

AAD 251: Arts & Visual Literacy

COURSE SYLLABUS (On-line)

We will attempt to explore hidden assumptions and preconceptions about the visual arts, and lead class participants to more fully experience and interpret visual experience and visual culture. The arts (whatever *that* means—we will investigate possibilities) rooted in concepts of visual design, will provide a conceptual framework for wider explorations. The goal is to introduce students to a set of conceptual skills for actively shaping and creating meanings in their visual experience, and discovering how other humans express their experience and identity through visual means. The ultimate grounding is not in what we see / look at, but in who we are, what it is to be a Viewer or Maker of visual experience.

We will explore visual culture; look at examples of visual Places, Objects, and Events (POEs—every POE tells a story...*many* stories, actually), and we will practice interpreting visual experiences (POEs themselves, individual and cultural influences on experience). Students will practice noticing, analyzing and interpreting both 2-D and 3-D worlds of experience, from photos on a screen to physical objects in their (*your*) everyday world. Along the way we will explore the nature of being a Viewer or Maker of visual experience. We will begin with the commonalities we share as humans (senses, needs, motives, personality, intelligences—the plural of intelligences” is intentional—and more), moving ever outward from self to a plurality of cultural structures and points-of-view. Through an investigation of images and objects—from cave paintings, to consumer products, to the fine arts—this class will examine design and interpretation: structure and meaning, symbols and metaphor, contexts, histories, narrative, models for interpreting, child development & image-making, varieties & definitions of “art” and their many uses, and other aspects of the creation and interpretation of visual culture. Aspects of definition and expectation will also be considered. In short, we will examine: Viewers and Makers, POEs (including Places, Objects, and visual Events), the Context of viewing, History, and the notion of art/Art itself (from historical, cultural, and individual perspectives).

We will also consider / wonder whose voices shape helps determine our interpretations of our visual experiences. We are, as individuals, and members of cultures, with potentially widely disparate points-of-view, *here*, at this *image*, this POE. What is it to me? What does it mean to others (gender, race, ethnicity, religion....all the many things that divide us as human beings). What did it mean to the person who created it? How might experience of a POE unite us as human beings in this world of physical existence, verbal/mental constructs, virtual realities, existential/spiritual beliefs...? How is our humanity, in all its rich and glorious diversity, from the individual to the collective voice, identity, issues of society and culture, expressed and encountered through our visual experience of the world?

In the past, this class touched on subjects ranging from Tibetan Buddhist paintings to Australian rugby uniforms, Dine (Navajo) sand painting, suspect identification in police work, translating visual artworks into forms the blind can experience, Voodoo rituals, and the “exhibition” of an empty gallery as an artwork. Each term is a bit different.

Objectives:

- 1) articulate individual and shared beliefs about visual arts and other visual phenomena;
- 2) identify and articulate a variety of ideas that shape individual and shared definitions of art and other objects of visual experience;
- 3) identify multiple social, cultural, psychological, and aesthetic contexts that shape the meanings of visual phenomena;
- 4) demonstrate ability to understand visual phenomena using interpretation models presented in the course.



READINGS:

By the time of the Midterm you should have finished the following Course Documents, including required readings on the Web (and finish the remaining Documents by Finals)

Introduction to Arts and Visual Literacy



Viewer & Maker

Child Development with Images
Human Senses
Human Intelligences
Human Emotions
Needs and Motives
Personality



POEs: Places, Objects, and Events

Design as Text
The Elements and Principles of Design
Practice with the Elements and Principles of Design
Dervish Video [Optional]
Moving Pictures
Image Styles
Mondrian Series
Chair Series
Lamp Series
Practice with Image Styles and the Visual World
Visual Tactics and Strategies
Architecture, Landscape, and Space
Principles of Landscape Design
Math, Nature, Image: Beauty and the Golden Ratio, Phi

> READINGS after the Midterm:



Contexts and Histories

Symbolism
Interpretational Perspectives (critical approaches)
The Psychological and Philosophical Perspective (a resource)
Non-Representationalism: Context and Symbol
Histories & POEs: a door lock, the *Mona Lisa*, and more
Context: Frames and Framing



The Question of art / Art

Introduction: Student Comments
Paintings are art? What are paintings?
Art, Aesthetics, and the Aesthetic Response
A Question of art / Art
An Artworld Myth: Rudolf Schwarzkogler
Art and N'Art
Conservative / Counter Views
Visual Arts, a Non-"Fine" Example: Food Styling
Categories of Visual Arts
Purposes for Designed Images and Objects
Creativity
Skill
Where is the art-ness in art / Art?
Considering Socks... Visual Arts and Education: Problems in Definition
A Question of art / Art (Supplemental Resource)
Range of art / Art: Sorting Game



Readings: No physical textbook is required. Information will be provided on-line including Blackboard and Web sites for further required reading (think of it as an on-line "textbook"). Students may also select their own Web-based readings, based on their interests and research topic, and from Optional Readings provided on the Blackboard course site.

Requirements:

Web-based readings and research.

Five short written exercises.

Midterm paper.

Final paper.

Participation in on-line discussions (Fall through Spring sessions; optional during Summer sessions).

AAD 251: Midterm Evaluation Form

(30 Points)

Description: and “Formal” analysis (Elements & Principles of Design application): 5 Points total possible

Tactics & Strategies (how applied; what they revealed): 5 Points possible

Image Styles: 5 Points possible

You (the Viewer—be sure to address each & every “level”) & the Object: 7 Points total possible

Senses: Emotions: Personality: Intelligences: Needs & Motives: You and the object:

Findings:

Maker’s intent:

Most surprising: and

Conclusions / judgment: 5 Points total possible

Writing skills (spelling, grammar, clarity...): 3 Points possible



Instructions for the Final (Fall-through-Spring / 35 total points)

Research, Analysis, and Interpretation Paper

Grading Criteria

Guidelines followed

Skipping portions of the guidelines will result in a reduction in grade

Not following the guidelines may result in rejection of a paper

Thoughtfulness and depth of analysis and interpretation

Evidence of understanding and ability to synthesize and apply course concepts and terms from the

Readings (Blackboard & Web)

Choice and use of References

Organization and clarity

In our Post-Modern world, where Truth and absolutes are elusive and subject to debate, analyzing art may lead us to no particular “right” or “wrong” interpretation and judgment, but the process and results can be judged—and graded—in terms of depth and consistency. Be sure to support your conclusions in terms of what you see in your chosen artwork.

Suggestions:

Again, I recommend doing the Elements and Principles of Design description & analysis portions of the midterm instructions for yourself, then writing about only those Design aspects that are most relevant to the interpretations you find in your research and create on your own. For example, color and value (light / dark) are relevant to understanding Rembrandt’s self-portraits, and a Formalist model of interpretation, using the formal Elements and Principles of Design cannot be avoided in approaching a later Mondrian painting or David Smith sculpture—and both could be essential for exploring / understanding the “fine art” of an alarm clock, toothbrush, or garden. Don’t rely only on the experts to point out what is significant in the work. You may find completely different meanings in it based on what YOU see in the work. Your interpretation does not have to be “serious,” only consistent with what can be seen in the work. For example, you might argue that the famous Fauvist painting *Green Stripe* by Matisse is an example of work done by someone with synaesthesia, or just why *is* the Luxor resort in Vegas a black glass pyramid (if it’s a work of fine art)—are they hiding something?

INSTRUCTIONS

In this assignment you are going to research, explore, and discuss a work of “fine art.” From the Readings you should have a pretty good idea that “fine art” is not limited to paintings, drawings, and sculpture. Based on the interpretational structure provided in this course, you will interpret the work, explain its “meanings,” and address its nature / role(s) as “fine art.”

What does the artwork *mean* as a POE in the world and in the lives of people? As you write, be sure to always explain *Why / How* (don’t just list ideas).

Based on your beliefs / conclusions about what you would include in the category “fine art” **choose a work of “fine art” to examine / explore.**



Exclusions—You may *not* use (yes, these examples are all paintings—or prints of paintings):

- Pablo Picasso’s *Guernica* or any painting from his Blue period,
- Edvard Munch’s *The Scream*,
- Leonardo da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa*,
- Salvador Dali’s *The Persistence of Memory*,
- Vincent van Gogh’s *Starry Night*.
- Cell phone

Assignment sections and point values (35 total)

Initial exploration and analysis: 9 points.

Research: 6 points.

art / Art and fine art, for you: 7 points

Interpretational perspectives: 9 points

Judgments and conclusions: 4 points

Step 1 Initial exploration and analysis (9 points):

Examine the work closely, as you did with your Midterm object. Become familiar with it. Try to make sense of it from as many different points-of-view (based on our course interpretational structure) as possible. Practice this before you start writing.

As you go along, consider what might be important for the interpretation you are developing:

Visual tactics and strategies

Image Styles (remember: they are not categories to plug your work into, but ideas to raise questions)

The work’s History

You and the work’s Maker(s)--or others involved with it--in terms of...

- Senses
- Emotions
- Personality
- Intelligences (note that this includes many aspects: from your physical body-in-the-world to your knowledge, beliefs, values; see Gardner’s Intelligence Domains)
- Needs
- and (Social) Motives (this may include dreams, desires, interests, intentions...)

As you develop your analysis of the artwork in your paper, be sure to **include relevant aspects of the above**. You want to develop as complete an interpretation as possible (and demonstrate familiarity with and ability to use ideas from the course). Specific application of ideas from the Midterm will vary from person to person.

Step 2 Research the work (6 Points):

Find out what the “experts” have to say about it, whether it’s a Renaissance painting or a contemporary toy. [Be sure to tell me what the work is and who created it, include an image, provide a link—in some way let me know what you are discussing.]

References

Use **at least 3 reference sources** of interpretations and analyses of works outside required course readings.

---List all References at the end of the paper.

person, or include directions (e.g. if you choose a work on display in a local gallery, store, museum, etc., you might interview the owner, employee, volunteer, et al.).

Step 3 "art/Art" & "fine art," for you (7 Points):

Based on the Readings about the nature and purposes of "art"—what it "is" or "should be"—explain what **art** is for you. Is "art" different from "fine art" for you? What role does, or should, or could it play in your life? In your society / culture?

Explain why / how the work you have chosen to write about qualifies as a work of "fine art" from **your** perspective and beliefs. [E.g. if your "definition" of "fine art" requires creativity and some kind of emotional response in the viewer, or should be "beautiful/decorative," or should "challenge" viewers...how does your chosen work demonstrate it?] Does the work actually "fit" your beliefs about art / fine art?

[NOTE: This is unlikely to be your absolute always-and-forever understanding of "art." The idea of art (and fine art) is a question with many answers. I just want you to examine your own beliefs & understandings about it, and discover how the work you've chosen fits—or doesn't fit—with your view. Are your views closer to the all-encompassing view inherent in this course, or to Kahmi and Torres who believe very little "fine art"—or "art" for that matter—has been produced in the past 100+ years?]

Step 4 Interpretational Perspectives (minimum 3 required, 9 Points):

A. Culture

Consider your chosen artwork as a cultural object (see the Sociocultural Interpretational Perspectives, Contexts folder). What cultural systems or functions might the work play a role in? What roles might it play? What kinds of "culture" might it be involved with (see Bodley's list under the section: *The Idea of Culture in Sociocultural*)?

In other words: the artwork is one small piece of a much larger cultural story (of its origin, and now). What roles does it play in that story?

B. Symbolism

Assume the work has symbolic meanings. Try "reading" it from the view of at least **TWO** symbolic systems. [See the Symbolic Interpretational Perspective and the Symbolism document in the Contexts folder.] Your symbolic interpretation does not have to be "true," only plausible (convince me to "buy it").

And...

C. Analyze / interpret the artwork from the point of view of at least one additional Interpretational Perspective of your choice (e.g. Environmental, Gender, etc.).

Step 5 Judgments and Conclusions (4 Points):

After reading what the experts have to say, and exploring the artwork in terms of your beliefs about art, as a cultural object (in cultural contexts), prodding it for symbolic meanings, considering it in terms of Styles, Strategies, You and its Maker, and so on... what have you concluded about the artwork? What does it "really" mean? What is the "bottom line" of your story about this work as a POE in the world and in people's lives?

--Do you agree with the experts or have you found other stories / meanings?

--Did you encounter any surprises along the way?

--Is it a "good" or "successful" work? Is it well designed?

--Is it an important or significant work in any way (today; in the past)? Unimportant / insignificant?

--Is it actually a work of art or fine art from your personal view (e.g. could it qualify as fine art from a cultural view, yet fi art from your own perspective, or vice versa)?

--Any other thoughts to conclude your story about the work and its meanings?

Other Assignments

Exercise #1: Intelligence Domains (Gardner +)

Exercise #2: Emotions (vast list of 'em to draw upon)

Exercise #3: Visual Tactics & Strategies (borrowed from advertising)

Midterm: Ordinary Object or Place

Exercise #4: What is art? (includes look at cross-cultural and Western aesthetic theory)

Exercise #5: Interpretational Perspectives (borrowed from anthropology)

Final: Examining a work of "fine art."

Art & Visual Literacy

AAD 251, Spring, 2008

CRN 35832

Mondays and Wednesdays, 12:00 – 1:20 pm, 221 McKenzie Hall

David Turner

dturner@uoregon.edu 346.4120

GTF: Elizabeth Lamb

elamb@uoregon.edu

office hours:

Thursdays, 10:30-11:30, 381A LA

Mondays, 10 – noon, 262 LA

Syllabus

Text book: *Exploring Visual Culture: Definitions, Concepts, Contexts*
edited by Matthew Rampley.
Edinburgh University Press, 2005

Other readings may be offered on the Blackboard site.

Assignments: All assignments listed below are explained further at the end of this Syllabus. **All assignments are due the week they are assigned on that Friday by noon.** For instance, Assignment #1 will be due Friday, April 4 by noon. Assignments should all be able to be submitted electronically via email or posting on the class Blackboard site.

Week 1: Perception: There's Even More To It

March 31:

- Introduction to Visual Literacy
- Cognitive Learning and Memory
- Non-Verbal Learning
- Perceptual Organization
- Visual Language: Facts and Illusions

Readings:

Rampley, Intro and Chapter 1, "Visual Culture and the Meanings of Culture," pp. 1 – 17.

Assignment #1: Create Homepage with information about yourself. (see details below)
Due Friday, April 4, noon.

Week 2: *Viewing Art: Looking Everywhere For It*

April 7:

- Relationship between Art Viewer & Art Maker
- Art and art: masterpieces and amateur/folk art
- The Artistic Process, can be applied to most everything

Readings: Rampley, Chapter 2, "Definitions of Art and the Art World," pp 18 – 33.
Rampley, Chapter 10, "The Rise and Fall and Rise of the Author," pp. 149 – 162.

Assignment #2: Visit UO's Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art and select two works of art. (see details below)
Due Friday, April 14, noon.

Week 3: *Design: Form and Function*

April 14:

- Principles of design
- Domestic & Interior design
- Graphic Design
- Visual and non-visual relationships

Readings: Rampley, Chapter 4, "Design and Modern Culture," pp. 50 – 66.
Rampley, Chapter 12, "Visual Practices in the Age of Industry," pp. 179 – 196.

Assignment #3: Select one song and design a cd cover for it and explain how the visual design matches music inside. (details below)
Due Friday, April 18, noon.

Week 4: *Reading Symbols and Narratives*

April 21:

- Infographics
- Symbolism and Iconography
- Sequenced Images: Storyboards and Moving pictures
- Gestures and Poses

Readings: Rampley, Chapter 6, "Photography and Film" by Glyn Davis, pp. 85 – 101.
Rampley, Chapter 8, "Representation and the Idea of Realism" by Neil Mulholland, pp. 115 – 132.

Assignment #4: Create Rebus. Due Friday, April 25, noon.

Week 5: Words and Imagery

April 28:

- Books and text
- Advertising
- Museum labels
- Word Art

Readings: Rampley, Chapter 9, "Visual Rhetoric," pp. 133 – 148.
Rampley, Chapter 13, "Technical Reproduction and its Significance" by Ruth Pelzer, pp. 197 – 213.

Week 6:

May 5: Review

May 7: Mid-Term

Week 7: Nature: Trying to Control the Wilds

May 12:

- Order out of Chaos
- Natural spaces and Urban design
- From Microcosm to Macrocosm
- Hand-made objects
- Film on artist, Andy Goldsworthy

Readings: Rampley, Chapter 3, "Concepts of Craft" by Juliette MacDonald, pp. 34 – 66.

Assignment #5: River walk project. Due Friday, May 16, noon.

Week 8: Visualize Public Spaces

May 19:

- Architectural spaces
- Parks: The Individual Among the Crowd
- Landscape Design
- Outdoor art
- Guest lecture on public art by Betsy Bostwick

Readings: Rampley, Chapter 7, "Architecture and Visual Culture" by Richard Williams, pp. 102 – 116.
Rampley, Chapter 11, "The Ideology of the Visual," by Glyn Davis, pp. 163 – 178.

Assignment #6: Public Art in Eugene/Springfield or UO campus
Due Friday, May 23, noon.

Week 9: *Personal and Public Histories*

May 26:

- Archives: Reading Histories
- Historic photographs
- Revisionist History
- Global Artifacts and Cultural Patrimony
- Personal Art

Readings: Rampley, Chapter 14, "From Mass Media to Cyberculture" by Glyn Davis, pp. 214 – 228.
Rampley, Chapter 15, "Visual Culture and its Institutions" by Fiona Anderson, pp. 229 – 245.

Assignment #7: Historic photos due Friday, May 30 at noon.

Week 10: *Beauty*

June 2:

- Evolution of Standards of Beauty
- Regional Beauty
- Determinates of Beauty

Readings: Rampley, Chapter 5, "Fashion: Style, Identity and Meaning" by Fiona Anderson, pp. 67 – 84.

Final:

Final Project due on Blackboard site no later than
Friday, June 13, 10:15 am

AAD 251 Arts and Visual Literacy

Winter 2008 ~~≠~~ MCK 240/125 ~~≠~~ 8–9:50am

Instructor: John Fenn (jfenn@uoregon.edu), LAW 265, 346-1774; office hours = MW 10am–12pm
GTF: Elizabeth Lamb (elamb@uoregon.edu), LAW 262; office hours = W 10am–12pm

What constitutes “visual literacy”? Is it the same as verbal literacy but just related to non-verbal culture, or is “reading” different than “seeing”? And how does visual literacy relate to notions of “art”? In this class we will explore the ways in which seeing and looking connect to meaning, paying attention to socio-cultural contexts and the ways in which we all ‘learn’ (in multiple modes) to use the complex perceptual/interpretive apparatus known as vision. As a participant in the class you will both observe and create things to look at, all towards the goal of assembling a critical tool kit for engaging the diverse range of visual information that surrounds us everyday— from the transparent to the transcendent.

Required Course Materials:

1. ***Understanding Comics*** by Scott McCloud. This title is available at the UO Bookstore and there will be one copy on reserve at the Knight Library.
2. **Computer access:** We will rely on the Web for many activities in this course, so you need to have access to a computer and the Internet. To fully participate in this class, you must be able to navigate and use the Blackboard course management system at UO. Crucial class materials—including required readings, assignment guidelines, and links to other sources—will be on the course Blackboard site. I will guide you through necessary steps, and be able to provide limited assistance along the way, but there are many resources on campus for you to use if you do not feel comfortable with Blackboard.
3. **Digital or film camera:** A few assignments will require you to document something photographically (or at least that will be one option for documenting), so you will need to have access to a camera. If you do not own one, Media Services does have them for checkout. See their home page at http://libweb.uoregon.edu/med_svc/ (this link will also be posted to Blackboard).

Grading & Assignments:

Below is a list of the assignments and requirements that comprise the total available points for this class; there are no extra credit opportunities. All assignments are listed below as a percentage of final grade point total; point values/grading scales for particular assignments can be found in assignment guidelines (posted to Blackboard). Late assignments are penalized 5% the first day and 2% thereafter. Should something prevent you from completing an assignment on time, you must **contact Dr. Fenn within 24 hrs** of that due date to make arrangements for remedying the situation. Except in the most extreme cases, the window of opportunity for fixing things will close after 24 hrs.

NOTE: University-excused absences account for a missed class period(s), but do not excuse you from completing work due on that day. It is *your* responsibility to make arrangements with Dr. Fenn concerning any work that will be affected by a University-excused absence.

1. **Discussion Board postings:** Blackboard Discussion Board postings in the form of “reading response” questions. For each week of class, you will post a set of two questions based on the readings for that week. These weekly postings are due by **noon** the day before a class meeting; since we have two meetings a week, this gives you two chances to post your required questions (though only one posting per week will be counted). *The only exception is Week 1, in which you only have one chance to make your post; the deadline for this post is extended to 7pm the night before Wednesday's*

class (1/9/07). I will use the questions to guide our discussion for any given class period, and you should consider them as one way to participate in class (i.e. do not just post them and forget about them). You are responsible for all weekly postings. **10% total (1% each)**

2. **Unit 1:** A written assignment involving the creation of a wiki on Wikispaces (we have a course site there, which I will explain). You will find an image (or create one!) and compose a short written analysis focused on notions of “visual literacy” and the creation of meaning, drawing on course readings and discussion. **10%**

3. **Unit 2:** Create a comic strip using any technique/media, with the goal of applying understandings of “visual literacy” to an actual creative effort. Evaluation is not on 'quality' of narrative/visual element, but on 'quality' of critical understanding (the grading rubric will be specific). A short written component and/or analytical reflection will be part of the assignment, in which you explicate your strip in terms of visual literacy and the main points of the unit reading (ie. McCloud's book). **20%**

4. **Unit 3:** A series of assignments, each one tied to the theme for each week in Unit 3. Specific guidelines for each assignment will be available at least a week prior to the due date. On the due date, we will have group “critiques” in which we'll view and discuss student work during the class period.

- A. Visit to BRING Gallery (field trip #1): follow directions/ map visit & trip visually, OR create a piece of art from BRING materials (total budget = \$5); EMX, bike, or car travel. **10%**
- B. River-path art hunt (field trip #2): travel at least ½ mile of Eugene's river bike/ped trail, looking for OR creating NON-INVASIVE art in a natural setting; document photographically and cartographically. **10%**
- C. i. public art (field trip #3a): find a piece of public art in city of Eugene & document it; and write about it re: visual elements, aesthetics, placement, 'meaning'; OR
ii. guerilla art (field trip #3b): find a work of graffiti/stencil art & document it; reflect on the “meaning” re: visual style, aesthetics, and physical placement. **10% (choose one option)**
- D. global art/online (field trip #4): conduct a search for art in a global/transcultural context; reflect on dynamic of crosscultural vs. culturally-specific visual literacies. **10%**

5. **Final:** You will complete an assignment from the *Learning To Love You More* website, choosing from a list of pre-approved assignments we will provide. During the final exam period, class meets to discuss and critique individual project. You will also turn in a short written component analyzing your own assignment in terms of concepts and tools we have explored over the term, but no “exam” per se... **20%**

NOTE: *Computer access is absolutely necessary for some of the above assignments! If you do not have fast enough Internet access at home, you may use any of the public computer clusters on campus. If you foresee difficulty regarding computer access, consult Dr. Fenn immediately.*

A quick word on respect :

While the classroom will be full of discussion, and activity, it should focus on course-related material. Here are a few reminders:

- **Arrive on time and stay the entire period;** I make sure to start and end class on time, so be in a seat and ready to start class by 8am (it's early—I know). Leaving or packing up early is a distraction to everyone else in the room, so avoid these activities at all costs.

• **Turn off or silence cell phones;** if you need to take an important call during class, please let me know beforehand and exit the room if the call comes

• **Refrain from having extended low-level (i.e. whispered) conversations ;** while it might seem “quiet,” this is very distracting to everyone else in the room

• **Do not listen to iPods, read the paper, check Facebook, or do crossword puzzles during class ;** being in class might not always be a student’s priority, but please be “here” when you are here

• **Extend respect to all in the classroom :** Biased, abusive, insulting language or actions will not be tolerated. We may very well discuss stereotypes and derogatory images, as these are often embedded in visual cultural or expressive practices, but we will do so critically and with respect for everyone’s feelings and perspectives. Should you feel threatened, insulted, or discriminated in any way, please bring your concerns to our attention. The University Bias Response Team is also a resource at your disposal; find more information at their website (<http://bias.uoregon.edu/index.html>) or by phoning (541-346-1134/1139).

Disability Services:

All students are entitled to an accessible and positive learning environment. If you identify as a student with a disability and need any assistance, please let us know. You may also want to contact Disability Services: 164 Oregon Hall, 346-1155 (TTY: 346-1083), disabshr@uoregon.edu

Academic Honesty:

“Members of the university community are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. To falsify the results of one’s research, to present the words, ideas, data, or work of another as one’s own, or to cheat on an examination corrupts the essential process by which knowledge is advanced.”

The above statement comes from the Student Life web page

(http://studentlife.uoregon.edu/duck_guide/academic_honesty.html). For more thorough description of the University’s policies, and the expectations placed on both students and faculty, go to that page. The bottom line is this: don’t cheat. Cheating so puts both student and instructor in uncomfortable positions, and getting caught has serious consequences for your career as a student. If you feel undue pressure from the workload in this class, come talk to one of us before thinking about cheating.

Course schedule: The following is my vision for the course; things may change slightly, so check Blackboard and email for announcements/adjustments! You should complete readings no later than the class period for which they are listed; other than the *Understanding Comics* text, all readings will be posted to the associated section of our Blackboard site (i.e. Week 1 for the first reading) as PDF files that you can either read on a computer or print.

Unit 1

Week 1	1/7	Visual Literacy & Art: Introduction to some core concepts
	1/9	read “Visual or Media Literacy?” by B.A. Chauvin (pdf on BB)
Week 2	1/14	Situating Visual Literacy; read “Sociocultural Perspectives on Visual Communication” by M. Griffin (pdf on BB)
	1/16	Visuality & Communicating read “Creating and Sharing Sights” by R. Finnegan (pdf on BB)

Week 3 1/21 **MLK Jr. Holiday: NO CLASS!**
1/23 Continue with Finnegan
read: Finnegan (con't) and supplementary materials posted to BB
UNIT 1 wiki assignment due

Unit 2

Week 4 1/28 Visual media: pictures & stories
read: *Understanding Comics* pp. 2–59
1/30 Visual media: time & style
read: *Understanding Comics* pp. 60–117

Week 5 2/4 Visual media: affect & words
read: *Understanding Comics* pp. 118–161
2/6 Visual media: art & process
read: *Understanding Comics* pp. 162–184
Week 6 2/11 Visual media: color & sequence
read: *Understanding Comics* pp. 185–215
2/13 **UNIT 2 comics assignment due**

Unit 3

Week 7 2/18 Politics: engaging issues/power through visual imagery
read: “Cartooning Nigerian Anticolonial Nationalism” by T. Olaniyan (pdf)
2/20 **BRING project due**
Week 8 2/25 the Natural World: reading culture in nature
read: materials posted to BB
2/27 **RIVER-PATH project due**
Week 9 3/3 Public Space: from advertising to public installations...
read: materials posted to BB
3/5 **PublicArt/GUERILLA hunt project due**
Week 10 3/10 Global settings: visual culture around the world
read: “Our Mosquitoes Are Not So Big” by T. Burke (pdf on BB)
3/12 **Online field trip project due**

Final exam period: 3/19/07 (Wed), 10:15–12:15; class meets to discuss/critique *Learning To Love You More* assignments

Course Syllabus
AAD 251 Art and Visual Literacy

Spring 2009: AAD 251

Location: Online

<https://blackboard.uoregon.edu//>

Instructor: David Bretz

Email: dbretz@uoregon.edu

Phone: (541) 345-6648

Office Hours: TBA - Email for appointment

Office: Lawrence Hall Room #168

Class Description:

Visual Literacy is a course designed to help you become more conscious of and more adept at using visualization as part of your intuitive intelligences. Your visual experiences form an intricate and powerful way of knowing and thinking that you have used intuitively all your life, but that you may have learned to consider as part of your cognitive processes even though up to 80% of the information that your brain processes each day is visual. As a class and as individuals, we will attempt to explore hidden assumptions and preconceptions about the visual arts, and engage class participants in a process to more fully experience and interpret visual culture.

Through drama, drawing, writing, music, slide shows, lectures, discussions and creative activities, we will trace the origins of visual communication from prehistoric gestures and cave art through the development of symbol-based languages, through writing, fine art, and media art.

In this learning process we will use critical theory to explore the effect of art on our perceptions of reality and the shaping of our lives and culture with special attention to issues of culture, gender, race, sexual orientation, and age. We will use creative experiments to experience the power and effect of the application of visual theories on our conscious and unconscious faculties and to learn to use our intuitive visual cognition more effectively for our constructive purposes.

AAD 251 is open to all students who have the academic requirements to enroll and commitment to learning the course materials. No previous experience is required or assumed. Absolute beginners can do well in this course. Students will need time for class, readings and writing, exercises, and projects.

Consider this course a unique opportunity to enrich your development as a student, a visual communicator, and as a human being. I ask you to open your mind to the ideas you will encounter. Embrace them for a time. Later you can keep what is appropriate for you and discard the rest. Stay open to the various ideas presented, to the ideas of your peers, and to those ideas presented in your assignments and readings. Much of what you learn as we explore this powerful, visual "way of thinking and knowing" will be of great help to you throughout your life, both personally and professionally. The goal is to introduce students to a set of conceptual skills for actively shaping and creating meanings in their visual culture. As with much of your education, many of the best lessons of this class will be revealed to you through your own experiences and thoughts as you work, create, and contribute to the group experiences.

Course Objectives: It is anticipated that participants in this course will:

- 1) articulate individual and shared beliefs about visual arts and other visual phenomena;
- 2) identify and articulate a variety of ideas that shape individual and shared definitions of art;
- 3) identify Multiple social, cultural, psychological, and aesthetic contexts that shape the meanings of visual phenomena;
- 4) demonstrate ability to understand visual phenomena using interpretation models presented in the course.

Readings: The required textbook is *Interpreting Art - reflecting, wondering, and responding*. Barret, T. (2003). Additional information will be provided via email, electronic reserves, and on-line, and students will be directed to Web sites for further required reading. Students may also select library resources and/or their own Web-based readings, based on their interests and research topic(s).

e-reserve: articles will be posted on the UO Library e-reserve system. Students will be given access information via email.

Course Requirements:

NOTE: Attendance is required. For every three absences, instructor reserves the right to lower student's grade by one letter grade. **NOTE -** If you are enrolled in an online class, participation through the online "Discussion Board" and through shared communication online will determine your class participation grade.

1. Class participation, including contribution to class discussions
2. Completion of weekly readings, written assignments, and individual presentations
3. Completion of midterm
4. Completion of group research project and presentation
5. Completion of final project and presentation.

Assignments & Grading: Total Points Possible 100

1. Short activity reports, quizzes and/or papers (two total) 10 points each - Total: 20 points
2. Midterm - 30 points
3. Media Project - 20 points
4. Final Project & Presentation - 20 points
5. Class discussion and participation - 10 points

Written work requires proper academic composition structure, spelling, grammar, and clarity of writing. These requirements will be a part of the grading on all written assignments and exams. Proper citing of any and all authors' quotes, ideas and/or the paraphrasing of another's quotes or ideas is required in all written work. Any and all online resources will be cited whether the author is named or not.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarizing from authors, websites, or other students will not be tolerated. If a student is discovered to have plagiarized in any class projects, written assignments, and/or exams, the student will receive an "F" and be removed from the class. If you have questions about plagiarism, please read the University of Oregon Student Handbook. For student information and assistance the quoted materials from the Knight Library website regarding plagiarism is submitted as part of this syllabus under "WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?"

Course Outline: An Overview

We will explore visual culture in general and the visual arts in particular, look at examples, and practice interpreting visual works. Along the way we will explore the concept of "art" and examine many aspects of visual experience and visual culture, including objects, places, and events. Students will practice noticing and analyzing both 2-D and 3-D forms.

Our investigations will begin with The Question of Art, and work toward an understanding of Seeing / Viewing as an act of Interpretation. Along the way, this class will consider: structure and meaning in images, symbols and metaphor, contexts, history, narrative, models for interpreting, child development & image-making, varieties of art and their many uses, and other aspects of the creation and interpretation of visual culture.

Other topic areas will include: advertising & media, how people both shape and are shaped by visual culture, and technology & the future. In the past, this class touched on subjects ranging from Tibetan Buddhist paintings to Australian rugby uniforms, Navajo sand painting, suspect identification in police work, translating visual artworks into forms the blind can experience, Voodoo rituals, and the "exhibition" of an empty gallery as an artwork. Each term is different.

Course Materials and Discussions:

Material presented in this course can be controversial and involve contentious discussion. A variety of opinions and ideas are encouraged and appreciated.

Participation in this class assumes that:

1. The dignity and essential worth of all participants is respected
2. The privacy, property, and freedom of participants will be respected
3. Bigotry, discrimination, violence, or intimidation will not be tolerated
4. Personal and academic integrity is expected

Participants with disabilities:

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make an appointment with me during the first week of the term. Please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability. The current counselor is Hilary Gerdes at 346-3211.

Disabilities may include (but are not limited to) neurological impairment; orthopedic impairment; traumatic brain injury; visual impairment; chronic medical conditions; emotional/psychological disabilities; hearing impairment, and learning disabilities.