ENG 4973/HUM 4973 (Spring 2010)
Senior Seminar: Visual Cultural Studies
M 2:00-4:45 p.m.
MB 1.206

Professor Sue Hum
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Office: MB 2.462
E-mail: sue.hum@utsa.edu**

Office hours: M 12:00-2:00, and by appointment.
** Please use this email rather than the one on Blackboard for a prompt response. Thanks!

Course Texts (required):


3. Own e-mail account & Internet access (includes daily, regular access from home or computer lab).

Course Skills Emphasis:
- Effective oral and written communication
- Critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills
- Innovation and creative abilities
- Working alone or collaboratively in small groups

Course Description:
In today's multimedia world, effective communication relies increasingly on images and words to persuade their audience. This course explores effective communication that draws on both rhetorical and visual strategies.

Visual Cultural Studies is divided into two parts. The first focuses on the exploration of principles of perception and visual interpretation. We will study different ways of understanding visuals, reading in a variety of disciplines: media and film studies, cultural studies, art, literature, electronic media, etc. We also investigate the design of visual communication both in traditional and electronic formats.

Most importantly, we study how ways of seeing and ways of speaking—habits and conventions—are symbiotic modes for representing and influencing our world(s)

Second, we will create our own powerful visual and rhetorical arguments, after we become proficient readers of visual arguments. Students are encouraged to take an active role in articulating what issues they would like addressed as well as teaching and learning from each other.

Course Requirements:
Quizzes and Final Exam.................................................................25%
Blogs & In-Class Assignments......................................................25%
3 Projects.....................................................................................50%

This woodcut from Descartes' 1644 *Principles of Philosophy* diagrams Descartes' theory of vision and its interaction with the pineal gland. Descartes believed that light rays impressed subtle particles into the eyes. The image was then transmitted to the pineal gland, which served as the nexus between mind and body. In this sketch the external stimulus is translated into an act of will (pointing) by the pineal gland.
Grades:
Your grade will be determined by a percentage of the total number of possible points: A=90-100%, B=80-89%, C=70-79%, D=60-69%, and F=59% or less.

Course Responsibilities:

Quizzes: There will be pop quizzes covering the assigned reading, lectures, class discussion, and Blackboard blogs. Be prepared! Quizzes can be conducted at any time during the class period. Make-ups for quizzes will be in essay format and will normally be more difficult than the original. The grade for any quiz not completed or made up will be a zero. Medical documentation is required to void a missed quiz. Since class lectures, presentations, reading, and discussion are subject to quizzes, students who show up sporadically cannot expect to succeed in the quizzes.

Final Exam. A comprehensive final exam will be conducted on Thursday, 6 May, 1:30-4:00 p.m. Comprehensive means that all materials covered in the course, including the assigned reading, lectures, teacher and group presentations, and web-discussions will be included. There will be short answer and essay questions. Students may bring to the exam one 8.5 x 11" piece of paper filled with notes. Those notes must be turned in with the final exam. After the final grade is submitted, students may review their final exam but cannot take it with them.

Blogs. Small group discussions on the assigned readings sometimes take place through the Blackboard discussion rooms. There will be questions and directions; use them as prompts for your ideas. You need not address every issue as they are intended to get you started writing and responding. Realize that you have an audience for these writings beside yourself and that you can always write more than is required to finish the thought you are exploring. You may use the blogs to engage in different kinds of writing: exploratory, personal essay, cultural analysis, rhetorical analysis, public writing, creative non-fiction, and experimental.

Your blogs should be around 250 words and respond to the prompts. And, you need to write short interactive responses (at least 100 words per posting) to at least 3 other postings and 1 rejoinder. Your 100-word responses should contribute “something new” to the discussion, whether you ask a good question, articulate an interesting critique, or tell a story, etc. to cast the conversation in some new light. Do respond to three other students. Your rejoinder is the “last word” on the thread you started.

Students may earn up to 16 extra credit points for active and substantial participation. Extra credit is provided both for students who participate above and beyond the minimum requirement in a consistent manner and for conducting discussions of high quality. At the end of the semester, students will vote on their favorite blogger or favorite blogs and recipients will receive extra credit points. These extra credit points will be added to your blog grade.

If you post after the deadline, your entry will be marked "late," and this will affect your response grade. Note that each blog session is open for two weeks; after that, students will be unable to contribute or post to that particular blog. You are responsible for any unforeseen circumstances and no exceptions will be made for missed deadlines. Please work ahead of the deadline to be safe.

The grade for your blogs assumes that your total number of entries occurs within the time limit and all responses to postings are completed. If some of your blogs are late or you miss replies, this will pull your score down by 50%. Moreover, the lengths stated above do matter, so if you are short of words on some, be long on others.

50% of the scoring of your blogs is based on quantity: A = 8 entries; B = 7 entries; C = 6 entries; D = 5 entries; F = 4 or fewer entries. 50% is based on quality, reliant on your end of the semester self-evaluation which describes whether you (a) connected to earlier posts (b)
synthesized various perspectives (c) responded specifically to issues raised (d) extended or complicated issues raised (e) raised new questions (f) reflected on and critiqued the issues.

These blogs, like your essays, are considered public speech, i.e. the statements you make are not considered private. So, it's advisable to not only be on your best and most polite linguistic behavior, but also think twice before you hit the send button. Please adhere to netiquette. If you want to read more, see www.albion.com/netiquette. Should you engage in offensive, uncivil language, you will lose your blog privileges (perhaps permanently) and your work will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs. If you are unfamiliar with Blackboard, please talk with Student Computing Services at any UTSA lab, or the Blackboard office (MS 3.02.28), or by phone: 458-4015, or by email: students@cmshelp.utsa.edu

**In-Class Assignments.** This in-class work cannot be made up or voided without a doctor's note. We will work in groups to discuss the assigned readings and present the main ideas to the class. Thus you will be responsible for coming to class prepared as you will not be able to participate in group discussion if you have not done the assigned reading. Use of PowerPoint and other media may be involved and prior knowledge of these programs is not required. A portion of in-class work involves workshops with regular collaborative work in small groups, where you will provide and receive constructive criticism to and from classmates. If you do not bring a draft on workshop days, you cannot participate in peer review and thus will be unable to earn points for that work. Please be courteous and respectful of your classmates writing even as you share ideas and suggestions for improvement. Remember that classmates simply offer suggestions and the author remains the final decision-maker on what to do with those suggestions. If you must miss a workshop day and would like an excuse, you'll need to provide medical verification, to be turned in with your project.

**3 Projects.** The three projects are connected with the three units in the course: (i) writing about images, (ii) reading and writing with images, and (iii) writing/producing images. These projects will involve some experimentation as well as traditional academic research, including an annotated bibliography. Students may take a one week extension at no penalty (on any and all projects 1 and 2), but their projects will not receive any comments from the teacher and will be returned with a grade only. The project # 3 may involve a traditional research project or an alternative media project; it includes a 10- minute PowerPoint presentation (5 slides or less); you will need to submit a portfolio with your project which includes a summary, outline, annotated bibliography, relevant reflections, and “Works Cited” page.

Do observe the deadline for submitting your projects. After the projects are collected in class, your work will be considered late. A project will be penalized two letter grades for up to every 24 hours of tardiness. If you do not turn in your project in class, it will be considered late. If you are turning in a project late, make sure a department staff member stamps your folder, indicating the time and date. Do save all drafts for your project in a folder and turn them in with your project. Work submitted for this course may not be submitted for credit in any other courses.
**Attendance and Participation.** Because this is a participation-centered course and we will be discussing the assigned reading in class, your presence in this class is critical. Do read the assigned work and come prepared to participate in class discussion. Student questions and debates all contribute to the overall growth of knowledge for the class. Learning studies show that in general, if a person has a question, then at least 1/3 of the other people in the class also have that question—SO ASK!

You will encounter a number of interesting and perhaps controversial topics in this course, and you will not always agree with me or with each other. At some point, strong disagreements may occur. Learning to listen respectfully and being open to different points of view are critical to ongoing class discussion and intellectual growth. Attentive listening also helps avoid needless repetition—a factor that your classmates will appreciate! In addition, each student is responsible for contributing to and maintaining a positive learning environment in the classroom.

In addition to daily in-class small and large group discussion, we will have in-class projects, including some collaborative work in small groups, which will contribute to your participation grade. Should your participation be minimal, the instructor may deduct up to one letter grade from your final grade. You may have **two** unexcused absences. Any absences beyond that will affect your final grade (every absence will cost you a letter grade off your final grade). Excessive absences (above 5 absences, even with a medical excuse) may result in failure from this course. All major assignments must be submitted to pass this course.

**Note on civility and professionalism.** Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. To ensure all students have the opportunity to gain from the time spent in class, students are prohibited from engaging in any form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result, minimally, in a request to leave class. Consistent distraction or hostile classroom behavior may result in removal from the course and reports to the Office of Judicial Affairs.

Cell phones should be turned off or set to “vibrate/buzz only” before you come to class. If you must take a call, please step into the hallway to talk.

**Academic Honesty.** All work submitted must be your own, with outside sources properly acknowledged with MLA citation formats. Academic dishonesty includes using the work of another writer as your own, copying, allowing a tutor to write part or all of your paper, or allowing someone else to use your work in the same manner. The penalty for academic dishonesty is your failure of this course. Therefore, if you are unsure about your work in this matter, please talk to me before (and not after) you submit your work. Please refer to the UTSA Student Code of Conduct: [http://www.utsa.edu/InfoGuide/appendices/b.cfm](http://www.utsa.edu/InfoGuide/appendices/b.cfm). See Sec. 203 on Scholastic Dishonesty.

**Miscellaneous:** Support services for students with disabilities are available through the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS) in MS 2.03.18.

**Extra Credit opportunities.** Attend the event listed below or on Blackboard and write a 500 word summary and evaluation, due a week after the scheduled event.

March 1-5 Brackenridge Distinguished Visiting Professor Elaine Richardson, Ohio State University
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11 Jan</td>
<td>What is visual cultural studies; course policies; group discussion; PPT rubric discussion; watch Berger episode 1, discussion.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Blog # 1 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18 Jan</td>
<td><strong>Martin Luther King Day – no class</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25 Jan</td>
<td>Representation and ideology</td>
<td>Ch 1</td>
<td>Blog # 2 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1 Feb</td>
<td>Meaning, aesthetics, and audience reception</td>
<td>Ch 2</td>
<td>Blog # 3 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8 Feb</td>
<td>Spectatorship and the Gaze</td>
<td>Ch 3</td>
<td>Draft of Project # 1 due</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>15 Feb</td>
<td>Scopic Regimes</td>
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<td>Blog # 4 due; Project # 1 due</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>22 Feb</td>
<td>Realism and perspective</td>
<td>Ch 4</td>
<td>Blog # 5 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>1 Mar</td>
<td>Image reproduction</td>
<td>Ch 5</td>
<td>Draft of Project # 2 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>8 Mar</td>
<td>Media forms</td>
<td>Ch 6</td>
<td>Project # 2 due</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>15 Mar</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break – no class</strong></td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>22 Mar</td>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Ch 7</td>
<td>Blog # 6 due</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>29 Mar</td>
<td>Indie media</td>
<td>Ch 8</td>
<td>Blog # 7 due; Proposal for Project # 3 due</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>5 Apr</td>
<td>Ways of seeing science</td>
<td>Ch 9</td>
<td>Annotated bibliography for Project # 3 due</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>12 Apr</td>
<td>Globalism</td>
<td>Ch 10</td>
<td>Blog # 8 due</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>19 Apr</td>
<td>Wrap up</td>
<td></td>
<td>In class workshop &amp; peer review of project # 3</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>26 Apr</td>
<td><strong>Semester Project Presentations and Project # 3 due</strong></td>
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<td>6 May</td>
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<td><strong>Final Exam – 1:30-4:00 p.m.</strong></td>
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