

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media & Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 401.50 L01

Special Topics in Communication and Media Studies

Modernity and Visual Culture

Fall 2017

Tues., Sept. 12-Tues., Dec. 5

Lectures: Tues. 2:00-4:45pm

Instructor:	Dr. Annie Rudd
Office:	SS 312
Office Phone:	(403) 220-5458 (email preferred)
E-Mail:	annie.rudd@ucalgary.ca (when emailing, please mention "COMS 401" in the subject line)
Web Page:	D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours:	Wed. 1:00-3:00, or by appointment

Course Description

In this course, students will learn about the historical connections between visual culture and modern life, considering the convergences of modernity and the visual in an array of cultural spaces and practices. Focusing on the period from approximately 1830 to 1950, this course explores the ways in which modern subjectivity was predicated on people's exposure to new varieties of visual experience. In investigating visual culture thematically rather than chronologically, students will be well positioned to consider points of historical continuity and rupture. They will also be encouraged to explore connections between historical developments in visual culture and the visual culture of the present day. Topics to be covered include, among others, the visual experience of urban life; visual constructions of race; cultures of exhibition and display; visual culture and social movements; and advertising and consumer culture.

Objectives of the Course

This course aims:

- to familiarize you with major developments and themes in the history of visual culture;
- to equip you with a theoretical apparatus and a vocabulary that will enable you to critically interpret a broad range of visual material;
- to introduce you to techniques of historical research involving visual artifacts;
- to provide you with historical context for the visual cultures of the present moment.

Textbooks and Readings

The textbook for this course is *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*, edited by Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski, which is available in the University Bookstore. A copy of the course textbook is also available on reserve at the Taylor Family Digital Library. All other readings will be posted on D2L. Please be sure to bring the assigned readings with you to class.

Internet and Electronic Communication Device Information

Computers are permitted in this class provided that they are used solely for note-taking and other in-class activities, and they do not present a distraction to you or others. The use of smartphones is not permitted in class—they must be silenced and placed in your bag during class, but can be used during the break. The unauthorized use of electronic devices for audio and video recording is prohibited.

If distraction due to electronic devices is impeding class participation, a policy prohibiting the use of all electronic devices may be introduced. Therefore, it's in your best interest to ensure that you are using laptops exclusively for class work.

A Note on Email Communication

Emails to your instructor or TA should have "COMS 401" mentioned in the subject line. Please do not use email to ask questions that can be answered by looking at the course outline or D2L. I aim to answer emails within 48 hours of receiving them—if you have emailed me and have not heard back within this timeframe, please feel free to send a follow-up message. You are expected to check your University of Calgary email regularly, as important course information will likely be sent out via email from time to time.

Assignments and Evaluation

Please note that this is a reading- and writing-intensive course. If you anticipate difficulty keeping up with the readings or satisfactorily completing a significant amount of written work, this course may not be a good choice for you.

Your grade in this course will be determined based on the following criteria; see details on each component below. If you would like more details on the criteria or expectations of any assignment, please don't hesitate to ask.

Weight	Assignment	Due
15%	Participation in discussion and in-class activities (not including in-class writing prompts)	Throughout semester
10%	Critical analysis 1	October 3
10%	Critical analysis 2	November 7
15%	Class facilitation	Throughout semester (presentation dates will be posted on D2L)
20%	In-class writing prompts (5 in total, lowest mark will be dropped)	Throughout semester
30%	Final essay (6-8 pages double-spaced)	November 28
Extra 2%	Optional extra credit assignment: essay presentation	Notes uploaded to D2L by December 2, presentation takes place December 5

Participation

Regular participation is expected and will be essential not only to your success, but to the experience that each student has in the class. Your participation will be assessed based on the frequency and quality of your contributions to class discussions and your participation in in-class group activities. Given the importance of participation, regular attendance is essential. You should come to every class with the readings completed and in hand, ready to discuss them.

Attendance will be taken in this class, and you are expected to arrive on time, avoid distractions while in class, and stay for the duration. Chronic absences or lateness will negatively affect your grade.

Critical Analysis Assignments

These short assignments are intended to encourage you to think critically and creatively about visual culture in modernity. By design, they are flexible so that you're able to take your analysis in a direction that you find most interesting and useful. The first critical analysis must be submitted by October 3, and the second one can be submitted any time before November 7. For each of these assignments, you have two options:

- a) Choose an artifact dating to between 1830 and 1950 (it can be a photograph, an article, an advertisement, or any other historical artifact, but you should be able to identify with specificity when and where it is from), and interpret its significance using at least one of the readings assigned in this class. A short list of potential artifacts will be provided on D2L, but you are welcome to choose one of your own—if you're unsure whether an artifact is suitable, please ask.
- b) Discuss at least two of the assigned course readings in relation to one another. You may want to respond to one or more of the following questions: How are these readings in dialogue? What can they tell us about the history of visual culture? Are they in conflict in any meaningful way? What can they tell us about the visual culture of the present moment?

These assignments must be at least 500 words in length, and any readings that you discuss should be properly cited in the citation style of your choosing. Information on citation will be provided on D2L and discussed in class. You will be assigned a grade for each critical analysis, but limited qualitative feedback—if you would like more information on why you got the grade you did, please inquire via email or visit office hours. Critical analysis assignments should be submitted using D2L Dropbox folders marked "Critical Analysis 1" and "Critical Analysis 2."

Class Facilitation

In groups of 4, you will lead a class discussion for approximately 20 minutes. You will be asked to prepare a slide presentation in which you discuss one of the week's assigned readings and pose questions to the class. Successful presentations will likely involve:

- a) Focusing on what you see as the most important ideas, sections, and/or passages and discussing those in depth, rather than summarizing the entire reading;
- b) Providing important quotations from the reading as appropriate (with page numbers);
- c) Offering compelling visuals (images or videos) on your slides along with text;
- d) Posing questions that will encourage productive, valuable class discussion. (Yes-or-no questions are unlikely to do this. Questions that get your classmates to reflect on

the broader themes of the reading, to make connections between the reading and others we've done in the class, or to connect the reading with contemporary life are more likely to elicit good discussion.)

Signup for class facilitation will take place in the second week of classes. It's essential that each group submits their presentation notes and slides by 10pm the Sunday before they are scheduled to give their presentation; these files should be uploaded to the D2L Dropbox labeled "Class Facilitation." Late submissions will be docked marks, and groups that do not submit their notes and slides in advance will not receive credit for this assignment.

In-Class Writing Prompts

In addition to the in-class group activities that will be counted toward your participation mark, you will be required to complete five short in-class writing assignments throughout the semester. These writing assignments will ask you to reflect on some aspect of the course content and discuss at least one of the week's readings. Dates of these writing assignments will not be provided in advance, and no make-ups are possible, so it's essential that you attend class regularly in order to avoid missing these assignments. That said, only your top four writing assignments will be counted toward your final grade.

Final Essay

Your major assignment for this class will be a final essay of 6-8 pages, due at the beginning of class on November 28. Building on the writing you have done in this course throughout the term, you will craft a well-researched, thoughtfully argued essay that offers critical and historical analysis of one or more visual artifacts, with reference to course readings as well as at least two outside readings. A set of essay questions and a short list of suggested artifacts will be provided to you early in the term, but you are also permitted to propose your own essay topic. You can propose your topic via email or by visiting office hours. Technical details relating to the essay and proper citation will be provided in class and on D2L. Before class on November 28, essays must be submitted in hard copy and also submitted via the D2L Dropbox labeled "Final Essay."

Optional Extra-Credit Assignment: Essay Presentation

You will have the option to deliver a concise (2 to 3 minutes, maximum), compelling presentation of your final essay to the class during our final meeting on December 5. You may wish to make a brief slide presentation to illustrate your discussion. Slides must be uploaded to the D2L Dropbox labeled "Final Essay Presentation" no later than December 2. This will be the only opportunity to complete an extra-credit assignment in this course.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: All assignments and exams weighted more than 10% must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Submission of Assignments:

For research essays, submission details will be provided in class and on D2L. If it is not possible for you to hand in your essay directly to your instructor, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available

for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. Brief extensions may be given by the instructor provided the student has a compelling reason to request one, and the request is made well in advance of the deadline.

Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

- Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. Letter grades will be used for essay assignments, while percentage grades will be used for exams and quizzes.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70		A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30		B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70		B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30		C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter.	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70		C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00		D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.	F	0- 49.99%	0%

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations or footnotes *with page numbers* must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly

where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436>. If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

For information about . . .	Visit or contact . . .
ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC)	SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca
CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program 	http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/
DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line 	http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca
STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services 	http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Services Mobile App 	http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents
STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman 	https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds
SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips 	403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus <p>If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line.</p>

Schedule of Class Topics and Readings

An important note: all readings and dates listed on the course outline are subject to change—so please check D2L regularly for the most up-to-date version of this schedule.

Week 1

September 12

Introduction to the course: What is modernity? What is visual culture?

Week 2

September 19

Images, technology, circulation

Required readings:

Oliver Wendell Holmes, selections from “The Stereoscope and Stereograph” (on D2L)

Karl Marx, “Commodities and Money” (in course reader)

Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, “Modernity: Spectatorship, Power, and Knowledge” (on D2L)

Week 3

September 26

Urban culture and visual experience

Required readings:

Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (in course reader)

Judith Walkowitz, “Urban Spectatorship” (in course reader)

Charles Baudelaire, excerpts from “The Painter of Modern Life” (on D2L)

Week 4

October 3

****Critical Analysis 1 due today****

Visibility and modern subjectivity

Required reading:

John Tagg, "A Democracy of the Image: Photographic Portraiture and Commodity Production" (on D2L)

Robert Mensel, excerpts from "Kodakers Lying in Wait" (on D2L)

Michel Foucault, excerpts from *Discipline and Punish* (on D2L)

Week 5

October 10

Visual constructions of race

Required readings:

Frederick Douglass, review of "A Tribute for the Negro" (on D2L)

W.E.B. Du Bois, excerpts from *The Souls of Black Folk* (on D2L)

Shawn Michelle Smith, "Baby's Picture is Always Treasured" (in course reader)

Week 6

October 17

The ethnographic gaze

Required readings:

Rachel Adams, "Freaks of Culture: Institutions, Publics, and the Subjects of Ethnographic Knowledge" (on D2L)

Timothy Mitchell, "Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order" (on D2L)

Week 7

October 24

Visual culture and social movements

Required readings:

Lisa Tickner, "Banners and Banner Making" (in course reader)

Lewis Hine, "Social Photography" (on D2L)

Week 8

October 31

Consumer culture and visual display

Required readings:

Erika Rappaport, "A New Era of Shopping" (in course reader)

Anne McClintock, "Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising" (on D2L)

Émile Zola, selections from *The Ladies' Paradise* (on D2L)

Week 9

November 7

****Critical analysis 2 due today****

Visual sensations

Required readings:

Ben Singer, "Modernity, Hyperstimulus, and the Rise of Popular Sensationalism" (on D2L)

Tom Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction" (on D2L)

Sigmund Freud, "The Dream-Work" (in course reader)

Week 10

November 14

Film screening.

Required readings:

None

Week 11

November 21

Realism and facades in modern life

Required readings:

Miles Orvell, selections from *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture* (on D2L)

Karen Halttunen, selections from *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America* (on D2L)

Week 12

November 28

****Final essay due today****

Visuality and the document

Required readings:

Allan Sekula, selections from "The Body and the Archive" (on D2L)

Alan Trachtenberg, "The FSA File: From Image to Story" (on D2L)

Week 13

December 5

Concluding discussion and essay presentations.