

Cynthia Vialle-Giancotti
Appearances, Illusion, Spectacle and Vision

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Instructor: Cynthia Laura Vialle-Giancotti

Pronouns: She, her, hers

Room:

Day and Time:

Office Hours: TBD

Course Description:

Have you ever wondered what would life be like if everything around you were deceptive, misleading and illusory? Welcome to the world of Baroque appearances.

In this class we will explore the multiple facets of appearances, understood in their literal sense as “physical appearance” (looks, clothing, make-up) and in their figurative sense as “illusion”, but also as lure and enchantment. From the spectacle of theatre and painting to the spectacle of the body (the king’s in particular), we’ll move to the problem of appearances, or to what the moralists deemed as a necessary evil to survive courtly society without killing one another. In this world, you’ll find manuals teaching you how to read the body, find every cue and distinguish friend from foe, but beware: in the end only a tricky devil can save you from the artifices of society. We’ll conclude the class with a return to reality and the origins of scientific vision.

Calendar

Spectacle and Illusion

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Representing the Spectacle

Diego Velazquez (1599-1660), *Las Meninas* (1656)

Jan Brueghel the Younger (1601-1678), *Allegory of Sight* (1660)

Rembrandt (1606-1669), *The artist in his studio* (1629)

Svetlana Alpers (1936-), *The art of describing* (1983) (Selections)

Week 3: The Spectacle within the Spectacle

Pierre Corneille (1606-1684), *L’illusion comique* (1636)

Gillet de la Tessonerie (1620-1660), *Le triomphe des cinq passions* (1640)

Emmanuelle Hénin « Théâtre dans le théâtre et tableau dans le tableau » (2006)

*Guy Spielmann, “Pour une théorie d’ensemble des spectacles de l’Âge Classique » (2006)

Week 4: The King as Spectacle

Jean de La Fontaine (1621-1695), *Le Songe de Vaux* (1671), *Les amours de Psyché et de Cupidon* (1669)

Mitchell Greenberg, *Baroque Bodies* (2001) (Selections)

*Martial Poirson, *Politique de la représentation : littérature, spectacle, discours de Savoir*, (2014) (Selections)

*Aurélia Gaillard, « Le conte et ses machines : pour une esthétique de l’effet merveilleux » (2011)

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Week 5: Pièces à Machines & Illusion

Thomas Corneille (1625-1709) & Jean Donneau de Visé (1638-1710), *La Devineresse* (1679)

Gaël Le Chevalier, *La pratique du spectateur, la médiation des regards dans le théâtre de Thomas Corneille* (2017)

Appearances

Week 6: A Culture of Appearances

Madeleine de Scudéry (1607-1701), *Clélie, histoire romaine* (1654-60), (Selections)

Charles Sorel (1602-1674), *Île de portraiture* (1659) (Selections)

Jean Rohou, « Entre enracinement et engagement : Crise du sens et de l'être et culte du paraître » (2006)

*Daniel Roche, *La culture des apparences : une histoire du vêtement (XVII^e-XVIII^e Siècle)* (1989)

Week 7 : The Art of Reading Appearances

Marin Cureau de la Chambre (1594-1669), *L'art de connoistre les hommes* vol.1 (1659), (Selections)

Charles Le Brun (1619-1690), *Conférence sur les passions, sur la physiognomie* (1647)

*Line Cottegnies, "Codifying the Passions in the Classical Age: a few reflections on Charles Le Brun's scheme and its influence in France and in England" (2002)

Week 8: Appearances and Faux-Semblants

Molière (1622-1673), *Le Tartuffe* (1664)

Constance Cagnat Debœuf, « 'Les Parures du diable' : Les Marques de l'hypocrisie dans Tartuffe » (2016)

Week 9 : The Social Game of Appearances

François de la Rochefoucauld (1613-1680), *Réflexions ou sentences et maximes morales* (1665)

Oskar Roth, « Optique et jugement chez La Rochefoucauld » (2005)

*Louis Van Delft, « L'optique des moralistes : perspective cavalière » (2005)

Vision

Week 10 : Morality as a Form of Discernment

La Bruyère (1645-1696), *Les Caractères* (1688-1694) (Selections)

Emmanuel Bury, « L'optique de La Bruyère » (2005)

*Éric Tourrette, *Les formes brèves de la description morale* (2008) « Le Discernement à l'œuvre » (p.129-158)

Week 11 : Diabolical Vision

Alain-René Le Sage (1668-1747), *Le diable boîteux* (1707) (Selections)

Christelle Bahier-Porte, « L'optique d'un diable moraliste : *Le diable boîteux* de Lesage » (2005)

Week 12: Scientific Vision

Ofer Gal & Chen-Morris, *Baroque Science* (2013) "Passions, Imagination, and the Persona of the New Savant", (p. 233-281)

Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *La folie du voir* (1986) [*The Madness of vision: on Baroque Esthetics* (2013)], "The stage of Vision", "The Work of the Gaze"

Week 13

Conclusion and Poster Presentations

Legend : the * indicates an optional reading, that can be used as a presentation topic.

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Further Reading Suggestions

Wagner, Marie-France, and Brun-Gouanvic C. Le. *Les Arts Du Spectacle Au Théâtre (1550-1700)*. Paris: H. Champion, 2001. Print

Mazouer, Charles. *Le Théâtre Français De L'âge Classique: I-II-III*. Paris: Champion, 2006. Print

Dubois, Claude-Gilbert. *Le Baroque: Profondeurs De L'apparence*. Talence, France: Presses universitaires de Bordeaux, 1993. Print

Romagnino, Roberto. *Décrire Dans Le Roman De L'âge Baroque (1585-1660): Formes Et Enjeux De L'ecphrasis*. Honoré Champion, 2019. Print

Lafond, Jean. *L'homme Et Son Image: Morales Et Littérature De Montaigne A Mandeville*. Paris: H. Champion, 1996. Print.

Course Objectives and Learning Goals

By the end of this course, you will:

Language

- Strengthen your ability to express yourself orally in French;
- Develop your discussion skills in an academic setting in French;
- Strengthen your French academic writing;

Literary and cultural analysis

- Strengthen your ability to analyse both fictional and critical texts in their social and historical contexts;
- Research a social and historical phenomenon, using a variety of resources from different fields;
- Approach a century in a comprehensive way: considering its multiple social, political, cultural and scientific dimensions;
- Strengthen your skills to develop and present your interpretations both of fiction and social change, both orally and in writing, individually and in a group;

Evaluations

3 Units

- **Short Oral Presentation (35% of the Grade)**, on assigned topic to kick off discussion.
- **One Page Paper (30% of the Grade)**, six in total, in French.
- **Poster Presentation (35% of the Grade)**, in groups of 2, 3 or 4

4 Units

- **Short Oral Presentation (25% of the Grade)**, on assigned topic to kick off discussion.
- **One Page Paper (20% of the Grade)**, six in total, in French.
- **Poster Presentation (25% of the Grade)**, in groups of 2, 3 or 4.
- **Final Paper or Final Quiz (30% of the Grade)**, 10-15 pages in French // 5 essay questions.

5 Units

- **Short Oral Presentation (25% of the Grade)**, on assigned topic to kick off discussion.
- **One Page Paper (20% of the Grade)**, four in total, in French.
- **Poster Presentation (20% of the Grade)**, in groups of 2, 3 or 4.
- **Final Paper or Final Quiz (35% of the Grade)**, 15-20 pages in French // 6 essay questions.

Details on the Evaluation Format

- 1. Class Participation:** reading the assigned materials, participating actively in the class discussions;
- 2. Short Oral Presentation:** 15min max presentation on an assigned topic, decided together with the instructor, to kick off class discussion. The text preceded by an asterisk are optional readings that you can pick to use for your presentation. Presentation Suggestions:
 - 1) Paraphrase the text (summarize it and describe its logical sequence/narrative structure). Or present an overview of the issue at hand, when the presentation is about background information.
 - 2) Present the two or three passages you find most relevant, and analyze them. If you are not presenting about readings on the syllabus, bring mini-excerpts from relevant written material.
 - 3) Suggest insightful questions for our class discussion.

Make your presentation a lively one, with or without props such as Powerpoint, handouts, etc.

3. One Page Paper: written in French, (3-500 word count). The content should be pertinent to the week's readings: you can expand on a theme presented in a text, contest an author's/critic's perspective and/or representation, compare different texts, etc. You will have to submit six throughout the quarter, it is up to you when you'll do so. **Advanced possibility: find a critical text in French on the week's assigned reading and comment it in your paper. (+5% bonus grade each time).**

4. Poster Presentation: Students get together in groups of 2, 3 or 4 and present one theme or object priorly agreed with the instructor. Prepare a poster presentation (Paper format // digital format) and be ready to walk your classmates and instructors through your poster. The poster should explain the object and how it relates to one of the themes discussed in class. Examples may be clothing, the body in all its forms, paintings, glasses, representations of the king, *pièces à machine*, fairy-tales, etc. Feel free to be as creative as you want. Visual prompts are strongly encouraged.

5. Final Research Paper: Length of the paper will depend on the number of Units. You will expand on a theme or a work explored in class, analyse it critically by using the appropriate concepts and vocabulary learnt in class. The topic is to be discussed in advance with the instructor. Quote at least one French source.

OR Final Quiz: You will pick 5/6 essay questions out of the 10 proposed and answer with 4-600 words to each one of them. The questions will be announced on the last day of class and you will have one week of time to submit them. Spelling accuracy, good grammar, good structure and syntax are fundamental, considering the allotted time. (in French)

Affordability and Inclusion

Since I believe in the importance of free education, I am committed to making this class financially accessible to all students, therefore: **all of the material for the class will be available on Canvas, you are not expected to buy anything.** You are, on the other hand, expected to read all the material **in French** and for this you will be able to find the readings in the respective week-folders on Canvas.

It is important that there be an atmosphere of trust and safety in the classroom. We will work on fostering an environment in which everyone feels safe to speak and is open to listening to what the other has to say.

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Students with Documented Disabilities

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request, review appropriate medical documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty. The letter will indicate how long it is to be in effect. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. Students should also send your accommodation letter to instructors as soon as possible. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: <http://oae.stanford.edu>).

The Honor Code

The Honor Code is the University's statement on academic integrity written by students in 1921. It articulates University expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work. Examples of conduct that have been regarded as being in violation of the Honor Code (and are most relevant for this course) include copying from another student's exam paper or allowing another student to copy from one's own paper; unpermitted collaboration; plagiarism*; revising and resubmitting a quiz or exam for regrading, without the instructor's knowledge and consent; representing as one's own work the work of another; using another student's clicker or mastering physics account; and giving or receiving aid on an academic assignment under circumstances in which a reasonable person should have known that such aid was not permitted.

See <http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/communitystandards/policy/honor-code>