

Master Syllabus

Course: ARH 105, Visual Imagery: A Critical Introduction

Cluster Requirement: 3B

Course Overview: This course serves as an introduction to analyzing images and the visual experience. The focus will be on "reading" visual phenomena (painting, sculpture, photography, film and digital media) in light of the larger cultural forces which shape our interaction with these media (the institution of the museum, the transformation of vision and the shifting cultural position of artists and audiences). These issues will be applied to specific historical contexts by way of a series of "case studies" which will both introduce some of the major movements and players within the history of art and visual culture as well as consider the way in which the visual experience shapes our sense of identity, history and social relations. Students will be evaluated by online writing assignments, a short response paper, periodic group work and a final museum project in which small groups will conduct a virtual museum tour in conjunction with Google Art.

Learning Outcomes:

Course-Specific Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

- Articulate the various properties of the media of contemporary visual culture (painting, photography, sculpture, film, digital media).
- Perform formal analysis across a range of media and subject matter.
- Define and apply foundational concepts such as "the gaze" and "visuality" to contemporary visual experiences and images.
- Correctly utilize terminology of the field in order to discuss images and the visual experience
- Understand the way in which images both reflect and contribute to the larger historical and political context which they engage.
- Create informed written and verbal responses to conceptual issues relevant to the field.

University Studies Learning Outcomes (Cluster 3B):

By the end of the course the student will be able to:

1. Articulate the cultural context, history and formal and conceptual aspects of the art form studied.
2. Interpret and create informed responses (via writing, presentation and performance) to the art form studied through the analysis of the form, content, context and methods of production using appropriate disciplinary terminology.
3. Explain the ways in which the art form expresses the values that humans attach to their experiences.

ARH 105 Rationale Statement

This course offers an introduction to the study of images for non-art majors. As such, it is geared toward building a conceptual toolbox through which students can more critically engage the history of art as well as their own contemporary visual environment. Each unit includes an investigation of a given theory, concept or method (the gaze, surveillance, formal analysis, etc.) which is then complemented by a series of "case studies." Following the University Studies guidelines, the intent of this structure is to connect the "conceptual aspects of the art form studied" with its "the cultural context and history" (Cluster 3.B.1).

For example in Week 3, the first class is dedicated to a conceptual investigation of the experience of sight, particularly the way in which this seemingly neutral and objective sense is colored by technology, desire and so on. On the following meeting, these ideas are applied to the 19th century Parisian art scene where students attempt to read the style of Impressionism in terms of the transformation to vision brought about the railroad and other technologies. On the following class, students are asked to respond to a writing prompt which concerns the influence of technology on contemporary vision. Following this format, the course serves to both model the larger application of theory to images and to introduce selected periods in the historical narrative of art.

At the pedagogical center of this course is the desire to forge connections between the concepts and histories of art and visual studies with the everyday visual experience of students. To this end, the assignments are structured around a philosophy of active learning which prompts students to connect and assess the material of the course, rather than passively absorb information. Not only do students contribute weekly discussion posts in response to online prompts, but so are they required to respond to at least one other posting from the class (Cluster 3.B.2). This is intended to foster dialogue in a familiar environment that does not carry the same weight and anxiety as a traditional essay. These questions often ask students to gather images and/or video from the internet that exemplify or contradict a given concept or idea from class (Cluster 3.B.2). As a result, the student actively applies the ideas to his or her own area of interests and experience. In addition, students complete a short writing assignment which focuses on close reading and application (Cluster 3.B.2).

While the course asks students to interrogate their everyday visual experiences, it also seeks to deepen their appreciation of the museum and its cultural value (Cluster 3.B.3). Indeed, a recurring theme of the class is the idea that, from the self-portraits of Facebook to the spatial relations of video games, contemporary images are the inheritors of a visual vocabulary which in many ways originates in the arts. Understanding that lineage is a crucial component of the course. To that end, the class concludes at the museum where students will bring together the ideas of the course in order to lead the class through a virtual tour of a site of their choice (Cluster 3.B.1, 2, 3).

Throughout these assignments, students hone a critical vocabulary and skill set which extend well beyond the realm of art history. At the same time, the course instills an appreciation for the history of art and the museum, which emerges as a dynamic space that is intimately connected to the experience of images in everyday life.

Examples of Texts and/or Assigned Readings (In order of the sample schedule below):

Marjorie Munsterberg, *Writing About Art: Formal Analysis*

Henry Sayre, "Using Visual Information" in *Writing about Art*

Terry Barrett, "Describing Photographs: What do I see?" in *Criticizing Photographs: An Introduction to Understanding Images*

Clive Bell, "The Aesthetic Hypothesis" (selections)

David Bordwell and Kristen Thompson, "The Significance of Film Form" in *Film Art: An Introduction*

Jane Kromm, "Inventing the Mis-en-Scene: German Expressionism and the Silent Film Set" in *A History of Visual Culture*

James Elkins, "Just Looking" in *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing*

Wolfgang Schivelbush, "Panoramic Travel" in *The Railway Journey*

Jane Kromm, "The *Flâneur* /*Flâneuse* Phenomenon" in *A History of Visual Culture*
 Jean Robertson and Craig McDaniel (eds.), *Themes in Contemporary Art* (selections)
 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*
 John A. Walker and Sarah Chaplin, *Visual Culture: An Introduction* (selections)
 Robert Smithson, "Entropy and the New Monuments" and "Entropy Made Visible (1973), *An Interview with Alison Sky*"
 Marita Sturken, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (selections)
 Thomas Crow, "Saturday Disasters: Trace and Referent in Early Warhol"
 "Jackson Pollock: Is He the *Greatest* Living Painter in the United States?" *Life Magazine*, August 8, 1949
 Sherrie Levine, "Statement" in *Art in Theory*
 Barbara Kruger, "'Taking' Pictures" in *Art in Theory*
 Barbara Kruger, "What's High, What's Low- and Who Cares?" *The New York Times*, Sunday, September 1990.
 Stephen Eisenmann, "Courbet's Trilogy of 1849-50" in *Nineteenth Century Art: A Critical History*
 Hilde Hein "What is Public Art?"
 Vilis R. Inde, "Richard Serra: Whose Property is it Anyway?"
 Andrea Pevsner, *New York Post* Editorials on Eric Fischl's *Tumbling Woman*
 Martin A. Danahay, "Feats of Simulation and the World of Video Games: Art, Cinema and Interactivity" in *A History of Visual Culture*
 Matt Ferranto, "Digital Self-fashioning in Cyberspace: The New Digital Self-Portrait" in *A History of Visual Culture*

Example Assignments:

Online Assignments: Each student will be required to complete 6 of the 9 online assignments listed in the schedule below. These assignments will be posted on discussion boards on the MyCourses site and will be graded with either a ✓, ✓+ or ✓-. [Addresses Learning Outcomes #1 and #2 from Cluster 3B]

Discussion Board Grading Rubric			
Assignment Not Turned In	✓ -	✓	✓ +
(0 points) Assignment Not Turned In.	(70 points) The ✓ - post addresses the question with superficial analysis which does not go beyond the surface. The writing lacks coherence and the train of thought is difficult to follow. Either no example is used or the example chosen is not relevant to the issue at hand.	(85 points) The ✓ post integrates specific examples where applicable, but the examples chosen do not necessarily work with the larger idea of the post or the connection is not immediately clear. The writing contains punctuation and grammar errors and/or is less than the 200 words requirement. Overall, the post could be strengthened with more in-depth analysis and clarity.	(100 points) The ✓ + post addresses the question with specific examples and insightful analysis. The writing is free of punctuation and grammar errors and is at least 200 words in length. Overall, the ideas are presented with clarity and focus.
_____ out of 100			

Final Project: This class culminates in a virtual museum tour where a small group of students leads the class through an assigned museum via Google Art Project (<http://www.googleartproject.com/>). The student will be asked to first of all give a short history of the museum itself as we "walk" through its hallways and then stop at 3-4 pieces of art and discuss this work in detail. The tour should integrate formal analysis of each of these works as well as touch upon a total of 3 concepts or themes (see the subject headings of the schedule below for a list) that we have discussed in class. The student will also be asked to include basic information about the style or movement as well as any necessary historical information relating to the works chosen or even the museum itself. A "script" which summarizes the main points of the presentation will be handed in. [Addresses Learning Outcomes #1, #2 and #3 from Cluster 3B] **(See attached rubric)**

Response Paper: At the end of the semester, each student will turn in a response paper which engages with the ideas of a reading of their choice. This paper should attempt to summarize the argument or position of the text and then react to this position. The student will be asked to integrate examples of visual phenomena to strengthen their argument. [Addresses Learning Outcome #2 from Cluster 3B]

Exams: There will be two non-cumulative, multiple choice exams. [Addresses Learning Outcomes #1 and #3 from Cluster 3B]

Course Artifacts for Assessment:

1. Online Discussion Boards
2. Response Essay
3. "Script" from Virtual Museum Tour
4. Exams

Sample Course Outline:

Week 1: Introduction to the Class, What is Formal Analysis?

Reading: Marjorie Munsterberg, *Writing About Art: Formal Analysis*

In-Class Assignment: Together, we will read several short reviews of exhibitions of painting, photography and film. Students will then mark those passages which reference formal elements of the work. Afterwards, we will discuss our findings as a group.

Week 2: The Mechanics of the Image: Analyzing Form I (Painting, Photography)

Reading: Sayre - "Using Visual Information" in *Writing About Art*
Barrett - selections from "Describing Photographs: What do I see?"

Case Study: Clive Bell and Formalism
Clive Bell - "The Aesthetic Hypothesis," pp. 107-110.

Group Assignment: Each group will be assigned a specific formal element (line, color, texture, scale, lighting and so on) and then asked to find a painting or photograph where that attribute plays a prominent role. These images along with the group members' names must be posted on our discussion board before class. Be prepared to discuss why you choose the image you did and how the particular formal element functions in the example you've chosen.

Week 3: The Mechanics of the Image: Analyzing Form II (Film)

Reading: David Bordwell and Kristen Thompson - "The Significance of Film Form"

Case Study: German Expressionism

Kromm - "Inventing the Mis-en-Scene: German Expressionism and the Silent Film Set"

Group Assignment: Each group will select a scene from *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) or a still image (either promotional image or a still from the film itself) where a specific formal element (point of view, composition, contrast, tracking shot, montage and so on) plays a prominent role. While you may certainly draw from the Kromm essay, the image or scene you choose should be one that is not mentioned by the author. These images along with the group members' names must be posted on our discussion board before class. Be prepared to discuss why you choose the scene or image you did and how the particular formal element functions in the example you've chosen.

Week 4: The Experience of Images: Vision and Visuality

Reading: James Elkins "Just Looking"

Case Study: Impressionism, the Railroad and the *Flâneur*

Schivelbush - "Panoramic Travel" in *The Railway Journey*, pp. 52-69.

Kromm - "The *Flâneur* / *Flâneuse* Phenomenon," pp. 147-155.

Online Assignment #1: If the 19th century experience of sight was transformed by the advent of the locomotive and the practice of *flâneur*, what sorts of media and experiences contribute to contemporary "visuality?" Choose an image or event that somehow illustrates this influence upon vision. Then, use this image to address the larger question of how the eye experiences time and space in the 21st century?

Week 5: The Gaze: Vision as Power

Reading: *Themes in Contemporary Art*, "The Gaze" pp 90-93.

Case Study: The Reclining Female Nude From Giorgione to Manet

John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 45-64

Online Assignment #2: The contemporary photographer Jeff Wall has described his *For Women* (1979) as a "remake" of Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1882). What do these works have to say about the relationship between gender and the gaze? How do Wall's manipulations to the original change this relationship? In order to engage these questions, you might want to ask yourself: Who does the looking each image? Who is there to be looked at? How do these issues contribute to the works' statement on gender? (Images of these works can be found on the *MyCourses* site).

Week 6: Surveillance and Art

Reading: Walker and Chaplin, "Surveillance," pp. 97-106

Themes in Contemporary Art - "What is Public? What is Private?" pp. 173-176

Case Study: Ai Wei Wei and Censorship in China
"Chinese Artist, Activist Ai Wei Wei Arrested" PBS

Online Assignment #3: For this week, I would like you to choose a scene from either *The Truman Show* (1998), *The Lives of Others* (2006) or *Rear Window* (1954) which engages the theme of surveillance. Then try to connect your analysis of this scene to some ideas we have discussed in class in relation to surveillance. Of particular relevance might be Foucault's idea of panopticism discussed in the *Themes in Contemporary Art* reading.

Week 7: Language and/as Art: Manifestos, Captions and Word Art

Reading: Themes in Contemporary Art, pp. 201-217, 223-229.
Marinetti - "The Futurist Manifesto"
Oldenberg - "I am for an Art"

In-Class Assignment: Using Marinetti's writing as an example, you will write an introductory paragraph for a manifesto of a fictitious art movement. Your text should include the historical or social catalyst for your movement as well as some description of the formal qualities of your art and the way in which this work will accomplish the stated goals of the manifesto.

Online Assignment #4: Richard Misrach's recent work, *Destroy This Memory* (2010), features photographs of handwritten messages spray painted on walls or scrawled on fences and bridges by those left stranded during Hurricane Katrina. Instead of using the conventional photojournalistic form, Misrach showed up after the disaster and meticulously catalogued these messages rather than the people themselves. Do you think this is an effective strategy in conveying the human drama or not. Is the text within these images as affective as actually showing human suffering or does Misrach sanitize the experience by focusing on these messages?

Week 8: Time and Temporality, EXAM 1

Reading: "Time" in Themes of Contemporary Art, pp. 111-132.

Case Study: Smithson and Earth Art
Robert Smithson "Entropy and the New Monuments" and/or "Entropy Made Visible (1973), *An Interview with Alison Sky*"

Screening: excerpts from *The Spiral Jetty* (1970)

Online Assignment #4: While the category of time based art forms is usually limited to film and music, this week we considered the question of whether still images might also articulate a temporality of sorts. Consider the Tag Body Spray ad and the Japanese Silkscreen Painting on the *MyCourses* module for this week. Describe the differing experiences of time that these images prompt? How long does it take to fully take these images in? What is this experience of time like in each case? How do the formal elements and context of these images contribute to their differing temporalities?

Week 9: Reproduction and Repetition

Reading: Sturken, "Visual Technologies, Image Reproduction and the Copy," pp. 185-204.

Case Study: Pop Art and Andy Warhol
Crow - "Saturday Disasters: Trace and Referent in Early Warhol," pp. 49-60.

Online Assignment #5: On page 51, Crow describes Warhol's *Marilyn Monroe* series as a "lengthy act of mourning." How do the themes of reproduction and repetition address the process of mourning in these works? Does this relationship in any way pertain to the role the image plays in deaths of contemporary stars (Michael Jackson, Anna Nicole Smith, Princess Diana)? Explain.

Week 10: The Role(s) of the Artist and Audience

Reading: "Jackson Pollock: Is He the *Greatest* Living Painter in the United States?" *Life Magazine*, August 8, 1949, pp. 42–45.

Case Study: Postmodernism and "The Death of the Author"
Sherrie Levine - "Statement" in *Art in Theory*, pp. 1066-1067.
Barbara Kruger - "'Taking' Pictures" in *Art in Theory*, p. 1070.
Sturken - "Pastiche Parody and the Remake," pp. 328-333.

Screening: excerpts from Hans Namuth's *Pollock '54*

Online Assignment #6: Find a portrait of a notable artist. Discuss how the formal elements of the image contribute to the way we are to regard the cultural position of the artist? Does it elevate him/her? How so? What is an artist according to the image?

Week 11: Low vs. "High" Culture

Reading: Walker and Chaplin - "Concepts of Culture," pp. 7-18.
Kruger - "What's High, What's Low- and Who Cares?" *The New York Times*, Sunday, September 1990.

Case Study: French Realism and Popular Culture
Peter Eisenmann "Courbet's Trilogies of 1849-50," 212-220.

Online Assignment #7: Choose a painting by Courbet from the aftermath of the Revolution of 1848 (1849-50) and discuss how it utilizes the conventions of popular images in order to engage the newly diversified audience of the Salon.

Week 12: Public Art and Controversy, EXAM #2

Reading: Hilde Hein "What is Public Art?"

Case Study: Richard Serra and the Tilted Arc
Vilis R. Inde, "Richard Serra: Whose Property is it Anyway?"

Case Study: Eric Fischl's *Tumbling Woman* and the 9/11 Controversy
Andrea Pevsner - *New York Post* Editorials

Group Assignment: For this assignment, each group will be assigned a position to take in the controversy over Fischl's sculpture in Rockefeller Center. Each side will then prepare an argument to make to a jury of their peers

in favor of either removing or not removing the statue. The jury will then decide who has made the most convincing argument.

Week 13: The Visual Culture of Science

Reading: Themes in Contemporary Art - pp. 246-263.

New York Times - "Art Installations Find Fertile Ground in Science Centers" and "The Artist in Hazmat Suits"

Case Study: Joseph Wright and the Enlightenment
Gardner's- "The Enlightenment," pp. 324-5.

Online Assignment #8: What does Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* (1632) tell us about the nature of scientific discovery? Where does it position us in relation to the scene? Why is that important? What formal elements contribute to this overall sense of discovery?

Group Activity: For this week's activity we will separate into opposing sides and debate the following question: Are the genetic modifications of Eduardo Kac's *GFP Bunny* (2000) unethical or an important component in understanding our changing relation to the natural world?

Week 14: New Media and Everyday Life

Reading: Danahay- "Feats of Simulation and the World of Video Games: Art, Cinema And Interactivity" (*from:* Kromm and Bakewell)

Ferranto - "Digital Self-fashioning in Cyberspace: The New Digital Self-Portrait" (*from:* Kromm and Bakewell)

Online Assignment #9: For this week's assignment, you will compare a digital image of yourself from Facebook to an "analog" photograph of yourself from your family album. Describe the difference in these two modes of presentation and the experience of the image they create. Does the sheer abundance of digital images somehow diminish the power or meaning of family photographs or simply transforming it? Will the digital image one day be able to signify the same sense of time and history as the film photograph from your family album?

Reaction Paper Due

Week 15: Virtual Museum Tours

Week 16 - Virtual Museum Tours

ARH 105 - Virtual Museum Tour Grading Rubric (out of 100)

	Emerging 1	Emerging 2	Proficient	Above Average	Outstanding
Background information on Museum	The emerging 1 presentation gives little or no information regarding the museum's history. There is no real focus or depth to the information that is provided.	The emerging 2 presentation gives some historical information on the museum. However, there is little focus or flow to this information.	The proficient presentation gives the basic historical information for the museum. There is perhaps a discussion of the architecture and founding, but the focus is lacking and the transition to the analysis of specific works is abrupt.	The outstanding presentation presents a summary of the history of the museum. This discussion includes the establishment of the museum, the strengths of its collection and, if relevant, its architecture.	The outstanding presentation offers a succinct summary of the history of the museum in question. This discussion includes the establishment of the museum, the strengths of its collection and, if relevant, an analysis of its architecture. In addition to this general information, the presentation hones in on the period that is to be discussed in the analysis of specific works.
	10	12.5	15	17.5	20
Style, Movement and/or Historical Context of Works	The emerging 1 presentation makes passing reference to larger historical context, but does not go into detail. There is little to no discussion of the relationship between this context and the work in question.	The emerging 2 presentation mentions the larger period of the work, but fails to make meaningful connections between this period and the work. Some features of both are discussed. However, the larger connection needs more information in order to become clear.	The proficient presentation addresses the larger historical context of the work. The main features of the style are mentioned and related to the work in question.	The above average presentation discusses the individual work in terms of its larger historical context. The main features of periods are mentioned and there is a discussion of the specific ways in which the work conforms with or contradicts its larger period.	The outstanding presentation connects the individual works to a larger historical context. This is accomplished by drawing comparisons to works seen in class and weighing the works against larger features of the style and period. This presentation also includes references to relevant historical events that may have influenced the work. Overall, the presentation presents a rich historical context for the work.
	10	12.5	15	17.5	20

Formal Analysis of Works	The emerging 1 presentation only indirectly references formal aspects of the work. There is no real engagement with the formal elements, yet alone analysis.	The emerging 2 presentation addresses several formal elements of the work in question. However, there is only superficial discussion of the way in which these elements contribute to the larger experience of the work.	The proficient presentation includes a formal analysis of the works of art under discussion. The major formal components are addressed and there is some attempt at tying them a larger interpretation. However, more in-depth analysis is needed to make this discussion persuasive.	The above average presentation includes a persuasive formal analysis of the works of art under discussion. This presentation does not simply list or describe the formal elements present in the work but ties them to a larger interpretation of the work.	The outstanding presentation includes a comprehensive formal analysis of the works of art under discussion. This presentation does not simply list or describe the formal elements present in the work but ties them to a larger interpretation of the work. Considerable thought has been given to the interrelation of form and content.
	10	12.5	15	17.5	20
Application of Concepts to the Works	The emerging 1 presentation either does not include or only indirectly references concepts discussed in class without a concerted attempt at definition or application.	The emerging 2 presentation integrates 1 or 2 concepts. However, the understanding of these concepts is incorrect or only superficial. The application needs additional information to be convincing.	The proficient presentation integrates 3 concepts. This application shows a basic understanding of the concept. However, this discussion would benefit from more in-depth analysis.	The above average presentation successfully integrates 3 concepts. This application shows a mastery of the concept. However, the application is fairly obvious and could be deepened.	The outstanding presentation integrates 3 concepts in an imaginative and thoughtful way. This application shows both mastery of the concept and creativity in its application.
	10	12.5	15	17.5	20
Coherence and Structure of Presentation	The emerging 1 presentation contains no discernible structure. There is no connection between ideas and no sense of flow throughout.	The emerging 2 presentation maintains only a very basic structure. The connection between segments is not entirely clear. Similar ideas are brought up throughout the presentation. The presentation feels like a collection of ideas.	The proficient presentation maintains a basic structure throughout. The talk has been organized into segments. However, the connection between them needs to be strengthened. In addition, the focus is lost at times despite their being an overriding sense of organization.	The above average presentation maintains a coherent structure throughout. It contains an introduction and conclusion. However, the connection between segments could be tightened in order to maintain focus. Overall, there is coherent logic behind the organization of the presentation.	The outstanding maintains a coherent structure throughout. The presentation begins with a brief summary of the larger goals and structure of the talk. Each segment flows smoothly to the next and the focus is apparent throughout. The presentation ends by returning to the initial ideas of the introduction in order to tie up loose ends.
	10	12.5	15	17.5	20