

PROVIDENCE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

432.13 Visual Communications

3 credit hours

Fall 2011

Dr. Nicholas P. Greco

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Class Times: Monday, 3:20-4:35; Thursday, 3:20-4:35.

Office Hours: Friday, 8:30-11:30, or by appointment.

SYLLABUS

A. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The main objective of this course is to explore the ways we understand and use images in all their forms. The analysis of photography, film, television and advertising, as well as new visual media, leads to a comprehension of how these images work and what messages they might be conveying.

B. COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through participation in lectures, classroom discussion and completion of the course requirements:

1. The student will begin to understand what visual communications are and how they have developed over history, especially in the Christian *milieu*;
2. The student will learn basic theoretical tools with which to engage the various forms of visual culture that are increasingly prevalent in society;
3. The student will understand viewers' practices of looking, or how an audience responds to visual culture.

C. COURSE TEXTS

Required: Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. 2nd Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

D. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Class attendance and participation: It is only in the best interest of the student if he or she attends each class and, in fact, consistent attendance is required. Each student will be expected to read the assigned course texts and be prepared to contribute to a meaningful discussion based on those readings. It is on this participation that a portion of the final grade is based. Each student is expected to arrive to class promptly for its beginning.

2. Readings Quizzes: There will be unannounced quizzes throughout the semester, consisting of short answer and multiple choice questions. These quizzes will be based on the readings. A student will receive no marks for quizzes missed, nor will they be able to write them at a later date.

3. Discussion Papers: Each student must prepare a discussion paper (3 pages in length) in which she or he presents not only a brief synopsis of particular assigned readings, but some commentary or thought about the subject matter presented or the stance taken by the author(s). These short works should not be simple summaries, nor should they be research papers. The student must submit 2 of these on the dates indicated in the course outline, based on the readings indicated.

4. Midterm test: This test will be comprised of some short-answer questions which deal with contents from the first part of the course. There will also be longer analytical questions based on particular examples of visual communication that has been presented in class.

5. Major Paper: The major paper is an analytical project using a method, viewpoint or theoretical framework presented in the course. As an object of study, the student should choose a piece of visual communication (either a preexisting piece of visual communication or one of their own creating). A copy of the piece of visual communication must accompany the analysis. The analysis should be 6-8 typed, double-spaced pages in length. **This paper must include a bibliography containing a minimum of 5 academic sources, and should follow the other instructions in the section below entitled "Written Assignment Format Policy."**

6. Final Exam: The final exam will cover all of the material presented in the course from its beginning, and will include analytical questions based on a particular example of visual communication that has not been previously presented in class.

E. GRADING SUMMARY

Attendance/Participation:	10%
Discussion Papers:	15%
Readings Quizzes:	15%
Midterm Test:	15%
Major Paper:	20%
Final Exam:	25%

Excellent	A+	4.0	91-100	Satisfactory	C+	2.5	67-69
	A		85-90	Adequate	C	2.0	63-66
	A-		80-84		C-		60-62
Very Good	B+	3.5	77-79	Marginal	D+	1.0	57-59
Good	B	3.0	73-76		D		53-56
	B-		70-72		D-		50-52
				Failure	F	0.0	<50

F. COURSE POLICIES

1. Class Attendance Policy: Attendance is mandatory. Missing more than 5 classes **for any reason** will result in a failing grade in the course.

2. Late Assignment Policy: Assignments are due immediately at the beginning of class on the date on which they are due. Assignments not remitted at that time will be accepted by hand or in my mailbox with a 10% penalty only until 4:30pm on the day that the assignment is due. Any assignments turned in after 4:30pm of the due day will be accepted but will receive a grade of 0. As there will be no extensions granted for any assignments, please note their due dates.

3. Written Assignment Format Policy: All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, using Times New Roman font (12-point only), with 1-inch margins on all four sides of the page, and include proper pagination. In addition, the text must be left-justified. The paper must follow Turabian style. Written assignments may be double-sided. The text should also be free of errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. The paper should be stapled together at the top left corner, without any type of plastic or paper binding. **Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a loss of marks. Papers without a proper bibliography or any proper citations will receive a mark of 0, unless otherwise exempted by the professor.**

4. Plagiarism: Students are expected to demonstrate academic integrity in all its various forms, and will be held accountable for doing so by the policy on Academic Conduct in the Student Handbook (http://www.providencecollege.ca/college/student_life/). One particularly problematic breach of academic integrity is plagiarism, which is stealing from the ideas and writings of another person and passing them off as one's own. For an elaboration of the nature, types, and prevention of plagiarism, see the Providence College document entitled "Academic Dishonesty: The Problem of Plagiarism in Academic Writing," in the Providence College Academic Formation Guide available in the Bookstore.

5. Information and Communication Technologies in the Classroom: **Student use of information and communication technologies for purposes other than class note-taking is not allowed in the classroom, as students are expected to give their total attention to class activities.** Use of cell-phones or iPods is never appropriate in the classroom, and use of laptop computers to play games, chat with others, browse the internet, or engage material not related to the class is always distracting to classmates and disrespectful to the instructor. Unlike some other post-secondary institutions, Providence has not yet found it necessary to ban laptops from the classroom, or prevent wireless internet access in classrooms. Only judicious use of them will keep it that way.

This is a Communications and Media class. As such, the exploration of new communication technologies is encouraged. However, unauthorized use of laptops and other information and communication technologies in this class will not be tolerated.

G. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Journal of Cultural and Religious Theory <<http://www.jcrt.org>>

Journal of Religion and Popular Culture <<http://www.usask.ca/relst/jrpc/>>

Renard, David. *The Last Magazine*. New York: Universe Publishing. 2006.

Stream: Culture/Politics/Technology - A Graduate Journal of Communication
<<http://www.streamjournal.org/index.php/stream>>

Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies <<http://www.yorku.ca/topia/>>

Wallace, Doug, ed. *Flash Forward 2007: Emerging Photographers from Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States*. Toronto: Magenta Publishing for the Arts. 2007.

H. COURSE OUTLINE

- September 8: Introduction; Practices of Looking
- September 12: Practices of Looking (cont'd)
Sturken & Cartwright, Chapter 1
- September 15: Histories
William A. Dyrness, *Visual Faith: Art, Theology, and Worship in Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001), Chapter 1
(ON RESERVE)
DISCUSSION PAPER #1 DUE
- September 19: Histories (cont'd)
- September 22: Histories (cont'd)
Dyrness, Chapter 2
- September 26: Histories (cont'd)
- September 29: Meaning
Sturken & Cartwright, Chapters 2
- October 3: Meaning (cont'd)
- October 5: **9:50 – 12:15 “How to Do Academic Research and Write Excellent Papers”**
All students, and *especially* new students, should attend this helpful workshop. At various points during your time as a Providence College student you will be expected to submit research and writing assignments. This workshop will help you to excel in these tasks.
- October 6: Spectatorship and Power
Sturken & Cartwright, Chapter 3
- October 10: **THANKSGIVING**
- October 13: Spectatorship and Power (cont'd)
- October 17: Realism and Perspective
Sturken & Cartwright, Chapter 4
- October 20: Realism and Perspective (cont'd)
- October 24: Reproduction of Images

- Sturken & Cartwright, Chapter 5
- October 27: Reproduction of Images (cont'd)
- October 31: Mass Media
Sturken & Cartwright, Chapter 6
- November 3: Mass Media (cont'd)
November 7: Consumer Culture and Desire
Sturken & Cartwright, Chapter 7
- November 10: Consumer Culture and Desire (cont'd)
Jon Pahl. "The Shopping Mall as 'Stairway to Heaven,' Leading
Nowhere." *Shopping Malls and Other Sacred Spaces: Putting God
in Place*. Grand Rapids, IN: Brazos Press. 2003. 65-82. (ON
RESERVE)
DISCUSSION PAPER #2 DUE
- November 14: Postmodernism
Sturken & Cartwright, Chapter 8
- November 17: Postmodernism (cont'd)
- November 21: Science
Sturken & Cartwright, Chapter 9
- November 24: **FACULTY FORUM**
- November 28: Science (cont'd)
- December 1: Globalization
Sturken & Cartwright, Chapter 10
- December 5: Globalization (cont'd)
- December 8: Christians and the Arts; Conclusions
Dyrness Ch.5 (ON RESERVE)