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)

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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 perfectly OK to study for exams with your peers and review lectures together. 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
	Trevor Paglen, "Invisible Images (Your Pictures Are Looking at You)," *The New Inquiry* (December 8, 2016); accessible at: http://thenewinquiry.com/essays/invisible-images-your-pictures-are-looking-at-you/
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
	Michel Foucault, "Las Meninas," in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971), 3–16.
Jan 20	Section — Practicing Visual Analysis and Accurate Description

Week 3	**Picture Stories**
Jan 23	Lecture – Word and Image
Read	James Cahill, "The Literati and Ch'an Painters of the Sung Dynasty," in *Treasures of Asia: Chinese Painting* (Geneva: Skira, 1960), 89–98.
	Maggie Bickford, "The Flowering Plum and the Flowering of Scholar Painting" and "The Completion of the Formative Process" [excerpt], in *Ink Plum: The Making of a Chinese Scholar-Painting Genre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 101–9, 131–40.
Jan 25	Lecture – Observation and Narration
Read	Lorraine Daston, "Observation," in *Prints and the Pursuit of Knowledge in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Susan Dackerman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Art Museums, 2011), 126–33.
	Daniela Bleichmar, "Natural History & Visual Culture in the Spanish Empire" and "Natural History & Visual Epistemology," in *Visible Empire: Botanical Expeditions and Visual Culture in the Hispanic Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 3–11 and 42–77.
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

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	Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave [1973]," in *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 1–24.
Feb 3	Section – Understanding Photographic Technologies

Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #2

Week 5	**Icons and Iconoclasm**
Feb 6	Lecture – Images as Signs and Symbols
Read	Finbarr Barry Flood, "Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum," *The Art Bulletin* 84, no. 4 (December 2002): 641–59.
	Martin Kemp, "Mona Lisa," in *Christ to Coke: How Image Becomes Icon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 140–65.
Feb 8	Lecture – Transparency and Abstraction
Read	VW, 102–129
	Fredric Jameson, "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism [1984]" [excerpt on the Bonaventure Hotel], *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 38–45.
Visit	Westin Bonaventure Hotel 404 S. Figueroa Street, Downtown Los Angeles **Document your visit with 1–2 photographs and submit to your TA**
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
Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #3 Questions for Midterm Review

Week 6	**First Midterm Exam**
Feb 13	Midterm Exam Review
Feb 15	Midterm Exam
Feb 17	No section
Watch	*La Jetée* (dir. Chris Marker, 1962; 28 mins.) DVD on reserve at Leavey Library

UNIT II FUGITIVE IMAGES

Week 7 Panorama

Feb 20 President's Day (no class)

Feb 22 Guest Lecture – Prof. Vanessa Schwartz, Panoramas and Spectacle

Read Wolfgang Schievelbusch, "Panoramic Travel," *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 52–69.

Vanessa R. Schwartz, "Representing Reality and the O-rama Craze," *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-siècle Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 149–76.

Feb 24 Section – Velaslavasay Panorama
1122 West 24th Street
(Meet your section directly at this location at the scheduled time)
www.panoramaonview.org

Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #4

Week 8 Reproduction

Feb 27 Lecture – Photography (II)

Read William M. Ivins, Jr., "New Reports and New Vision," in *Prints and Visual Communication* (1953; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 135–57.

Mar 1 Lecture – New Vision

Read László Moholy-Nagy, "Production-Reproduction [1922]," in *Photography in the Modern Era: European Documents and Critical Writings, 1913–1940*, ed. Christopher Phillips (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1989), 79–82.

Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility (Second Version) [1935–36]," in *Selected Writings, Volume 3: 1935–1938*, eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Harry Zohn (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press/Harvard UP, 2002), 101–33.

Mar 3 Section – Reading Texts and Images Critically

Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #5

Week 9	**Seeing the Invisible**
Mar 6	Lecture – Bodies and Character
Read	John Tagg, "A Means of Surveillance: The Photograph as Evidence in Law," in *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1988), 66–102.
Mar 8	Lecture – Mobile Viewpoints
Read	Rebecca Solnit, "The Visibility Wars" and Trevor Paglen, "Conversation with Laura Cornell," in *Mass Effect: Art and the Internet in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Lauren Cornell and Ed Halter (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2015), 243–265.
Watch	Harun Farocki, *Serious Games: Watson is Down* (Part 1), *Three Dead* (Part 2), *Immersion* (Part 3), *A Sun with No Shadow* (Part 4) (2009–10; 45 mins. total) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEVi3pdO4VI&spfreload=10
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**
Mar 20	Lecture – [TBD]
Read	VW, 150–180
Mar 22	Lecture – Screening Selfhood
Read	Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 6–18. Banet-Weiser, Sarah, "Branding the Postfeminist Self," in *Authentic™: The Politics and Ambivalence in a Brand Culture* (New York: NYU Press, 2012), 51–89; 233–40 (notes).
Mar 24	Section – Analyzing a Film Sequence
Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #7 Questions for Midterm Review

Week 12	**Second Midterm Exam**
Mar 27	Midterm Exam Review
Mar 29	Midterm Exam
Mar 31	No section
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 *Moholy-Nagy: Future Present* Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Mid-Wilshire) 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 **Submit your ticket stub with your name to your TA in lecture on Apr 3**

UNIT III THE IMAGE-MASS

Week 13 Collections

Apr 3 Lecture – Museums

Read Hans Belting, "The Farewell to *Apollo*," in *The Invisible Masterpiece* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2001), 27–49.

James Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture," in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 215–29 [excerpt].

Apr 5 Lecture – Memories

Read Margaret Olin, "Five Stories of 9/11," in *Touching Photographs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 160–223.

Apr 7 Section – Discussing Creativity in the Public Sphere
USC Fisher Museum of Art (HAR)
(*Meet your section directly at this location at the scheduled time*)
fisher.usc.edu

Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #8

Week 14 Cut/Paste, High/Low

Apr 10 Lecture – Collage, Montage, and Mash-Up

Read VW 219–39

Anke te Heesen, "News, Paper, Scissors: Clippings in the Sciences and Arts Around 1920," in *Things That Talk*, ed. Lorraine Daston (New York: Zone, 2004), 296–327; 418–23 (notes)

Apr 12 Lecture – Degraded Images

Read Marshall McLuhan, "Media Hot and Cold" and "Media as Translators," in *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964; repr., Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 22–32 and 56–61.

Hito Steyerl, "In Defense of the Poor Image," *e-flux journal* 10 (November 2009); http://www.e-flux.com/journal/in-defense-of-the-poor-image/

Francesco Casetti and Antonio Somaini, "The Conflict Between High Definition and Low Definition," *Convergence* 19, n. 4 (2013): 415–22.

Apr 14 Section – Using Digital Resources

Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #9

Week 15	**Network/Culture**
Apr 17	Guest Lecture – Prof. Jennifer Greenhill, American Magazines
	Jennifer A. Greenhill, "The View from Outside: Rockwell and Race in 1950," *American Art* 21, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 70–95.
Apr 19	Lecture – Journalism and Advertising
Readings	Fred Ritchin, "Making Pictures Matter," *Bending the Frame: Photojournalism, Documentary, and the Citizen* (New York: Aperture, 2013), 47–78.
Watch	*Ways of Seeing*, Episode 4 (dir. John Berger and Mike Dibb, 1972) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jTUebm73IY
Apr 21	Section – Reviewing Key Concepts for the Final Exam
Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #10 Questions for Final Exam Review

Week 16	**Conclusion & Review**
Apr 24	Final Review
Apr 26	Final Review
Apr 28	Section – Extended Office Hours
Deadline	Image Journal Revisions Due

May 8 **Final Exam, 2:00–4:00pm (Location TBD)**
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 **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 http://dsp.usc.edu for more information.
Contact: (213) 740-0776 (Phone), (213) 740-6948 (TDD only), 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 (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 (http://preparedness.usc.edu).