



[John Berger, cat, from *Bento's Sketchbook*]

Ways of Seeing Ways of Listening

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Description

The title of this course is a nod to John Berger's *Ways of Seeing*, a project that took shape both as a book and a television series in the early 1970s. Turning away from conventional art history, Berger joined a generation of thinkers, artists, and activists who interrogated our conventional understandings of the relationship between seeing and knowing. Collectively, this group opened important questions about the gendered, racialized, and sexualized dimensions of the human gaze, as well as the political and performative dimensions of representation, the influence of capital, and the connection between looking and listening. In short, this generation of thinkers inspired a broad investigation of human relationality through the politics of regard.

Our course tracks this intellectual and creative trajectory, treating our various ways of seeing and listening as relational ontology characterized by exposure and the vulnerability of an incarnated self for whom the other's attention is necessary. We will regard looking and listening as historical processes—both individual and social—which, paradoxically, depend on being seen and heard. Here the classical formation of the liberal human subject is displaced by an understanding of the self as radically dependent on the other.

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