APPROPRIATION....
Graduate Seminar in Art History and Critical Theory
Huey Copeland, Associate Professor of Art History, Northwestern University
Fall 2017

Description
Within U.S. art-historical discourse, “appropriation” often refers to a brand of photo-based practice associated with the work of white women artists such as Cindy Sherman who emerged in the New York art world of the late 1970s. In this exploratory graduate research seminar, we will aim to historicize, contest, and expand this mobilization of the term by considering how various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences have differentially conceived of appropriation as well as how forms of “borrowing” and theft—whether of images, artifacts, bodies, or lands—continue to shape the politics of cross-cultural encounter in the Americas and beyond.

All readings will be available for free via Canvas.

Assignments and Evaluation
1. The seminar requires mandatory attendance at, robust participation in, and careful preparation of assigned materials for all class meetings by all course members.
2. Each week one or two students will give brief presentation(s)—no more than 10 minutes—on a work of art identified on the syllabus as key to the week’s readings. In selecting and researching a cultural object, students should aim to historicize the work and to articulate its relationship to relevant lines of argumentation encountered in the readings. Students are strongly encouraged to consult the instructor and are required to send along any relevant materials—PowerPoints, handouts, etc.—to him by 8PM the day before seminar or to post them to the course slide file by that time.
3. Except when presenting, every week students will be required to frame and articulate a response that critically explores a problem, thematic, or thread encountered in the majority of that week’s readings. This paper should be no more than 3 double-spaced pages and must be posted to the appropriately labeled Canvas “Discussions” thread for that week by 8PM the day before each seminar. Students should be sure to consult each other’s responses before class begins.
4. For their final papers students are required to submit a 12-15-page fully illustrated and documented research paper using a recognized citational system (Chicago Style footnotes are preferred). Students may write on any topic of their choosing that speaks to the concerns of the course.
5. By the middle of the term, students will also need to provide the instructor with a one-page research proposal outlining their topic and plan along with a preliminary bibliography and set of images. These materials should also be posted to the “Discussions” thread of the Canvas site.
6. During the last class, each student will give a brief illustrated PowerPoint presentation that lays out the thesis of their final paper. The PowerPoint file—with a clearly articulated thesis statement on the 1st slide—must be emailed to the instructor by 8PM on the day before class presentations and the revised abstract should be posted to the “Discussions” thread for
review by your peers at that same time. On the last day of class, each student will have 10 minutes to engage questions, comments, and criticisms on their final paper.

All papers should be double-spaced and typed in 12-point font with 1-inch margins on all sides of each page. As goes without saying, plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated.

Course Schedule
In the schedule below, recommended—not required—materials are listed at the end of each week and marked with an *. While these texts are optional for the group, students presenting should make sure to engage these materials.

Week 1: Introductions

Week 2: As Art-Historical Consideration
Presentation: Pablo Picasso, Les Demoiselles d'Avignon, 1907

Week 3: As Feminist Practice
Presentation: Sherrie Levine, After Walker Evans, 1981
José Esteban Muñoz, “‘The White to Be Angry’: Vaginal Davis’s Terrorist Drag,” Social Text
Week 4: As Racial Non/Event
**Presentation: Eleanor Antin, Being Antinova, 1983**


Week 5: And Settler Societies
**Presentation: Jimmie Durham, Self-Portrait, 1986**


Week 6: And Critical Anthropology
**Presentation: Trinh T. Minh-Ha, Reassemblage, 1982**


*Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Reassemblage: From the Firelight to the Screen*, 40 min, 16mm, Jean-Paul Bourdieu, 1982.

**Week 7: And Postcolonial Critique**

*Presentation: Kader Attia, Untitled (Ghardaïa), 2009*


**Week 8: Contemporary Contestations, Disciplinary Differences**

*Presentation: Theaster Gates, An Overlapping Love, 2014*


D. W. Winnicott, “The Use of an Object and Relating through Identifications,” in *Playing and

Week 9: NO CLASS (Independent Research)

Week 10: PRESENTATIONS