Visual Culture/Visual Literacy
PWR 3020-028
MWF 2:00 – 2:50 PM, DUAN G1B27
FALL 2004

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COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES:

This course will help you further develop the tools of analysis and argument. The aim of this course is to help you write—for an audience—clearly, forcefully, coherently, and gracefully by developing your skills in critical thinking. We will experiment with the form recommended by the department, using an occasion, thesis, projected organization (i.e. an outline of reasons supporting the thesis) in the opening paragraph, body paragraphs that launch and develop points from the projected organization, and a conclusion which addresses your work’s significance.

The focus of this course is visual culture. Visual images pervade our world. We choose some visuals such as photography, TV, movies, videos and fine art, for entertainment and information. We encounter a barrage of images on billboards, magazines, posters, signs, stamps, bumper stickers and clothing. Much effort is put into these images to confer the power that persuades us to buy specific products, to vote in particular ways, and even to believe in certain things. The layers of meaning and influence conferred by visual images are not always so easy to decode, even though these images both reflect and shape our culture. Visual images not only inform popular culture; they also influence issues such as race, power, gender and class.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Lunsford, Andrea A. *The Everyday Writer.*

COURSE WORK:

Reading Responses: You will complete written reading responses for certain readings assigned from your textbook. These responses average one double-spaced typed page in length, and will be submitted for a grade. I will provide you with a detailed handout regarding reading responses at a later date.
Rough Draft Workshops: You will workshop drafts of your essays before you revise them and turn them in for a final grade. Workshop attendance and draft preparation is extremely important, and both will count towards your final grade.

Essays: You will complete two five page essays for this class. One will focus on analysis, and the other will focus on argument.

Class Participation and Attendance: In a writing workshop, classroom attendance and participation is an integral part of the learning experience. Class participation and regular attendance are expected, and will count toward the determination of your final course grade.

COURSE GRADE:

Reading Responses: 20%
Rough Draft Workshops: 20%
Essays: 20% each
Class Participation/Attendance: 20%

GRADING SCALE FOR PAPERS:

A Exceptional in content, organization, style, and mechanics; illuminates the topic through its depth of analysis or argument.
B Well above average both in development of the thesis and in style; command of mechanics.
C Meets the assignment without major mistakes; mixture of strengths and weaknesses, basically follows form.
D Fails to include all the elements of the form or doesn’t develop them adequately; poorly organized; contains many distracting mechanical errors.
F Incomplete, disastrously flawed, plagiarized or never turned in.

GRADING SCALE FOR PARTICIPATION:

A Always prepared for class; participates without being called on; criticisms of other student papers show insight, close reading; comments are clear, succinct, and helpful.
B Generally prepared for class; occasionally participates without being called on; criticisms of other student papers demonstrate a good grasp of the course goals; comments generally are clear and helpful.
C Adequately prepared for class; only participates when called on; mastery of the course goals generally is evident, but criticisms of student papers, although somewhat helpful, demonstrate a less than thorough reading or understanding of the paper or course goals.
D Preparation is less than adequate; never participates unless called on; criticisms of other student papers demonstrate a casual reading, at best; comments demonstrate a failure to master the course goals.
Disruptive to class (reading newspaper, talking, continual tardiness, etc.); unprepared when called on; unable or unwilling to participate in class discussions.

**COURSE POLICIES:**

**Attendance:** Attendance is expected. Class attendance and participation are a valued aspect of this course. Three absences are allowed (the equivalent of one week of class). I do not distinguish between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. If you miss more than a week of class, your final grade will be lowered. You are responsible for all assignments. If you miss a class, you are responsible for the material covered in class, as well as for any assignments given. Please do not arrive late for class.

**Late Work:** It is important to turn your work in on the date it is due. In fairness to all students in the class, late work will be penalized.

**SPECIAL NOTES:**

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard 322, www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices).

If you speak English as a second language, you should contact me before the third class meeting so that I can better assist you in the course, advise you about special ESL courses, and/or refer you to appropriate services on campus.

You are responsible for reading and complying with the CU Honor Code and the definition of plagiarism. Go to: www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode. Presenting someone else’s work (words or ideas) as your own could result either in an F for the assignment or an F in the course.

**COURSE CALENDAR (SUBJECT TO CHANGE):**

PT = *Picturing Texts*
RR = Reading Response

*Note: You may also be assigned readings from the Visual Literacy Reading Theme link http://uclibraries.colorado.edu/pwr/themes/themes.htm*

8/23 Introduction to course; review syllabus; student introductions
8/25 In class diagnostic essay
8/30 Return and discuss diagnostic essay
9/1 PT – Chapter 1, pp. 22-55
9/6 Labor Day – no class
9/8  PT – Chapter 1 readings, pp. 78-89. “The Restaurant Florent Ad Campaign,” “Squaring the Circle” RR

9/10  PT – Chapter 1 readings, pp. 90-95. “Covered in Glory.” Instead of RR, complete “Picture This” assignment on page 94.

9/13  PT – Chapter 2, pp. 98-115.


9/22  PT – Chapter 3, pp. 152-168.

9/24  PT – Chapter 3 readings, pp. 169-174. “And My Hats Were Prettier,” “I Talked to Nana this Morning.” RR.

9/27  PT – Chapter 3 readings, pp. 175-188. “In Our Glory: Photography and Black Life,” “Litany.” RR.

9/29  PT – Chapter 3 readings, pp. 189-207. “Memory is Your Image of Perfection,” “What’s Wrong With This Picture?” RR.

10/1  NO CLASS. FALL BREAK.


10/6  Discuss Essay #1, Analysis of your own life and culture.

10/8  Outline of essay #1 due.

10/11 Workshop rough draft of essay #1.

10/13 Workshop rough draft of essay #1.

10/15 Final draft of essay #1 due; PT – Chapter 4, pp. 230-247.

10/18  PT – Chapter 4 readings, pp. 248-264. “Your Mum and Dad,” “A Letter From My Father.” RR.

10/20  PT – Chapter 4 readings, pp. 265-275. “Crisis at Central High,” “An Indian from India.” RR.


10/29  PT – Chapter 5, pp. 318-331.


11/8  PT – Chapter 6, pp. 384-398.
11/10  PT – Chapter 6 readings, pp. 399-405. “Red Delicious,” “Turn About Map-A New World of Understanding.” RR.
11/17  PT – Chapter 7, pp. 434-463.
11/24  Discussion of essay #2, Argument.
11/26  Thanksgiving Holiday, no class.
11/29  Present ideas and tentative thesis statements for argument essay.
12/1   Outline of essay #2 due.
12/3   Workshop draft of essay #2.
12/6   Workshop draft of essay #2.
12/8   Final draft of essay #2 due.