



Visual Rhetoric

CMST 5300

Instructor: Jennifer Peeples
Office hours: Wednesday 1-3
and by appointment

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Required Textbooks:

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

Required Readings on Canvas:

Brummett, B. (2014). *Rhetoric in popular culture*. 3rd Los Angeles: Sage.

Fahmy, S. Bock, M.A. & Wanta, W. (2014). *Visual communication theory and research: A mass communication perspective*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

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.

Heller, S. & Anderson, G. (2016). *The graphic design idea book: Inspiration from 50 masters*. London: Laurence King Publishing.

Kress, G. and van Leeuwen, T. (2006). 2nd 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), 37-42.

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

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

Sturken, M and Cartwright, L. (2018). *Practices of looking: An introduction to visual culture* (3rd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

**Additional [The Conversation](#) and [On Photography](#) readings listed in the syllabus.

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.

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 in class.

Group project (3 parts):**1) Construct a visual artifact:**

This can be any type of visual product: a photograph, advertisement, cartoon, illustration, memorial, website, billboard, television news clip, short film, commercial, print news story (with pictures, of course), or something else. The visual artifact will need to address a public audience for a purpose other than entertainment or selling a product.

2) Write an explanation paper

The paper will be used to explain your visual artifact. It will put it into context by explaining the situation, audience, issue, time period, etc (1-2 pages max). Using readings from the class, the explanation will also provide a bullet pointed list of the choices made by the group in the production of the visual artifact. For each bullet point you will 1) state the concept you used, 2) provide its definition and citation, and 3) how you applied it in the construction of your artifact. Include a bibliography (APA style) of the sources you used. Show me what you know, people!

3) Present findings to the class as a Pecha Kucha (20 slides each lasting 20 seconds = 6.6 minutes).

The visual artifact and the critical analysis will then be presented to the class at the end of the course.

Evaluations:

Quizzes	10%
<u>Picture This</u> image	10%
<u>Picture This</u> paper	20%
Critical analysis draft	02%
Critical analysis paper	28%
Group project visual artifact	10%
Group project explanation	10%
Group project presentation--PechaKucha	<u>10%</u>
	100%

Grade distribution:

100-93% = A	76-73% = C
92-90% = A-	72-70% = C-
89-87% = B+	69-67% = D+
86-83% = B	66-63% = D
82-80% = B-	62-60% = D-
79-77% = C+	59-0% = F

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.

DATE	Topic	Reading Assignment
Introduction to visual rhetoric:		
Aug 28	Tues: Introduction to course.	
Aug 30	Thurs: Visual rhetoric	Thurs: Olson, Finnegan and Hope, "Visual rhetoric in communication" 1-8+ https://colorado.aiga.org/2013/01/visual-rhetoric-an-introduction-for-students-of-visual-communication/
Sept 4	Tues: Theory and analysis of visual rhetoric	Tues: Foss, "Theory of visual rhetoric" Brummett, "Visual Rhetoric Criticism," 196-202

Sept 6	Thurs: Theory of visual communication	Thurs: Fahmy, Bock and Wanta.
Sept 11	Tues: Visual rhetoric & culture	Tues: Sturken and Cartwright, "Images, power and politics." pp. 13-29
Sept 13	Thurs: Visual rhetoric & culture	Thurs: Sturken and Cartwright, "Images, power and politics." p. 29-48
Method: Tools for analyzing images		
Sept 18	Tues: Perception and Composition	Tues: Bang, <u>Picture This</u>
Sept 20	Thurs: Experiment with Design	Thurs: Heller & Anderson, Graphic design idea book
Sept 25	Tues: Communicate a message	Tues: Heller & Anderson, Graphic design idea book
Sept 27	Thurs: Design day!	Thurs:
Oct. 2	Tues: <u>Picture This</u> papers due and presentations	
Oct 4	Thurs: <u>Picture This</u> presentations	
Oct. 9	Tues: Visual Vocabulary	Tues: McCloud, p. 24-59
Oct 11	Thurs: Gaze, Frame, and Social Distance	Thurs: <u>Reading Images</u> , Kress and van Leeuwen, pp. 114-133
Oct 16	Tues: Involvement and Power	Tues: <u>Reading Images</u> , Kress and van Leeuwen, p. 133-153.
Function: What do images do?		
Oct. 18	Thurs: Memorialize and commemorate.	Thurs: https://theconversation.com/the-best-weapon-against-terrorists-oblivion-35988 https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/13/magazine/getting-others-right.html https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/15/magazine/the-history-of-photography-is-a-history-of-shattered-glass.html https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/03/magazine/a-too-perfect-picture.html

Oct 23	Tues: Commodify	Tues: Class viewing: <i>Killing Us Softly 4</i>
Oct 25	Thurs: Commodify	Thurs: https://theconversation.com/for-fathers-day-give-us-men-who-arent-shown-as-fools-and-clowns-31170 https://theconversation.com/the-coded-images-that-let-advertisers-target-all-our-senses-at-once-98676 https://theconversation.com/do-sex-and-violence-actually-sell-45138
Oct 30	Tues: Paper work day. Draft due	
Nov 1	Thurs: Paper due day Brief presentation.	
Nov 6	Tues: Performing and seeing	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/23/magazine/theres-less-to-portraits-than-meets-the-eye-and-more.html https://theconversation.com/whats-lost-when-we-photograph-life-instead-of-experiencing-it-58392 https://theconversation.com/selfie-is-not-a-dirty-word-68966 https://theconversation.com/humanizing-the-heroin-epidemic-a-photo-essay-56412 https://theconversation.com/why-do-people-risk-their-lives-for-the-perfect-selfie-55937
Nov 8	Thurs: Group organization day	Professor Peeples will be at a conference
Nov. 13	Tues: Perform and confront	Tues: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/31/magazine/the-superhero-photographs-of-the-black-lives-matter-movement.html https://theconversation.com/friday-essay-worth-a-thousand-words-how-photos-shape-attitudes-to-refugees-62705
Nov 15	Thurs: Confront and Resist	Thurs: https://theconversation.com/friday-essay-the-photographer-the-island-and-half-a-million-lifejackets-81682 https://theconversation.com/is-ryan-kellys-pulitzer-prize-winning-photograph-an-american-guernica-82567

Nov. 20	Tues: Governing and authorizing	Tues: https://theconversation.com/five-things-we-learned-from-the-father-of-the-political-cartoon-42575 https://theconversation.com/the-branding-of-an-american-president-40451 https://theconversation.com/when-image-trumps-ideology-how-jfk-created-the-template-for-the-modern-presidency-78073
Nov. 22	Thanksgiving!	
Nov. 27	Tues: Iconic image smack down!	Tues: Lucaites and Hariman “Visual rhetoric, photojournalism and democratic public culture”
Nov. 29	Thurs: Group work day	
Dec. 4	Tues: Group Presentations	Tues: Artifacts, Papers, and slides due
Dec. 6	Thurs: Group Presentations	

Please keep in mind the following

Class content:

Images, like their spoken counterparts, 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.
- 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.
- I also encourage all students to take advantage of my offices hours (Wed. 1-3, Main 213) or e-mail (jennifer.peeples@usu.edu) 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 and absolutely no texting! 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!

From the university:

- Disabilities: USU welcomes students with disabilities. If you have, or suspect you may have, a physical, mental health, or learning disability that may require accommodations in this course, please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as early in the semester as possible (University Inn # 101, 435-797-2444, drc@usu.edu). All disability related accommodations must be approved by the DRC. Once approved, the DRC will coordinate with faculty to provide accommodations.

- **USU Plagiarism Policy:** Plagiarism includes knowingly "representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials." The penalties for plagiarism are severe. They include warning or reprimand, grade adjustment, probation, suspension, expulsion, withholding of transcripts, denial or revocation of degrees, and referral to psychological counseling. Please refer to The Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University, Article VI., <https://studentconduct.usu.edu/studentcode/>.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment is defined by the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as any "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." If you feel you are a victim of sexual harassment, you may talk to or file a complaint with the Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Office, located in Old Main, Room 161, or call the office at 797-1266.
- **Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy:** Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.