Journalism 250  Visual Communication  Fall 2016
2:00-3:40pm Tuesday 4:00-5:40  MZ112  Professor David Blumenkrantz
Office hours  MZ326 M9-11, T12-2  david.blumenkrantz@csun.edu  818 677-2855

COURSE DESCRIPTION
Visual Communication is interwoven with Visual Literacy, defined as the ability to find meaning in imagery, and Visual Culture, which focuses on aspects of culture that rely on visual images. Both are indispensable components of contemporary life, essential to a wide range of disciplines, sciences and enterprises including anthropology, sociology, psychology and engineering, as well as governmental and commercial interests. This course is primarily concerned with evaluating numerous forms of visual communication in the mass media, including typography, photographs, newspaper layout, magazine and Web design, editorial cartoons, comic strips, animated cartoons, print and television advertisements, public relations, television programs, and motion pictures, to determine their obvious and implied messages.

iPad required
This is a myCSUNtablet class and an iPad is required. The bookstore has a variety of options for students, including payment plans. More information can be found here: http://www.csun.edu/it/mycsuntablet-students

TEXT
Persuasion: A Basic Guide to Visual Communication, an eBook written and edited by the instructor, can be downloaded for free on Moodle.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

• Describe how images are processed physiologically by the eye and brain
• Explain how key theories of perception and communication relate to visual literacy and visual culture
• Explain the role that Semiotics, Gestalt and other psychology-based cognitive processes play in perception, and the relationship of images to meaning
• Analyze visual messages through the application of various perspectives
• Compare the personal, social and political impact that various types of visual messages have on consumers
• Compare and contrast the intent and effectiveness of design principles
• Explain the significance of persuasion, and identify uses of distortion, stereotyping and propaganda in visual messages
• Evaluate the ethical considerations inherent in visual communication, and the tremendous responsibility that goes with the creation and dissemination of visual messages in the mass media

**GRADING** Based on weekly Moodle quizzes, Tumblr blog projects, online assignments, a visual analysis writing assignment, and the final exam.

**LATE WORK** Late work is not accepted. The online quizzes must be taken before the lectures, so they cannot be accepted late.

**ATTENDANCE** At the beginning of each class, a short game will be played using the app [Kahoot!](https://kahoot.com). Three points deducted for each unexcused absence, tardy, or for leaving early.

**TECHNOLOGY** Smart phones or other cell phones are not allowed in the classroom. Those who cannot abide by this will be asked to leave, without a second warning. The only exception is when they are used for taking notes or searching the eBook. The instructor may require students to submit their notes via email.

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Aug. 30** *Introduction to course objectives and expectations*. Explanation of eBook, Moodle, quizzes, Tumblr projects and other assignments

• Homework: Visual Communication Theories quiz; first blog post

**Sept. 6** *Visual Communication Theories*: Visual culture and literacy, Laswell’s Communication Model, Huxley’s Visual Comm Circle Dance, Viewers make meaning, Gowan’s Four Functions of Art

• Homework: Visual Cues quiz; Visual Cues & Semiotics blog post

**Sept. 13** *Visual Cues*: Physiology of seeing: eye and brain functions, the four elements of vision

• Homework: Semiotics, Gestalt and Cognitive Processes quiz; Gestalt & Cognitive Processes blog

**Sept. 20** *Semiotics, Gestalt and Cognitive Processes*

• Homework: Visual Persuasion quiz; Visual Persuasion blog

**Sept. 27** *Visual Persuasion*: Advertising, public relations, television and film, propaganda, documentary

• Homework: Dominant Culture & Stereotyping; Dominant Culture & Stereotyping blog
Oct. 4  **Dominant Culture & Stereotyping**: Cultural and visual imperialism, negotiated, dominant and oppositional readings, media bias, political and corporate control, the perpetration and recontextualization of stereotypes

- Homework: Convergence Media quiz; Convergence Media blog
- Extra credit: Virtual Shadow eBook review assignment

Oct. 11  **Convergence Media**: Screen culture, multiscreen generation, multitasking, backpack journalism, visual social media, convergence in movies and television, crowdfunding, “smart TVs,” the ascencion of cable programming, Singularity theory

- Homework: Photographic Representation quiz, Photographic Representation blog

Oct. 18  **Photographic Representation**: The Myth of Photographic Truth, ethical issues in photojournalism, responsive photography, directorial and digital manipulation, war photography, issues of ownership, mobile photography & citizen journalism

- Homework: Political Cartoons quiz; Political Cartoons blog

Oct. 25  **Political Cartoons**: The personal and social impact of comic strips and editorial cartoons; methods used by editorial cartoonists (satire, caricature, visual puns and humorous allusions)

- Homework: Typography and Graphic Design quizzes; Typography and Graphic Design blog

Nov. 1  **Typography**: Media-conscious uses of type, early writing systems and printing technologies, printing democratizes literacy, the personal computer, basics of typography (styles, families, categories)

**Graphic Design**: History of graphic design, the elements and principles of design

- SPECIAL BLOG ASSIGNMENT: ELECTION 2016 VISUAL MEDIA

Nov. 8  Students present election blogs

- Homework: Information Graphics quiz; Information Graphics blog

Nov. 15  **Information Graphics**: Early maps and infographics, various forms of information graphics, weather maps, the influence of *USA Today*, logos and icons, functionalism and corporate identity, interactive infographics.

Nov. 22  **Analyzing Visual Messages**: lecture and assignment

Nov. 29  Guest Speaker (to be announced)

Dec. 6  Analyzing Visual Messages assignment due today; Final Exam preview

Dec. 13  **FINAL EXAM**
TUMBLR VISUAL COMMUNICATION BLOG PROJECT

All students will maintain an ongoing blog featuring articles and images about the issues covered in this course. Students will work in pairs and will create and co-administer the blog site. The name can be anything you choose it to be, as long as you include your first and last names some where in either the name or the subheading of the blog. All of the posts on this blog must be directly related to a topic covered in the Visual Communication curriculum; as long as you are able to explain in your written portion what the issue, topic or theory is that inspired you to create a particular post, anything is acceptable other than intentionally insulting, intolerant, obscene or otherwise undesirable materials.

• Once a blog has been created, the team must also "follow" the instructor's blog on Tumblr, so that the instructor can in turn "follow" their blog. The addresses to all of the student blogs will be posted on Moodle so that everyone can follow each other.
• The blog assignments can be found on the Activities and Quiz page at the end of each chapter of the eBook.
• Every student will be expected to add at least one post per week to their blog site, but are free to add as many as they want, as long as they address topics related to visual communication.
• Each time a post is made, it should include original writing by the students; anything between 250 and 1000 words is acceptable. Posts can also include examples found online; links must be provided to still images as way of attribution.
• Students must put their name at the end of their own posts, so the instructor knows who in each group is responsible for each posting.
• Blogs must be posted deadline, which is usually the night before the following day's class, to give the instructor time to look at them.
• Each weekly post will be worth 10 points maximum for each blog member, with the exception of the first blog. There may be other exceptions that will be announced.
• Each class session, various blog groups will present their work to the class. Each group will present for 15-20 minutes. The presenting groups will be selected randomly; anyone absent the day their group presents will lose all potential points for that week.
• Once a blog has been created, both members of the team must post the url address in the News Forum, and also here in Moodle, in order to earn credit. The deadline is the Monday before class at 10pm.

PLAGIARISM

The Journalism Dept. is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. Plagiarism and cheating are not tolerated. In accordance with University policy, plagiarism and cheating on any exam, quiz or assignment are grounds for an automatic failure and disciplinary action. In addition, all source material and data, including the use of specific words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs must be appropriately attributed. This includes information from the Internet. For an explanation of the behavior defined as cheating and an overview of disciplinary measures, see the current CSUN catalog.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Journalism Dept. strives to prepare students to become well-educated, principled citizens capable of initiating careers as skilled journalists, public relations practitioners and other related communication professionals. The department will help students to achieve the following objectives by the end of their program of studies:
* Attain competency in writing basics such as grammar and punctuation, word usage and spelling, sentence and story structure and journalistic style.
* Attain competency in the gathering and critical analysis of information using such techniques as interviewing, observation and researching primary and secondary sources.
* Acquire expertise in thinking critically and creatively, while exercising news judgment, the organization and presentation of information in multiple journalistic forms (i.e., print, visual and electronic, and public relations).
* Develop an ethical basis for making journalistic and public relations decisions.
* Develop flexibility in working in evolving mass communication media and environments using a variety of technologies and techniques.
* Understand the historical, theoretical, legal and societal contexts in which journalists and public relations practitioners work.

Comparative Cultural Studies General Education (GE): Student Learning Outcomes

Students will understand the diversity and multiplicity of cultural forces that shape the world through the study of cultures, gender, sexuality, race, religion, class, ethnicities and languages with special focus on the contributions, differences and global perspectives of diverse cultures and societies. Students will:

• Describe and compare different cultures.
• Explain how various cultures contribute to the development of our multicultural world.
• Describe and explain how race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, sexuality and other markers of social identity impact life experiences and social relations.
• Analyze and explain the deleterious impact and the privileges sustained by racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, classism, homophobia, religious intolerance or stereotyping on all sectors of society.

5 Demonstrate linguistic and cultural proficiency in a language other than English.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The campus Disability Resources and Educational Services offers a range of services, including learning support, disability management counseling, accommodations such as access to assistive technology or accessible classroom furniture, alternative testing services, and exam scheduling. If you have a disability and need accommodations, register with the DRES office (Bayramian Hall, Room 110/818-677-2684) or the National Center on Deafness (Chisholm Hall/818-677-2611).