**ENGLISH 505**

**Visual Rhetoric and the University**

Spring 2015

Mondays/Wednesdays 8:00-9:15am

**Professor Christa Olson**

6187D H. C. White Hall *office hours: Mondays 9:30 – 10:30am,*

cjolson6@wisc.edu *Wednesdays 10:30 – 11:30am,*

*& by appointment*

Life on campus is full of images that have persuasive purpose. Whether they foster pride, challenge assumptions, or just try to make us laugh, those pictures and scenes aim to influence us—and they’re often successful. This class explores that power visual images have to affect us. It combines reading in visual theory with real-life examples drawn from the history and present of UW-Madison. We’ll discuss team loyalty, branding, and campus pride as profoundly rhetorical matters. We’ll use challenging but accessible scholarly reading to give complex concepts immediate application by looking closely at the politics of all kinds of pictures. We’ll also make some pictures ourselves. Over the course of the semester, we’ll explore the University campus, visit the Silver Buckle Press, and watch political speeches; we’ll discuss Bucky, the bombing of Sterling Hall, and the posters that appear around every day; you’ll write analytical papers, compose photo essays, and give presentations. By the end of the semester, you’ll be equipped with tools for engaging critically with photographs, performances, and buildings and with a greater appreciation of those artifacts’ persuasive effects.

**Course Organization**

This class is organized into four units and three major assignments. It starts with an introduction to rhetoric and visual culture and then covers three themes: “Joining & Engaging,” “Political Histories,” and “Seeing the campus.” Most weeks, we’ll read one or two articles for discussion on Tuesday and then, for Thursday, review primary source materials for a related University case study. In other words, Tuesdays will be about establishing critical concepts, and Thursdays about applying and adjusting those concepts.

**Required Materials**

Most readings for the class can be found in the course packet available on our Learn@UW page. I expect that you will have the week’s readings with you in class each day, either as a printed copy or electronically. Having access to them will be crucial to your engagement with our discussion.

Additional readings and materials are linked at the URLs below and from our Learn@UW page.

**Assignments**

*In-Class Work* (10% of final grade). The work for this course will include class discussion, writing, and small group work. On most Thursdays, we will analyze case studies, applying critical concepts to local examples. Those case study activities will often involve informal presentations, small group discussions, or writing. Active participation and critical engagement with case studies and readings is crucial to success in the class.

*“Quick Take” Criticism* (QTC, 20% of final grade). Five Wednesdays during the semester, you will submit (via our Learn@UW site) a brief (400 word) rhetorical analysis of an image that I will have posted the previous Friday. QTCs should respond to the questions I pose, using rhetorical concepts and specific examples to construct an analysis. As the purpose of this assignment is to hone your criticism-writing abilities, your writing for each QTC should meet the same standards of clarity, description, and use of evidence you’d expect for a formal paper. Each QTC is worth 5 points and must be submitted by 9:00pm the day before class. Check the calendar below for specific due dates.

*Visual Analysis* (20% of final grade). The job of a rhetorical critic is not only to identify when an argument is being made and what that argument is, but also to analyze *how* the argument is constructed. QTCs and in-class work have you writing as critics about visual artifacts; this assignment asks you to make your criticism visual. You will choose a space on campus that you perceive as doing rhetorical work (shaping behavior, communicating values, or constraining use) and present a visual critique of that space to the class.

*Historical Visions Essay* (25% of final grade). This assignment will help you add research skills to your rhetorical criticism tool kit. For it, you will choose a historical photograph of University life –one that seems to be **doing** something— and investigate its context, circulation, and use. As a class, we’ll spend time in archives on campus and online. You will need to do further historical research on your own. As Campbell & Burkholder suggest, your task for this assignment will be identify how your image is “a product of, and function[s] within, a particular historical context” (49).

*Criticism Remix* (25% of final grade). For this assignment you will take an essay that you composed for another class and analyze how its production was mediated–by the class in which you produced it, by your perspectives at that time, by the modes and media available to you for completing it, etc. Based on that analysis, you will remix the critical essay, honoring, rivaling, and revising the contribution it makes and the forms it takes. In your remix, you may use any medium or combination of media you choose. Your task is to find the forms most amenable to your project and apply them. The underlying goal of the assignment is for you to practice criticism as both profoundly malleable and necessarily situated. The formats, objects, audiences, and critical orientations you choose will go a long way to determining your final product.

**Attendance & Participation**

I assume that you will make class attendance a priority this semester. We will use class time to practice the skills you’ll need for each of the major assignments, and your active, prepared participation is essential. Except in extraordinary circumstances, missed in-class work cannot be made up. Should you need to miss class, please be in touch with me as soon as possible. If you miss more than four days of class during the semester, you should expect a negative effect on your final grade. If you have reason to suspect that attendance will be an issue for you this semester, please come talk to me as early as possible to discuss options to help you succeed in the course.

**Late Assignments**

I will accept late assignments without grade penalty if you communicate with me **in writing** (email is fine) prior to the deadline for the assignment. Written notification should include **your name**, **the assignment name**, and **a new proposed due date**. You do not have to tell me why your assignment is late. If you cannot turn the assignment in on the new proposed due date, it is your responsibility to submit a new note.

Assignments whose new due dates are more than one week after the original due date will receive minimal feedback. Assignments turned in after the final due date for all assignments (9:25pm on Wednesday, May 13) will receive a zero. Unapproved late assignments will receive no feedback and their grade will drop 5% for each day after the deadline.

**Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct**

UW-Madison defines academic integrity as a set of core values around teaching and learning to which each member of the University community is responsible. All of us, students and instructors alike, are expected to pursue our scholarship honestly, acknowledging the sources and people who help make that scholarship possible. Failure to uphold academic integrity can lead to disciplinary action.

The UW System Administrative Code defines plagiarism, one of the most common kinds of academic misconduct, as “an act in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation; [or] uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise.” For more, see: http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html.

Unfortunately, despite the vehemence with which instructors excoriate plagiarism, the rules for source use and acknowledgement are far from universal. It should go without saying that submitting an assignment you found online, ‘borrowed’ from a friend, or paid someone else to complete is a gross violation of academic integrity. If I have reason to suspect your assignment is so far out of line, I will follow University policy as outlined in the link above.

On more complicated questions, however, you might find yourself truly confused. Must you cite yourself or your professor when you adapt material for your remix assignment? How different does language need to be to count as paraphrase? When does a piece of information become common knowledge? (after all, we don’t cite Lavoisier when we say that fire needs oxygen to burn). In what genres is it okay to appropriate material, and how much is okay?

Overall, the conventions for academic source use rest on two pillars: the idea that others should be able to trace what you’ve done (think of one scientist trying to replicate a previous scientist’s experiment) and the idea that people should get credit for their ideas. If your work adheres to those two goals, you should be fine. If you are in doubt, over-acknowledgement is the safest approach. When you draw from a source (be it your mother, Wikipedia, or a book), include a reference to it. You can also check out the Writing Center’s guide to source use (<http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>), raise the question during class, or stop by my office hours.

**Disability Services**

I am committed to working with you to be sure this class is accessible. If you have a disability that may have an impact your work this semester, please meet with me early on to arrange accommodations that will meet your needs and allow you to fulfill the requirements of the course. If you are interested in receiving official university services and accommodations for your disability, please contact the McBurney Center for Disability Services by phone at 263-2741 or email at FrontDesk@mcb.wisc.edu.

\* \* \*

**Week One**

**Introduction to Rhetoric & Rhetorical Criticism**

Wednesday, January 21 – What is rhetoric? What is visual rhetoric?

“The most political decision you make is where you direct people’s eyes”

– Wim Wenders, filmmaker

*In class*: Moments in Time 2014 Photographers’ Choice

http://news.wisc.edu/slideshows/photos-2014/

**Week Two**

**Tools for Rhetorical Criticism**

Monday, January 26 – Compositional Analysis

*Read for today*:

Rose, Gillian. “The Good Eye” (CP)

*In class:* Practice Analyses: The Lincoln Statue

slideshow: <http://www.news.wisc.edu/slideshows/7/slides/54>

Wednesday, January 28 – Descriptive Analysis

*Read for today:*

Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs, & Thomas A. Burkholder. “Descriptive Analysis”

Barthes, Roland “Rhetoric of the Image” (CP)

*In class*: Practice Analysis: HCW bulletin boards

**Week Three**

**Tools, cont.**

Monday, February 2 – Contextual Analysis

*Read for today:*

Campbell, Karlyn Kohrs, & Thomas A. Burkholder. “Contextual Analysis” (CP)

Wednesday, February 4 – Campus Resources for Multimodal Work

\* \* \*

THE UNIVERSITY AS CASE STUDY, PART I: JOINING & ENGAGING

**Week Four**

**Identification**

Monday February 9 – Seeing our People

*Read for today:*

LaWare, Margaret. “Encountering Visions of Aztlan” (CP)

Wednesday, February 11 – Case Study: Bucky Badger and University identity **(QTC DUE)**

*Read for today:*

Schultz, Gwen. Excerpt from *The Bucky Badger Story* (CP)

Bucky’s Bio at <http://www.uwbadgers.com/spiritsquad/bucky-badger.html>

*Watch for today:*

“Teach me how to Bucky”: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oVAZXZfIlNk

**Week Five**

**Critique**

Monday, Febraury 16 – Rhetorical Performance

*Read for today:*

Blair, Carole, & Neil Michel. “Reproducing Civil Rights Tactics” (CP)

Wednesday, February 18 – Case Study: “Black be Nimble” **(QTC DUE)**

*Read for today*:

Lallensack, Rachel “Art installment made by students addressing race issues destroyed within two hours of its unveiling”

Leonidas, Leah “UW-Madison students’ artistic commentary on racial injustices taken down hours after exhibition”

Class visit by Alex Jackson and Jay Katelansky, creators of the “Black be Nimble” installation

**Week Six**

**Visual Analysis Salon**

Monday, February 23 – Visual Analysis Presentations

Wednesday, February 25 – Visual Analysis Presentations

**Revised Visual Analysis Materials and Self-Evaluations due via Learn@UW**

**by Friday, February 27 at 5:00pm**

\* \* \*

THE UNIVERSITY AS CASE STUDY, PART II: POLITICAL HISTORIES

**Week Seven**

**Into the Archives**

Monday, March 2 – Visit to the University Archives’ Photography Collection

Wednesday, March 4 – Visit to the University Archives’ Photography Collection

Meet at the University Archives: Room 425 in Steenbock Library (550 Babcock Drive)

**Week Eight**

**Protests and Social Movements**

Monday, March 9 – Image Events & Protests

*Read for today:*

Johnson, Davi. “MLK Jr.’s 1963 Birmingham Campaign as Image Event” (CP)

Yang, Michelle “Still Burning” (CP)

Wednesday, March 11 –Protests on (and around) Campus **(QTC DUE)**

*View for today:*

Photo collection from 1960s/70s protests (see links on Learn@UW)

“The Sterling Hall Bombing: Destruction of a Movement”

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iduajf09Raw>)

Wisniewski, Matt. “Wisconsin ‘Budget Repair Bill’ Protest”

(<http://vimeo.com/20089255>)

Badger Herald, “Black Lives Matter Protest at UW-Madison”

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkAeAI883PU>)

MEET AT UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

**Week Nine**

**Making a Scene**

Monday, March 16 – The Comic and the Absurd

*Read for today:*

Demo, Anne T. “The Guerrilla Girls’ Comic Politics of Subversion” (CP)

Wednesday, March 18 – The Pail and Shovel Party **(QTC DUE)**

NO CLASS MEETING, CHRISTA AWAY AT A CONFERENCE

*Read for today:*

“The (non-) Politics of Pail and Shovel” <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/odd/archives/002996.asp>

“Lady Liberty Lights Up Lake Mendota” (CP)

Wisconsin Historical Society Archive Record for a 1979 Pink Flamingo: <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/museum/artifacts/archives/001660.asp>

In lieu of class meeting, complete the discussion activity on Learn@UW

**Week Ten**

**Presidents and Political Scenes**

Monday, March 23 – Presidential Visual Rhetoric

*Read/View for today:*

Strachan, J. Cherie & Kathleen E. Kendall, “Political Candidates’ Convention Films”

Parry-Giles, Trevor. “Resisting a ‘Treacherous Piety’”

Wednesday, March 25 – Politics on Campus

*View for today:*

President Obama, remarks on the “American College Promise” (9 January 2015) President Obama, speech on Bascom Hill (4 October 2014) (links on Learn@UW)

**Historical Visions Drafts Due in class on Wednesday, March 25**

\* \* \*

**Week Eleven**

**Spring Break**

Monday March 30 & Wednesday April 1 – No Class (of course)

\* \* \*

THE UNIVERSITY AS CASE STUDY, PART III: SEEING THE CAMPUS

**Week Twelve**

**Learning to See**

Monday, April 6 –Pedagogies of Sight

*Read for today:*

Jack, Jordynn. “Pedagogies of Sight” (CP)

Wednesday, April 8 – Learning to See the Campus **(QTC DUE)**

*Read for today:*

Brown, Charles E. “Campus Landmarks” (from 1924):

<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/UW.UWLandn01>

McCoy, Elizabeth, et al. “Seeing the University of Wisconsin-Madison Today” (from

1978): <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/UW.SeeUWToday>

Website for UW-Madison Visitor & Information Programs

<http://vip.wisc.edu/welcome/>

**Historical Visions Essays due, via Learn@UW, by 11:59pm, Sunday, April 12**

**Week Thirteen**

Monday April 13– Rhetorical Landscape

*Read/View for today:*

Clark, Gregory. “Landscape, National Identity, and Civic Tourism” (CP)

Wednesday, April 15 – Central Campus Cultural Landscape

*Read for today:*

“Cultural Landscape Inventory: Bascom Mall”

“Cultural Landscape Inventory: Observatory Hill”

(available on Learn@UW; focus on the sections on landscape significance and history)

**Week Fourteen**

Monday, April 20 - Remix Work Time

Wednesday, April 22 – Visit to Silver Buckle Press

**Week Fifteen**

**Rhetorical Memory**

Monday, April 27 – Monuments and Memorials

*Read for today:*

Blair, Carole “Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric’s

Materiality”

Gallagher, Victoria & Margaret LaWare “Sparring with Public Memory”

(both available on Learn@UW)

Wednesday, April 29 – The University Campus as a Site of Memory

**Week Sixteen**

**Wrapping Up**

Monday, May 4 – Remix Showcase

Wednesday, May 6 – Remix Showcase

**Revised Remixes due by the end of our final exam period**

**(Wednesday, May 13 at 9:25pm)**

**There is no final exam.**