Course Description

Visual images are everywhere in contemporary life. They influence the way we live our lives and are a reflection of past and present social values. Visual literacy is increased by the active exploration of the production and consumption of these cultural artifacts.

Objectives

By viewing and discussing examples and techniques in the areas of commercial art, photography, film, fine art, and the internet, students will have the opportunity to practice employing their analytical skills on a broad range of visual products. Students will engage with and employ some of these techniques in order to increase their awareness of the impact of popular visual culture inside and outside the classroom.

Information

1. You may leave messages for me at the art department (632-7250). The best time to arrange to see me is on class days before or after class. Email: ruth.kisch@stonybrook.edu.

2. Class meets here every Thursday evening from 6-9 pm. You are required to attend every class, to stay the whole time, to take part in discussions and presentations. Please come on time!

CEA 540 Visual Images in popular Culture  Fall, 2014  Ruth Kisch

REQUIREMENTS

1) **Participation: 15%** of grade
   a-attend all classes, arrive on time at 6 pm.
   b-participate in all discussions,
   c-engage actively in simulation games, analysis of visual artifacts, and creative production assignments,
   d-bring the required materials and references to each class,
   e-contribute in a supportive, co-operative and responsible manner to the group projects.

2) **Website Review: 15%** of grade
   a-write a 1-2 page paper reporting on a visit to a website chosen from a list of sites of particular visual interest; these will include but not be limited to museums, public broadcasting, the film industry, advertising organizations, individual artists.
   b-the review will note the sponsoring institution or organization, whether the site is current, for whom the site is designed, how easy the site is to use, the quality and appropriate nature of the information and imagery there, the aesthetic qualities of the site, how useful the site would be to teachers and/or students.
   c-student work will be evaluated on how thoroughly, accurately and articulately a & b are completed.

3) **Collaborative Project Design: 15%** of grade
   a-the purpose of this activity is to have students experience the collaborative nature of product development, graphic design, media placement and the relation of all these to societal values.
   b-each student will assume one of five (5) tasks: 1-package design, 2-storyboard for TV ads, 3-audience analysis, 4-print ad for newspaper, magazine, movie theatres, 5-marketing strategies.
   c-students’ grades will combine a grade for individual contributions and a grade for the group.
4) **Cultural Artifact**: 50% + 5% of grade
Each student will create an artifact which reflects an imaginary historical, literary, scientific, mathematical or sociological discovery. The artifact could be a letter, photograph, tool, textile, etc. The artifact and accompanying paper will demonstrate the student’s skills in analyzing visual content and its cultural impact.

   a- An artifact **proposal sheet** will be due three weeks before the final project describing the object and supporting documentation.

   b- The paper of 5-10 typed pages will set the context for discovery of the artifact and explain its importance in illuminating a particular literary work, clarifying a historical controversy or exemplifying a scientific theory. It will include an analysis of how the use of real or imaginary artifacts can help students better understand the values that influence institutions, cultures and societies. Students will present their work orally to the class.

**Schedule of Topics, Readings and Due Dates**

1: Introduction; syllabus; Afghan Girl
   Reading: S&C 9-46.

2: What Is Visual Culture? Reading images; analysis of a photograph; signs
   Reading for: S&C 49-52; 62-89.

3: Assigning web reviews; fairy tales & changing values; same story—different point of view.
   Reading: S&C 223-236; Cabret title page-109.

4: Film clip analysis; news: newspaper to TV.

5: Blair Witch Project—mockumentary; TV ad analysis: “Who’s Renting Your Eyeballs?”
Schedule of Topics, Readings and Due Dates (continued)

6: **Web reviews**; analysis of data from TV advertising; assign advertising project
   Assignment: gather materials for advertising project.

7: **Web reviews**; advertising project; studio time and conference time
   Assignment: prepare for advertising presentation.

8: **Presentation of advertising projects**; assign artifact project; artifact analysis
   Reading: S&C 347-381; Cabret 408-end. BRING CABRET BOOK NEXT CLASS!

9: **Web reviews**; Cabret discussion; communicating facts; critical eye on factual images (maps); slide show
   BRING STURKEN NEXT CLASS!
   Reading: S&C 307-337.

10: **Web reviews**; looking at modern and post-modern; definitions in Sturken; public art controversies discussion/community

11: **Artifact proposal sheets due**—studio and Conference time.

12: Community and art; Christo and Jeanne Claude film; What is your community identity?

13: Artifact presentations

14: Artifact presentations