architecture, or the Decorated Shed."  
Gronow, Jukka.

#### 23 october: film noir violence & woman as symptom

*Kiss Me Deadly.* (1955, 106 min) Dir. Robert Aldrich.

*Ensayo de un crimen.* (1955, 87 min) Dir. Luis Bunuel.

*Laura.* (1944, 88 min) Dir. Otto Preminger.

#### 30 october: violence in the media

*The Killing Screens.* (1994, 41 min) Dir. Sut Jhally

*Operation Storm in the Media.* (1991, 31 min) Dir. Judy Ferguson, et al.  
Schlesinger, Philip. "The Interpretation of Violence."

#### 6 november: ethnographic violence

*The Ax Fight.* (1975, 30 min) Dir. Timothy Asch.

Daniel, E. Valentine. "Violent Measures, Measured Violence."

Keesing, Roger M. "Murder on Mount Austen: Kwaio Framing of an Act of Violence."

#### somatic violence

#### 13 november: violences of aids

*The Living End.* (1992, 85 min) Dir. Gregg Araki.

*Silver Lake Life: The View from Here.* (1994, 99 min) Dir. Tom Joslin and Peter Friedman.

Wojnarowicz, David. "Postcards from America."

#### 20 november: violated bodies, cultural vicissitudes

*Warrior Marks.* (1993, 54 min) Dir. Pratibha Parmar.

Ahmed, Leila. "Discourse of the Veil."

Davis, Kathy. "The Rise of the Surgical Fix."

#### 4 december: hate speech, hate acts

*Blood in the Face.* (1991, 78 min) Dir. Anne Bohlen, Kevin Rafferty, & James Ridgeway.

Butler, Judith P. "Burning Acts, Injurious Speech."  
Austin, J.L.

#### 11 december: libidinal violence, dangerous desires

*Salo: The 120 Days of Sodom.* (1975, 115 min) Dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini.

*The Night Porter.* (1974, 117 min) Dir. Liliana Cavani.  
Deleuze, Gilles. Selections from *Coldness and Cruelty*

### required texts

(These articles are available for Purchase at East Side Copy, 15 East 13th Street)

- Ahmed, Leila. "Discourse of the Veil." *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Austin, J.L. *How to Do Things With Words*. Eds. J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962.
- Bersani, Leo. "Narrativity and Violence." *The Forms of Violence: Narrative in Assyrian Art and Modern Culture*. New York: Schocken Books, 1985.
- Butler, Judith P. "Burning Acts, Injurious Speech." *Excitable Speech: A Politics of Performance*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Daniel, E. Valentine. "Violent Measures, Measured Violence." *Charred Lullabies: Chapters in an Anthropology of Violence*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Davis, Kathy. "The Rise of the Surgical Fix." *The Dilemma of Cosmetic Surgery*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Deleuze, Gilles. Selections from *Coldness and Cruelty*. New York: Zone Books, 1991.
- Fanon, Frantz. "Concerning Violence." *Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1963.
- Foucault, Michel. "The Spectacle of the Scaffold." *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977.
- Gronow, Jukka. *The Sociology of Taste*. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Herman, Edward S. "Terrorism: Misrepresentations of Power". *Violent Persuasions: The Politics and Imagery of Terrorism*. Ed. David J. Brown and Robert Merrill. Seattle: Bay Press, 1993.
- Keesing, Roger M. "Murder on Mount Austen: Kwaio Framing of an Act of Violence." *Beyond Textuality: Asceticism and Violence in Anthropological Interpretation*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1995.
- Menchu, Rigoberta. Selections from *I, Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. Ed. and Intro. Elisabeth Burgos-Debray. Trans. Ann Wright. London: Verso, 1984.
- Schlesinger, Philip. "The Interpretation of Violence." *Media, State and Nation: Political Violence and Collective Identities*. London: Sage Publications, 1991.
- Venturi, Robert, Denise Scott Brown, and Steven Izenour. "Ugly and Ordinary Architecture, or the Decorated Shed." *Learning from Las Vegas*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988.
- Wojnarowicz, David. "Postcards from America." *Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration*. New York: Vintage Books, 1991.

### required screenings

(To be viewed at the Avery Fisher Center, 2nd floor of Bobst Library, NYU)

- The Ax Fight*. (1975, 30 min) Dir. Timothy Asch. VCA 2281
- Battle of Algiers*. (1967, 122 min) Dir. Gillo Pontecorvo. VCA 4659
- Blood in the Face*. (1991, 78 min) Dir. Anne Bohlen, Kevin Rafferty, & James Ridgeway. VCA 2415
- La boca del lobo*. (1990, 111 min) Dir. Francisco J. Lombardi. VCA 3197
- Cindy Sherman*. (1981, 10 min) Dir. Michael Owen and Carole Ann Klonarides. VCA 3529
- Dressed to Kill*. (1980, 105 min) Dir. Brian DePalma.
- Ensayo de un crimen*. (1955, 87 min) Dir. Luis Bunuel. VCA 2063
- Karen Finley*. (1989) Dir. Tom Jaremba. VCA 3673
- The Killing Screens*. (1994, 41 min) Dir. Sut Jhally. VCA 5961
- Kiss Me Deadly*. (1955, 106 min) Dir. Robert Aldrich. VCA 5250
- Laura*. (1944, 88 min) Dir. Otto Preminger. VLD 110
- L.A. is Burning: Five Reports from a Divided City*. (1993, 87 min) Dir. Karyn J. Taylor. VCA 3979
- The Living End*. (1992, 85 min) Dir. Gregg Araki. TBA
- Las madres de plaza de mayo*. (1986, 64 min) Dir. Lourdes Portillo & Susana Muñoz. VCA 2889
- The Night Porter*. (1974, 117 min) Dir. Liliana Cavani. VCA 4757
- One Survivor Remembers*. (1995, 39 min) Dir. Kary Antholis. VCA 6119
- Operation Storm in the Media: Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting..* (1991, 31 min) Dir. Judy Ferguson, Jessica Glass, et al. VCA 3042
- Procedure 769: The Witnesses to an Execution*. (1995, 85 min) Dir. Jaap van Hoewijk. VCA 6177
- Silver Lake Life: The View from Here*. (1994, 99 min) Dir. Tom Joslin and Peter Friedman. VCA 5711
- Trobriand Cricket: An Ingenious Response to Colonialism*. (1976, 54 min) Dir. Jerry Leach. VCA 1448
- Up to the South*. (1993, 60 min) Dir. Jayce Salloum and Walid Ra'ad. VCA 3909
- Warrior Marks*. (1993, 54 min) Dir. Pratibha Parmar. VCA 4101
- Zero de conduite*. (1933, 50 min) Dir. Jean Vigo. VCA 4326