



The Art Institute of CaliforniaSM - San Diego

Course Syllabus

Course Number: HU130 **Section:** A

Course Title: Visual Language and Culture

Catalog Description: The media revolution communicates through images as much if not more than through words. Strategies of interpretation and theories of visual logic are introduced.

Prerequisites: HU110 College English

Course Day and Time: Wednesdays 8AM-12PM—Room 147

Session/Year: Spring 2007

Instructor Name: Katie McGowan

Instructor Contact Information: katiegracemcgowan@gmail.com

Instructor Availability Outside of Class: First and foremost, I want all of you to know that I am available for you. Good communication between a student and instructor often makes the difference between a successful and unsuccessful class experience. I expect you to take on the responsibility of contacting me with any questions or concerns about this class. You can reach me via e-mail at any time (I check it often!) and also by appointment. I am usually at the classroom a few minutes early and can remain at least a few minutes after class. If you need more time than these opportunities offer, I am more than happy to schedule a time to meet with you on campus personally.

Course Length: 11 Weeks

Contact Hours: 44 Hours

Credit Values: 4 Credits

Core Course Competencies: Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Discuss theories of visual logic.
- Gain a greater ability to translate concepts into images.
- Demonstrate writing skills.
- Explore contemporary society in relation to media culture
- Describe major historical trends in visual art.
- Examine the social and economic function of the visual.
- Translate concepts into images.
- Relate psychological formulations to visual cultural imagery and icons.
- Apply concepts to analyze the effectiveness of visual work with respect to its intended goals and audience.
- Understand and sensitively apply cross-cultural communication skills.

Text(s): 1. *Practices of Looking* by Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright.

2. Your syllabus. It is your guide to the whole term. It includes all class policies, due dates, and weekly assignments; therefore it is crucial that you keep your syllabus throughout the term and bring it to each class. Keep it in a folder specifically for Visual Language and Culture materials and assignments—you will have LOTS of handouts.

Note: You MUST have the textbook (and your reading completed) by our second class meeting so that we can ensure a fruitful discussion of the readings.

Materials and Supplies: Paper, pen, dictionary, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* 6th Ed. By Joseph Gibaldi (or the MLA guide of your choice)

Estimated Homework Hours: 4 Hours per week minimum

Technology Needed: Access to a computer, word processing program and printer

Assignments and Point Values: The total number of available points is subject to change according to the needs of the particular class.

Assignment	Points Available	Student Score
Participation (5/class + 25 presentation)	80	
Homework (3 x 10 points each)	30	
Mid-Term Exam	50	
Essays (2 x 50 points each)	100	
Final Exam	50	
Quizzes (3 x 20 points each)	60	
TOTAL points available in class	370	

Grading Scale: Grades on individual assignments and for the course will be calculated as follows:

A	93 -100 %
A-	90 - 92 %
B+	87 - 89 %
B	83 - 86 %
B-	80 - 82 %
C+	77 - 79 %
C	73 - 76 %
C-	70 - 72 %
D+	67 - 69 %
D	65 - 66 %
F	64 % or below

Add/Drop/Withdrawal Policies:

- Students may drop and/or add classes or change sections until 5:00 p.m. on the sixth day of the quarter without incurring a financial or academic cost. These course transactions are not reflected on the student's transcripts. Students should see their Academic Advisor or the Registrar's office staff for assistance.

Last Day to Add/Drop: Tuesday, April 10, 2007 by 5:00 p.m.

- Students may withdraw from classes until 5:00 p.m. on the Friday of the ninth week of the quarter. They will receive a grade of "W," which does not affect their GPA. However, the course will be shown as a "withdrawal" on their transcripts. The student will have to pay for the class and the withdrawal does adversely affect their graduation date and Incremental Completion Rate (ICR). Students can be terminated if the ICR falls below acceptable levels. Students should see their Academic Advisor or the Registrar's office staff for the change form and assistance in processing it.

Last Day to Withdraw from Classes with a "W": Friday, June 1, 2007 by 5:00 p.m.

Academic Honesty Statement: The Art Institute of California- San Diego considers academic honesty to be one of its highest values. Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty while pursuing their studies at The Art Institute of California- San Diego. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: plagiarism and cheating; misuse of academic resources or facilities; and misuse of computer software, data, equipment or networks.

Course Policies:

Food and drink are not allowed in any computer lab.

Please clean up after yourself and leave your desks in neat rows when you exit the room.

Cell phones, iPods, handheld games, and palm pilots must be silenced and put away. I don't want to see them!

Attendance: You are expected to attend all classes on time as scheduled throughout the quarter. If you are absent, the number of hours you missed will be recorded. If you come late to class or leave early, your absence will be counted in 15-minute increments. This absence accumulates towards total absenteeism on a student's quarterly record. It is your responsibility to keep track of your attendance. You may ask the Registrar's Office for an Attendance Snapshot at any time. **There are no excused absences.** If you do not attend *any* classes for fourteen (14) consecutive calendar days, you will be withdrawn from school.

***You must sign in at the beginning of each class session**

Instructors use the following chart for reducing final grades due to excessive cumulative absences:

CLASSES MISSED	HOURS MISSED	% CLASS TIME	EFFECT ON FINAL GRADE
2	8	18	Reduction by one letter grade
3	12	27	Reduction by two letter grades
More than 3	More than 12	More than 27	F Grade

CULINARY

2	10	18	Reduction by one letter grade
3	15	27	Reduction by two letter grades
More than 3	More than 15	More than 27	F Grade

Makeup and Late Work: If you are absent from class, I expect you to email me any work that is due before or during the class session. I will then send you anything you missed.

As a rule, **late work is NOT accepted.** Quizzes given during class **may not** be made up. Daily coursework may be made up **ONE TIME**, **only in the case of documented, unavoidable absences.** You may turn in **ONE** essay or project late (within 1 week of the original due date) but your grade will be dropped one full letter for that assignment. To obtain permission to turn in said late assignment, you must make contact with me **PRIOR** to the class meeting when the assignment is due.

General Student Conduct: The Art Institute of California—San Diego expects its students and employees to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. The Art Institute students are generally men and women who are preparing for career employment. An integral part of their career and professional development is the expectation that they will conduct themselves during the educational processes in the same manner as will be expected in an employment situation. All students or employees are encouraged to report any unprofessional or offensive behavior to the Dean of Student Affairs.

Disability Statement: It is the Art Institute of California-San Diego policy not to discriminate against qualified students with a documented disability in its educational programs, activities or services. If you have a disability-related need for accommodations in this class, contact the Disability Services Coordinator, Carrie Perez, at 858-598-1407 or in Room 130, or stop by Student Services in Room 178.

Additional Tutoring: Tutoring and additional support is available through your Academic Advisor.

Course Calendar Outline

In addition to the reading, essays, and assignments listed on the syllabus, expect a good portion of each class to be devoted to individual writing assignments and collaborative assignments to be completed in class. All plans are subject to change.

If you miss class, you must contact me to be updated on assignments.

- Week 1:** Class Introduction (syllabus, expectations, term schedule, visual culture overview)
 Discussion: the way Visual Language & Culture relates to your field of study.
 Hints for reading a theory-rich textbook
 Key Concepts: Ideology, Icons, Semiotics, Representation, Photographic Truth
Tough Guise—a documentary that analyzes the representations of masculinity in American popular culture (movies, cartoons, TV, etc.)
 Worksheet on *Tough Guise*—due in class
Homework for next week: Read Chapter 1: Practices of Looking
- Week 2:** **Work due this week:** Chapter 1: Practices of Looking
 Discussion of chapter—Fashion, objects, fine art, toys
 Subjective/Objective, Denotative/Connotative, & The Functions of Art
 Allocate chapters for presentations
 Essay #1 Assigned
Homework for next week: Chapter 2: Viewers Make Meaning-prepare for quiz
- Week 3:** **Work due this week:** Chapter 2: Viewers Make Meaning
 Reading quiz
 Group activity: bricolage & appropriation
 Group Presentation #1
Homework for next week: Essay # 1
 Chapter 3: Spectatorship, Power, and Knowledge
- Week 4:** **Work due this week:** Essay # 1
 Chapter 3: Spectatorship, Power, and Knowledge
 Discussion of psychoanalytic theory, the gaze, Foucault and Lacan
 Group Presentation #2
 View excerpts of *Rear Window*
Homework for next week: Prepare for midterm exam!
- Week 5:** **Work due this week:** Be prepared for midterm!
Midterm Exam
Super Size Me
 Discussion of film.
Homework for next week: Chapter 6: Consumer Culture & Manufacturing of Desire
 Read chapter then select 2-3 magazine clippings that relate to the reading. Bring them to class.
- Week 6:** **Work due this week:** Chapter 6: Consumer Culture and the Manufacturing of Desire
 Read chapter then select 2-3 magazine clippings that relate to the reading. Bring them to class.
 Propaganda, branding, consumerism
 Group Presentation #3
 Marx's Commodity Fetishism.
 In class activity utilizing magazine clippings
Homework for next week: Magazine assignment
 Read Chapter 4: Reproduction and Visual Technologies-quiz next week

- Week 7:** **Work due this week:** Magazine assignment
 Read Chapter 4: Reproduction and Visual Technologies
 Reading quiz
 Discussion of film reviewing techniques, academic writing about cinema.
 Essay #2 Assigned
 Group Presentation #4
Homework for next week: Chapter 7: Postmodernism and Popular Culture
 Bring a toy, piece of artwork or literature that exemplifies postmodernism
- Week 8:** **Work due this week:** Chapter 7: Postmodernism and Popular Culture
 Bring a toy, piece of artwork or literature that exemplifies postmodernism
 Group presentation #5
 View *symptoms* of the postmodern condition
Man With a Movie Camera
Homework for next week: Essay #2. Chapter 8: Scientific Looking,
 Looking at Science (read 279-300)
- Week 9:** **Work due this week:** Essay #2. Chapter 8: Scientific Looking,
 Looking at Science (read 279-300)
 Group presentation #6
 Discussion: the gendered body, Judith Butler, perceptions of Difference.
The Brandon Teena Story
 Discuss extra credit projects
Homework for next week: Chapter 9: The Global Flow of Visual Culture
- Week 10:** **Work due this week:** Chapter 9: The Global Flow of Visual Culture
 Group presentation #7
 Reading quiz
 Discuss final essays & projects.
 Review for final exam
Homework for next week: Study for Final Exam!
 Extra credit project (optional)
- Week 11:** **Work due this week:** Extra credit project (optional)
FINAL EXAM
Presentations-Final Projects

Project and Assignment Descriptions:

Essay One: Analysis of Advertising Campaign—3 pages, MLA format.

Choose a specific ad campaign (Jack in the Box, Victoria Secret, Nike, etc.) and analyze the techniques it uses to sell its product. You must incorporate at least two direct, relevant quotations from the text to support your analysis and cite them in MLA style (include a final Works Cited page). Your ad campaign can be from TV, magazines, the Internet, etc. DUE: WEEK 4.

Essay Two: Film Synthesis—3 pages, MLA format, two secondary sources.

Choose one of the types of critical film analysis (auteur, feminist, psychoanalytic, etc.) discussed to date and use it to analyze a film of your choice. In addition to your primary source (the movie), you must also include two cited secondary sources (supporting sources—can be a film review of your movie, an essay describing your chosen type of criticism, etc.) DUE: WEEK 9.

Examples of questions to ask yourself when selecting an essay subject:

(Note: there is no need to address all/any of these, they are examples to help you determine what type of critique you want to write):

- Does the text use outdated stereotypes when representing certain groups?
- Is there a character that breaks said formulaic stereotypes?
- Memorable elements of the narrative? Use of language? Perspective?
- Consider the readings and discussions we have had in class. Have any of the concepts we have covered been reinforced or contradicted here? Why? How?
- What element of this image/text/narrative is most striking to you?
- Discuss how the piece relates to the time in which it was written and how it is recontextualized today.
- What is it trying to say (if anything)?



Reading Presentations

My group will present chapter: _____ on week _____.

Group members:

Names

Email and/or phone number

On the week of your presentation, you and your group members should be prepared to facilitate the day’s dialogue. I suggest taking copious notes, preparing discussion prompts and coming up with ‘real life’ examples.

Each group must present the class with a study guide for their chapter. The study guide should be between two and four pages long and include key concepts and vocabulary from the text. I will present Chapter 1 and distribute an example study guide. These handouts should be kept as study tools.