

**Visual Rhetoric
Communication Studies 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:

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

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

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

Dickinson, G, Blair, C. & Ott, B. L. (2010). *Places of public memory*. Tuscaloosa, U of Alabama P. 1-32.

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* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

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.

Murray, D. C. (2015). Notes to self: The visual culture of selfies in the age of social media. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 18.6, 490-516.

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* (2nd 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:

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|-------------|-------------|
| 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 |

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.

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:

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| Quizzes | 10% |
| <u>Picture This</u> image | 10% |
| <u>Picture This</u> paper | 20% |
| Critical analysis paper | 30% |
| Group project (visual artifact 10%; explanation 10%) | 20% |
| Group project presentation | <u>10%</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.

| DATE | Topic | Reading Assignment |
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| Introduction to visual rhetoric: | | |
| Week 1 Jan 10, 12 | Tues: Introduction to course. Thurs: Visual rhetoric | Thurs: Olson, Finnegan and Hope, "Visual rhetoric in communication" 1-9+ |
| Week 2 Jan. 17, 19 | 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 |
| Week 3 Jan. 24, 26 | Visual rhetoric & culture | Tues: Sturken and Cartwright, "Images, power and politics." p. 26-46. Thurs: Lucaites and Hariman "Visual rhetoric, photojournalism and democratic public culture" |
| Method: How do visual texts function? | | |
| Week 4 Jan. 31, Feb. 2 | Tues: Perception and Composition Thurs: Elements of Visual Communication | Tues: Bang, <u>Picture This</u> Thurs: Berger, 25-59 |
| Week 5 Feb. 7, 9 | Tues: Visual Vocabulary Thurs: Composition | Tues: McCloud, p. 24-59 Thurs: Clay, 89-134 |
| Week 6 Feb. 14, 16 | Tues: <u>Picture This</u> papers due and presentations Thurs: <u>Picture This</u> presentations | |

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| <p><u>Week 7</u> Feb. 21, 23</p> | <p>Tues: Attend your Monday classes</p> <p>Thurs: Gaze, Frame, Social Distance, Involvement and Power</p> | <p>Tues:</p> <p>Thurs: <u>Reading Images</u>, Kress and van Leeuwen, pp. 114-133</p> |
| <p><u>Week 8</u> Feb. 28, Mar. 2</p> | <p>Tues: Gaze, Frame, Social Distance, Involvement and Power</p> <p>Thurs: Analyzing visual rhetoric</p> | <p>Tues: <u>Reading Images</u>, Kress and van Leeuwen, p. 133-153.</p> <p>Thurs: Brummett, “Visual Rhetoric Criticism,” 196-202 & Hart, “Analyzing Media,” pp. 177-188.</p> |
| <p><u>Week 9</u> Mar. 7, 9</p> | <p>Spring Break</p> | |
| <p><u>Week 10</u> Mar. 14, 16</p> | <p>Tues: Analyzing Media</p> <p>Thurs: Paper work day</p> | <p>Tues: Hart, “Analyzing Media,” pp. 188-210</p> |
| <p>Analyses examples: What do visual texts do?</p> | | |
| <p><u>Week 11</u> Mar. 21, 23</p> | <p>Tues: Analysis Papers due!</p> <p>Thurs: Memorialize and commemorate.</p> | <p>Thurs: Dickinson, G, Blair, C. & Ott, B. L., Places of public memory, 1-32.</p> |
| <p><u>Week 12</u> Mar. 28, 30</p> | <p>Tues: Commodifying</p> <p>Thurs: Performing and Seeing</p> | <p>Tues: Class viewing: <i>Killing Us Softly 4</i>.</p> <p>Thurs: Murry, Notes to self, 490-516. **Please note there is a nude image of the upper half of a woman in this article, because (brace yourselves) people occasionally take selfies while not wearing all their clothes—even in Utah.</p> |
| <p><u>Week 13</u> Apr. 4, 6</p> | <p>Tues: Confronting and resisting</p> <p>Thurs: Governing and authorizing</p> | <p>Tues: Harold, OurSpace, Anti-Logos, 27-70.</p> <p>Thurs: Schill, political image, 118-142.</p> |

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| Week 14 Apr. 11, 13 | Tues: Iconic image smack down! Thurs: Group work day | |
| Week 15 April 18, 20 | Group Presentations | Papers due |
| Week 16 Apr. 25, 27 | Group Presentations | |
| Final exam Tuesday, May 2 9:30-11:20 | 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.
- 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 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!