

## Course Content

Course Code: HR1001

Course Title: Ways of Seeing: Exploring Visual Culture

Pre-Requisites: Nil

No of Aus: 3

Contact Hours: 39 hours

### Course Aims

This course lays the foundation for advanced studies in art history. Maintaining focus on seeing and the concept of the visual, the course will introduce students to key theories and debates shaping and determining the interwoven fields of art history and visual culture studies. It will explore how visual culture operates as a bridge for art history, bringing into analytical focus images that were not previously considered as art. We will examine foundational concepts and definitions as well as the seminal writings of these cognate fields, exploring how the consideration of ways of seeing and the concept of the visual have expanded the scope for critical responses to images. These expansive responses include the political, social, ethical and cultural dimensions of images. The course will enable students to analyse images from a variety of perspectives incorporating poststructuralist, semiotic, postmodern, postcolonial, and feminist critiques, contributing insights into how images manifest relations of power.

### Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Identify and discuss foundational approaches in the inter-related fields of art history and visual culture studies; develop methods and techniques for the visual analysis of images and articulate coherent and considered responses to images.
2. Think about and write critically about images utilising the relevant visual vocabulary, and maintaining a focus on the visual in your written analysis of images.
3. Display a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental critical methodologies and approaches to analysing images.
4. Use visual analysis and concepts, themes, ideas, theories and debates from the weekly readings to think about and write about images critically and in a focused and coherent way.
5. Participate respectfully in class discussion, share your research in presentation formats, and provide constructive criticism and feedback to your peers on their oral presentations.

### Course Content

This course is an introduction to the interpretation of visual imagery. It surveys images on a global scale across various media including painting, drawing, photography, moving image,

sculpture, ceramics, architecture and installation. It takes into consideration everyday practices of seeing and showing. We will commence with key foundational approaches in the enterprise of art history, considering how the discipline was shaped in its early appearance by western scholarship and currents of thought prior to the inception of cultural theory and critique. We will explore how visual culture has expanded art history's domain by bringing into focus images that were not previously considered as art and ways of seeing that reveal inherent political ideologies and cultural biases. We will consider some central themes in the history of vision and visual culture including the relationship between discipline, surveillance, and vision; and race, gender and visibility. We will examine images using a variety of critical frameworks that incorporate poststructuralist, semiotic, postmodern, postcolonial, and feminist perspectives.

### **Weekly Schedule of Learning Activities**

#### **Week 1: Course Introduction ILO 1, 2, 3, 5**

- Course Introduction: Introduction to the course contents. Utilising a plethora of images, we will consider questions such as: What is art? What is art history? What is visual culture? We will go over the various aspects of the course including the weekly schedule of learning activities and assessment exercises followed by a Q&A session.

#### **Weeks 2-4 Art History and Visual Culture: Interpretation and Representation ILO 1, 2, 3, 5 ILO 1, 2, 3, 5**

What is Formalism?

Some traditional approaches to art history: Heinrich Wölfflin's principles of art history; Erwin Panofsky's Symbolism, Iconology, Iconography; Otto Pacht's *The Practice of Art History: Reflections on Method*

#### **Prescribed Readings:**

- E.H. Gombrich, "Moment and Movement in Art", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 27 (1964): 293-306.
- Donna K. Reid, "Describing a Work of Art," *Thinking and Writing About Art History* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2004), 5-9.
- Heinrich Wölfflin, *Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Early Modern Art, One Hundredth Anniversary Edition*, trans. Jonathan Blower (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2015).

#### **Weeks 5-7 Art History and Visual Culture: Seeing and the Concept of Visuality ILO 1, 2, 3, 5**

#### **Prescribed Readings:**

- Michael Baxandall, "Patterns of Intention," in *The Art of Art History*, ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 45-54.
- John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC Press, 1972), 1-33.

- Whitney Davis, *A General Theory of Visual Culture* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2011), 11-42.

### **Weeks 8-10 Visual Culture and its Critique ILO 1, 2, 3, 5**

- Nicholas Mirzoeff, “The Subject of Visual Culture”, ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Visual Culture Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 4-23
- Marquard Smith, “Introduction: Visual Culture Studies: History, Theory, Practice”, *Visual Culture Studies* (London: Sage Publications, 2008), 1-16.
- W.J.T. Mitchell, “Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture” ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff, *The Visual Culture Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 86-101.

### **Weeks 11-13 Visual Culture’s Discursive Formations ILO 1, 2, 3, 5**

- Mieke Bal, ‘Visual Essentialism and the Object of Visual Culture’, *Journal of Visual Culture* 2.1 (2003): 5-32
- Norman Bryson, “Responses to Mieke Bal's ‘Visual Essentialism and the Object of Visual Culture’”, *Visual Culture and the Dearth of Images, Journal of Visual Culture* 2.2 (2003): 232-237.
- Nicholas Mirzoeff, “The Right to Look”, *Critical Inquiry*, 37.3 (2011): 473-96.

### **Assessment (including continuous and summative assessment)**

#### **Class Participation Weighting 20% ILO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 [Continuous Assessment]**

Weekly attendance and participation in class discussion on the works of art and prescribed readings will count towards your final grade. Please read the prescribed readings and come to class with prepared comments and questions to contribute to the discussion on a weekly basis.

#### **Class Presentations (between Weeks 2 to 12) Weighting 20% ILO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 [Continuous Assessment]**

Fifteen-to-twenty-minute group presentations which include a visual analyses of works of relevant to the week’s topic and theme and situate the selected works of art within the concepts, ideas, and theories from the prescribed weekly readings. Please submit any notes, handouts and powerpoint slides 48 hours prior to the class.

#### **Mid-Semester Assessment: Short Answer Responses to Stimulus Materials: Responding with a Visual Analysis and Referencing Prescribed Readings - Weighting 20% ILO 1, 2, 3, 4**

Students will respond to four images (5marks each) provided as stimulus materials, writing short answer responses (around 200 words each) with a brief visual analysis and referring to prescribed readings relevant to the stimulus material.

#### **Final Assessment: Essay – 2000 words – due \_\_\_\_\_ Weighting 40% ILO 1, 2, 3, 4**

Students will select one or more image(s) from any time-period and geographic region and construct an argument based on its / their visual analysis, situating the image(s) within one of the critical frameworks or debates examined during the course. This is not a research essay and so no extraneous research is required. Along with the visual analysis, you will need to provide an argument and reference the prescribed course readings and recommended resources from the course. Please attach a separate Bibliography in Chicago Style. The word count of 2000 does not include the footnotes and bibliography.