

## **Mobility, Migrations and the Crisis of New Technologies - 1750-1870**

### **ARTH 539**

Instructor: Maureen Ryan

Fall 2004

### **Description**

This seminar addresses the ways in which historical and theoretical research over the past decade and a half has taken up the legacies of colonialism and of ongoing globalisation, by bringing migration, nomadism, and displacement to the fore. Such research has blasted away at analyses that have ended up asserting representations of social and political communities and institutions in ways that stress the stable, the permanent and the hierarchical. The topic of the present seminar will allow us to investigate the import of these issues in relation to visual culture of the 18th and 19th centuries. How does thinking about the constant transformation and mobility of peoples, things and communities—between urban and rural, between metropole and colony, and between and across international borders, affect the ways we approach the historical past? What are the impacts of new technologies that transform the way the local and the global are visualized and represented. And how do new ways of seeing, and new media forms affect these developments?

Over the term of this seminar, course readings, class discussion, presentations by visiting scholars, and an individual research topic will provide an opportunity to examine the complex ways in which various categories of visual culture operate in relation to mobile viewers, new technologies and shifting relations of global exchange. It should be noted that the focus of the seminar will not be on one particular region or national entity (for example France or England, or the Americas), nor on one particular medium or form of visual culture. Rather course readings have been designed to explore theoretical and methodical questions that need to be raised when considering how different forms of the visual media (high art or popular art forms), processions or spectacle, or the built or imagined environment, work in relation to the circulation and consumption of meanings.

Individual term research projects could range from inquiries into particular visual media and technologies in relation to the movement, exile or transportation of populations through time and across space, exchanges of capital and labour, or the circulation of ideas and technologies (for example, the transformations and migrations of science or medicine as exemplified in the plates of Diderot's and d'Alembert's Encycolpedia). Projects could also consider the roles of gender, sexuality, class and 'race' in the displacements and reconfigurations attending architectural and urban spaces or in forms of public spectacle or private ritual. These topics will allow the theoretical and methodological problems raised in readings and in class discussions, to be worked out in relation to particular historical and visual problems. The research projects will be developed over the course of the term and will presented in an oral seminar in the last weeks of class, and further developed into a written research paper of 18-25 pages to be handed in at the end of the term.

### **Course Requirements**

In Class discussions of readings: 25%

Seminar Presentations: 15%

Research Paper: 60%