

KEY CONCEPTS
Introduction to Visual Culture
September 23, 2019

- **Modern:** A quality or condition of “being modern,” of breaking from the “traditional” (pre-modern), from the past
- **Modernity:** An historical period associated with particular social, economic, epistemological, and ideological shifts.
- **Modernism:** An artistic, literary, and scientific movement. Not a synonym for modernity.

- Modernity: belief in the concept of knowledge as a stable thing.
- Postmodernity: knowledge is constructed and constantly in flux.

- Modernity: belief in progress and the scientific method.
- Postmodernity: questions whether progress is always positive and if the scientific method can answer anomalous events, knowledge, and information.

- Modernity: belief in the possibility of a unified human being.
- Postmodernity: assertion that the modern subject is fragmented and diverse.

- Modernity: belief that experience/reality can be pure and unmediated, and that Truth exists.
- Postmodernity: experience/reality are constructed and illusory; there are many truths.

- Modernity: belief in “master” or “meta narratives,” i.e., religion, science, psychoanalysis, Enlightenment myths of progress, Male/Female difference, Marx, Freud, Foucault, or – in our time Deleuze & Guattari: anyone!
- Postmodernity: questions master narratives in favor of difference, plurality, and multiplicity.

- Modernity: belief in fundamental, intrinsic, and universal (or classic) transcendent values and essential, autonomous, and self-sufficient objects, texts, and actions.
- Postmodernity: views the above constructs as contingent, insufficient, and lacking transcendence.

- Modernity: reality, immediacy, the original
- Postmodernity: hyperreality, hypermediacy, the simulacra

- Modernity: a continuous self-conscious, self-referential attitude, promoting social change and able to absorb cultural postmodernism as one of the “isms” of the modern.
- Postmodernity: a philosophical approach toward the deconstruction of modernism and its epistemologies.