Writing 3020: Word and Image
(Section 37)
The University of Colorado at Boulder
Fall 2013
M/W 3:00pm-4:15pm
Location: CLRE 208

Instructor: Nils Michals, MFA
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Office hours: Tue., 12:20pm-1:50pm, Thur., 12:20pm-1:50pm, & By Appointment
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Course Overview

In the March 1913 issue of Poetry, Ezra Pound, the renowned modernist poet, wrote that the poetic image is “that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time”. Even a full century later in our highly digitized 21st century such an idea endures. Today word and image abound. In the fine arts certainly, and increasingly in cross-textual and interdisciplinary forms that bend our understanding of genre. However, we must not forget that the convergence of word and image in the digital age is the central component in what, how, and why our culture consumes. After all, a brilliant advertisement is one that is both intellectual and emotional at the same time. This class is about examining this convergence of word and image in a whole host of cultural and creative contexts. Readings and viewings will include poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and theory, as well as advertising, photography, painting, sculpture, film, and any interdisciplinary iteration that may fall between. In a variety of approaches ranging from the academic to the photo essay, students will analyze, critique, and create visual and written texts, select and engage in lines of inquiry related to their areas of interest, and employ their knowledge of word, image, form, and perspective to refine and expand their communicative skills and style.

Course Goals
There are five goals that shape this course. Our work this semester is designed to help you:

- **develop rhetorical knowledge**, analyzing and making informed choices about purposes, audiences, and context as you read and compose texts.

  We’ll begin by analyzing the rhetorical situation in a variety of texts—that is, we’ll ask questions about the relationships between the text, writer, audience, and context, and we’ll discuss how these relationships shaped the writer’s choices. Then you’ll apply this rhetorical knowledge by writing in different genres and for different audiences, adapting the voice, tone, format and structure of your writing to meet the
needs of your audience. We’ll also discuss the ethical use of rhetoric—if rhetoric is a form of power, what are our ethical responsibilities as writers?

- **analyze texts in a variety of genres**, understanding how content, style, structure, and format vary across a range of reading and writing situations.

  We’ll explore texts that come from a variety of sources (professional, scholarly and popular, for example) and from a variety of media (traditional print, image, film, sculpture, etc.). Through application of this content, you’ll extend your content knowledge in various writing contexts, critically applying strategies for various audiences and purposes. Such an outcome is the result of reading critically: to recognize the rhetorical strategies an author has chosen—both in format and content—that invite the audience to interpret the text in a particular way. We’ll also discuss how the same text may be interpreted in different ways.

- **refine and reflect on your writing process**, using multiple strategies to generate ideas, draft, revise, and edit your writing across a variety of genres.

  This class emphasizes the step-by-step, day-by-day process of writing, as well as the benefits of a writing community in which everyone plays a vital role. Since the class pays particular attention to the idea of writing as a process, the papers will involve stages (prewriting, researching, drafting, peer review, revision), and you will be expected to participate in these stages from beginning to end. One of the most important strategies that you’ll practice is workshopping each other’s writing. A regular part of class time will be devoted to small- and large-group workshops in which you will read and critique each other’s work. The benefits of this workshop approach are two-fold: as a writer, you receive a range of responses to your work and, as a reader, you learn from reading and critiquing your peers’ writing. You will also have occasional conferences with me to discuss your writing.

- **extend mastery of writing conventions**, building on previous writing and discursive strategies to apply to a range of writing environments.

  As upper-division students, you more than likely have writing experience, most notably in your chosen area of inquiry. This class is designed to expand your understanding of written and visual communication in various academic and professional environments. You will learn how purpose, audience, and context determine the conventions you may use in order to create forceful, dynamic writing that engages the reader.

- **understand and apply language conventions rhetorically**, including grammar, spelling, punctuation, and format.

  Yes, grammar counts, but what counts as “good” grammar changes in different rhetorical situations. Because this is an academic course, in most of your major assignments you’ll be expected to use a writing style and tone that is considered appropriate for a general academic audience. However, as part of the course you’ll
also write in other genres and for other audiences, so you’ll need to think carefully about how to adapt your writing for the rhetorical situation at hand. In other words, this writing class is not just about what your writing teacher here at CU thinks is important; it’s about deepening your skills in rhetorical knowledge, writing processes, and language conventions so that you can write effectively for a variety of audiences in a variety of situations—both inside and outside the classroom.

These goals express the PWR’s commitment to preparing you for the other kinds of reading and writing you will perform in your other classes. They also fulfill the course criteria given to all state institutions by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, the governmental body that contributes to the policies for college education in Colorado.

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**Required Materials**

- Course Reader via Desire2Learn (Print out or access via laptop)
- A reliable Internet connection with access to the following:
  - Desire2Learn (https://learn.colorado.edu), which we will use regularly for this course
- A notebook for homework responses and in-class writing
- A CU email account to be checked regularly

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**Major Assignments**

In addition to smaller in-class reading, writing, and response assignments, you will be expected to complete the following assignments. **Completion of all the major assignments is required in order to pass the class.** All major assignments will be turned in via D2L. More specific information regarding the assignments will be provided, generally two weeks in advance of the scheduled due date.

- **Photographic Memoir or Personal Essay:** The focus of this essay is to explore quite literally the relationship between word and image. In this essay you’ll be encouraged to write either a memoir or a personal essay, the former a story retrieved from the writer’s memory, generally with the narrator as the protagonist. The latter may reference an event in the writer’s life, but usually a personal essay focuses more on an area of interest, an idea that the writer would like to explore. This essay will require you to focus on an image via an old photograph, a dream, or an object (or some combination of all three) as a way to investigate a memory or idea. This essay will incorporate personal experience, narration, description, analysis and other strategies often employed in creative non-fiction.

- **Advertising Rhetorical Analysis:** American culture is so inundated with the consumption of products that we often do not even see how fluidly we move through the world of buying and selling. In many ways, this is the most ubiquitous form of word and image we have. The focus of this essay/project is an analysis not just of what an advertising text is saying, but how that text is presented. As part of this
essay, you’ll actually work in groups to create your very own spoof advertisement for a product. This ad will involve creative design, and you’ll be encouraged to utilize photographic composition, design principles, and marketing strategies. To assist you in the design process, you’ll have access to the Atlas design lab on campus. In the accompanying essay, you’ll analyze your own ad and discuss some of the rhetorical strategies you see at work. You’ll also be asked to discuss your interpretation of the text’s purpose, audience, and ethical implications. In addition, you may discuss any fallacies of argument that you detect. As part of this essay, you may also consider what exactly your ad spoofs, how your ad compares to others in the same field, or perhaps how it fits into the larger discussion of advertising and consumer culture.

- **Ekphrasis: Poem & Visual Arts:** From Rilke to Cezanne to Stevens, poets and painters have long shared the “problem” of how to accurately represent the world of objects and things. Although this debate is an old one, it was certainly heightened as Modernist and Post-Modernist ideas took root, and as the nature of interdisciplinary text expands, so does such ekphrastic work. Are poets and visual artists to produce a mimetic representation, that is, a direct mirror to the world? If so, where is there room for abstraction, for simile, metaphor, and symbol? Indeed, Rilke, upon visiting and revisiting a retrospective of Cezanne’s work in the early 20th century knew the great painter was on to something revolutionary in his handling of color and object. This essay is your opportunity to investigate the distilled image, both in language and on the canvas. Your objective in this essay is to provide a critical analysis of a famous poem on a famous piece of visual art (painting, photograph, sculpture, etc). Using provided readings and theory, you’ll be asked to examine the imagistic interplay between pen and brush, employing both the elements of poetry and artistic composition. Responses may range from comparative analyses to philosophical musings on word/image to informed arguments as to meaning/interpretation.

- **Photo Essay with Text:** For your final project, you’ll photograph and write on a topic of your choice. Ideally, you’ll select a line of inquiry that dovetails with your area/field of interest here at CU—Boulder. This final project will incorporate both writing and photography/film, and the two should be complimentary, each informing the other through word and image. This final project may be journalistic, reflective, argumentative, analytical, artistic/creative, or some combination thereof. Multimodal samples will be provided and a final presentation of your project will be required.

***NOTE: I encourage you to KEEP EVERYTHING! Whether digital or hardcopy, graded or ungraded, keep all of your work over the course of this semester, including any written feedback you receive from me.***

**Grading**

To complete this course successfully, you must attend class and scheduled conferences, complete assignments on time, and participate in class activities and discussions. If you have a question about your grade, please ask me about it. Please remember: even if you feel that you have done poorly on an assignment, **turn it in anyway.** If you turn the assignment in,
you will at least receive some points that count toward your final grade. Otherwise, you will not receive any points for the assignment. Something is always better than a zero. That being said, if any element of what you turn in is plagiarized (someone else’s work represented as your own, i.e. not cited), you will receive an F for that assignment, and I will be forced to consider taking further disciplinary action. Always.

Keep in mind that it is your responsibility to keep track of your own grade. Grades will be posted throughout the semester on D2L, but you are welcome to ask me about it whenever you would like. I will not usually seek you out to tell you how things are going; as responsible adults, you will be expected to be in charge of your own situation.

The Class Components are Weighted as Follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Introduction</td>
<td>required, ungraded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photographic Memoir/Personal Essay</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advertising Rhetorical Analysis (Ad)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ekphrasis: Poem &amp; Visual Arts</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photo Essay/Text Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project Presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Attendance and Workshop Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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Grading scale
The following scale will be used to determine your final grade in this course:

A…..100-94%
A-…..93.9-90%
B+…89.9-87%
B…..86.9-83%
B-…..82.9-80%
C+…..79.9-77%
C…..76.9-73%
C-…..72.9-70%
D+…69.9-67%
D…..66.9-63%
D-…..62.9-60%
F……59.9-0%

Class Attendance & Participation
This class hinges on discussion and interaction with your peers, both in the context of reading and writing. This class will move forward as a community. In my classes, there are no “dumb” questions and you are encouraged to critically analyze positions provided you can offer proof and persuasive argumentation to back it up. There will be a wide range of discursive possibilities in this class (not just analysis and argumentation), so you are going to need help, and not just
from me, but from your peers. Each of us approaches writing with our own experiences, thought patterns, passions and neuroses, so it is essential that everyone speak up in class. But just as important, you are going to need each other to lean on; thus, you need to be here to help provide criticism and make your classmates better readers, thinkers and writers. In light of this, more than three (3) absences in this class will affect a student’s grade.

Keep in mind that coming to class may not always mean that you have attended class. If I see you texting, talking on a cell phone, or using your laptop for extracurricular purposes, you will be marked absent for that class.

In-class writing assignments/responses as well as workshop participation will be factored into your overall class attendance and participation grade.

**Late Assignments**
Late assignments are, well, late. Unless you have spoken with me beforehand to arrange for an extension, I will subtract a half letter grade from the total grade for each day the paper is late. I will not grant extensions just for any reason, but if you absolutely cannot meet the deadline because of something unavoidable, contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss the situation. Computer problems are not an acceptable excuse for a late assignment; with the variety of resources on campus, you should have ample opportunity to complete your work on time.

**Writing Center**
If you want additional help with your writing, the Writing Center in Norlin Library is a great place to go to talk about ideas, improve your thesis or essay organization, or just generally work on your writing skills. Check the Writing Center website for more information about hours and services, or request an appointment online at: http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html.

**Revising Graded Assignments**
At the end of the semester, if you would like to resubmit one of your major (graded) assignments, you may revise one assignment for reevaluation. You are welcome to schedule an appointment with me to discuss some strategies for revision. NOTE: You cannot revise assignments that were originally turned in late.

**Disabilities**
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 have a temporary medical condition or injury, see the guidelines at http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/go.cgi?select=temporary.html.

**Religious Observances**
Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance. In this class, I ask that you contact me at least one week ahead of the date(s) that you will be absent so that we can discuss any assignments/class material that you will miss. See full details at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/fac_relig.html.
**Classroom Behavior***
Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student’s legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. (See policies at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/code.html#student_code.)

**Discrimination and Harassment***
The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff and faculty. Any student, staff or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh.

**The Honor Code***
All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the academic integrity policy of this institution. Violations of this policy may include: cheating, plagiarism, aid of academic dishonesty, fabrication, lying, bribery, and threatening behavior. All incidents of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu; 303-725-2273). Students who are found to be in violation of the academic integrity policy will be subject to both academic sanctions from the faculty member and non-academic sanctions (including but not limited to university probation, suspension, or expulsion). Other information on the Honor Code can be found at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/honor.html and at http://www.colorado.edu/academics/honorcode/.

* University of Colorado recommended syllabus statement
Mon., 8/26  
Introductions & Expectations

Wed., 8/28  
Module 1: The Photographic Memory: Memoir & The Personal Essay
Reading:  
Didion, “The Metropolitan Cathedral in San Salvador”

Writing:  
Personal Introduction (Ungraded, 1-2 pages, typed, MLA Format)

Mon., 9/2  
No Class / Labor Day Holiday

Wed., 9/4  
Reading:  
Philip Lapote, “Introduction”, The Art of the Personal Essay  
George Orwell, “Shooting an Elephant”  
Roiphe, “This is How You Write a Memoir”  
Susan Shapiro, “Make Me Worry You’re Not Ok”

Mon., 9/9  
Reading:  
Margaret Atwood, “The Female Body”

Wed., 9/11  
Reading:  
E.B. White, “The Ring of Time”

Mon., 9/16  
Reading:  
G.K. Chesterton, “A Piece of Chalk”  
David Sedaris, “Me Talk Pretty One Day”

Wed., 9/18  
Writing:  
Photographic Memoir/Essay Draft Due (2-3 pages, typed, 3 copies)

Mon., 9/23  
Module 2: “Collateral” Damage: The Advertising Image and Its Effects on Culture
Reading:  
Center for Media Literacy, “How to Analyze an Advertisement”

Writing:  
Photographic Memoir/Essay Final Due (5 pages minimum, MLA Format, Upload to D2L)

Wed., 9/25  
Reading:  
The Gender Ads Project, “How to Read Ads”

Mon., 9/30  
Reading:  
Knowing Words, “Rhetoric and Rhetorical Analysis—Words (And More) at Work”

Wed., 10/2  
Reading:  
Jean Kilbourne, “Two Ways a Woman Can Get Hurt’: Advertising and Violence”

Video:  
Jean Kilbourne, Killing Us Softly 4

Mon., 10/7  
Group:  
Group Advertising Image (1 Print Copy)

Wed., 10/9  
Writing:  
Advertising Rhetorical Analysis Draft (3-4 pages, typed, 2 copies)

Mon., 10/14  
Module 3: Ekphrasis: Poetry and the Visual Arts
Reading:  
Alfred Corn, “Notes on Ekphrasis”  
Poets.org, “Ekphrasis: Poetry Confronting Art”
Writing: Advertising Rhetorical Analysis w/Ad (5 pages minimum, MLA Format, Upload to D2L)

**Wed., 10/16**

Reading: W.H. Auden, “Musee des Beaux Arts”
Pieter Bruegel, *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*

Video: John Berger, “Ways of Seeing” (Episode 1)

**Mon., 10/21**

Reading: Rainer Maria Rilke, “Archaic Torso of Apollo”
Unknown, “Male Torso”, Louvre

Video: John Berger, “Ways of Seeing” (Episode 2)

**Wed., 10/23**

Reading: John Ashbery, “Self Portrait in a Convex Mirror”
Parmigianino, *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror*

*Poets.org, “Ashbery, Parmigianino, and the Convex Mirror”*

**Mon., 10/28**

Reading: W.J.T. Mitchell, “Ekphrasis and the Other”

Video: John Berger, “Ways of Seeing” (Episode 3)

**Wed., 10/30**

Unknown, *Medusa’s Head*, Uffizi Gallery

Video: John Berger, “Ways of Seeing” (Episode 4)

**Mon., 11/4**

Reading: Thom Gunn, “In Santa Maria del Popolo”
Caravaggio, *Conversion on the Way to Damascus*

**Wed., 11/6**

Writing: Ekphrasis Essay Draft Due (3 pages, typed, 2 copies)

**Mon., 11/11**

**Module 4: The Photo Essay: Essay and Image**

Reading: Hank Klibanoff, “What the Still Photo Still Does Best”

Writing: Ekphrasis Essay Final Due (5 pages minimum, MLA Format, Upload to D2L)

**Wed., 11/13**

Reading: W. Eugene Smith, “A Country Doctor”
CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, “The Photo Essay”

**Mon., 11/18**

Reading: Sandra Shields and David Campion, “Memory and the Valley”

**Wed., 11/20**

Reading: Zed Nelson, “Gun Nation”

**Mon., 11/25**

**No Class / Fall Break--Thanksgiving**

**Wed., 11/27**

**No Class / Fall Break--Thanksgiving**
Mon., 12/2

Wed., 12/4
Writing:  Photo Essay Project Draft Due (3-4 pages, typed, 2 copies, 1-2 images)

Mon., 12/9
Presentation:  Class Presentations of Final Projects

Wed., 12/11
Presentation:  Class Presentations of Final Projects

Thur., 12/19  **Scheduled Day of Final (7:30-10am)**
Writing:  Photo Essay with Text Final Due (8 pages minimum, 5 Photographs minimum, MLA Format, Upload to D2L)