IDEA OF COURSE:

A primary goal of CAT I was to cultivate your awareness that we are all swimming in the medium we call “culture,” a medium that shapes, whether or not we realize it, what we think and believe, and how we behave. The purpose in CAT II is to explore in greater depth one particular culture. In this CAT track we will explore the artistic cultures associated with the word “modernism.” Fundamental to our task will be to seek a clear and useful conception of what we mean by “Modernism,” and its various cognates such as “modernization,” “modernity,” and, naturally, “modern.” An unhelpful starting point would be to define “modern” as “the way we live now”; this, of course, only begs the questions we will be trying to answer: How do we live now? What are the significant qualities or characteristics of modern life? Are our arts and technologies adequate for our needs? Under the conditions of modernity—or, if you prefer, “late”—modernity—what indeed are our needs, as individuals and as a species?

“Modernism” refers to artistic responses to modernity; modernity refers to the cultural response to modernization; modernization refers to many, many things. Among the many forces associated with modernization, three, arguably, have been fundamental in shaping modern culture (i.e., “modernity”): first, the technological and economic transformations arising from the on-going industrial “revolutions” of the last several centuries; second, the unremitting sequence of challenges to traditional explanations of the universe and of “man’s place in nature,” challenges
arising from the work of, among others, Copernicus, Darwin, Freud, Heisenberg, and Hubble; third, dramatic demographic changes, most conspicuously, exponential increases in the human population and the concentration of people into cities. While a bold over-simplification, one might understand the first two forces in terms of the third: our urbanized “mass” culture, with its energetic regularities and institutions largely indifferent to the spiritual demands of the individual, may be looked upon as the ultimate manifestation of the rationalization (in Max Weber's sense of behavior directed toward a specific goal) of mechanized modes of production and consumption we associate with the Industrial Revolution, on the one hand, and, on the other, the evident occlusion of belief systems that have traditionally served as a common a guide for purposeful human behavior. This peculiar admixture of hyper-rationalization without apparent over-arching purpose is one characteristic quality of modernity, a quality to which Modernism has sought various creative responses.

One way we will search for an understanding of Modernism is by looking at how artists have given creative expression to their experience of the modernity, and how these expressions have been represented and mis-represented through the medium of film. Innovations in visual media are arguably the most ubiquitous and significant technological transformations in the modern world. Indeed, our conception of the modern world may be virtually indistinguishable from our visually mediated representations of it. One challenge in this class is to try to distinguish representations of modernity from the actual experience of it. You will be asked to examine film and documentary depictions of the lives of certain individuals whose works epitomize creative attempts to make sense of modern culture. Also, while Modernism is associated with “artists” in the traditional sense--by which is usually meant painters, musicians, and writers--we will ask to what extent it makes sense to extend the rubric of “modernism” to cover other creative endeavors, including perhaps science and engineering.

Our course begins with an overview of the forces we associate with modernization and how they gave rise to the range of thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, creations, customs, and so forth that we associate with modernity.

Part I: Modernization, Modernity, and Manifestos

Week 1: Introduction: Change and Adaptation

A. Things Fall Apart (and then fall together in new and wholly unanticipated forms).
   1. The ways things were (material and mental conditions, ex. Martin Guerre).
   2. The way things became (material and mental conditions, ex. Kern)

B. Modernity: One long historical moment

“The desire beneath many romantic literary visions is for a terrifying awakening that would undo the West’s economic and cultural order, whose origin was the Industrial Revolution and whose goal is global saturation, the obliteration of difference. It is also the desire, of course, of what is called terrorism.”

   - Lentricchia and McAuliffe, Crimes of Art and Terror (2003)

   1. Prelude: Enclosure and transportation
2. Demographics, Urbanization, Industrialization, Capitalism.
3. One long historical moment: some theories

Model of our synchronic moment: (L/M; Clark)
Other historical “moments” (e.g., Classical, Christian)
- Theories about the diachronic dimension:  Progressive, circular, regressive
- Lentricchia and McAuliffe’s thesis
- Precedents for this interpretation: Lord Clark “illusions of hope”; Robert Pattison, “triumph of vulgarity”; Sayre and Lowy: a rejection of capitalism in the “name of precapitalist values”; Another way of speaking about all this: technologically superior though, morally and spiritually compromised dominant cultures and artistically subordinate, though morally and spiritually superior sub-cultures (Hebdige, Pattison); i.e., the continuity of Sub-cultures, and cultures, over time: Poets and Punks, trying to ‘break on through to the other side’

Diachronic and Synchronic: Explaining the Diachronic in terms of the Synchronic
- Disputing Facts and Competing Theories about the synchronic dimension
- Marx, Gramsci (hegemony)
- Scott (“domination and the arts of resistance”)
- Goffman (self-mortification)

Readings: “Modernity” (IIA); begin “Days of War, Nights of Love”

**Week 2: Machines and Manifestos**

A. Capitalism and the Wrecking Ball of Modernity
   Communist and Capitalist Manifestos: from Smith to Marx to the Unabomber

B. The political nature of artist manifestos
   1. Communist, Wagner, Futurist, Dadaist, Surrealist, White, Pandaemonium, so on.
   2. Situationists (hegemony revisited)

Readings: Manifestos (Art in Theory); and IV A-D

**Week 3: Fight Clubs, past and present**

“Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery”

“Murder is the sincerest form of criticism” O. Wilde

A. Louder than words: Luddites, other robust critiques (saboteurs, terrorists, anarcho-syndicalists, wobblies)

B. Disposable Batteries (Matrix)
   1. How to behave when you’re Bestand: “The first rule of fight club”
   2. Job Interviews (E. Kline; Office Space)
3. “Nickled and Dimed” (Ehrenreich)
4. Happy little proles (‘Whistle While [they] Work’)
5. “The Edukators”

Readings: Complete “Days of War, Nights of Love”: also, “Art and Modern Life” (VIA)

Part II: The Soul of the Artist Under Modernism

Week 4: Lives of the Modern Artists: Sub-cultural and counter-cultural responses to Modern conditions since the mid-19th century

A. Fundamental question: since the mid-19th century, are there predictable patterns or, at least, recurrent themes, discernable in the response of artists to modern conditions?
   (Culture as solution and problem briefly revisited (Hutchins, Geertz)
   Technology as a Problem; Art as attempted Solution (artists seeking solutions more adaptive to the needs of human beings that the patterns imposed by modern technologies, be they “hard” or “soft” technologies, mechanical (IR), economic (capitalistic), social (urban), or political).

B. Our focus: counter- and sub-cultural responses to modern conditions
   1. Hoffmann on Prometheus
   2. The variety and over-lapping qualities of counter-cultural response: violence, voyants, manifestos

Readings: Art in Theory, I A-B

Week 5: “Rejection of capitalism in the name pre-capitalist values”

A. Appalled Romantics: A brief 200 year retrospective (From William Wordsworth to William Morris to Morrison and Morrissey; including glimpses of Beethoven, Rimbaud, Nietzsche, Chateaubriand, de Musset, Baudelaire, Wilde, Kerouac, and others).

B. Arts and Crafts, and Art Nouveau (Morris, Ruskin)

Readings: AiT, IIB; and III B

Week 6: Voyants, or “figures of romantic anti-capitalism”

“I don’t know what’s gonna happen man, but I’m gonna have my kicks before the whole shit-house goes up in flames” J. Morrison

A. “When you look into the abyss…”
Artistic creation and other forms of transcendence (Nietzsche, Emerson Wilde, Pater, Monte Veritas)

B. “Live fast, die young, make a nice corpse” Rimbaud, Morisson, Basquiat, Mishima)
Part III:  Core and Periphery

Week 7: Gesamtkunstwerk

A. From total art to Total War to Total Art
   1. Wagner
   2. Adas, “Machines as the Measure of Man”
   3. Benjamin, Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”
   4. Kern, Culture of time and space
      Metropolis (Lang, Simmel)

B. “The Wonderful, Horrible Life of Leni Riefensthal”

Readings: III A-D “Rationalization and Transformation”

Week 8: Core and Periphery

A. Art In Theory in the mid-20th century

B. Art in Theory, continued

Readings: VIA-B; VIIA-D

Week 9: Rebel Consumers

“Give me convenience or Give me death”
Dead Kennedys

A. “Give me convenience or Give me death”: Avant garde merchandising and mass consumption
   1. “Merchants of Cool”
   2. Hip: A History” (Leland)

B. “Days of War, Nights of Love”

Readings: VIII A-C

Week 10: “Crimes of Art and Terror”?  

A. Lentricchia and McAulliffe; Sayre and Loewy; Clark; Pattison; Hoffman.
Essay #1:

The text “Days of War, Night of Love” may be read as a manifesto about how we ought to respond to modernization and modernity. While it was written at the start of the 21st century, this “manifesto” is explicitly concerned with issues and ideas that have prevailed since the 19th century. From what you can gather from lectures, discussions, and readings, offer a thesis on the following question: Is Crimethinc’s “manifesto” consistent with the ideas expressed in the majority of Modernist manifestos printed in “Art in Theory, 1900-2000”? 

Your consideration of manifestos should address the fact that modern art has generally been concerned as much with politics as aesthetics (for instance, as Benjamin notes, fascists have tended to aestheticize politics, while communists have tended to politicize art). In this regard, consider whether modern art is or ought to be exclusively “artistic” (“art for art’s sake”) or expressly political. Does modern art, as revealed in its manifestos, envision perhaps a “third way,” one that combines traditional notions of art with politics? Other issues you might address in the course of your essay include: What are the most significant characteristics of modernity? What connections, if any, exist between the forces of modernization (especially the Industrial Revolutions) and the behavior, sensibilities, and worldviews we associate with the idea of modernity? A better than average essay will also probably take a stand on whether Crimethinc’s manifesto is at all warranted. (15%)

Essay #2:

On the representations of modern artists in film and documentary: Take as your subject two artists—one 19th century and one 20th century—whose work and life epitomize creative responses to the conditions of modernity, and whose work displays some continuity with respect to its attempts to address solutions to the problems arising from modern culture.

Working in groups of up to 3 people, learn about the artists and their world and present a thesis on two issues: 1) the extent to which the artists’ were facing similar challenges in similar ways, and the extent to which the artists’ works successfully dealt with the challenges of modernity; and 2) the extent to which the film or documentary accurately (through its manipulation of such basic techniques as editing, framing, and soundtrack) displays the artist and the artist’s world.

Be prepared to present your preliminary findings in discussion section (paper 20%).

Essay #3 and Manifesto Project:

A traditional account of modernization and modernity represents, either implicitly or explicitly, the significant changes in the past 200 years as originating from a Western “core” and emanating out to a non-Western periphery. One criticism of Modernism as an artistic “movement” is that, despite its pretensions to being avant-garde, it nonetheless reflects a largely, if not exclusively bourgeois Western viewpoint.

Compose an essay that addresses the following question: If Modernist art were to be created from and for the “periphery,” what would it be? Fundamental to this question are a host of other questions, such as: from the perspective of the “periphery” what account ought one to give of modernization and modernity? Who are the periphery? Who is the core? (Have we a better
metaphor?) Is the periphery limited to non-Western cultures, or are sub- or counter-cultures within Western culture equally peripheral?

As a prelude to your essay, you must compose a manifesto; ideally, your manifesto will integrate as many "peripheral" viewpoints as possible, beginning with those provided by your peers in discussion sections. Who, among your peers, is the most peripheral? If you enquire into your respective family backgrounds, whose family’s past is most peripheral to the main trajectory of modernization and modernity? You might attempt to identify and paraphrase historical narratives that challenge the “core-periphery” model of modernity. So too, in conjunction with other members of your section, you might seek to combine counter-narratives into a single, coherent narrative (25%).

**Manifesto Project:**

There should be only one project per discussion section. The project should attempt to combine the manifestos of ALL the students in that section. The project should attempt to give creative expression to a synthetic (though not to the point of eliminating critical differences) endeavor in a way that tests the validity of the collective manifesto; in conjunction with other members of your section, design and endeavor to implement a project to test the validity of your manifesto. Again, the key question is this: What sort of artist manifesto would best represent the viewpoint of the “periphery” in its attempt to address the culture of modernity?

A better than average project should also include some consideration of the Situationist manifestos (e.g., Debord, Kaprow in “Art in Theory”) and will also grapple with the fundamental contradictions that exists at the intersection of our evolved natures and our modern culture (for instance, that we are small-group animals attempting to cope or thrive within a large-group world, and that our modern techniques create long-term effects, though we have evolved only short range—spatially and temporally—attention spans) (10%).

**Final exam:**

Revisit the argument of your first essay and offer a thesis on whether it is warranted in view of what you have studied since you wrote it. Also, analyze the rhetorical merits of your first essay. Include in your analysis of your first essay’s strengths and weaknesses, considering such matters as grammar, punctuation, diction, paragraph structure, transitions, and overall clarity and persuasiveness.

A list of possible Artist Subjects. The list is, of course, in no way exhaustive of possibilities; the primary purpose of the list is simply to suggest the potential range of possibilities (i.e., from poets to punks, architects to musicians, taggers to film makers, sculptors to performance artists). Almost any subject addressed in your Art in Theory text is probably viable.

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<tr>
<th>Percy Shelly</th>
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<td>Frederic Chopin</td>
<td>Pablo Picasso</td>
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<td>Anais Nin</td>
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<td>Henry Miller</td>
<td>Jack Kerouac</td>
<td>Yukio Mishima</td>
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<td>August Rodin</td>
<td>John Steinbeck</td>
<td>Patti Smith</td>
<td>Jean Michel Basquiat</td>
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COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Please note: For the year 2005-2006, UCSD is requiring every first-year student to maintain a portfolio containing copies of all completed written assignments (in every course: not just writing courses) that have been commented on and/or graded and returned by instructors or TAs. The portfolio would not include exams except for essay exams. Students must have portfolios complete and available for selection by the Writing Director of their respective colleges at the end of the academic year. If selected, the work in these portfolios will not be returned; keep copies for your personal files separately.

IMPORTANT NOTES re GRADES

Policy on missed exams and late assignments

- Unexcused late assignments will be docked 1/3 (one-third) of a letter grade for each day late (e.g. A becomes A- the first day late, B+ the second day late, etc.).
- Make-up exams must be arranged as soon as possible after illness, injury, or family emergency.
- The policy on make-up finals follows UCSD policy, since there are strict calendar deadlines established by the University for the submission of grades at the end of a quarter.
- Sudden long-term illness, injury, or family emergency may necessitate an incomplete for the course, or withdrawal from it. Excuses and incompletes must be negotiated with your TA and the course instructor(s) prior to the final exam.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

UCSD has a university-wide Policy on Integrity of Scholarship, published annually in the Catalog (pp. 62-64 for 2005-6), online at http://registrar.ucsd.edu/records/grdbk3.html. All students must read and be familiar with this Policy.

Receipt of this syllabus constitutes an acknowledgment that you are responsible for understanding and acting in accordance with UCSD guidelines on academic integrity.

Academic stealing refers to the theft of exams or exam answers, of papers or take-home exams composed by others, and of research notes, computer files, or data collected by others.

Academic cheating, collusion, and fraud refer to having others do your schoolwork or allowing them to present your work as their own; using unauthorized materials during exams; inventing data or bibliography to support a paper, project, or exam; purchasing tests, answers, or papers from any source whatsoever; submitting (nearly) identical papers to two classes.

Plagiarism refers to the use of another's work without full acknowledgment, whether by suppressing the reference, neglecting to identify direct quotations, paraphrasing closely or at length without citing sources, spuriously identifying quotations or data, or cutting and pasting the work of several (usually unidentified) authors into a single undifferentiated whole.

Students with special needs
Students with physical or learning disabilities should first work with UCSD’s Office for Students with Disabilities to obtain current documentation, then contact instructor and TA’s to arrange appropriate academic accommodations. This should be accomplished as soon in the quarter as possible. To be fair to all students, no individual accommodations will be made unless the student first presents the proper documentation.

Innovations in visual media are arguably the most ubiquitous and significant technological transformations in the modern world. Indeed, our conception of the modern world may be virtually indistinguishable from our visually mediated representations of it. The challenge of this class is to try to distinguish representations of modernity from the actual experience of modernity. Our particular focus will be upon the depiction of the lives of modern artists in film and documentary. Our task will be to examine how accurately modern artists and modern cultures have been represented in film. Our course begins with an overview of the forces we associate with modernization and how they gave rise to the range of thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, creations, customs, and so forth that we associate with modernity.