AHIS 100g  INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL CULTURE

Spring 2017  Lecture: Mondays & Wednesdays, 2:00–3:20pm (THH 101)
Discussion: Fridays

Prof. Megan R. Luke (mluke@usc.edu)
Office hours: Wednesdays, 12:00-2:00pm (THH 326)
*Sign-up sheet on office door*

TAs
Jessica Brier (brier@usc.edu)
Office hours: Fridays, 12:00–2:00pm (Literatea Café, Doheny Library)

Samantha Burton (burtons@usc.edu)
Office hours: Tuesdays, 1:00–3:00pm (THH 355-E)

Course Description

In the late 1920s, following a period of profound technological change that affected every aspect of life, the artist László Moholy-Nagy famously declared: “It is not the person ignorant of writing but the one ignorant of photography who will be the illiterate of the future.” In our digital present, this course proposes that we expand this literacy to include all images and the various networks, spaces, and technologies we use to share, distribute, consume, and produce them. Students will be introduced to critical and historical concepts necessary for understanding the images we routinely see and manipulate. We will consider a wide range of media and their social consequences, various systems for image aggregation and exchange, and the relationships between visual and textual knowledge.

Learning Objectives

Students in this course will cultivate skills in:

- visual analysis and description
- close reading of scholarly texts in the humanities
- critical thinking about the history and theory of images and visual perception

Through required participation in discussion sections, students will also learn:

- how to navigate library and digital resources
- best practices for visiting museums and archives
- strategies for improving their writing at the college level
Course Materials

The following book is required; copies will also be available at Leavey Library Reserves:

- Anne Friedberg, *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006) [noted as VW on the Course Plan]

In addition to the readings, you are also responsible for watching a number of videos in this class and visiting select architectural sites, marked “Watch” and “Visit” on the syllabus, respectively:

- DVDs of required feature-length films will be placed at Leavey Library Reserves. Keep in mind that there may only be one copy available and plan accordingly.

- When you are asked to visit a site outside of class, please document your experience with a photograph and submit to your TA via email as per their instructions. Images pulled from the web do not count!

PDFs and PowerPoint Presentations

All readings not in the required book (above) on available publicly online (see links in Course Plan, below), will be available as PDFs for download through ARES (https://reserves.usc.edu). PowerPoint presentations of the slides shown in class will be made available via a Google Drive link sent to your USC email address after each lecture for study purposes for exams. Note that these materials are all under copyright and are for personal study use only; they may not be downloaded, printed, or otherwise distributed. There will be no Blackboard site for this course; it is your responsibility to check your USC email for regular communications from your TA.

Section Visits to Campus and Area Collections

Several of your Friday discussion sections will take place outside the scheduled room, at locations on- and off-campus, as noted on the Course Plan. These field trips will offer you the opportunity to look at a range of materials first-hand. It is your responsibility to arrive directly at each location for your scheduled section on time; please plan accordingly and be in touch with your TA with any questions in advance.
Assignments

Participation (10%)

Unbroken attendance in lecture and discussion sections, robust discussion and preparation, respect for teachers and peers, timely completion of all assignments.

- To get the most out of lecture, it is recommended that you complete the readings/site visits/videos assigned for each lecture beforehand. You are required to complete all the week’s readings before section and to come prepared to ask questions and discuss them.

Image journal (30%)

You will choose and analyze an image in light of the assigned readings for a given week, according to a prompt supplied by your TA. Each journal entry will be due each week in section as noted on the syllabus. Each entry should be 1,000–1,200 words; total of ten (10) entries for the semester.

You will be graded on the overall quality of the entire journal at the end of the semester, with particular attention given to the improvement of your writing and analyses. You will receive feedback on the first five (5) entries from your TA in Week 9. If you do not complete an entry by the deadline, you miss out on the credit. You will have the opportunity to revise two previously completed entries prior to the assignment of the final grade on the journal, due at our last class.

Midterm exam #1 (15%)

Comprehension of concepts introduced in lectures and readings in Weeks 1–5.

Midterm exam #2 (15%)

Comprehension of concepts introduced in lectures and readings in Weeks 7–11.

Final exam (30%)

Comprehension of concepts introduced in lectures and readings. The final exam is cumulative, covering material from the entire semester.

- Prior to each exam, there will be a review. Please submit specific questions or topics for discussion according to the dates marked on the syllabus.
Course Protocols

Late work will not be accepted. If you miss a deadline, you receive no credit for that assignment. There will be no make-up exams. Exceptions in cases of medical or family emergency require documentation from your doctor and/or academic advisor.

Laptops, tablets, and phones are not permitted in lecture. These devices must be switched off prior to entering class to keep us all focused on the lecture and the projected images. You will be asked to leave lecture if you distract yourself and the students around you with any of these devices, and your section participation grade will be lowered at the discretion of your TA. Students who have a medical reason to use electronic devices must apply to the professor in person. For a helpful explanation of the benefits of this policy, see: www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/the-case-for-banning-laptops-in-the-classroom.

Come prepared to class. Bring notepaper and pen/pencil to all class meetings and always bring a copy of the week's assigned readings with you to discussion sections. Follow instructions from your TA for formatting your image journal assignments, and bring your own blue books for exams.

Attendance is your responsibility. Exams are based on the readings and material covered in lecture and section. If you miss class, you miss out; do not email the professor or your TA to “make it up.” Office hours are for help with assignments or clarification, not to cover lectures or sections that you missed.

Selling notes/class materials to other students or outside vendors is strictly prohibited. Such behavior is subject to disciplinary action by the College and will result in a failing grade in the class. It is never OK to obtain monetary or other material compensation from this exchange.

Academic honesty is a top priority. If you plagiarize your writing or cheat on exams, you will receive a failing grade in the class. If you have questions about what qualifies as plagiarism or cheating, consult with your TA prior to completing any assignment.

See page 13 for:

- Statement for Students with Disabilities
- Statement on Academic Integrity
- Emergency Preparedness / Course Continuity in a Crisis
COURSE PLAN

Week 1  Vision/Culture

Jan 9   Introduction
Watch   *Ways of Seeing*, Episode 1 (dir. John Berger and Mike Dibb, 1972)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pDE4VX_9Kk
Jan 11  Lecture – Pictures and Power
Read    VW, 1–22
Jan 12  No section

UNIT I  PICTURING REALITY

Week 2  Perspective

Jan 16  Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday (no class)
Jan 18  Lecture – Structuring Vision
Read    VW, 26–56
Jan 20  Section — Practicing Visual Analysis and Accurate Description
### Week 3  
**Picture Stories**

**Jan 23**  
**Lecture** – *Word and Image*  
Read  

**Jan 25**  
**Lecture** – *Observation and Narration*  
Read  

**Jan 27**  
**Section** – *Using the Library and Special Collections*  
USC Libraries Special Collections, Doheny Memorial Library (DML), Room 209  
(*Meet your section directly at this location at the scheduled time*)  
[libraries.usc.edu/locations/special-collections](http://libraries.usc.edu/locations/special-collections)

**Deadline**  
Image Journal Entry Due #1

### Week 4  
**Projection**

**Jan 30**  
**Lecture** – *Camera Obscura*  
Read  
VW, 59–74, 86–93  
Visit  
Santa Monica Camera Obscura (open M–F, 9am–3pm; Sa, 11am–4pm)  
1450 Ocean Avenue, check in at the office with ID to borrow the key (Walking distance from Downtown Santa Monica Expo Station)  
**Document your visit with 1–2 photographs and submit to your TA**

**Feb 1**  
**Lecture** – *Photography (I)*  
Read  

**Feb 3**  
**Section** – *Understanding Photographic Technologies*  

**Deadline**  
Image Journal Entry Due #2
## Week 5  Icons and Iconoclasm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Visit</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Feb 8 | Lecture – Transparency and Abstraction | VW, 102–129  
| Feb 10| Section – Curation, Collecting, and Control | USC Hancock Memorial Museum, Hancock Foundation Building (AHF)  
(*Meet your section directly at this location at the scheduled time*)  
[libraries.usc.edu/locations/special-collections/hancock-memorial-museum](libraries.usc.edu/locations/special-collections/hancock-memorial-museum) | **Document your visit with 1–2 photographs and submit to your TA** **Document your visit with 1–2 photographs and submit to your TA** |                   |

### Deadline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Image Journal Entry Due #3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questions for Midterm Review</td>
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## Week 6  First Midterm Exam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 13</td>
<td>Midterm Exam Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 15</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 17</td>
<td>No section</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Watch | *La Jetée* (dir. Chris Marker, 1962; 28 mins.)  
DVD on reserve at Leavey Library |
## UNIT II  |  FUGITIVE IMAGES

### Week 7  |  Panorama

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 20</td>
<td>President’s Day (no class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 22</td>
<td>Guest Lecture – Prof. Vanessa Schwartz, Panoramas and Spectacle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 24</td>
<td>Section – Velaslavasay Panorama</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1122 West 24th Street</td>
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<td>(Meet your section directly at this location at the scheduled time)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><a href="http://www.panoramaonview.org">www.panoramaonview.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline</td>
<td>Image Journal Entry Due #4</td>
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### Week 8  |  Reproduction

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb 27</td>
<td>Lecture – Photography (II)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 1</td>
<td>Lecture – New Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 3</td>
<td>Section – Reading Texts and Images Critically</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline</td>
<td>Image Journal Entry Due #5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Week 9  Seeing the Invisible

Mar 6  Lecture – Bodies and Character

Mar 8  Lecture – Mobile Viewpoints


Mar 10  Section – Improving Your Writing

**Deadline**  Image Journal Entry Due #6
Receive Feedback from TA

Week 10  Spring Break

Mar 13  Spring Break (no class)
Mar 15  Spring Break (no class)
Mar 17  Spring Break (no section)

Watch  *Vertigo* (dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 1958; 2 hr., 9 mins.)
DVD on reserve at Leavey Library
### Week 11  Screens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mar 20</th>
<th>Lecture – [TBD]</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read</td>
<td>VW, 150–180</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar 22</td>
<td>Lecture – Screening Selfhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 24</td>
<td>Section – Analyzing a Film Sequence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Deadline | Image Journal Entry Due #7  
Questions for Midterm Review |

### Week 12  Second Midterm Exam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mar 27</th>
<th>Midterm Exam Review</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar 29</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 31</td>
<td>No section</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Visit   | Select one of the following local museum exhibitions to visit:  
*Kerry James Marshall: Mastry*  
Museum of Contemporary Art, Grand Avenue (Downtown)  
[www.moca.org/visit/grand-ave](http://www.moca.org/visit/grand-ave)  
*Moholy-Nagy: Future Present*  
Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Mid-Wilshire)  
[www.lacma.org/plan-your-visit](http://www.lacma.org/plan-your-visit)  
*Visible Vault: Archaeological Treasures from Ancient Latin America*  
Natural History Museum (Exposition Park)  
[www.nhm.org/site/explore-exhibits/permanent-exhibits/latin-american-art](http://www.nhm.org/site/explore-exhibits/permanent-exhibits/latin-american-art)  
**Submit your ticket stub with your name to your TA in lecture on Apr 3** |
## UNIT III  THE IMAGE-MASS

### Week 13  Collections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr 3</td>
<td>Lecture – Museums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 5</td>
<td>Lecture – Memories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 7</td>
<td>Section – Discussing Creativity in the Public Sphere&lt;br&gt;USC Fisher Museum of Art (HAR)&lt;br&gt;(<em>Meet your section directly at this location at the scheduled time</em>)&lt;br&gt;fisher.usc.edu</td>
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### Deadline  Image Journal Entry Due #8

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### Week 14  Cut/Paste, High/Low

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr 10</td>
<td>Lecture – Collage, Montage, and Mash-Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read</td>
<td>VW 219–39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 12</td>
<td>Lecture – Degraded Images</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 14</td>
<td>Section – Using Digital Resources</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Deadline  Image Journal Entry Due #9
**Week 15  Network/Culture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr 17</td>
<td>Guest Lecture – Prof. Jennifer Greenhill, American Magazines</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jennifer A. Greenhill, “The View from Outside: Rockwell and Race in 1950,”</td>
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<td><em>American Art</em> 21, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 70–95.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 19</td>
<td>Lecture – Journalism and Advertising</td>
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<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iTUebm731Y">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iTUebm731Y</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 21</td>
<td>Section – Reviewing Key Concepts for the Final Exam</td>
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**Deadline**

- Image Journal Entry Due #10
- Questions for Final Exam Review

**Week 16  Conclusion & Review**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apr 24</td>
<td>Final Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr 26</td>
<td>Final Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 28</td>
<td>Section – Extended Office Hours</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Deadline**

- Image Journal Revisions Due

**May 8  Final Exam, 2:00–4:00pm (Location TBD)**

[https://classes.usc.edu/term-20171/finals](https://classes.usc.edu/term-20171/finals)
STATEMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to your TA \textbf{no later than your first section (January 20)}. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Please visit \url{http://dsp.usc.edu} for more information.
Contact: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), \url{ability@usc.edu}

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook (\url{http://scampus.usc.edu}), contains the University Student Conduct Code (see University Governance, Section 11.00), while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS/COURSE CONTINUITY IN A CRISIS

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies. See the university’s site on Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness (\url{http://preparedness.usc.edu}).