

## **AHIS 100g INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL CULTURE**

Spring 2019 Lecture: Mondays & Wednesdays, 12:00–1:20pm (THH 301)  
Discussion: Thursdays

Prof. Megan R. Luke ([mluke@usc.edu](mailto:mluke@usc.edu))

Office hours: Mondays, 1:20–1:50; Wednesdays, 9:00–11:00am (THH 326)

\*Sign-up sheet on office door\*

TAs Amanda Jordan ([agjordan@usc.edu](mailto:agjordan@usc.edu))  
Office hours: Wednesdays, 2:30–4:30pm

William J. Simmons ([wjsimmon@usc.edu](mailto:wjsimmon@usc.edu))

Office hours: Mondays, 2:00–4:00pm

### **Course Description**

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In the late 1920s, following a period of profound technological change that affected every aspect of human 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.” 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**

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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

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### *Readings, Films, PowerPoint Presentations*

- All readings not already available publicly online (see links in Course Plan, below), will be available as PDFs for download through ARES (<https://reserves.usc.edu>).
- 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.
- 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.

**IMPORTANT: These materials are all under copyright and are for personal study use only; they may not be downloaded, printed, or otherwise distributed.**

### *Section Field Trips and Independent Site Visits*

- Several of your Thursday discussion sections will take place outside the scheduled room, 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.
- When you are asked to visit a site outside of class on your own time, 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!

## Assignments

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### *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, you should 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 750–1,000 words; total of ten 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 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. You can only improve with this effort; that is, your grade may increase or stay the same, but you will not be penalized by attempting a revision. The choice to revise one or two of these entries is yours; it is not required, and your final grade on the journal will not be affected if you decide not to.

### *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

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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](http://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 repeat 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**

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Jan 7            Introduction

Watch          *Ways of Seeing*, Episode 1 (dir. John Berger and Mike Dibb, 1972)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opDE4VX\\_9Kk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opDE4VX_9Kk)

Jan 9            Lecture – Pictures and Power

Read            Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1–16.

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 10          No section

**UNIT I      PICTURING REALITY****Week 2      Perspectives**

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Jan 14          Lecture – Structuring Vision

Read            Anne Friedberg, “The Window,” *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 26–48.

Michel Foucault, “Las Meninas,” in *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1971), 3–16.

Jan 16          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 17          Section — Practicing Visual Analysis and Accurate Description

**Week 3      Picture Stories**

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- Jan 21      Martin Luther King’s Birthday (No class)
- Jan 23      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.
- Jan 24      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
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**Week 4      Icons and Iconoclasm**

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- Jan 28      Lecture – Images as Signs and Symbols
- Read      Martin Kemp, “Mona Lisa,” in *Christ to Coke: How Image Becomes Icon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 140–65.
- Jan 30      Lecture – Iconoclasm
- Read      Finbarr Barry Flood, “Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum,” *The Art Bulletin* 84, no. 4 (December 2002): 641–59.
- Jan 31      Section – How to Read Challenging Texts

Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #2
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**Week 5      Outer and Inner Space**

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- Feb 4      Lecture – Whole Earth
- Read      Denis Cosgrove, “Contested Global Visions: One-World, Whole-Earth, and the Apollo Space Photographs,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 84, no. 2 (1994): 270–94.
- Dennis Overbye, “Apollo 8’s Earthrise: The Shot Seen Round the World,” *The New York Times* (December 21, 2018),  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/21/science/earthrise-moon-apollo-nasa.html>

- Watch “Earthrise,” Op-Docs, *The New York Times* (October 2, 2018), 30 mins.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/02/opinion/earthrise-moon-space-nasa.html>
- Feb 6 Guest Lecture – Prof. Susanna Berger, Art History
- Read Susanna Berger, “Apin’s Cabinet of Printed Curiosities,” *The Art of Philosophy: Visual Thinking in Europe from the Late Renaissance to the Early Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 40–73.
- Feb 7 Section – Midterm Preparation

Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #3 Questions for Midterm Review
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**Week 6 First Midterm Exam**

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Feb 11 Midterm Exam Review

Feb 13	Midterm Exam
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Feb 14 No section

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\*\*

**UNIT II FUGITIVE IMAGES**

**Week 7 Production/Reproduction**

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Feb 18 President’s Day (No class)

Feb 20 Lecture – Photography (I)

Read Susan Sontag, “In Plato’s Cave [1973],” in *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 1–24.

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.

Feb 21 Section – Reading Texts and Images Critically

Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #4
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**Week 8 Circulation/Illumination**

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Feb 25 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.

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.

Feb 27 Guest Lecture – Prof. Kate Flint, Art History / English

Read Kate Flint, “Flash Memory” and “Light-Skinned,” from *Flash! Photography, Writing & Surprising Illumination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 58–76; 140–173.

Feb 28 Section – Understanding Photographic Technologies

Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #5
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**Week 9      Seeing the Invisible**

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Mar 4            Lecture – Mobile Viewpoints

Read            Wolfgang Schivelbusch, “Panoramic Travel,” *The Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Time and Space in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 52–69.

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), 243–65.

Mar 6            Lecture – Bodies and Character

Read            Allan Sekula, “The Body and the Archive,” *October* 39 (Winter 1986): 3–64.

Mar 7            Section – Improving Your Writing

Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #6 Receive Feedback from TA
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**Week 10      Spring Break**

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Mar 11           Spring Break (no class)

Mar 13           Spring Break (no class)

Mar 14           Spring Break (no section)

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

**Week 11      Our Screens, Our Selves**

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- Mar 18      Lecture – Being Seen
- Read      Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Screen* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 6–18.
- Mar 20      Lecture – Screening Selfhood
- Read      Anne Friedberg, *The Virtual Window*, op. cit., 219–39.
- Sarah Banet-Weiser, “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 21      Section – Analyzing a Film Sequence

Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #7 Questions for Midterm Review
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**Week 12      Second Midterm Exam**

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- Mar 25      Midterm Exam Review
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| Mar 27 | Midterm Exam |
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- Mar 28      No section
- Visit      Museum of Jurassic Technology  
9341 Venice Boulevard, Culver City  
Students (with ID), \$5 admission  
**\*\*No cell phone use in the museum\*\***  
10 minute walk from Culver City Expo Line station  
<http://mjt.org>
- Submit your ticket stub with your name (or email a selfie in front of the museum) to your TA in (or, respectively, before) lecture on April 1.

**UNIT III THE IMAGE-MASS**

**Week 13 Collections**

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- Apr 1 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 3 Lecture – Memories
- Read Margaret Olin, “Five Stories of 9/11,” in *Touching Photographs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 160–223.
- Apr 4 Section – Collections, Curation, 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](http://libraries.usc.edu/locations/special-collections/hancock-memorial-museum)

Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #8
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**Week 14 Cut/Paste, High/Low**

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- Apr 8 Lecture – Collage, Montage, and Mash-Up
- Read 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 10 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/>
- Apr 11 Section – Using Digital Resources

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

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- Apr 15 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 17 Lecture – The World as a Picture
- Readings Martin Seel, “Thirteen Statements on the Picture,” *Aesthetics of Appearing*, trans. John Farrell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 159–85.
- Apr 18 Section – Reviewing Key Concepts for the Final Exam

Deadline	Image Journal Entry Due #10 Questions for Final Exam Review
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**Week 16 Conclusion & Review**

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- Apr 22 Final Review
- Apr 24 Final Review
- Apr 25 Section – Extended Office Hours

Deadline	Image Journal Revisions Due
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**May 3 Final Exam, 11am–1pm (Location TBD)**  
<https://classes.usc.edu/term-20191/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](mailto: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>).