Art, Science, Technology: The Human Body as an Experiment

Science and art, the “twin engines of creativity,” are still (within the post-Enlightenment academy) stereotypically thought to be at opposite ends of the intellectual spectrum. However, art and science share a common ground that can be characterized as an underlying will to enhance human understanding and extend our experience of the world.

This multi-media seminar is devoted to exploring globally, historical and present-day expressions of the relationship between art, science and technology. To this end we will explore various—often controversial—technological collaborations between scientists and artists from different countries who represent different cultures, whose medium and message is the human body in various guises: caricatured, cartoonized, compositied, genetically engineered, robotized, cyborgized, plastinated, surgically altered, biotechnologically enhanced, and so forth. We will also explore how these collaborations and guises shape popular cultural ideas and trends in body-modification, past and present, across cultures.

Textbooks/Other Materials: There are four required books
2) Mary Shelley, Frankenstein (editor J. Paul Hunter, the 1818 text, contexts, nineteenth-century responses, modern criticism, Norton Critical Edition 1996);
3) Osamu Tezuka, Astro Boy (Dark Horse Manga 2008 [1950s]);
4) H.G. Wells, The Island of Dr. Moreau (Phoenix Pick/Arc Manor 2008 [1896]).

R.U.R. and Astro Boy, along with other readings, will be accessible on Canvas as pdfs. Be sure to get the correct editions of Frankenstein and The Island of Dr. Moreau.

Course Requirements: No prerequisites.

Intended Audience: Undergraduates; aimed at sophomores and juniors

Class Format: A mix of lectures and seminar-style discussions of required books.

Estimated Cost of Materials: ($0-50); two of the books are available on Canvas as pdfs.

HISTART Distribution Requirements:
C. Asia, D. Europe and the US, 4. Modern and Contemporary

Jennifer Robertson jennyrob@umich.edu
TTh 10-11:30am
180 Tappan
3 Credit Lecture

www.lsa.umich.edu/HistArt