

## **COMS 497.01W and LIBS 497.01W: Introduction to Visual Culture**

**Dr. Emily Newman**

Texas A&M University – Commerce

Summer 1 Web-Based Class, 2024

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OUTCOMES

This course intends to explore visual culture by examining key ideas and terminology, discussion major issues, and using major touchstones in the 19th and 20th century to examine different kinds of visual expression. In this course, students investigate the role of visual culture in daily life, exploring fine art, popular culture, film, television, advertising, business communications, propaganda, viral social media and information graphics. We will explore art and artifact contextually – through culture, language, politics, and location, as well as techniques and production - to better begin to truly see and understand what makes this work so essential. Addressing the way our identity informs our view of culture, through our exploration of various cultures and art we can hopefully broaden our horizons.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

- discuss and define visual culture
- become acquainted with the characteristic features of the art and culture in certain moments in history (the development of photography, the Bauhaus, the Holocaust, for example)
- learn to analyze the relationships among content, context, and style
- acquire a working knowledge of the specialized vocabulary used in art, photography, and visual culture
- enhance visual literacy and critical thinking skills
- demonstrate knowledge of the interconnectedness of global dynamics (issues, trends, processes, and systems)

### ASSESSMENT:

Students' ability to meet the course objectives and learning outcomes will be evaluated through written assignments, discussion posts, worksheets, projects, and essays.

### REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Valentina Grande (Author), Sergio Varbella (Illustrator), *Bauhaus: A Graphic Novel*, Prestel, 2022. ISBN: 3791388576

Nora Krug, *Belonging: A German Reckons with History and Home*, Scribner, 2019. ISBN: 1476796637

\*Please note: we will also be required to watch videos and films online, a few of which might require a nominal rental fee.

## WORKLOAD:

The rule of thumb for time required for course study and preparation each week for a face-to-face class or an online course during the spring and fall semesters is three times the number of credit hours (or 9 hours per week) for the course. But in the summer session, we only have 5 weeks INSTEAD of the full 15, so our schedule is very compressed. You need to plan accordingly. If you find yourself unable to complete course requirements in a timely manner, refer to the University's withdrawal policy and the appropriate dates. Incomplete grades are only granted for extreme emergencies. Being "overloaded" either from other class assignments or job commitments are not considered to be emergency situations. For this class, you should expect an hour to an hour and a half of work each day. If you desire, you can work ahead and start the projects early and take the class at your own pace, just remember to follow due dates and engage in conversation in discussion posts!

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS:\*

**Discussion:** Each student will write numerous times to the discussion page for the class. There will be clear class prompts, with word counts for you to follow. Sometimes, students will be required to respond to their peers and engage in conversation.

**Writing Assignments:** Various short essays of 2-3 pages will be assigned over the course of the semester. It is expected that you will follow formatting guidelines, basic essay structures, and will have edited and proofread your work. These essays encourage critical thinking, no research other than information that is provided to you, and should be written entirely by students.

**Project:** This larger project is based on one of our key sources and asks you to examine it further in depth, while tackling a design project that engages the core principles of visual culture that have been discussed in the course.

**Reflection Paper:** This is a short writing assignment that asks you to reflect on what you learned in the course, no research needed.

**Assignments will NOT be accepted after the week in which they are assigned.** For each class day late, the grade will be reduced by ½ a letter grade.

## **Grade Breakdown:**

Written Assignments – 40%	Project – 30%
Discussion Posts – 25%	Reflection Paper – 5%

## **Grade Scale:**

A = 90%-100%	(exceptional)
B = 80%-89%	(good)
C = 70%-79%	(average)
D = 60%-69%	(minimally sufficient)
F = 50%-59%	(failure)

\*subject to change

**Note:** Personal computer problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the school or local library, office service companies, an Internet cafe, or a bookstore, such as Barnes & Noble, etc.

#### DISCUSSION:

Each person will bring their own experiences to this class, and should feel comfortable expressing their opinions and vulnerabilities. The classroom is a safe environment, and each student should behave with integrity and treat their peers with respect.

#### HANDING IN ASSIGNMENTS

Each assignment must be uploaded on time and in the appropriate location on D2L.

#### FORMATTING

All written assignments must be typed using the following guidelines: 12 pt. Times New Roman font, 1" margins, double-spaced, with page numbers. Failure to format properly will result in a lower grade. Artwork titles **MUST** be italicized.

#### CLASSROOM POLICIES:

##### **Statement on Student Behavior:**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenet of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct).

All students must show respect toward the instructor and the instructor's syllabus, presentations, assignments, and point of view. Students should respect each others' differences. If the instructor determines that a student is not being respectful towards other students or the instructor, it is the instructor's prerogative to ask the student to leave, to refer the student to the department head, and to consider referring the student to the Dean of Students who may consider requiring the student to drop the course. Please refer to pages 42 – 46 of the Texas A&M University-commerce Student guidebook's Codes of Conduct for details.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. There is **no tolerance** for any kind of academic dishonesty in this course. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on exams, theft of instructional material or exams, representing the work of someone else as one's own, and misrepresenting absences. Academic dishonesty is a severe transgression and may result in referral to the Dean of Students, expulsion from class and/or the University, and a failing grade.

It is the student's responsibility to:

1. research and write their own papers
2. give proper credit through documentation when using words or ideas of others
3. rely on their own knowledge when taking tests
4. refuse to give another student the opportunity to be dishonest

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

### ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

This class is specifically a space for learning and practicing invaluable writing and researching processes that cannot be replicated by generative artificial intelligence (AI). While the ever-changing (and exciting!) new developments with AI will find their place in our workforces and personal lives, in the realm of education, this kind of technology can counteract learning. This is because the use of AI diminishes opportunities to learn from our experiences and from each other, to play with our creative freedoms, to problem-solve, and to contribute our ideas in authentic ways. In a nutshell, college is a place for learning, and this AI simply cannot do that learning for us. Academic integrity plays a vital role in the learning that takes place in class, and submitting work as your own that was generated by AI is plagiarism. For all of these reasons, any work written, developed, created, or inspired by generative artificial intelligence does not lend itself to our learning goals and is a breach of ethical engagement and our academic integrity policy.

## TURNITIN

TAMUC uses Turnitin software to help students avoid plagiarism and cheating. Turnitin is a 'text-matching' software which is designed to educate students regarding appropriate citation and referencing techniques. Turnitin is also used to provide TAMUC with confidence in the academic integrity of students work. Turnitin does this by comparing a student submission against an archive of Internet documents, Internet data, a repository of previously submitted papers, and subscription repository of periodicals, journals, and publications. Turnitin then creates an 'Originality Report' which can be viewed by both lecturers and students, which identifies where the text within a student submission has matched another source.

## A&M-COMMERCE SUPPORTS STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit [www.tamuc.edu/counsel](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel)

STATEMENT ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ADA ELIGIBLE STUDENTS:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services  
Texas A&M University-Commerce, Waters Library, Room 162  
Phone (903) 886-5150, Fax (903) 468-8148  
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

After contacting the Office of Student Disability Resources and Services, it is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor of what accommodations are needed **IN ADVANCE** of when they are needed (for example, if testing accommodations are necessary, please inform the instructor with appropriate documentation at LEAST one week before the test date).

EMAIL POLICY:

Email is the preferred form of communication, with a general response time of 24 hours during the week (do not expect replies over the weekend). For all emails sent, please **include full name, student ID, and the class** that you are attending. Do not send emails to myself and other professors at once, as each professor has different issues to address. You are allotted three absences for this course; plan accordingly and there is no need to contact me about unexcused absences that are incorporated into this allowance. For excused absences, you need to bring in a hard copy of appropriate documentation of your absence.

GRADE POLICY:

If you have concerns regarding a grade, email me **within one week of receiving the assignment back** clearly explaining why you think the assignment was addressed incorrectly. After the email is received, we will then set up an appointment to discuss the concern.

\*\*\* THERE WILL BE NO EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS\*\*\*

### SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

### NONDISCRIMINATION NOTICE

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

### CAMPUS CONCEALED CARRY

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to (<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements:

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

[https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser\\_support.htm](https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm)

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

## **ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

## **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here: <https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

## **MINIMAL TECHNICAL SKILLS AND PROGRAMS NEEDED**

At a minimum, you must have access to and be able to use Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

## **SYSTEM MAINTENANCE**

Please note that on the 4th Sunday of each month there will be System Maintenance which means the system will not be available 12 pm-6 am CST.