IDS 216W | Introduction to Visual Culture

FALL 2020, Tuesday, 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM
Class will be synchronous on Tuesdays with asynchronous assignments due later in the week.
ZOOM CLASS LINK: https://emory.zoom.us/j/97315106301

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Katie Schank
EMAIL: kschank@emory.edu (I will respond within 24-48 hours.)
PHONE: 404-316-8851

OFFICE HOURS:
By appointment: https://calendly.com/kschank/office-hours
Zoom link: https://emory.zoom.us/j/860852128

COURSE OVERVIEW:
We live in a culture that is saturated by visual images. Thus, it is vital to understand what forces shape visual culture and how it shapes our thinking about myriad topics such as politics, race, class, and gender. In this class you will learn the importance and power of the visual as we explore and analyze how the visual is produced, circulated, and consumed. We will begin by understanding the theories behind visual culture and then learn how to apply these theories as we analyze a variety of visual materials including photography, art, advertising, news, and digital media. You will become adept at “reading” visual images in the same way that you would read other texts, and the discussion-based nature of our synchronous meetings will give you ample opportunity to hone this skill. In addition, short visual and textual assignments throughout the semester and a larger final project on a topic of your choosing will offer you ample opportunities to apply your skills and knowledge and begin to think how you might incorporate the visual into future research projects.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Students who complete this course will:

1. Be adept at critically “reading” visual images.
2. Understand the theoretical and analytical frameworks that can be applied to visual culture.
3. Identify how visual images are both reflective of and shaped by social and cultural events.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of interdisciplinary methodology in research and writing and be able to make an original and cogent argument supported by evidence from primary visual sources, visual theory, and secondary sources.
5. Demonstrate skill in critical thinking, writing, research, oral presentation, and group discussion.
REQUIRED TEXTS

There are no texts to buy for this course. All readings and materials will be available on the course Canvas site.

ASSESSMENTS/ASSIGNMENTS

Synchronous Class Participation (15%)
Discussion Board Participation (15%)
Visual Analysis Assignments (20%)
Final Presentation and Peer Feedback (10%)
Final Paper (40%)

GRADING SCALE

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<th>Grade</th>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>89-87</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>86-83</td>
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<td>C+</td>
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<td>66-64</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>63 or lower</td>
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If you have concerns about a grade, I ask you to explain those in an email to me. The email should articulate why you think your grade was not adequate.

Class Participation (15%): The success of our class depends on everyone’s involvement. Please come to our synchronous class sessions prepared to contribute by completing the assigned readings and viewing of visual materials. Be ready with questions, critiques, and analysis of the assigned materials. Your participation grade depends on your involvement and contributions to class discussion. Simply being in attendance does not earn you credit towards class participation. Please be prepared to have both your video and audio turned on in Zoom. Arrive on time, do not leave until class is over, and try to resist distraction!!!

When we have live discussions and online discussions, I want everyone to understand there is no one “right” answer. Different viewpoints and interpretations are encouraged and welcomed. There does not always need to be agreement in the class but there should always be respect for others as they express opinions and ideas that may differ from yours. For those needing guidelines on netiquette, please refer to [https://www.education.com/reference/article/netiquette-rules-behavior-internet/](https://www.education.com/reference/article/netiquette-rules-behavior-internet/)

Class Discussion Board (15%):

100-300 words, due weekly. Discussion posts are due each week on Sunday by 11:59 pm; comments are due each week by Monday, 11:59 pm. Each week you must post a response to the discussion prompt included in the course schedule and posted to the discussion board itself. Your response must be no shorter than 100 words and no longer than 300 words. In addition to posting your own answers, you must comment on at least
two posts by your classmates. Comments must be substantial and analytical—a quick two- or three-word comment will not suffice. You are certainly welcome to make more comments if you would like. Each discussion will be worth 3 points, and the total of these points will constitute your Class Discussion Board grade. For more detail, please see the rubric included on the Canvas site.

I hope to build a community of sharing beyond the live discussions that will take place during our live meetings on Tuesdays and the Class Discussion Board assignments. Once you become attuned to how much the visual is part of our everyday lives, you will constantly discover fun and exciting information to share! I will offer a place on the class Canvas site to share interesting articles and visuals that you discover. Participation in this sharing will not be mandatory but is highly encouraged.

**Visual Analysis Assignments (20%):** There will be four short visual analysis assignments (3-4 pages each) over the course of the semester that will align with the end of each unit. These assignments will be in response to readings, concepts, theories, and/or particular visual materials covered during that unit. These assignments will be posted on Canvas. Due dates for these assignments are posted in the Course Schedule and on the Canvas calendar.

**Presentations/Peer Feedback (10%):** Each student will give a short presentation about their final project/paper. Dates and details for this assignment will follow and will take place in the final class meetings of the semester.

**Final Project (40%):** The final project will be comprised of two shorter writing assignments (a project proposal and an annotated bibliography) that will help you build to your final paper/project. The topic of the final paper/project will be your choice. Specific requirements and parameters for this assignment will be given at a later date. Note: a requirement of the final project is that each student have a one-on-one meeting with me to discuss their intended project.

**A NOTE ON TIME:**

It may feel as if you have a lot more “homework” for this class. Due to the structure of the class, only one of our two weekly class times will meet “live” or synchronously. The other class time will be offline or asynchronous. Some of the assignments that you will do outside of class (listening to a lecture, participating in an online discussion, watching a video, touring an online exhibit) would have happened during a class period if we were meeting as a traditional, face to face class. In addition, you will have the assignments that would normally be the homework portion of the class (readings, writing assignments, etc.). On average, you should expect to spend two hours of time working outside of class for every credit hour for the class plus the hour and fifteen minutes of asynchronous “class work.”

Synchronous “live” sessions will take place every Tuesday from 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM. You can access the link for these session on the modules page of Canvas as well as at the top of this syllabus. Attendance for Zoom sessions are mandatory. Unexcused absences will result in a failing participation grade for that day. Consult “participation” under “course policies” for further information.

**CLASS POLICIES**

1. **Attendance:**
   Students should attend all synchronous classes. Students are allowed one absence with no penalty. After that, students will receive a 0 for each class missed. Serious illnesses are handled separately, will
require written documentation, and will call for the student to make up the work missed. Students are excused from class, without penalty, for the observance of religious holidays. Students should notify me during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class due to the observance of a religious holiday. If you miss class, you are responsible for getting notes from a classmate, including any altered assignments, project topics, or announcements that were made.

2. **Late Work:**
   Please note that readings and assignments are due on the dates designated in the syllabus. If an emergency arises and you make arrangements with me ahead of time, I may agree to accept a late assignment. If I do not agree or if you have not made prior arrangements with me, you will receive a lower grade. Paper assignments handed in after the due date will be penalized at 1/3 of a letter grade per day. For example, if your paper earned a grade of an A- but was one day late, the grade would be recorded as a B+. **All work must be turned in for a student to pass this course.**

3. **My availability:**
   In an effort to be accommodating to everyone’s varying schedules, I offer office hours by appointment in addition to my set office hours listed at the top of the syllabus. I encourage you to meet with me! I enjoy getting to know my students and having the opportunity to speak about the course and your other interests one on one. I am also available over e-mail and will respond within 24-48 hours, if not sooner. It is my policy that I do not read paper drafts over e-mail if you have not already met with me one on one.

4. **Assignments/Readings:**
   It is likely that there will be changes to the syllabus as the semester progresses. Depending on the direction of the course and student interest, it may be beneficial to substitute a different reading. Necessary changes will be announced in class, via email, and updated on the Course Schedule.
WHAT IS VISUAL CULTURE?
DEFINING THE FIELD

INTRODUCTION

Asynchronous Activities: Complete before our synchronous class meeting on 8/25

Introduction to Visual Culture

READ:
https://www-jstor-org.proxy.library.emory.edu/stable/3109288?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

VIEW:
Brian Kennedy, “Visual Literacy: Why We Need it,” TEDxDartmouth, May 26, 2010
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=186&v=E91fk6D0nwM&feature=emb_logo

DO:
Technology set up (Zoom, Canvas, VoiceThread)

WEEK 1

8/25

Introductions

Review of Canvas Site, Syllabus, and Class Policies

In-Class Writing:
Imagine that you have just a few minutes to explain to your roommate, friend, or a family member what Visual Culture is (or is not). What would you say based on what we have read and discussed thus far? Why would you argue that it’s an important field? What would you tell them if they asked you why you were taking this class?

HOW EXACTLY DO WE “READ” VISUAL IMAGES?!?
ANALYTICAL TOOLS & FRAMEWORKS

Asynchronous Activities: All due by 11:59 pm, 8/31 unless otherwise noted

READ:
Stuart Hall, “The Work of Representation”

POST:
See Discussion Board week #1 for questions/topic.

WEEK 2

9/1

CREAD:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>View</th>
<th>In-Class</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/8</td>
<td>Ketteeman, “Semiotics of Advertising and the Discourse of Consumption”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Before class, find two advertisements and post them to the course’s Canvas site. These can be from a magazine, social media, or an internet search. We will analyze these images using both Barthe’s system of sign/signifier/signified and Pierce’s of iconic, indexical, and symbolic signs.</td>
<td>Project Proposal Due. See “Assignments” tab on Canvas for information. Submit on Canvas by midnight.</td>
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**Asynchronous Activities: All due by 11:59 pm, 9/7 unless otherwise noted**

**Read:**
Benjamin “Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”
Davis, “Art in the Age of Digital Reproduction”

**Post:**
See Discussion Board week #2 for questions/topic.

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Listen</th>
<th>Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/15</td>
<td>Hillenbrand, “Remaking Tank Man, in China”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Project Proposal Due. See “Assignments” tab on Canvas for information. Submit on Canvas by midnight.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Asynchronous Activities: All due by 11:59 pm, 9/14 unless otherwise noted**

**Read:**
Sontag, “In Plato’s Cave” from On Photography

**Listen:**

**Post:**
See Discussion Board week #3 for questions/topic.

**Guest:**
Sarah Morris, Subject Librarian at the Woodruff Library

**Asynchronous Activities: All due by 11:59 pm, 9/21 unless otherwise noted**

**Read:**
Harriman and Lucaites: No Caption Needed
Hillenbrand, “Remaking Tank Man, in China”

**Post:**
See Discussion Board week #4 for questions/topic.
## ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME?
SPECTATORSHIP, THE GAZE, & POWER

### WEEK 5

| 9/22 | **READ:**  
Michel Foucault, “Panopticism”  
John Tagg, “Evidence Truth and Order: Photographic Records and the Growth of the State”  

Visual Analysis #1 Due. See “Assignments” tab on Canvas for information. Submit on Canvas by midnight. |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------|

**Asynchronous Activities: All due by 11:59 pm, 9/28 unless otherwise noted**

**READ:** Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasures"

**VIEW:**
John Burger, *Ways of Seeing*, episode 2  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JU_RToLqOsA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JU_RToLqOsA)

**POST:**
See Discussion Board week #5 for questions/topic.

### WEEK 6

| 9/29 | **READ:**  
Bell hooks, “The Black Oppositional Gaze”  

**IN-CLASS ACTIVITY:**  
Confronting the Gaze  
Look at the image that has been assigned to your group. Take just a few minutes and write about how the image makes you feel. Does not seeing the front of a subject anger or intrigue you? What’s the difference between your positionality as the viewer versus the positionality of the photographer? Does being confronted by any of these images make you feel uncomfortable? |
|------|---------------------------------------------------------------|

**Asynchronous Activities: All due by 11:59 pm, unless otherwise noted**

**READ:**  
Mirzoeff, “How to See Yourself”  
Murray, “Notes to Self: The Visual Culture of Selfies in the Age of Social Media” (CANVAS)  
[https://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/20/sunday-review/my-selfie-myself.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/20/sunday-review/my-selfie-myself.html)  
VIEW:
The Ugly Business of Beauty Apps | Internetting with Amanda Hess

POST:
See Discussion Board week #6 for questions/topic.

| HOW DOES THE VISUAL SHAPE UNDERSTANDINGS OF RACE AND ETHNICITY? |
| IMAGES, POWER, & POLITICS |
| WEEK 7 |
| 10/6 |
| READ: |
| Fanon “The Fact of Blackness” |
| Visual Analysis #2 Due. See “Assignments” tab on Canvas for information. Submit on Canvas by midnight. |

*Asynchronous Activities: All due by 11:59 pm, 9/21 unless otherwise noted*

EXPLORE:
https://exhibits.libraries.emory.edu/framing-shadows/portraits/

POST:
See Discussion Board week #7 for questions/topic.

| WEEK 8 |
| 10/13 |
| PICTURING RACE |
| READ: |

*Asynchronous Activities: All due by 11:59 pm, 9/21 unless otherwise noted*


EXPLORE:
https://fatwts.umbc.edu/online-exhibition/

POST:
See Discussion Board week #8 for questions/topic.

| WEEK 9 |
| 10/20 |
| READ: |
| Evelyn Alsultany, “Selling American Diversity and Muslim American Identity through Nonprofit Advertising Post-9/11 |
| “Visual Tropes of Migration Tell Predictable but Misleading Stories” |
## CAN THE VISUAL MAKE A DIFFERENCE?
### VISUAL ACTIVISM

**Asynchronous Activities: All due by 11:59 pm, 10/27 unless otherwise noted**

**VIEW:**
“Optics: Visual Culture and Electoral Politics”
[https://www.icp.org/browse/archive/media/optics-visual-culture-and-electoral-politics](https://www.icp.org/browse/archive/media/optics-visual-culture-and-electoral-politics)

“The Dark Art of Political Memes”

**POST:**
See Discussion Board week #9 for questions/topic.

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<tr>
<th>WEEK 10</th>
<th><strong>READ:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>10/27</td>
<td>Progressive Era and Documentary Photography, Reading TBD</td>
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**Asynchronous Activities: All due by 11:59 pm, 9/21 unless otherwise noted**

**READ:** Nicholas Mirzoeff, “How Ferguson and #Blacklivesmatter Taught Us Not to Look Away,”

**READ:** Nicholas Mirzoeff, “The Jim Crow Internet”


**POST:**
See Discussion Board week #10 for questions/topic.

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<tr>
<th>WEEK 11</th>
<th><strong>EXPLORE:</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>11/3</td>
<td>Visual Culture and Public Health</td>
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**EXPLORE:**
CDC 1918 photo gallery: [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-commemoration/historical-images.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-commemoration/historical-images.htm) (Links to an external site.)


Complete the questions posted on CANVAS. Also comment on at least two other student’s posts.

Photographs by Karen Cunningham: [https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/05/04/a-city-nurse](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/05/04/a-city-nurse) (Links to an external site.)
Annotated Bibliography Due. See “Assignments” tab on Canvas for information. Submit on Canvas by midnight.

**Asynchronous Activities: All due by 11:59 pm, 9/21 unless otherwise noted**

**READ:**
Mirzoeff, “Visualizing the Anthropocene” (CANVAS)

**WATCH:**
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEsJI6Nxo4Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BEsJI6Nxo4Q)
and
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbO0LeK3P4E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbO0LeK3P4E)

**POST:**
See Discussion Board week #11 for questions/topic.

**WEEK 12**

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<tr>
<td>11/10</td>
<td><a href="https://www.gpbnews.org/post/resurgence-protest-culture-two-design-behemoths-design-dissent">https://www.gpbnews.org/post/resurgence-protest-culture-two-design-behemoths-design-dissent</a></td>
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**VIEW:**
Images of Dissent Exhibit, online.

**Asynchronous Activities: All due by 11:59 pm, 9/21 unless otherwise noted**

**READ:**
Shifman
Lunenfeld

**EXPLORE:**
Knowyourmeme.com
icanhazcheezburger.com
Facebook group: Emory memes for (not so) Southern Teens

**POST:**
See Discussion Board week #12 for questions/topic.

**WEEK 13**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Presentations</th>
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<tr>
<td>11/17</td>
<td>Visual Analysis #4 Due. See “Assignments” tab on Canvas for information. Submit on Canvas by midnight.</td>
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No readings or activities due. Work on final projects/papers.

Schedule an appointment to meet with me to discuss your final projects/papers.

**WEEK 14**

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<th>Presentations</th>
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<td>11/24</td>
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Final Paper/Projects – Due Date will be announced when the University releases the exam schedule for Fall semester.
UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES

Plagiarism

Please read and abide by the Emory University honor code. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonestly, please discuss them with me BEFORE handing in your work. Ignorance of Emory’s policies is not a valid excuse or defense! For more on this go to: http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html

Academic Support

First and foremost, if you find yourself having any difficulty in my class, please come and see me! I am very open to feedback and am happy to fix something that might not be working. Also, I can consult with you and refer you to the appropriate resources available to you at Emory. There are a variety of resources available to Emory undergraduates for academic support! Take advantage of them if you need them. * Visit http://college.emory.edu/oue/resources-a-z.html for a list of programs.

Peer Tutoring Writing Support

Tutors in the Emory Writing Center and the ESL Program are available to support Emory College students as they work on any type of writing assignment, at any stage of the composing process. Tutors can assist with a range of projects, from traditional papers and presentations to websites and other multimedia projects. Writing Center and ESL tutors take a similar approach as they work with students on concerns including idea development, structure, use of sources, grammar, and word choice. They do not proofread for students. Instead, they discuss strategies and resources students can use as they write, revise, and edit their own work. Students who are currently enrolled in an ESL-supported section of English 101, English 123, or English 221 or who plan to take one of those courses next semester should see ESL tutors, as they are specifically trained to support students in ESL Program courses. To learn more about ESL tutoring or to make an appointment, go to tinyurl.com/eslemory. All other students in the college should see Writing Center tutors who are trained to work with this broader population. Learn more and make an appointment at writingcenter.emory.edu. Please review tutoring policies before your visit.

Access and Disability Resources Access, Disability Services and Resources (ADSR) works with students who have disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact ADSR. It is the responsibility of the student to register with ADSR. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and that disability accommodations are not provided until an accommodation letter has been processed. Students registered with ADSR who have a letter outlining their academic accommodations, are strongly encouraged to coordinate a meeting time with your professor that will be best for both to discuss a protocol to implement the accommodations as needed throughout the semester. This meeting should occur as early in the semester as possible. Contact Access, Disability Services and Resources for more information at (404) 727-9877 or adsrstudent@emory.edu. Additional information is available at the ADSR website at http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/students/index.html.