



English 706: Visual Rhetoric

Fall Semester 2011
Tuesdays & Thursdays 1:00 – 2:15pm
7105 Helen C. White Hall

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 8:00 - 9:00am,
Thursdays 11:00am – 12:00pm, & by appointment

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Course Description

Since at least the early 1990s, when W.J.T. Mitchell noted a “pictorial turn” in the humanities and the New London Group introduced the idea of “multiliteracies,” scholars have been looking beyond talk and text models in order to study writing, rhetoric, literacy, and persuasion. In this course we will trace some of those developing conversations and contribute to them. Course readings and discussion will pay particular attention to how rhetorical understandings of civic identity and public culture are shaped by the visual turn in the field. Along the way we will look at contexts historical --British and Spanish colonialism, the Greco-Roman world, & the Civil Rights Movement-- and contemporary --war memorials, the visual presidency, the digital age. We will also consider the two major strands of visual scholarship in rhetorical studies --one, more grounded in the study of rhetoric, that foregrounds public and civic concerns, the other, more grounded in the study of composition, that emphasizes digital realms, multimodality, and the pedagogical. Our readings and discussions will examine the differences between those two strands and consider the possibilities of rapprochement.

Required Texts

All required readings for the course are available online via our [Learn@UW](#) page.

Suggested Texts

Previous training in rhetoric is not required for this course. However, if you are new to rhetoric, you might find the following reference texts useful:

Jasinski, James. Sourcebook on Rhetoric (Sage, 2001).

Memorial Library Reference Stacks, 2 South (non-circulating), PN172 J37 2001

Sloan, Thomas, ed. *Encyclopedia of Rhetoric* (Oxford UP, 2001).
Memorial Library Reference Stacks, 2 South (non-circulating), PN172 E52 2001

Assignments (all evaluated on a $\sqrt{+/\sqrt{-}}$ scale)

Response Papers. Each of you will submit six 1-page, single-spaced “instigator” papers over the course of the semester. These brief papers will choose a major theme or question from one or more of the readings and engage analytically with it. True to their name, these “instigators” should aim to spark discussion by taking a critical stand on the reading, proposing a new interpretation of a passage or example, or placing multiple readings in conversation. At the same time, these essays should stay close to the readings: their task is to help us focus on the day’s topic, not ‘riff’ on a tangential idea. You will each be part of a group (A-C) scheduled to respond every third week or so (you will write as individuals). I may ask some or all of the group members to present their essays to help direct discussion. Please email your response to the class (including me) by 5:00pm the night before the day your group is scheduled. If you need to skip a day during the semester, there are two make-up days at the end of the semester.

Group Project – Applied Visual Rhetoric. One of the valuable skills to gain during graduate education is the ability to turn the academic material you encounter into a resource for your own work. You might be looking for ideas to incorporate in your classroom, tools to help with community projects, or sources for your scholarship. Whatever you’re up to, developing your facility at adapting, adopting, and applying is worthwhile. This assignment will push you to do just that. As part of a small group you will put together a project of applied visual rhetoric that ties the concepts and theories we’ve discussed to some aspect of your life/work outside the class (a unit for a composition class, a guide to some aspect of campus visual culture, a visual history of a community organization, etc.). We’ll organize groups (and I’ll provide further guidance) in mid-September. The project will include three pieces:

- 1) A 20-30 minute class presentation
- 2) Documentation of your project (lesson plans, guide, assignment prompts, etc.)
- 3) A 3-4 page individual analysis/reflection paper

Annotated Bibliography. In preparation for your final paper, the annotated bibliography asks you to immerse yourself in a specific conversation related to the field of visual rhetoric. For it, you will need to choose a scholarly conversation to which you see your final project (the conference paper) contributing. The “scholarly conversation” for your annotated bibliography is not the same as the topic of your conference paper. Instead, it should provide a larger background or scene for that topic (e.g. for a conference paper about the use of visuals in ACT-UP campaigns you might put together an annotated bibliography on queer rhetorics, on visibility in social movements, or on rhetoric and performance studies, depending on the larger conversation your conference paper will engage). You should pick a sufficiently limited conversation such that your bibliography of at least twenty-five article-length sources will cover the bulk of current scholarship on the topic. Your sources need not all come from rhetorical studies but should all be scholarly in nature (no primary sources, please) and should deepen your understanding of a matter of concern within the field of rhetoric. As you read, look for underlying questions, recurring arguments, points of confluence, emerging disagreements, and persistent gaps. Your annotations should state the main argument of the piece and give a concise summary. You might also note the particular contributions a text makes to your topic. The annotated bibliography

should be formatted to conform to MLA or APA style. You can find a useful guide to annotated bibliographies and some examples at <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/annotatebib.html>.

Conference Paper. Your final project for the semester will be a 7-9 page conference paper that builds from the conversation you traced in your annotated bibliography. Because this is a conference paper, keep in mind a few particular questions of style: 1) your paper should not be a literature review; it should contribute something new to an existing conversation; 2) your paper should elaborate a single arc of argument and offer a handful of specific supporting examples that can be easily grasped by a listening (rather than reading) audience; 3) your writing style overall should accommodate verbal presentation. This doesn't mean that your piece should be informal; conference papers are usually still formal affairs. It does mean that you should provide sign posts within your argument to guide listeners through steps and use relatively short sentence constructions. We will workshop drafts in-class on December 6, and you will present your paper as part of a class mini conference on December 8, 13, or 15. The final version of the paper is due on Monday, December 19 by 5:00pm.

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SEMESTER SCHEDULE & READING LIST

STARTING PLACES

Tuesday September 6 – State of the Field (Four Recent Examples of Visual Scholarship)

Readings:

Tonn, Mari Boor “From the Eye to the Soul”

Yang, Michelle Murray “Still Burning”

Reid, Alex “Exposing Assemblages”

(<http://enculturation.gmu.edu/exposing-assemblages>)

Hodgson, Justin, et al. “The Importance of Undergraduate Multimedia”

(<http://www.technorhetoric.net/16.1/disputatio/hodgson-et-al/JUMPdisputatio.swf>)

Thursday September 8 – A Brief Introduction to Talking About Pictures

Readings:

Berger, John “The Suit and the Photograph”

Finnegan, Cara A. “What is this a Picture Of?”

Rose, Gillian “The Good Eye”

Take some time before class to familiarize yourself with at least some of the following visual culture resources online:

Blogs

No Caption Needed blog (<http://www.nocaptionneeded.com/>)

Bag News Notes blog (<http://www.bagnewsnotes.com/>)

Visual Politics blog (<http://visualpolitics.tumblr.com/>)

Lens blog at The New York Times (<http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/>)

Flickr Photostreams

U.S. National Archives Flickr photostream

(<http://www.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/>)

White House's Flickr photostream (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/whitehouse>)

Library of Congress Flickr photostream

(http://www.flickr.com/photos/library_of_congress/)

Tuesday September 13 – Classic Image Texts (Group A)

Readings:

Barthes, Roland “Rhetoric of the Image”

Benjamin, Walter “Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”

Jay, Martin “The Noblest of the Senses: Vision from Plato to Descartes”

Mitchell, W.J.T “Pictorial Turn”

**Thursday September 15 – Visual Materials Collection at the Wisconsin Historical Society
MEET IN HCW 7105 AND TIM JOHNSON WILL GUIDE YOU TO THE WHS**

Tuesday September 20 – Early Discussion of Visual Rhetoric (Group B)

Readings:

Corbett, Edward P. J. “The Rhetoric of the Open Hand and the Rhetoric of the Closed Fist”

Foss, Sonja “Ambiguity as Persuasion”

Blair, J. Anthony “Possibility and Actuality of Visual Arguments”

Thursday September 22 - On the Nature and Implications of Visual Rhetoric (Group C)

Readings:

DeLuca, Kevin Michael and Jon Wilferth “Foreword”

(<http://enculturation.gmu.edu/6.2/foreword>)

Finnegan, Cara A. & Barbour, Jennifer L. Jones “Visualizing Public Address”

Finnegan, Cara A. “Visual Studies and Visual Rhetoric”

Olson, Lester C. “Intellectual and Conceptual Resources for Visual Rhetoric”

Tuesday September 27 – Image Events (Group A)

Readings:

Delicath, John W. & Kevin Michael DeLuca “Image Events, the Public Sphere, and Argumentative Practice”

DeLuca, Kevin Michael “Making Waves” from *Image Politics*

Johnson, Davi “Martin Luther King Jr.’s 1963 Birmingham Campaign as Image Event”

Thursday September 29 – Early Discussion of Multiliteracies and -modalities (Group B)

Readings:

The New London Group “A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies”

Kress, Gunther “‘English’ at the Crossroads”

Wysocki, Anne & Johnson-Eilola, Johndan “Blinded by the Letter”

Tuesday October 4 – On the Nature and Implications of Multimodality (Group C)

Readings:

Kress “Gains and Losses”

Prior “Moving Multimodality Beyond the Binaries”

McDonagh, Deana, Nan Goggin, & Joseph Squier “Signs, Symbols, and Subjectivity”

Moran, Charles “Powerful Medicine with Long-Term Side Effects”

Wysocki, Anne Frances “awaywithwords”

MODES AND MEDIA

Thursday October 6 – What Photography Does (Group A)

Readings:

Linfield, Susie “A Little History of Photography Criticism” and “Photojournalism and Human Rights” from *The Cruel Radiance*

Zelizer, Barbie “Journalism, Memory, and the Voice of the Visual;” “Journalism’s Mix of Presumption, Possibility, and Certainty;” and “How News Images Move the Public” from *About to Die*

Tuesday October 11 – Iconic Photos & Image Vernaculars (Group B)

Readings:

Finnegan, Cara A. “Recognizing Lincoln”

Hariman, Robert & Lucaites, John Louis “Introduction,” “Performing Civic Identity,” and “Visual Democracy” from *No Caption Needed*

Thursday October 13 – New Media (Group C)

Readings:

Brooke, Colin Gifford “In (New) Media Res, a Preface,” “Interface,” and “Perspective” from *Lingua Fracta*

Rice, Jeff “Introduction,” “The Story of Composition Studies and Cool,” and “Imagery” from *The Rhetoric of Cool*

Tuesday October 18 – Multimodal Scholarship (Group A)

Readings:

Wysocki, Anne Frances. “Monitoring Order”

(<http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/3.2/binder.html?features/wysocki/mOrder0.html>)

Sorapure, Madeline “Between Modes”

(<http://english.ttu.edu/kairos/10.2/binder2.html?coverweb/sorapure/index.html>)

kyburz, bonnie lenore “Notes on ‘Notes on the Film’”

(<http://kairos.technorhetoric.net/15.1/inventio/kyburz/index.html>)

Thursday October 20 – “Writing” (Group B)

Readings:

Shipka, Jody “Introduction” and “Rethinking Composition / Rethinking Process” from *Toward a Composition Made Whole*

Wysocki, Anne Frances. “The Multiple Media of Texts”

Trimbur, John “Delivering the Message”

Tuesday October 25 – Monuments & Memorials (Group C)

Readings:

Biesecker, Barbara “Remembering World War II”

Blair, Carole & Neil Michel “The AIDS Memorial Quilt and the Contemporary Culture of Public Commemoration”

Dickenson, Greg, Brial L. Ott, & Eric Aoki “Spaces of Remembering and Forgetting”

COMMON THEMES & MAJOR CONCEPTS

Thursday October 27 – The Visual in Composition Pedagogy (Group A)

Readings:

Allen, Nancy “Seeing Rhetoric”

DeVoss, Danielle Nicole, Ellen Cushman, and Jeffrey T. Grabill “Infrastructure and Composing”

Halbritter, Bump. “Big Questions, Small Works, Lots of Layers”

<http://www.technorhetoric.net/16.1/praxis/halbritter/index.php>

George, Diana “From Analysis to Design”

Tuesday November 1 – Applied Visual Rhetoric Presentations

Thursday November 3 – Applied Visual Rhetoric Presentations

Tuesday November 8 – Publics and the Public Sphere (Group B)

Readings:

Warner, Michael “Publics and Counterpublics”

Asen, Robert “Imagining in the Public Sphere”

DeLuca, Kevin Michael & Jennifer Peeples “From Public Sphere to Public Screen”

Finnegan, Cara A. & Jiyeon Kang “Sighting the Public”

Thursday November 10 – Nationalisms and Group Identifications (Group C)

Readings:

Olson, Lester C. “Resisting Rape”

Clark, Gregory “The Rhetorical Experience of Landscape” and “Landscape, National Identity, and Civic Tourism”

Lamp, Kathleen “The *Ara Pacis Augustae*”

Tuesday November 15 – Seeing Difference (Group A)

Readings:

Malin, Brenton J. “Looking White and Middle-Class”

Omidvar, Iraj “A Study of Photographs of Iran”

Pinney, Christopher “Indian Images Under the Shadow of Colonialism”

LaWare, Margaret “Encountering Visions of Aztlán”

Thursday November 17 – Bodies (Group B)

Readings:

Fredal, James “Herm Choppers”

Harold, Christine & Kevin Michael DeLuca “Behold the Corpse”

Olson, Christa J. “Casta Painting”

Tuesday November 22 – Consumption (Group C)

Readings:

Rogers, Richard A. “Deciphering Kokopelli”

Black, Jason Edward “The ‘Mascotting’ of Native America”

Kimble, James & Lester C. Olson “Rosie the Riveter”

Thursday November 24 – – Thanksgiving Break

No Class and three weeks left in the semester: some things to be thankful for...

Tuesday November 29 – Environmentalism and Scientific Vision (Make-up Day)

Readings:

Doyle, Julie “Seeing the Climate?”

Jack, Jordynn “A Pedagogy of Sight”

Thursday December 1 – Political Image (Make-up Day)

Readings:

Erickson, Keith V. “Presidential Rhetoric’s Visual Turn”

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

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

Look through the last few months of images on the White House’s Flickr photostream

Tuesday December 6 – Workshopping Day

Thursday December 8 – Mini Conference Group C

Tuesday December 13 – Mini Conference Group B

Thursday December 15 – Mini Conference Group A

Monday December 19 – Final Paper Due