New Course Request

Indiana University

Check Appropriate Boxes: Undergraduate credit ☑ Graduate credit ☐ Professional credit ☐

1. School/Division: Herron
2. Academic Subject Code: HER

3. Course Number: 214
   (must be cleared with University Enrollment Services)
4. Instructor: Instructor Varies

5. Course Title: Visual Learning: From The Simpsons to The Guerrilla Girls

   Recommended Abbreviation (Optional) ____________________________
   (Limited to 32 Characters including spaces)

6. First time this course is to be offered (Semester/Year): Fall 2007

7. Credit Hours: Fixed at ______ or Variable from ______ to ______

8. Is this course to be graded S-F (only)? Yes ☑ No ☐

9. Is variable title approval being requested? Yes ☐ No ☑

10. Course description (not to exceed 50 words) for Bulletin publication:
    Designed for the novice, this class facilitates viewers in interpreting powerful images
    from our contemporary world, starting with art and moving across popular culture and
    academic disciplines. Classes involve making and interpreting images. Essential
    questions help students examine how visual images impact their lives. Convenes at
    Herron with off-site visits to museums and public spaces.

11. Lecture Contact Hours: Fixed at ______ or Variable from ______ to ______

12. Non-Lecture Contact Hours: Fixed at ______ or Variable from ______ to ______

13. Estimated enrollment: ______ of which ______ percent are expected to be graduate students.

14. Frequency of scheduling: each semester
    Will this course be required for majors? no

15. Justification for new course: Need introductory class for general public in beginning skills of visual literacy

16. Are the necessary reading materials currently available in the appropriate library? Yes

17. Please append a complete outline of the proposed course, and indicate instructor (if known), textbooks, and other
    materials.

18. If this course overlaps with existing courses, please explain with which courses it overlaps and whether this overlap
    is necessary, desirable, or unimportant.

19. A copy of every new course proposal must be submitted to departments, schools, or divisions in which there may be
    overlap of the new course with existing courses or areas of strong concern, with instructions that they send comments
    directly to the originating Curriculum Committee. Please append a list of departments, schools, or divisions thus
    consulted.

Submitted by: Eric Noldeh 
   Date 3.6.07
   Department Chairman/Division Director

Approved by: Craig Daniel
   Date 3.6.07
   Dean
   Date 

Dean of Graduate School (when required)

Chancellor/Vice-President
   Date

University Enrollment Services
   Date

After School/Division approval, forward the last copy (without attachments) to University Enrollment Services for initial processing, and the remaining
four copies and attachments to the Campus Chancellor or Vice-President.

UPS 724
   University Enrollment Services Final—White; Chancellor/Vice-President—Blue; School/Division—Yellow;
   Department/Division—Pink; University Enrollment Services Advance—White
E211 Visual Learning: From The Simpsons to The Guerilla Girls
Dr. Cindy Bixler Borgmann / Larry Hurt, Adjunct Instructor
Herron School of Art and Design, Eskenazi Hall, Room 147
Office Phone: 278-9449, Room 168
TH 5:00 – 8:00

**Course Description:** Designed for the novice, this class facilitates viewers in interpreting powerful images from our contemporary world, starting with art and moving across popular culture and academic disciplines. Classes involve making and interpreting images. Essential questions help students examine how visual images impact their lives. Convenes at Herron with off-site visits to museums and public spaces.

**Course Objectives:** The primary purpose of this course will be to introduce the concept of visual literacy to students and provide a series of units of instruction that:
- examine how human beings make meaning from what they see
- develop inquiry-based approaches to examining and interpreting contemporary images
- develop awareness of the influence of visual imagery on their lives
- increase ability to communicate through visual imagery – as interpreter and creator
- introduce changing aesthetic philosophies;
- understand art as cultural expression
- increase skills in critical inquiry and personal response;
- broaden their understanding of the role and definition of art

**IUPUI Principles for Undergraduate Learning:**
Principles practiced and assessed in this course:

#1: Core Communication Skills: Students demonstrate ability to comprehend, interpret, and analyze visual imagery and to express ideas to others in various formats – written, spoken, visual, and movement.

#2: Critical Thinking: Students analyze carefully and logically information (visual images, text, verbal dialogue) and ideas from multiple perspectives. Student demonstrate the ability to analyze complex issues and make informed decisions, to solve challenging problems, and to synthesize information, and to use knowledge and understanding gained from all modes of knowing to generate and explore new questions.

#4: Intellectual Depth, Breadth, and Adaptiveness: Students examine and organize disciplinary ways of knowing and apply them to specific issues and problems. Students will compare and contrast visual approaches to knowledge to those of various disciplines.

#5: Understanding Society and Culture: Students recognize their own cultural traditions and understand and appreciate the diversity of the human experience, both within the United States and internationally.

#6: Values and Ethics: Students make judgments with respect to individual conduct, citizenship, and aesthetics, recognizing art as a visual sign for communicating meaning and values of life. Students recognize the importance of aesthetics in their personal lives and society.

**Expectations:** No previous art experience required. Respect for multiple and different viewpoints. Attendance, punctuality and class participation are expected. Please contact instructor immediately in event of absence. Absences or excessive tardiness will result in formal conference with instructor and lower final evaluation.

**Assignments:** Assignments are to be completed on time and presented in a professional manner. The following assignments will comprise evaluation of student performance:

- On-line responses to readings / Big Questions: 20
- Inclass participation in critical inquiry: 40
Studio projects 20
Journal reflections 20

Text:

Selected readings from the following:

Accommodations: Students needing accommodations because of disability will need to register with Adaptive Educational Services and complete the appropriate forms issued by that office before accommodations will be given. Adaptive Educational Services is located in CA 001E. (274-3241)

Weather: For information on university class status the IUPUI weather advisory is http://www.iupui.edu/it/registrar/adverseweather.html or call 278-1600.

Basic Format of the Course:

Instructional Format: Research on dialogic inquiry and constructivist learning from the disciplines of art, language, and art education provide a solid foundation for nurturing competencies of visual literacy in beginning viewers. Visual literacy content and content-related issues are complex and rarely about facts and single solutions. In order to create an environment where diverse opinions and critical thinking will be encouraged, each unit of instruction will be organized around a Socratic Seminar format. (Gravill, 2006) Within this structure, students are encouraged to try to gain understanding of the topic or issue through focused dialogue with others in the class. Students will respond to weekly questions and readings on-line, prior to class. After examining common texts or images in class, questions are posed, and a constructive dialogue occurs. Types of possible questions include:

- Open-Ended Questions-require proof and group insights to arrive at an answer
- Associative, Evaluative, Emotive Questions – requires personal response and perception of human import
- World Connection Questions- connects the topic to the real world
• Universal Theme/Core Question- encourages discussion about the universality of the text
• Analysis Question- (a variation on the literary analysis question)- a question that focuses on the style, use of design elements, etc. in the image being discussed

Class sessions will take place in the Herron galleries, art education classroom, computer lab, as well as the Indianapolis Museum of Art, the Eiteljorg Museum, School of Medicine, and other public places for visual study, such as: Target, State House, Circle Center Mall, and movie theatre.

Visual literacies and big questions:

The ten categories that follow will be based on images and image-making practices identified by leaders in art, art history, art education, and visual culture. Each literacy is followed by possible areas of exploration through a core of essential questions. The categories below are adapted from the text (Elkins, 2003) and provide our starting place for discussing / nurturing visual competencies with beginning viewers through essential or “Big” questions. The class outline provides the range of visual imagery examined in this course. Specific image selections will be based on current exhibitions and imagery experienced in the current culture.

1. Visual Thinking Competencies:
   Introduction to inquiry methods of making meaning would start with practice of Visual Thinking Strategies, Yenawine & Housen, a strategy for beginning viewers. Once a community of inquiry is formed other types of viewing practices would be used. Methods such as aesthetic scanning (Broudy), personal response questioning (Geahigan/Wolfe), principles of interpretation (Barrett), would be used as appropriate to the images under study each session.
   Essential questions:
   • What does it mean to “see” a work of art?
   • How do we, as human beings, make meaning from art viewing experiences?
   • What is the relationship between viewing time and meaning making?
   • What is the relationship between aesthetic response and image decoding?
   • How do we define the word “expression?” What do works of art express?

2. Visual Literacies that Involve Making Images: Visual studies will be strengthened by including image making and relating that making process to the historical and interpretive experience. The two are linked together, and understanding would be increased by creating and examining images. Otherwise the image making process will be inaccessible to historical understanding.
   Essential questions:
   • What does it mean to “tell the truth” when creating a visual portrait of yourself or your family?
   • How do you manipulate visual media to communicate ideas?
   • How do we help others make meaning from the images we create?
   • What is Modification?

3. Visual Literacies and the Aesthetic. What constitutes a work of art? Students grapple with the defining criteria of a work and their personal criteria of what a work of art should do/look like to be a good/successful work. Students gain exposure to art from various philosophical viewpoints and aesthetic theories that challenge their pre-existing assumptions.
Essential questions:
• Is beauty in the eye of the beholder?
• Are there universal standards of beauty?
• When is censorship appropriate, or is it?

4. Art History as a Kind of Literacy. Students would distinguish styles within one artist’s body of work - theme/big idea, explore the issues of appropriation and forgery, and have a beginning experience with art as cultural expression.
Essential questions:
• How does art reflect the historical, cultural, social, political culture it comes from?
• Does meaning change over time? (How does history affect the way we create meaning in art?)

5. Non-Western Visual Literacies. Students would encounter works of non-western culture that are dense with meanings and attempt to discern the meanings those works had for their makers, emphasis on meaning/cultural context,
• In what ways are images universal?
• Are there visual qualities or aspects of visual content that cross cultures?
• How has globalization affected production and dissemination of images
• either in fine art or advertising?
• Is there a universal visual language?
• Are there “hard-wired” images/responses?

6. Literacies from the Past (Unrecoverable literacies): While we can learn a great deal from contemporary images, there is also much to be gained by recovering and studying historical methods of seeing. Without this knowledge, we often assume that our contemporary “lens” is actually revealing the information that is visually to be gained.
Essential questions:
• Do images have a “shelf-life” or time-sensitive power or credibility?
• Who has made images and how have images been used to communicate? (propaganda, daily life, religion, sales, etc).
• How has image making and meaning making from image changed throughout history?

7. Visual Literacies in the Sciences. The world of science, like art history, has a variety of images that are of critical importance just like those of the artistic canon. Certain images in astronomy, biology, physics, and meteorology, for example, should be recognized and understood for the universal ideas and structures they contain.
Essential questions:
• Are there universal scientific images? If yes, what makes those images universal?
• How does universal reading and understanding of scientific images benefit society?
• How does prior specific knowledge about an image affect our ability to make meaning?
• Can an individual in the sciences increase his or her ability to understand a phenomenon through increased visual literacy

8. Special Effects and Digital Images: Competencies in deciphering the effects of digital: In a world of dazzling special effects and motion picture wonders, a student of visual studies should attain a level of literacy which allows them to move beyond recognition towards an understanding of commercial editing tools and processes.
Essential questions:
• What are the primary technological tools of the film maker?
• How is reality “constructed” using these technological tools?
• How are censorship issues different in this age of artificial reality?

9. Graphics and Design. This study would move beyond the typical fine arts and commercial approaches and look instead at understanding design.

Essential Questions:
• How are images used to promote or sell products or communicate ideas?
• Whose interests are being served?
• What visual literacy skills are needed when decoding and making decisions about ads, internet promotions, and other commercial/visual messages?
• What is the role of image modification in commercial design? How are products modified?
• How does design impact human behavior and understanding?

10. Spaces: Public and Otherwise. The way spaces are designed from building exteriors to interiors to signing impacts human response. Students will examine meaning in the visual design of architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design.

Essential questions:
• How do we “read” visual spaces?
• How does the visual message of our urban environments communicate meaning?
• How do we “read” architecture?
• What is the “language” of architecture and urban design?
• Whose interests are being served by that architecture?
Course Outline

Class 1: Introduction: Semiotics and negotiating meaning with the visual
Reading; on-line response; journal reflection

Class 2: Big Questions and Grand Conversations Convene in Herron Gallery
Reading; on-line response; journal reflection

Class 3: Aesthetics: Differing aesthetic philosophies that challenge meaning making
Convene at Indianapolis Museum of Art; Reading; on-line response; journal reflection

Class 4: Video: Questions around the aesthetic: So this is art? Artistic intention and viewer
response. Convene in Herron gallery; Reading, on-line response; journal reflection

Class 5: Photography / media: What is “truth?”
Studio project 1

Class 6: Photo/studio continued
Reading; on-line response; journal reflection

Class 7: Advertising: Text and image
Studio project 2

Class 8: TV/Appropriated images in mass media
Reading; on-line response; journal reflection
Studio project 3

Class 9: Hello to Hollywood: Digitized reality
Reading; on-line response; journal reflection

Class 10: Film/Lost Literacies
Studio project 4 journal reflection/reading

Class 11: Non-Western Convene at IMA
Reading; on-line response; journal reflection

Class 12: Non-Western Convene at IMA
Reading; on-line response; journal reflection

Class 13: Sciences: Medical imaging to astronomy, Convene off campus
Studio project 5; journal reflection/reading

Class 14: Public Spaces: Who’s in control?
Reading; on-line response; journal reflection

Class 15: Public Spaces: Convene off campus

Class 16: Final presentations
Background:

We believe, as a nation of citizens and educators, that the ability to decode text, make meaning from the written word, and express ourselves through writing are the marks of an educated populace. However, we also live in a world that is rich and steeped in visual imagery. Whether we are watching televisions or our computer screens, we have become aware that there is a "language" of image that communicates a variety of messages on a variety of levels. Sophisticated use of software, digital imagery, and messages bound to text and music communicate a great deal about our lives and our culture. Young people, in particular, are targets of this information. Podcasts, video games, instant messages, and carefully targeted ads reach off the page and engage viewers who have grown able to assimilate these materials at high speed with little or no fear. They can multi-task, move from screen to screen on their computers, and absorb large volumes of information about everything from products to politics.

However, though young people are absorbing a great deal of information at a high rate, their "visual literacy" may not be attuned to all of nuance and subtlety that is entering their eyes and minds. This idea of visual literacy is one that is frequently discussed in literacy circles, and just as frequently debated. Questions such as: what does it mean to be visually literate? Who determines that someone is visually literate and by what standard do we measure the ability? Does visual literacy simply mean making sense of images? What is the role of text when it is joined with an image? Is visual literacy a significant skill that every citizen should have? How will development of visual literacy skills affect text-based literacy development? Who will teach these skills, and how will we measure their acquisition? Whose interests are being served by the images that our students are experiencing and decoding? These questions are among the hundreds that are connected to a debate that rages in literacy, education, and technology circles.

Author and co-developer of the Visual Understanding in Education program, Philip Yenawine, states that “Visual literacy is the ability to find meaning in imagery.” (Flood, 1997, page 1) However, individuals who are visually literate do not deal exclusively in imagery. Graphics are seen as relevant and significant because of the text that often accompanies the image. He or she “reads” the image and the text. (Stern, 2001) The authors of enGage from the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory state that “Visual literacy is the ability to interpret, use, appreciate, and create images and video using both conventional and 21st century media in ways of advanced thinking, decision making, communication, and learning.”

Individuals who participate in this activity will engage in a variety of activities that include identification, naming, and interpretation. That interpretation can include making sense of metaphors, identifying known or unknown elements, raising of questions, speculating about what is taking place in the image, fact-finding, and categorizing of the visual elements.

Though we live in a visually-oriented culture where we are bombarded with imagery on computer screens, magazine ads, television, and I-Pods, we cannot assume that all who see and experience these images are actually able to derive meaning from them and gain access to all of the material that they contain. We do not learn to negotiate meaning in imagery simply by exposure. The logical solution to this dilemma is to create a course in visual literacy that prepares students to face the plethora of media-based imagery with the tools that enable them to make sense of all of this material. In a world where a high level of text-based literacy is required in order to succeed in schools, technology-laden business, and general computer use, there is on-going discussion as to which literacies are the most significant. One level of visual literacy will allow the viewer to identify a person in a newspaper photograph, another will allow the viewer to identify psychological manipulation in an ad. Some images are symbolic and filled with mysterious meanings, others are identified on face value. Individuals in this environment will make sense and meaning at their own level (Yenawine, 1997)

This course will be designed for and situated within the visual arts department. Though many of the questions that will be raised are philosophical, scientific, and related to communications and semiotics, art education provides a unique lens for exploring this body of knowledge and investigating the questions that will be raised.
Additional reading bibliography:


