

College of Visual and Performing Arts
Department of Art and Visual Technology
Visual Thinking – AVT 204 MW
This syllabus subject to change

The true mystery of the world is the visible. Oscar Wilde

Professor: Isabel Manalo
Office hours: MW by appointment
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Required Texts:

Ways of Seeing by John Berger
On Photography by Susan Sontag

Very simply this course, AVT 204 Visual Thinking, could be defined as a class about seeing. What you will be doing in here is largely that, but equally as important you will be thinking about what you are seeing and why you are seeing it in a particular way. Assigned projects will offer you the opportunity to challenge yourself on your acquired ways of seeing. A more complicated definition of this class would be that it could provide you with an opportunity to define a personal concept of 'vision.' Class content includes slide lectures, readings, films and discussion. There will be a fair amount of writing and projects that evidence your commitment to presenting your subject in an unexpected way. However, the outcome of what you will be doing in here will not have a neatly 'boxed set' of products. Think of it as a semester to explore and experiment with your own curiosity and intuition. When explaining that curiosity is tied with intuition, William Thurston of Cornell said: "you don't see what you're seeing until you see it, but when you do see it, it lets you see many other things." In short, what you are really developing in this class is your individual poetics of vision. "Art is not what you see but what you make others see", Edgar Degas.

For AVT 103, 104, 215, 222, 232, 243, 252, 253, 262, 272

This class fulfills a Mason Core requirement for Arts.

Mason courses in the film making, visual and performing arts stress generative, inquiry based learning through direct aesthetic and creative experience in the studio environment. Art history courses address the intrinsic relationship of personal and cultural creativity, and the manifestation of aesthetics, visual culture and visual narrative within historical contexts.

Learning Outcomes:

Students who successfully complete a course in the Arts category must meet the first learning outcome and a minimum of two of the remaining four learning outcomes:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic process, and a work's underlying concept, and where appropriate, contexts associated with the work.
2. Identify and analyze the formal elements of a particular art form using vocabulary and critique appropriate to that form.

3. Analyze cultural productions using standards appropriate to the form, as well as the works cultural significance and context.
4. Analyze and interpret the content of material or performance culture through its social, historical, and personal contexts.
5. Engage in generative artistic processes, including conception, creation, and ongoing critical analysis.

OBJECTIVES

1. To discuss and examine the ways filmmakers, artists, philosophers and writers have brought new ideas into our ways of seeing.
2. To expand one's possibilities in the realm of personal vision.
3. To experiment with these different possibilities through working on projects, writing and in-class discussions.
4. To communicate your thoughts and ideas, present them as a topic of discussion with the purpose of further clarification and definition. Through this, you will be practicing how to use "critique" for your best interests.
5. To learn evaluative interpretive principles necessary for the communication of ideas through visual imagery.
6. To define the 'whats', whys and wherefores' of your vision.

Statement on Materials of a Potentially Objectionable Nature: For FAVS majors in the College of Visual and Performing Arts, this is a required course that investigates a range of contemporary themes and practices in still and moving image making. We may from time to time be viewing or reading materials that some students may find distressing or objectionable for religious, cultural or personal reasons. These materials are presented as objects of study and analysis and as part of the educational process, without any intent to cause offense or distress. If you are concerned that your religious or cultural beliefs would make it impossible for you to participate in part or in whole in this class, please see me at the beginning of the term so that we can discuss ways to manage your concerns.

ASSIGNMENTS | All assignments need to be PRINTED out for the due date.

- **Photo essays on various mediums of image making covered in this course: Oil Painting, Acrylic Painting, Photography (Analog and Digital), Collage/Appropriation, Film and Video, Sculpture, Installation, Internet/Blog art, Surveillance/Drone art.**
- **Instagram photo essay**
- **Facebook live video**
- **Studio visit blog essay based on graduate art student studio visit**

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

You are expected to complete and submit all assignments on the due date. Assignments that are late or missing will be marked as zero unless there is a valid medical emergency. Please refer to the grading rubric and criteria applicable to all work done in this class:

A – Assignment is clearly cohesive and articulate in concept and presentation. The written portion is exceptional in its organization and use of grammar. External sources are used and cited appropriately and accurately. Presentation of the image and essay is well designed and ‘presentation ready’.

B – Assignment is somewhat cohesive in concept and presentation. The written portion is well organized with some minor grammar mistakes. Sources are cited and the presentation of both image and essay are almost ‘presentation ready’.

C - Assignment is completed but not cohesive in concept and presentation. The written portion is not organized with a number of grammar mistakes. The essay is not verbally articulated and sources are not cited and the presentation of both image and essay is sloppy and not ‘presentation ready’.

D – Assignment is turned in but incomplete and disorganized.

F – Assignment may be completed but is not turned in on the due date. Assignment is turned in but incoherent and incomplete and fails to accomplish the focus and goal of the assignment.

The following criteria will also be used to evaluate your performance in this class and ultimately determine the final grade.

- **Attendance and timeliness**
- **Participation in class discussions, critiques and presentations**
- **Demonstrates respectful and positive attitude and behavior**
- **Ability to provide and receive constructive feedback**
- **Demonstrated progress from beginning to end of the semester**
- **Assignments: 50%, Class Participation and Attendance: 25%, Final Project: 25%**

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

In respect to a conducive learning environment, no phones or personal listening devices (with or without head phones) or any other kind of digital device may be used during class time. All phones must be turned off and powered down. Absolutely NO TEXTING allowed during class time. Phones MUST BE STORED OUT OF SIGHT during the entire duration of class unless otherwise needed for any particular class assignment. Any calls or texting interruption will result in the device being taken away.

SEMESTER CALENDAR | Subject to Change

WEEK 1

Jan. 23 – Introduction to course. Reading: *Ways of Seeing* by John Berger. Chapter 1

Jan. 25 – Discussion and Video on *Ways of Seeing*. Episode 1. Linear and Atmospheric Perspective. The Italian Renaissance. Dutch still life painting, English and French landscape painting.

Photo Essay Assignment #1: Visit the west wing 2nd floor of the National Gallery of Art. Find an oil painting of your choice. Spend at least 20 minutes in front of it

looking, observing and taking notes. Take a photograph of the image and write 300 - 500 words about this painting. Combine image and article and print out. Due Monday Jan. 30

WEEK 2

Jan. 30 – Five students will present Assignment #1. Discussion on what influences how and what we see. Look at paintings from Non-Western traditions. Read Ch. 2 and 3 in *Ways of Seeing*.

Feb. 1 - Discussion on Ch. 2 and 3 of *Ways of Seeing*. View Episode 3.

Photo Essay Assignment #2: Find in an old personal photo from home. Write an essay on why it's significant to you.

WEEK 3

Feb. 6 - Presentation from 5 students of Assignment #2. Diane Arbus, LaToya Ruby Frazier,
HW: Read Ch. 4 – 7 in *Ways of Seeing*.

Feb. 8 – Discussion on Berger. View episode 4 of *Ways of Seeing*. Advertising, Desire, Consumption.

Photo Essay Assignment #3: Create an advertisement using Instagram that evokes glamour and desire.

WEEK 4

Feb. 13 – Presentation from 5 students of Assignment #3. Photography and Appropriation. Collage. Andy Warhol, Vik Muniz, Wangechi Mutu.

Feb. 15 – Discussion on **Richard Prince's** Instagram Exhibition from 2016. HW: Photography as questioning authenticity. Dismissing photography as representing truth.

WEEK 5

Feb. 20 – **Andreas Gurskey, Thomas Schutte, Justine Kurland and more.** Read Chapter 1 and 2 from *On Photography* by Susan Sontag.

Feb. 22 – Photography Discussion.

Assignment #4: Visit the National Gallery of Art East Wing to visit the Photography Exhibition. Write a photo essay on one of the photographs in the exhibition.

WEEK 6

Feb. 27 – Presentation of Assignment #4 from 5 students.

March 1 – **Narrative Painting: Maia Cruz Palileo, Kerry James Marshall, Romare Bearden**

Assignment #5: Report on a narrative painter

WEEK 7

March 6 – Presentation of Assignment #5 from 5 students

March 8 – Sculpture- Abstraction-appropriation and repetition: Brian Jungen, Tara Donovan, Yayo Kusama, Maya Lin

WEEK 8

March 13 - No Class Spring Break

March 15 – No Class Spring Break

WEEK 9

March 20 – **View Yayo Kusama at the Hirshhorn Museum.**

March 22 – Discussion on Kusama exhibition.

Assignment #6: Blog entry including images on Yayo Kusama Exhibition.

WEEK 10

March 27 – Presentation of Assignment #5 from 5 students

March 29 – Transformative Architecture

WEEK 11

April 3 – **Introduce Final Project: Studio Visit Blog Article with photos and video**

April 5 – The work in progress: Artist Studio Visits

WEEK 12

April 10 – Internet, Surveillance and Drone Art: Dries Depooter, Hasan Elahi,
Part 1 of Final Project Due

April 12 – **Assignment #7 Produce a video using Facebook live**

WEEK 13

April 17 - **Presentation of Assignment #7. Part 2 of Final Project Due**

April 19 - Video: Bill Viola, Pipilotti Rist, Paul Pfeiffer

WEEK 14

April 24 – Edit and upload final projects to Wordpress as needed

April 26 – Edit and upload final projects to Wordpress as needed

WEEK 15

May 1 - **Final Project Presentations**

May 3 – Final Project Presentations. Last Day of Class

University and School of Art Policies

In accordance with George Mason University policy, turn off all beepers, cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class. The instructor of the class will keep his/her cell phone active to assure receipt of any Mason Alerts in a timely fashion; or in the event that the instructor does not have a cell phone, he/she will designate one student to keep a cell phone active to receive such alerts.

Commitment to Diversity

This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran's status, or physical ability.

Statement on Ethics in Teaching and Practicing Art and Design

As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the School of Art adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

Open Studio Hours

SOA teaching studios are open to students for extended periods of time mornings, evenings and weekends whenever classes are not in progress. Policies, procedures and schedules for studio use are established by the SOA studio faculty and are posted in the studios.

ArtsBus

Dates for Spring 2017:

February 18

March 25

April 18

ArtsBus Credit:

* Each student must have up to 5 AVT 300/Artsbus credits before graduation. For credit to appear on your transcript you must enroll in AVT 300. This also applies to anyone who intends to travel to New York independently, or do the DC Alternate Assignment.

* If you plan/need to go on multiple ArtsBus trips during a semester and need them towards your total requirement, you must enroll in multiple sections of AVT 300. Please go to the ArtsBus website: <http://artsbus.gmu.edu> "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding ArtsBus policy.

* Non-AVT majors taking art classes do not need Artsbus credit BUT may need to go on the Artsbus for a class assignment. You can either sign up for AVT 300 or buy a ticket for the bus trip at the Center of the Arts. Alternate trips must be approved by the instructor of the course that is requiring an ArtsBus trip.

Visual Voices Lecture Series

Dates for Spring 2017:

January 26

February 9

March 9
 March 23
 March 30

Visual Voices is a year-long series of lectures by artists, art historians and others about contemporary art and art practice. Visual Voices lectures are held on Thursday evenings from 7:20- 9:00 p.m. in Harris Theater: <http://soa.gmu.edu/visualvoices/>

Important Deadlines

<i>January 1 Day of Week</i>	<i>Sunday</i>
Martin Luther King Day (no classes)	Mon Jan 16
First day of classes ; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date; full semester waitlists removed	Mon Jan 23
Last day to add classes —all individualized section forms due Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	Mon Jan 30
Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty	Mon Feb 13
Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)	Fri Feb 24
Immunization Record Deadline	Wed Mar 1
Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via Patriot Web	Mon Feb 20 – Fri Mar 24
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	Mon Feb 27 – Fri Mar 31
Spring Break	Mon Mar 13 – Sun Mar 19
Incomplete work from Fall 2016 due to Instructor	Fri March 31
Incomplete grade changes from Fall 2016 due to Registrar	Fri April 7
Dissertation/Thesis Deadline	Fri May 5
Last day of classes	Sat May 6
Reading Days Reading days provide students with additional study time for final examinations. Faculty may schedule optional study sessions, but regular classes or exams may not be held.	Mon May 8 – Tue May 9
Exam Period (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)	Wed May 10 – Wed May 17
Commencement and Degree Conferral Date	May 20

Once the add and drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Requests for late adds (up until the last day of classes) must be made by the student in the SOA office (or the office of the department offering the course), and generally are only approved in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid being processed) , LATE ADD fee will apply. Requests for non-selective withdrawals and retroactive adds (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the academic dean of the college in which the student’s major is located. For AVT majors, that is the CVPA Office of Academic Affairs, Performing Arts Building A407.

Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences

If you have a diagnosed disability or learning difference and you need academic accommodations, please inform me at the beginning of the semester and contact the Disabilities Resource Center (SUB I room 234, 703-993-2474). You must provide me with a faculty contact sheet from that office outlining the accommodations needed for your disability or learning difference. All academic accommodations must be arranged in advance through the DRC.

Official Communications via GMU E-Mail

Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

Attendance Policies

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

Honor Code

Students in this class are bound by the Honor Code, as stated in the George Mason University Catalog. The honor code requires that the work you do as an individual be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas. (This does not prohibit collaborative work when it is approved by your instructor.) As a faculty member, I have an obligation to refer the names of students who may have violated the Honor Code to the Student Honor Council, which treats such cases very seriously. No grade is important enough to justify cheating, for which there are serious consequences that will follow you for the rest of your life. If you feel unusual pressure about your grade in this or any other course, please talk to me or to a member of the GMU Counseling Center staff.

Using someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is plagiarism, a very serious Honor Code offense. It is very important to understand how to prevent committing plagiarism when using material from a source. If you wish to quote verbatim, you must use the exact words and punctuation just as the passage appears in the original and must use quotation marks and page numbers in your citation. If you want to paraphrase or summarize ideas from a source, you must put the ideas into your own words, and you must cite the source, using the APA or MLA format. (For assistance with documentation, I recommend Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*.) The exception to this rule is information termed general knowledge—information that is widely known and stated in a number of sources. Determining what is general knowledge can be complicated, so the wise course is, "When in doubt, cite."

Be especially careful when using the Internet for research. Not all Internet sources are equally reliable; some are just plain wrong. Also, since you can download text, it becomes very easy to inadvertently plagiarize. If you use an Internet source, you must cite the exact URL in your paper and include with it the last date that you successfully accessed the site.

Writing Center

Students who are in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). The services of the Writing Center are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis.

The Collaborative Learning Hub Located in Johnson Center 311 (703-993-3141), the lab offers in-person one-on-one support for the Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, Blackboard, and a variety of other software. Dual monitor PCs make the lab ideal for collaborating on group projects, Macs are also available; as well as a digital recording space, collaborative tables, and a SMART Board. Free workshops are also available (Adobe and Microsoft) through Training and Certification; visit itraining.gmu.edu to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.