

COMM 344: Visual Communication and Culture
MWF 9-9:50 a.m. DOR 304
Fall 2010

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Office Hours: M 11-2:00 p.m., WF 11-11:50 a.m., and by appointment
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Course Description: "An introduction to the basic principles of perception and visual interpretation to students. Analysis and discussion address the dependent processes of rhetorical visual communication in media and film studies, cultural studies, art, literature, and photography within the public sphere. Prerequisite: COMM 110." ([Columbia College 2010-2011 Undergraduate Catalog](#) 177).

Course Objectives: "A picture is worth a thousand words."
"Seeing is believing."
"Are my eyes deceiving me?"

These adages, and more, abound in our culture. We are fascinated, compelled, and ultimately persuaded by the visual. This course examines the ways in which we see our world, literally and figuratively. Through this examination, we can better see ourselves and how we are both products and consumers and this visual culture.

Course Goals:

- To recognize different perspectives of visual theory.
- To identify and articulate the scientific and social processes of looking.
- To articulate and analyze visual images.
- To employ reflexive skills related to visual interpretation
- To articulate ethical arguments regarding photojournalism

COURSE SCHEDULE

August	23	Images
	25	Course introduction, expectations, grading, etc.
	27	What is Visual Communication? Chapter 1
	30	Visual Cues and Design—Chapter 2
September	1	Visual Cues, continued
	3	Visual Theories—Chapter 3
	6	<i>Labor Day—No Class</i>
	8	Visual Theories, continued-- The Male Gaze
	10	Pornography
	13	<i>Gaze Portfolio</i>

	15	<i>Gaze Portfolio</i>
	17	<i>Gaze Portfolio</i>
	20	Visual Persuasion—Chapter 4
	22	Visual Persuasion & Stereotypes—Chapter 5
	24	Visual Stereotypes, continued
	27	Visual Analysis—Chapter 6
	29	EXAM #1
October	1	Specific Visual Mediums; Typography—Chapter 7
	4	Typography, continued
	6	Graphic Design—Chapter 8
	8	Graphic Design & Informational Graphics—Chapter 9
	11	Informational Graphics, continued
	13	Cartoons—Chapter 10
	15	Cartoons, continued; Photography—Chapter 11
	18	Photography, continued
	20	Motion Pictures—Chapter 12
	22	<i>Fall Break—No Class</i>
	25	EXAM #2
	27	Television—Chapter 13
	29	Computers—Chapter 14
November	1	The Worldwide Web—Chapter 15
	3	Moving Forward—Chapter 16
	5	Photography and Enacting Change— <i>The Bang Bang Club (BBC)</i> —Chapters 1-4
	8	BBC Chapters 5-8
	10	BBC Chapters 9-12
	12	BBC Chapters 13-16
	15	Group Meetings
	17	Group Meetings
	19	Papers Due
	22-26	<i>Thanksgiving Break—No Class</i>
	29	BBC Chapters 17-19
December	1	BBC summary
	3	Group Presentations
	6	Group Presentations

- 8 **Group Presentations**
 10 Last Day of Class, course summary

Tuesday, December 14 **Final Exam 10-12 p.m.**

Required Materials

Lester, Paul Martin. Visual Communication: Images with Messages 5th ed. Boston: Wadsworth, 2011. Print.

Marinovich, Greg and Joao Silva. The Bang Bang Club: Snapshots from a Hidden War. New York: Basic Books, 2000. Print.

Highly Suggested

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 7th ed. New York: Modern Language Association, 2009. Print.

Online databases are available at

<http://www.ccis.edu/offices/library/resources.asp>. You may access them from off-campus using your eServices login and password when prompted.

Course Policies:

1. **Late work will not be accepted. Work is due at the beginning of class.**
2. **Exams cannot be made up.**
3. **All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, stapled, follow the format given in the syllabus, and use the MLA style of citation.**
4. **Work is not accepted via e-mail.**
5. **It is possible to receive zero credit for any given assignment if the work is of poor quality.**
6. **Cell phones are to be turned off upon entering class. Failure to do so will be punishable by the student(s) singing a fuzzy, sparkly song of the instructor's choosing.**
7. **If after an assignment is graded and returned, you are not satisfied with the grading of a particular question or section, you must submit a written document explaining your appeal no earlier than 24 hours, and no later than 7 days after the item has been returned. This appeal will not be accepted via e-mail. Grades are not GIVEN, they are EARNED.**
8. **Full and complete compliance with the Student Conduct Code (found in the CC Undergraduate Catalog) is expected.**
9. **Students with documented disabilities that may need classroom academic adjustments, auxiliary aids or services are required to register with the ADA Coordinator, 214 Atkins-Holman Student Commons, phone # 875-7626.**
10. **No food is allowed in class.**

11. **Even though Columbia College allows the professor to give a grade of "W" after the end of the official drop date, I will not practice this policy. The grade you are earning at the end of the semester will be the grade reported.**
12. **Columbia College Athletes must provide a detailed schedule (including departure and return times) by the second week of classes. This is to insure that assignments can be met given the amount of time lost to travel.**
13. **Final exams are to be taken at the time designated in the syllabus, as determined by the Academic Affairs office. The appropriate professors must clear any change in the examination time.**
14. **Any revisions to the syllabus will be in writing and handed out in class.**

Attendance:

In today's job market, employers are increasingly vocal about their dissatisfaction with the manners of college graduates. This dissatisfaction affects the ability of these graduates to retain and advance in their jobs. I take it as part of my responsibility, as an instructor, to prepare you for professional behavior by encouraging and requiring it in our classroom.

As a communication class, success does not occur unless the class, on the whole, communicates. Each day I will take roll at the beginning of class. For this 3 credit hour course, you are allowed 3 unquestioned absences. This includes excused and unexcused absences— you do not need to tell me why you are absent. Any absences over the 1 will result in a loss of 10 points per absence. You are all adults and will be treated that way— if your dog dies and you choose not to come to class you can make that decision. Pointedly, the Wellness Center does not excuse you from class, and it most certainly does not excuse you from an assignment. I do not accept notes from physicians to excuse absences. Use your absences **wisely**. In that same vein, leaving early and arriving late disturbs the classroom environment for the other tuition-paying students and the instructor. Therefore, travel reservations and doctor appointments should not be made during this time. If you do leave early or arrive late, I will note that. Any 3 notations will equal one absence. Ten total absences will result in a zero (0) for the participation/citizenship portion of your grade.

I want you to have a positive experience in this class. To that end, I try to be supportive in our interpersonal interactions. I ask you to not mistake me being a nice person for me being a doormat.

— **You are responsible for all information given on days when absences occur.**

— **If you come to class late during a screening and/or presentation, BE AS QUIET AS POSSIBLE!!!!**

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Exam #1 100 points. This exam will test knowledge gained from textbook, appropriate handouts, and in-class discussions for Chapters 1-6 of *Visual Communication*.

Exam #2 125 points. This exam will test knowledge gained from textbook, appropriate handouts, and in-class discussions for Chapters 7-12 of *Visual Communication*.

Exam #3 150 points. This exam will test knowledge gained from textbook, appropriate handouts, and in-class discussions for Chapters 13-16 of *Visual Communication* and *The Bang Bang Club*.

Photographer Paper 175 points. Choosing from a list provided in this syllabus, students will choose one photographer and write a 5-8 page paper documenting their work. The paper should include information about key images by the artist, in addition to biographical and written works by the author. This paper should ultimately explain why this photographer is iconic and worthy of study.

Final Group Project 200 points. This project will allow students, in self-selected groups of 3 to 4, to choose a visual medium of their choice to create for the CC campus. The project will be graded by the group (65 points), the class (65 points), and the instructor (70 points). Presentations documenting the group's work will run 10-15 minutes.

*** All written work will be submitted to turnitin.com for this course. The class ID # is: **3355729**. The course password is: **serif**.

Participation and Attendance 100 points total. This course is dependent upon the exchange of ideas and experience, and peer critique. Therefore your participation and positive citizenship is fully expected. To receive an average participation grade of 75% a student will regularly contribute to a positive learning environment in class. This grade will include your participation in 'non-assignment' activities like the *Gaze Portfolio*.

- A **MAGNIFICENT!** Much more quality than is expected from a student at this level. Superlative performance work.
- B **GOOD WORK!** Work done above the average for students at this level. Only 1 or 2 minor flaws. Above average performance work.
- C **OKAY!** Average quality that is expected from students at this level. Few minor flaws. Met the normal expectations in performance work.
- D **MISSING SOME PIECES!** Below the average work for students at this level. Many minor flaws or a major flaw.
- F **WHAT HAPPENED????** Work that is completely below average for students at this level. Many major and minor flaws.

Grading Scale

<i>Exams</i>	375 points	A	100-90 %
<i>Paper</i>	175 points	B	89-80 %
<i>Group Project</i>	200 points	C	79-70 %
<u><i>Participation</i></u>	<u>100 points</u>	D	69-60 %
		F	59-0 %
Total	850 points		

Verbal work should:

- involve the listeners
- be vocally expressive
- have appropriate physical, nonverbal cues
- improve upon previous work
- be memorable

Written work should:

- have clear, coherent ideas
- exert critical thinking
- explain a creative process
- exhibit comprehension and use of concepts from class discussions
- be memorable

It is NOT acceptable to say to professors "I need a B," "I want an A," "I really need this class to graduate," or "I need an A so that I can keep my scholarship." These requests are a not-so-subtle request for special treatment. These requests ask the instructor to ignore course policies, grades earned, and standards of teaching so that a student can be 'given' a grade whether they earned it or not. It is akin to emotional blackmail and it will not be tolerated. A college education is an endeavor in learning and scholarship. If you are here for job training and plan to 'just show up,' this class will not be enjoyable for you. Consider this syllabus clear warning that you will held accountable to the policies held within.

A Note Concerning End of the Semester Grades

Due to excessive and inappropriate requests like "What do I need to do to get a B?" and "I just want you to give me a C," at the end of the semester, the following procedure is required of all grade inquiries at the end of the semester.

1. Review Course Policy #7.
2. In writing, confirm all of the grades you have in your possession for this course, for this semester. If you do not have all of your grades with you, then you need to wait until you do to initiate this contact. We cannot properly discuss your grade unless you have all graded assignments and have read all comments pertaining to said assignments.
3. For the attendance portion of your grade, carefully review the attendance policy and estimate what you believe your grade would be. Include the number of absences and tardies in this estimation. More times

than not, students ignore and/or forget all of the times they weren't in class or were late to class.

4. Clearly articulate why you believe the grade you received is incorrect. For example, "When I add together all of the points for my assignments, I come up with a 765.4 points which is a C, not the D I received. This includes a 20% F Attendance grade because of the 5 absences I had during the semester." This request shows a comprehension of course policies and proper documentation of graded work. Offering "I really need a B for grad school," shows self-interest and nothing else. Genuine grade concerns and dilemmas should be the only ones submitted. Please do not use the week after grades are turned in to plea for a higher evaluation on the quality of work you did over 15 weeks in this class.

5. Upon an *appropriate* grade inquiry, I will respond in kind.

6. If after this response you are still unsatisfied, you will be directed to the appropriate Departmental faculty member for further grievance procedures.

Photographers Eligible for Selection

These photographers are on a first come, first serve basis. A maximum of two people can select the same photographer.

Ansel Adams	Diane Arbus
Richard Avedon	Erwin Blumenfeld
Phil Borges	Margaret Bourke-White
Brassai	Henri Cartier-Bresson
Joan Fontcuberta	Imogen Cunningham
Edward Curtis	Robert Doisneau
Harold Edgerton	Elliott Erwitt
Robert Frank	Walker Evans
Anne Geddes	Ralph Gibson
Irving Penn	Timothy Greenfield-Sanders
Lewis Hine	George Hurrell
Andre Kertesz	William Klein
Josef Koudelka	Joel-Peter Witkin
David LaChapelle	Dorothea Lange
Annie Liebovitz	Robert Mapplethorpe
Joel Meyerowitz	Richard Misrach
László Moholy-Nagy	Nicholas Nixon
Alexander Rodchenko	Pedro Meyer
David Muench	Helmut Newton
Herb Ritts	Galen Rowell
Sebastiao Salgado	John Sexton
Cindy Sherman	W. Eugene Smith
Edward Steichen	Alfred Steiglitz
Paul Strand	Jerry Uelsmann
Weegee	William Wegman
Edward Weston	Minor White
Mathew Brady	Shelby Lee Adams

ACADEMIC HONESTY CONTRACT FOR DR. DARNELL'S CLASSES

Aristotle believed that we are persuaded by three artistic proofs. One of these proofs is *ethos*, or the ethical character of a speaker. This class is based upon full and just ethical treatment of all academic work. It is not enough to speak well, but you must also be a good and upstanding person as you speak, to paraphrase Quintillian.

To not be ethical in your scholastic work is to be academically dishonest. Academic dishonesty is a broad topic that entails many unethical education practices, of which plagiarism is the most well known yet most misunderstood. Plagiarism is a term that many of you may have heard of and even participated in, unknowingly. Therefore, let me define for you what I consider to be plagiarism and what I **will not tolerate** in this course. Specifically, the word plagiarism comes from the Greek *plagiarius* meaning *an abductor or plunderer*, and *plagiare* meaning *to steal*. Plagiarism is the knowledgeable and specific use of another's work while claiming that work to be your own original thoughts, ideas and work

To avoid instances of academic dishonesty, be sure to review the academic dishonesty policy at Columbia in the Undergraduate Catalog. For this course, the following practices constitute academic dishonesty:

- Reusing academic work from other courses without my consent.
- Using another person's work with or without his or her permission.
- Cheating on examinations.
- Using group-produced work as individual work.
- Falsification of information, which includes creating or citing sources for which bibliographic information and/or physical copies cannot be provided upon request.
- Plagiarism in any and all forms. This includes:
 - Copying another's work verbatim or failing to give appropriate credit to another for an idea, opinion, or theory.
 - Citing sources as original when they were used as support for someone else's work.

You must always cite sources when:

1. *You are quoting another's work.*
2. *You use another's ideas, theories, arguments, and or viewpoints.*
3. *You use statistics, illustrations, or facts from another unless information is commonly known. To avoid questions, choose to cite rather than not to cite.*

I have read this entire plagiarism contract and I understand its content without exception. I agree to fully abide by its guidelines. All writing I submit in this class will be my own. If I use other sources than my own writing, I will clearly notate them and document them in parenthetical citation according to MLA style guidelines. I understand that submitting any writing with my name on it indicates it to be my own. Any instance of dishonesty, no matter the volume, nullifies the entire body of work. I understand that if I use writing from any source and submit it as my own, I will be in violation of this course's policy and the ethical cornerstone of higher education, and as such, this plagiarism will result in a grade of "0" being issued for the offending assignment and a grade of "0" for course participation.

Student Signature

Date

Student ID#