**INTS 245: Visual Culture and Society**

**Fall 2019**

Monday and Wednesday, 3:00 pm – 4:15 pm

Innovation Hall 206

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**Office Hours:** Monday, 2:00 pm – 3:00 pm

**Course Description and Objectives**

This course will provide an overview of the evolving, interdisciplinary body of scholarship and research known as Visual Culture. Visual Culture draws from Art History, Cultural Studies, and Film and Media Studies; however, it is not reducible to any one of these disciplines or modes of inquiry. In this class, we will examine the way visual media reinforces or challenges societal power structures.

Furthermore, research in Visual Culture has attended not only to visual objects, but also to the act of looking itself, and to the social construction of perception. As many of the theorists we’ll read have argued, perception is far from natural and universal; rather, it is historically and culturally specific and as such has changed over time, in part as a result of the development of new visual technologies. Looking practices, particularly those that have developed in the West, are also both the product of, and a system of reinforcement for, power and economic relationships, along gender and racial lines. Throughout this course, we will work to make visible the typically unnoticed practices of looking, and gain insight into the way society is structured through the visual.

By the end of the semester, students will have learned to:

* Understand past, current, and emerging theories associated with visual culture, photography, film, television, and other visual media in society
* Acquire, expand, and deploy a conceptual vocabulary appropriate for the analysis of complex visual phenomena
* Apply relevant theoretical perspectives to the exploration of visual culture and its functioning within contemporary societies

**Required Text**

Sturken, M. & Cartwright, L. (2017). The practices of looking: An introduction to visual culture     (3rd ed.) New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Additional articles will be available electronically on BlackBoard.

**Learning Community Policies**

* *Technology***:** If you need a laptop or tablet for taking notes or otherwise participating in class, that’s fine. However, please do not use a personal device for any purpose unrelated to our class. All devices should be silenced. Cell phones should be put away, except in the instances that I ask you to use them for an activity. I recommend that you power them down. If there is a serious need to leave your cell phone on, such as a family emergency, please put it on vibrate and let me know. If you leave the classroom to take a call, I’ll understand why.
* *Attendance and Timeliness*: You are expected to attend every class. You can miss one class and not have it affect your grade. Please let me know ahead of time if you will be absent. Absences are excused when due to illness, religious observance, participation in university activities at the request of university authorities, or compelling circumstances beyond your control. To claim an excused absence, you must provide legitimate documentation written or signed by a person in authority to excuse such an absence (ex: sicknesses require a doctor’s note). You are responsible for all announcements, assignments, materials, and date changes covered or made in class while you are absent. Please make friends in class to make sure you have a contact should such an occasion arise.
* *Late Work:* All assignments are due on the date listed on Blackboard and must be handed in on time. Late work will be marked down letter grade for each calendar day they are late.
* *Email and Blackboard:* Please check your email and our Blackboard course site several times a week. I will use both email and the announcement page in Blackboard to communicate with you between classes. I also welcome your emails and will do my best to respond quickly. Our policy is to always be sure to respond within 24 hours. If you have not received a reply within 48 hours, please be sure to follow up with me replying to the original e-mail as I may have not received it.
* *Honor Code, Plagiarism, Collaboration*: The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that:
  + All work submitted be your own;
  + When using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and
  + If you are uncertain about the expectations for a specific assignment, ask for clarification.

**Assignments and Evaluation**

* Quizzes (30%)
* Class Participation (20%)
* Essay One (15%)
* Essay Two (15%)
* Group project & presentation (20%)

**Quizzes**

Quizzes will be administered online each week to gauge your understanding of the reading. Each quiz will be posted on BlackBoard and will be multiple choice.

**Class Participation:**

Participation means more than coming to class, it means being *fully present* in class. It means coming to class ready to participate (having done the readings, arriving with textbooks and notes, and otherwise prepared). It means participating in class discussion and debates. It means asking questions. Below is a general rubric outlining my participation grade scale. This scale is meant to give you an idea as to what is expected.

A – Attends each class fully prepared, participates in meaningful class discussion

B – Attends each class mostly prepared, often participates in meaningful class discussion

C – Attends most classes somewhat prepared, occasionally participates in meaningful class discussion

D – Attends some classes barely prepared, rarely participates in class discussion

F – Rarely attends class with little to no preparation, does not participate in class discussion

**Analytical Essays**

Two 5-10 page essays will be assigned to gauge how well you are grasping the subject matter. Please use Times New Roman 12-point font and double-space. PLEASE DO NOT DOUBLE-SPACE THE HEADERS. In each essay, you will pick a visual cultural artifact to discuss in the context of the theories we learn about in class. These will be due at the beginning of class on the due dates listed.

**Final Project:**

The final group project for this course invites you to teach a concept we have learned about back to the class. Your group will decide upon a topic and choose visual cultural artifacts to help prove your point. At the end of your group’s presentation, the class may ask questions regarding your chosen topic and material.

**STUDENT RESOURCES:**

**Writing Center** [(http://writingcenter.gmu.edu;](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/) 703-993-1200, Robinson A, Rm 114): I encourage you to visit the writing center for assistance on writing assignments for this and other courses. The Writing Center provides, at no charge, tutors who will help you at any stage of the writing process. Call for an appointment.

To the Writing Center:

I allow my students to use you as a resource for all writing projects in my class.

Angela Barajas

**Student Technology Assistance and Resources** [(http://media.gmu.edu;](http://media.gmu.edu/) 703-993-8990; Johnson Center, Rm 229): STAR provides support for web and multimedia design. Video cameras and other equipment are available for student check-out. For support in using **Blackboard**, please contact Learning Services by email at courses@gmu.edu. You can expect a 24-hour turnaround time.

**Disability Support Services** [(http://ods.gmu.edu;](http://ods.gmu.edu/) 703-993-2474; SUB I, Rm 222): Please address any special needs or special accommodations with me at the beginning of the semester or as soon as you become aware of your needs.  If you qualify for accommodation, the ODS staff will help you obtain the appropriate the documents.

**Counseling Center** [(http://caps.gmu.edu;](http://caps.gmu.edu/) 703-993-2380; SUB I, Rm 364): The Counseling Center provides individual and group sessions for personal development and assistance with a range of emotional and relational issues.

**COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY STATEMENT:**

School of Integrative Studies an intentionally inclusive community, promotes and maintains an equitable and just work and learning environment. We welcome and value individuals and their differences including race, economic status, gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and disability.

❖     We value our diverse student body and desire to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff.

❖     We commit to supporting students, faculty and staff who have been the victims of bias and discrimination.

❖     We promote continuous learning and improvement to create an environment that values diverse points of view and life experiences.

❖     We believe that faculty, staff and students play a role in creating an environment that engages diverse points of view.

❖     We believe that by fostering their willingness to hear and learn from a variety of sources and viewpoints, our students will gain competence in communication, critical thinking and global understanding, aware of their biases and how they affect their interactions with others and the world.

**Course Calendar**

Week 1:

8/26 & 8/28

Introduction and Definitions

Week 2

9/2 & 9/4

Reading – (Chapter 1) Images, Power, and Politics

Week 3

9/9 & 9/11

NO CLASS ON LABOR DAY!

Reading: (Chapter 2) Viewers Make Meaning

Week 4

9/16 & 9/18

Reading: (Chapter 3) Modernity: Spectatorship, the Gaze, and Power

Week 5

9/23 & 9/25

(Chapter 4) Realism and Perspective: From Renaissance Painting to Digital Media

Week 6

9/30 & 10/2

(Chapter 5) Visual Technologies, Reproduction, and the Copy

Week 7

10/7 & 10/9

Mon (10/7) - (Chapter 6) Media in Everyday Life

Wed (10/9) -Analytical Essay One Due

Week 8

10/14 & 10/16

FALL BREAK!

Week 9

10/21 & 10/23

(Chapter 7) Brand Culture: The Images and Spaces of Consumption

Week 10

10/28 & 10/30

(Chapter 8) Postmodernism: Irony, Parody, and Pastiche

 Week 11

11/4 & 11/6

(Chapter 9) Scientific Looking, Looking at Science

Week 12

11/11 & 11/13

Individual & Group Meetings

Week 13

11/18 & 11/20

Mon (11/18)- Analytical Essay Two DUE

Week 14

11/25 & 11/27

(Chapter 10) The Global Flow of Visual Culture

Week 15

12/2 & 12/4

Group Presentations