I/EYEGASM

Mutations of the Broadcasted Self in the Chaotic Digital Age of Sex and Race

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Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays,
before class at The Loft, 11:30am to 12:40pm

“I couldn’t decide whether I was writing the characters, or whether the characters were writing me, or whether we were all one and the same.”

--David Bowie, musing on the last night he performed as Ziggy Stardust with the Spiders from Mars

Your UCSD course catalogue refers to this class as “Public Rhetoric and Practical Communication” and, indeed, we will, in the course of the Fall quarter, explore the spheres of rhetoric, communication, and—brace for it—the joys of “writing a resume.” But we will also be embarked on other, related perhaps more profound missions!

Together, we will explore the following questions: What is “self” and what goes into its manufacture? In order to answer those questions (and to keep our adventure timely and of value for undergraduates from across the disciplines) we will be grappling with contemporary debates that impact on our construction and “branding” of our self in worlds analog and digital. Other questions we will work with this semester include: What is a memoir? What is a self-portrait? Why does it feel so good to have our pictures liked by unseen entities, the digitized shadows of others, connected to us by the bizarre electronic network that is the internet? What is the relationship of our Facebook page to our Self? Are living through a paradigm shift?—a watershed epoch where something as basic as the “I” is totally being rewritten by our obsession with digitized eyes!
In our class I will speak of hygiene’s cousin, “Eyegiene,” and of something I call “I/EYGegasm”—where the addictive *hedonizing* pleasure of the visually digitized world evolves into the virtual equivalent of crystal meth. I/EYGegasm is a made-up word, a neologism, that attempts to speak to our common experiences with mass media today—is it possible that the mesh of our minds with technology, our daily ritual of touching/seeing screens (computer screens, smartphone screens, television screens) comes to infect/dominant our lives? Eyes wide open, so to speak, these screens become electric, naked mirrors, concealing nothing, revealing all.

The various works we encounter this term will teach us to rethink, rewrite, and reimagine what it is we call to consciousness when we picture the contours of the human mind—in the process, we will learn to tell stories of ourselves, share representations of ourselves that just might move someone else (and get you a job, career, future!).

During the semester we will hang out with a wide-ranging and eclectic group of characters including Banksy, the epic #streetart maven cum moviemaker with *Exit Through the Gift Shop*; Frida Kahlo, who basically rewrites the notion of the self-portrait in oil painting and beyond; Nathanael West, American novelist and arch satirist cynic whose *Miss Lonelyhearts* will singe your existential synapses; and Dan Clowes, infamous graphic narrative guru whose *Ghost World* redefines notions of being for a 21st century audience—also making cameos? Marshall McLuhan, Siggy Freud, John Berger, and LA Playwright Oliver Mayer.

{Please note that you must have the old school PRINT version of the books for our class as electronic versions are to be avoided.}

### Sections/Teaching Assistants

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### Required Books:

1. *The Medium is the Massage* 9th Edition by Marshall McLuhan (Author), Quentin Fiore (Author), Shepard Fairey (Illustrator)
   Publisher: Gingko Press; 9th edition (August 1, 2001)
   ISBN-10: 1584230703

2. *Freud for Beginners* Paperback –by Richard Appignanesi (Author), Oscar Zarate
   Publisher: Pantheon (July 15, 2003)
3. Ways of Seeing: Based on the BBC Television Series Paperback – by John Berger (Author)
Publisher: Penguin Books; Reprint edition (December 1, 1990)
ISBN-10: 0140135154

4. Kahlo by Andrea Kettenmann (Author)
Publisher: Taschen (September 1, 2015)
ISBN-10: 383650085X

5. Ghost World – by Daniel Clowes (Author)
Publisher: Fantagraphics (April 1, 2001)
ISBN-10: 1560974273

6. Miss Lonelyhearts Paperback – by Nathanael West (Author), Harold Bloom (Introduction)
Publisher: New Directions; Reprint edition (July 17, 2013)
ISBN-10: 0811220931

The Hurt Business: Oliver Mayer's Early Works [+ PLUS Paperback –
by Oliver Mayer, William Nericcio, Editor
Publisher: Hyperbole Books, San Diego State University Press; 1st edition
ISBN-10: 1879691841