

**Visual Rhetoric  
SPCH 5300**

**Instructor:** Jennifer Peeples  
**Office hours:** Wednesday 12:30-2:30  
and by appointment

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**Required Textbooks:**

Bang, M. (2000). *Picture this: How pictures work*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

**Required Readings on Course Reserve:**

Berger, A. A. (1989). *Seeing is believing: An introduction to visual communication*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

Blair, C., M. S. Jeppeson, and E. Pucci, Jr. (1991). Public memorializing in postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as prototype." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77, 263-288.

Brummett, B. (2014). *Rhetoric in popular culture*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Clay, R. (2009). *Beautiful thing: An introduction to design*. Oxford: Berg.

Dickinson, G., Ott, B. L., & Aoki, E. (2005). Memory and myth at the Buffalo Bill Museum. *Western Journal Of Communication*, 69(2), 85-108.

Foss, S. K. (2005). Theory of visual rhetoric. In Smith, K., S Moriarty, G. Baratsis., & Kenney, K. (Eds.), *Handbook of visual communication: Theory, methods, and media* (pp. 141-152). Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates,

Harold, C. (2007). *OurSpace: Resisting the corporate control of culture*. Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota Press.

Hart, R. P. (2005). *Modern rhetorical criticism* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Kress, G. and van Leeuwen, T. (2006). 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. *Reading images: The grammar of visual design*. London: Routledge.

Lucaites, J., & Hariman, R. (2001). Visual rhetoric, photojournalism, and democratic public culture. *Rhetoric Review*, 20(1/2), 37.

McCloud, S. (1994). *Understanding comics: The invisible art*. New York, NY: William Morrow.

McNaughton, M. (2007). Hard cases: Prison tattooing as visual argument. *Argumentation & Advocacy*, 43(3/4), 133-143.

Olson, L., C. A. Finnegan, & D. S. Hope. (2008) *Visual rhetoric: A reader in communication and American culture*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication Inc.

Schill, D. (2012). The visual image and the political image: A review of visual communication research in the field of political communication. *Review of Communication*, 12(2), 118-142.

Sturken, M and Cartwright, L. (2009). *Practices of looking: An introduction to visual culture* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

**By the end of the course, you should have:**

- a greater understanding of visual culture, communication and rhetoric.
- factual knowledge of the visual communication terminology.
- knowledge of different approaches to analyzing visual messages.
- enhanced critical thinking and analytical skills.
- improved writing, research, discussion, and speaking skills.

**My Expectations:**

I am at my best as a teacher in situations where students are consistently present, actively participating in the learning process (this includes work done outside the classroom), and taking responsibility for their course-related actions. Our (mine, yours and your classmates') satisfaction with the course depends largely on the extent to which you honor these expectations to the best of your ability.

**Your Expectations:**

You should also have some expectations of me as an instructor. I believe my responsibilities as a teacher include starting and ending class on time, being prepared to teach, attending office hours, returning your work promptly, grading fairly and fostering a respectful, open learning environment. If at any time you feel I have not met these expectations or if you have any additional concerns, please let me know so that your needs as a student can best be met.

**Grade distribution:**

100-93% = A

92-90% = A-

89-87% = B+

86-83% = B

82-80% = B-

79-77% = C+

76-73% = C

72-70% = C-

69-67% = D+

66-63% = D

62-60% = D-

59-0% = F

**Assignments:**

**Quizzes:** Quizzes will take place at the beginning of class. They are intended as a means of encouraging you to read. They cannot be made up. Please come to class on time.

**Picture This assignment and paper:**

Using the assigned book Picture This, you will create a construction paper image/illustration along with a paper explaining the decisions you made as you constructed your project.

**Critical analysis paper and presentation:**

This paper analyzes a visual artifact. In the paper, you will explain how the visual artifact functions (how it persuades) by using the assigned readings and the skills and tools learned throughout the class. You will then present your artifact and analysis to the class.

**Final exam:** Tuesday Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>, 1:30-3:20. Show me what you know.

**Evaluations:**

Quizzes	15%
<u>Picture This</u> image	10%
<u>Picture This</u> paper	20%
Critical analysis paper	35%
Critical analysis presentation	05%
Final exam	<u>15%</u>
	100%

**READING THE SCHEDULE**

1. This schedule is subject to change if the demands of the course require it.
2. The reading assignment will be **discussed** the day it is listed.
3. Assignments are written in **bold type**.

**During the course of the class, reading assignments may be subject to changes by the instructor.**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading Assignment</b>
<b>Introduction to visual communication:</b>		
<b><u>Week 1</u></b> Aug. 26, 28	Tues: Introduction to course.  Thurs: Visual rhetoric	Thurs: Olson, Finnegan and Hope, "Visual rhetoric in communication" 1-9+
<b><u>Week 2</u></b> Sept. 2, 4	Tues: Theory of visual rhetoric  Thurs: Visual rhetoric & culture	Tues: Foss, "Theory of visual rhetoric"  Thurs: Sturken and Cartwright, "Images, power and politics." pp. 9-26

<p><b><u>Week 3</u></b> Sept. 9, 11</p>	<p>Visual rhetoric &amp; culture</p>	<p>Tues: Sturken and Cartwright, "Images, power and politics." p. 26-46.</p> <p>Thurs: Hariman and Lucaites, "Visual rhetoric, photojournalism and democratic public culture"</p>
<p><b>Method: How do visual texts work?</b></p>		
<p><b><u>Week 4</u></b> Sept. 16, 18</p>	<p>Tues: Analyzing visual rhetoric</p> <p>Thurs: Analyzing Media</p>	<p>Tues: Brummett, "Visual Rhetoric Criticism," 196-202 Hart, "Analyzing Media," pp. 177-188.</p> <p>Thurs: Hart, "Analyzing Media," pp. 188-210</p>
<p><b><u>Week 5</u></b> Sept. 23, 25</p>	<p>Tues: Perception and Composition</p> <p>Thurs: Elements of Visual Communication</p>	<p>Tues: Bang, <u>Picture This</u></p> <p>Thurs: Berger, 25-59</p>
<p><b><u>Week 6</u></b> Sept. 30, Oct. 2</p>	<p>Tues: Visual Vocabulary</p> <p>Thurs: Composition</p>	<p>Tues: McCloud, p. 24-59</p> <p>Thurs: Clay, 89-134</p>
<p><b><u>Week 7</u></b> Oct. 7, 9</p>	<p>Gaze, Frame, Social Distance, Involvement and Power</p>	<p>Tues: <u>Reading Images</u>, Kress and van Leeuwen, pp. 114-133</p> <p>Thurs: <u>Reading Images</u>, Kress and van Leeuwen, p. 133-153.</p>
<p><b>Analyses examples: What do visual texts do?</b></p>		
<p><b><u>Week 8</u></b> Oct. 14, 16</p>	<p>Tues: <u>Picture This</u> assignment work day</p> <p>Thurs: <i>Attend your Friday classes!</i></p>	
<p><b><u>Week 9</u></b> Oct. 21, 23</p>	<p><b><u>Picture This</u> Presentations</b></p>	
<p><b><u>Week 10</u></b> Oct. 28, 30</p>	<p>Tues: Memorialize and commemorate.</p>	<p>Tues: Dickinson, G., Ott, B. L., &amp; Aoki, E., Memory and myth. 85-108.</p>

	Thurs: Performing and seeing	Thurs: McNaughton, Hard Cases, 133-143.
<b><u>Week 11</u></b> Nov. 4, 6	Tues: Commodifying  Thurs: Confronting and resisting	Tues: Class viewing: <i>Killing Us Softly 4</i> .  Thurs: Harold, OurSpace, Anti-Logos, 27-70.
<b><u>Week 12</u></b> Nov. 11, 13	Tues: Governing and authorizing  Iconic images smack down!	Tues: Schill, political image, 118-142.
<b><u>Week 13</u></b> Nov. 18, 20	In-class paper workshop  <i>Thurs: Prof. Peebles is out of town.</i>	Paper <i>drafts</i> due  Work on your paper
<b><u>Week 14</u></b> Nov.25, Nov, 27	<b>Paper Presentations</b>  <i>Happy Thanksgiving</i>	<b>Papers due!</b>
<b><u>Week 15</u></b> Dec. 2, 4	<b>Paper Presentations</b>	
<b><u>Final exam</u></b>	Tuesday Dec. 9 <sup>th</sup> , 1:30-3:20	

**Please keep in mind the following**

**Class content:**

Visual communication, like its spoken counterpart, can create strong reactions in its viewers, especially if you are not the intended audience. I expect that all the points of view expressed by your classmates, the visual examples presented in the texts, and those discussed in class will be treated with respect.

Visual examples used in this class will contain nudity (not pornography), images of death, political cartoons and other things that might be offensive to some people. If you feel that you are unable to view these images with a critical/analytical stance, this may not be the class for you.

**Please only bring in visual examples to share with the class when assigned or with a clear educational or informative goal. Please don't bring in visual examples solely for the intention to shock, offend, or titillate the class. If you are unsure about your image, check with me first.**

**Assignments:**

- All presentations must be performed and assignments turned in on the due date in class in order to receive full credit. Exceptions will be made for extreme documented circumstances.
- All assignments must be turned in at the beginning of the class period that they are due or else they will receive 05% off the final grade each day the assignment is late including the due date. An assignment will not be accepted after three days past the due date. Quizzes and in-class assignments cannot be made up.
- Plagiarized work will receive an F for assignment and may, depending on the severity of the infringement, receive a failing grade for the course and/or expulsion from the university.
- Students may not use a paper written in another class for credit in this one, or vice versa, without instructor consent.
- Please refer to the university honesty/honor code for further policies pertinent to this class.

**In the classroom:**

- Students who miss the first week of class often have a difficult time catching up. I therefore reserve the right to drop students from the course if s/he misses a class meeting the first week of the semester.
- If you have a disability, I strongly encourage you to contact the Disability Resource Center or myself so that the classroom environment can be made conducive to your learning style.
- I also encourage all students to take advantage of my offices hours or e-mail if you have any concerns or questions over any aspect of the course. I am here to help you learn!
- Finally, I try to create a comfortable classroom environment that contributes to your education. For that reason I ask that you turn off your phones, no iPods, and absolutely no text messaging! Laptops may be used during lecture, but must be turned off during class discussion and activities. Please refrain from bringing anything else to class that may be a distraction for you or any of the other students. Thanks!

