

Syllabus watch - teaching material culture

Date : February 2, 2009

I thought it might be a good idea to open a thread discussing and linking to teaching materials for courses in "material culture", "thing theory", "materiality" and so forth...

I've been looking around a bit.

Here are some of the courses I've come across so far that best exemplify the dynamism of this growing field (I've got a bias towards anthropology...literature people please weigh in in the comments, and design people, and history people...)

Severin Fowles "[Thing Theory](#)" in the Anthropology Dept at Columbia University is a great course with student assignments posted online to the class blog. It's also interesting to see how this course has changed over the years.

Robert Frosts course in "[Material Culture and the Interpretation of Objects](#)" at U Michigan is mainly focused on museological texts.

Bill Brown's literature based "[thing theory](#)" at Chicago

Mike Shanks, [Thing Theory](#), from an archaeological perspective at Stanford.

Dr Fillippo Osella's course, The Allure of Things at Sussex University provides a great overview of the British slant on material culture. the course no longer seems to be online, but I saved the version from 2007 as a webarchive (safari is the browser) which hopefully you can download here:

[Download file](#)

Then Fred Myers and I taught a graduate seminar in the NYU Anthropology department on Materiality, which was frustrating because there was so much we couldn't include. The idea was to really focus on the intersection of thinking about materiality for the discipline of anthropology rather than a broader based survey of the literature. [Download file](#)