
INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL CULTURE in Spring 2019 (CM2100)

Course Code	CM2100	Professor(s)	Noemie Oxley
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-305
Class Schedule	MR: 10:35-11:55 in G-L21	Office Hours	By appt.
Credits	4	Email	noxley@aup.edu
Semester	Spring 2019	Office Tel. Ext.	

Course Description

This course considers the construction of the visual world and our participation in it. Through a transcultural survey of materials, contexts and theories, we will deploy “tactics for studying the functions of a world addressed through pictures, images, and visualizations, rather than through texts and words”. To do so, we will engage film, photography, advertisement, news reports, but also museum exhibitions and vernacular images – images made by ordinary people in ordinary situations – such as YouTube amateur videos clips or selfies. We will examine the virality of these representations and how they circulate through media and new media. We will notably consider the importance of social media such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, their impact on the redefinition of community and identity, and their role in the construction of social, cultural, and political movements. Recognizing the predominance of visual forms of media, communication, and information in the post-modern world, we will explore their power in transforming not only our world and society, but also in forming them, more and more.

Course Learning Outcomes

Define the different expressions of visual culture in Western contemporary society
Demonstrate a detailed understanding of key theoretical debates and their application on a different range of media
Explain how viewers create cultural meaning
Identify how images and information circulate through different media and social arenas
Accurately describe, interpret, and compare images in relation to visibility.

General Education

Course Outline

January

Week I – 21st-24th: Introduction to the course

Monday 21st - Session I

TOPICS : Introduction to the course

Thursday 24th - Session II

TOPICS: Practices of looking, Introduction to key terms and theories

READINGS: Sturken, Maritha, Cartwright, Lisa, *Practices of Looking. An Introduction to Visual Culture*. Chapter 1.

January 27 – last day to drop/add courses online

Week II - 28h – 31st: Intro to Film Studies

Monday 28th - Session I

TOPICS: Cinema of attractions, Spectacular Screens/Lumière Brothers and their “views”

READINGS: Tom Gunning: Cinema of Attractions

Thursday 31st - Session II

TOPICS: Cinema and mise-en-scene

READINGS: Suzanne Speidel, “Film Form and Narrative” (excerpt)

February

Week III - 4th – 7th: Montage; Intro to Photography

Monday 4th - Session I

TOPICS: Montage and persuasion

READINGS: Paul Messaris, “Montage and Editing” (Excerpt)

Thursday 7th - Session II

TOPICS: Introduction to Photography

READINGS: Nicholas Mirzoeff, *Introduction to Visual Culture*

Week IV – 11th - 14th: Introduction to Photography II

Monday 11th - Session I

TOPICS: Punctum and Studium

READINGS 12/02: Roland Barthes, *Camera Obscura* (excerpts)

Thursday 14th - Session II

TOPICS: Photography and Political Agency

READINGS: Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*

Week V – 18th – 21st: Advertising

Monday 18th - Session I

TOPICS: Studying advertising images

READINGS: Reading: Roland Barthes, “Rhetoric of an image”

Thursday 21st - Session II

TOPICS: Commodity visual culture

READINGS: Reading: Maritha Sturken, Lisa Cartwright: "Advertising, Consumer Cultures and Desire"

Week VI - 25th - 28th: Branding

Monday 25th – Branding and Visual Culture

TOPICS: Branding the Authentic

READINGS: Reading: Sarah Banet-Weiser: "Branding the Authentic".

Social media: Instagram case study.

Thursday 28th - Session II

TOPICS: Group presentation on Branding strategies /advertising images

March

March 4th , March 15th, (included) spring break, no classes

March 22nd, Mid-semester grades due

Week IX – 18th – 21st : Representation and Reality

Monday 18th – Session I

TOPICS: Documentary and the “historical magnitude of filmed subjects”

READINGS: Jay Ruby, *Image Ethics*

Thursday 21st - Session II

TOPICS: Reality TV and the manufacture of “real” entertainment.

READINGS: *The Revolution in American Television*, Chapter 1.

Week X – 25th 28th: Visuality and “The Right to Look”

Monday 25th – Session I

TOPICS: Visuality

READINGS: Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, Ch. 1.

Thursday 28th – Session II

TOPICS: Case Study: News, Representation and reality

READINGS: Thomas Nagel, *The View from Nowhere* (excerpts).

April

Week XI – 1st – 4th: Visuality II

Monday 1st - Session I:

TOPICS: The Right to look: Filming protests – A political action?

READINGS: Kari Andén-Papadopoulos, “Citizen Camera-witnessing: Embodied political dissent in the age of ‘mediated mass self-communication’”.

Thursday 4th - Session II

TOPICS: Visit to the Quai Branly Museum’s permanent collection

READINGS: James Clifford, “Quai Branly in Process”.

April 5th, Last day to withdraw from a course/no credit option

Week XII - 8th-11th: On Collecting art and representing the Others

Monday 8th - Session I

TOPICS: National museums and patrimony: a French history.

READINGS: Reading: James Clifford: "Collecting art and culture"; Susan Vogel, "Art/Artifact: African Art in Anthropological Collection"

Thursday 11th - Session II

TOPICS: Framing the "Muslim Other" in France and in Britain.

READINGS: "What's wrong with Muslims? Screening conflict and identity within France and Britain's suburbs"

Week XIII -15th – 18th: Gender and the Gaze

Monday 15th - Session I:

TOPICS: The Gaze

READINGS: Marita Sturken, Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking*, pp. 104-137

Thursday 18th - Session II:

TOPICS: Gender and the Gaze in Cinema and Video Games

READINGS: Linda Williams, "Body Genres". Recommended: Laura Mulvey, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*.

Week XIV – 25th: Race and the Gaze

Thursday 25th - Session II

TOPICS: Advertising soap in the British Empire.

READINGS *Soft-soaping empire: commodity racism and imperial advertising*, Anne McClintock

May

Week XV– 29th- 2nd: Race and the Gaze – CCL to the course

Monday 29th - Session I:

TOPICS: Case study: 'Blacksploitation'

READINGS: Screening *Shaft*

Thursday 2nd - Session II

TOPICS: Conclusion to the course

READINGS:

Week XVI – 6th: Conclusion to the course

May 7th, Last day of classes, May 9h -12th, Reading days

May 13th – 17th, Final exams

Textbooks

This course doesn't have any textbook.

Attendance Policy

CONDUCT/CLASS POLICY

–Please be courteous and respectful at all times. You may disagree with someone, but please do so politely (a good way to start is by saying “I can see your point”). Make sure you attempt to understand each other before you contribute to the discussion.

–Please use restroom **before class**, except in an emergency (routine departures in the middle of the class are unacceptable). Frequent departures and arrivals *distract* the flow of class each time they happen. That said, of course emergencies happen.

–**Avoid conversations with people sitting around you.** They are distracting to all those around you.

–**You must check your AUP email once per day for important announcements.**

–**NO CELL PHONES ALLOWED DURING CLASS.**

–**Laptops and other electronic devices:** Laptops are only allowed in class for specific researches. Bring pen and paper!

FYI, research says that electronic devices (including laptops) in the classroom often impede learning. So why not taking notes on paper??

<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/hot-thought/201007/banning-laptops-in-classrooms-0>

<http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/releases/take-notes-by-hand-for-better-long-term-comprehension.html>

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an “F” for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and *especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.*

ENGLISH PROFICIENCY STATEMENT

As an Anglophone university, The American University of Paris is strongly committed to effective English language mastery at the undergraduate level. Most courses require scholarly research and formal written and oral presentations in English, and AUP students are expected to strive to achieve excellence in these domains as part of their course work. To that end, professors include English proficiency among the criteria in student evaluation, often referring students to the university Writing Lab where they may obtain help on specific academic assignments.

Grading Policy

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

In-class participation/attendance/short presentations (throughout the semester) – 20%

– You are expected to engage class discussion frequently and constructively. This requires not only keeping up with assigned readings, but also thinking critically about the ideas and examples at hand. Every class, you may be required to complete a short quiz by responding to three questions on the reading that were sent to you prior to class. Your

Mid-term In-class Exam – 20% – you will be able to choose from a set of essay questions on the course. Open-notes.

Assignments – 20 % – These four assignments, throughout the course, will focus on issues discussed in class. They will be divided in three essays and one group presentation.

Final paper – 20 % – Undertake a detailed analysis (2000 words max) of a case study of your choice reflecting the issues and theories of globalization seen in class.

Curating Project – 20 %

Other
