



EDUCATION 5210
Graduate Seminar in Curriculum Studies:
VISUAL LITERACIES & NEW MEDIA
Summer Session II 2014, Section 'A'

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Course Description and Rationale

What does it mean to be literate in a world dominated by the visual image? Students will actively engage in hands-on assignments to bring theory to practice and will learn the language and method of the critique process. The readings are directed towards a critical awareness of visual culture in everyday life of students and teachers, and its impact on identity construction. How do educators structure conversations with youth to critically reflect upon everyday consumption of images? How do the ubiquitous images of advertising, television, posters, movies, and images from popular culture intersect and impact the construction of personal and professional identity? How do they exist within a network of visual codes that are referenced throughout art history and often considered neutral? How can students become critically engaged in reading and creating images as communication? How can they take the means of production into their own hands by constructing original images and visual narratives with playful, critical awareness. The readings and available resources will provide a rich resource of graphic literature, and recent theoretical studies about images in public space and the recent wave of graphic novels/comics. Students will identify and challenge their assumptions about comics/graphic novels through an examination of the dialectic of images / words in the history and practice of visual narratives.

This course will also present examples of image-based research methods and critique potential problems in ethnographic representation of human subjects. Students, who are consuming the simulated world through technology, need to critically reflect as *readers* of images and to become *writers* by becoming involved in their own productions. The assignments in this course will apply the theoretical readings into practice. The best way to influence the reading of popular culture is through active participation in the creation of authentic representations that are relevant to the lives of students. The tone of the class will be reflective and inventive with a playful approach to the manipulation of both traditional and electronic materials.

Visual images and material culture (the *stuff* of everyday life) are often overlooked in methods of inquiry into personal identity, and teaching practice as part of professional development. In this course we will take a fresh look at the ubiquitous images that confront us daily, in advertisements,

movies, personal photos, comics, and objects. A critical approach will be taken to question our assumptions. This course requires active participation and an open mind about what it means to locate the learning within the student, and to work with a broader definition of literacy, which includes visual culture.

The first five classes, taught on line, will focus on graphic novels, narrative structures and use of the image in writing. New literacy implies a need for critical thinking in visual and media literacy, by understanding the social, political, economic, and aesthetic contexts which makers and consumers inhabit. Readings and assignments will deconstruct assumptions about comics and graphic novels to understand their evolution, influences, satirical stance, and styles. Students will write questions to facilitate theoretical discussions of course readings followed by workshop assignments. The hands-on assignments will work with ideas and examples from the readings. Critiques will follow every activity to learn the language of visual critical analysis, and to connect the readings to practice. What is the language for readers and creators to assess/critique (describe, synthesize, and evaluate) the intentionality of the author and effectiveness of the work? What are the variety of different voices being used in comics past present and future, and how can this inspire differentiation and diversity in teaching?

Does one accept the reality projected and manipulated in public space by those who have the money to buy it, or can one actively participate in generating more complex perspectives and critiques? Advertisements are situated within a much larger network of representation such as the cinema and art history. Workshops and readings will question the origins or persistence of certain stereotypes over time in the representation of race, class, and gender through gestures, stance, the gaze, and design formulas. How can rhetorical language be taught through the language of persuasion in advertising? How much is individual identity exchanged or lost to a belief in a larger reality created by advertisers?

As children buy more into popular culture and technology, the gap increases between what and how they learn inside and outside of schools. The main assumption of this course is that the motivation to learn comes from a need to communicate and to represent life experiences in multiple ways. Skills are learned in order to actualize ideas. Images have the most staying power in their ability to become imprinted in our memories. Images will not be used as support to illustrate or to generate text. Students will learn to *read* images and forms of typography as concrete language codes like hieroglyphics. Images are systems of communication existing within a contextual framework with their own codes of reference. The contradiction in the reading of images or hieroglyphics is that on one hand it is an enigmatic language - there is not a single reading - yet at the same time images have the potential to be the most universally understood language. It is a Question of agency: Do we make the world or does the world make us?

Objectives

1. The readings and the collected resources made available during the course will include the history and genealogy of comics, advertising, ethnographical issues when representing human subjects, references of social significance, and specialized terminology of the aesthetics, and craft. For example, it is important to learn this language in order to distinguish comic/graphic

novels as relevant literature from hack clichés. Students will become more critically aware of the proliferation of literature available, as resources to connect with teaching practices, and to form good questions, in order to guide their students through the critique process.

2. Students will also engage in hands-on workshops that decode and apply the creative process as possible ways to engage with images, text, series, dvoice, perspectives, and the value of satire to motivate critical thinking and motivation with adolescent learners. Hands-on exercises are the best way to closely observe different methods and possible blueprints for applying the concepts in the classroom.

Students will:

- Become familiar and to appreciate the literacy value of specific graphic novels and comics.
- Understand the socio-political context influencing the evolution of graphic literature.
- Understand how comics/graphic novels influence their students and the potential to develop relationship with them.
- Generate graphic literature, through different exercises, working from intuitive responses to rational intent/analysis.
- Learn about the new publishing companies such McSweeney's that have developed from the DIY (do it yourself) ethics of self-publishing that has become possible through the proliferation of home technology and distribution systems online.
- Reflect on their own lives in learning through making graphic forms of communication.
- Experiment with different forms of graphic text/images to find confidence and competence in different styles.
- Craft and share examples in group critiques to understand the relationship of the arts with an audience and how to guide audience viewing and feedback.
- To become more flexible and aware of differentiated teaching styles in order to motivate and engage the 21st Century learner.
- To become familiar with using the visual in ethnographic research methods and to be critical of issues when representing human subjects.

Assignments

Readings

Readings will provide a theoretical background to the discussions and hands-on assignments. Five classes will be online, followed by two weeks of face-to-face. Images and videos will be presented along with the readings. Discussion online will focus on questions about the readings and images with an academic, critical approach, **not** unsubstantiated personal opinions. For the online discussions, two submissions per class are required per reading: one in response to the questions and another in response to the comments of your colleagues.

A) Participation and Workshop Assignments in Online Component (20 %)

I will post questions to facilitate an online discussion of the reading. It is necessary for everyone in the class to read everyone's online submissions. To receive your grade you will submit, to the instructor, at least one page that summarizes the reading and one page that summarizes the responses from students. A rubric will be provided to show how the grade is determined by the level of thinking and making references to the readings and other comments.

B) Participation and Workshop Assignments in face-to-face classes (30 %)

Participation is crucial to the theoretical component of this course to show your understanding of the text. It is also important to build community and collaboration among the group.

Every class will have a workshop activity. An understanding of the readings should be apparent in the choices made in the hands-on assignments. They will be compiled into a portfolio and handed in at the end as part of the participation mark. A rubric will be provided. Every class will have a workshop component that will build towards final assignments with critical reflections.

C) Assignments Total (50%)

Students will manipulate images and text in a workshop approach to assignments.

25% Cumulative assignment for the graphic novel study will be a 24-panel comic that shows an understanding of the workshops and readings about graphic novels in the hands-on and critical reflection.

25% The second assignment will be working with theatrical tableau/Photoshop to construct images and a two-page critical reflection, based on the readings.

Summary of class hours for a total of 39 hours

- 13 hours online
- Two weeks face-to-face at the University from July 7 to 18, 2014

Assignment #1: Graphic Novel/Foto Novello/Comic

15% for production, 10% for analysis referencing readings

Rationale:

- To study graphic novels and to analyze visual narrative structures
- To actively engage in the construction of a foto novela by:
 - Using images to find words to find images
 - Getting inside and staying inside images when writing fiction
 - Using different narrative visual structures in framing, composition, and aesthetics
 - Employing different narrative structures in creating voice through text

In Class Workshops leading to final assignment

1. Look at excerpts from graphic novels as a form of literature and study formal strategies in framing visual narratives.
2. Writing workshop using a booklet by Lynda Barry, and Scott McCloud

Final Assignment: 24-Panel Comic

- 12 panels are drawn from one perspective of a character or characters within the narrative.
- 12 panels from the other character.

Parameters: You can use cut and paste collage or drawing. NO downloaded images. Images must be self-generated. You can scan in photos, drawings, collected fragments that become collaged.

Theme: Critical memory of school culture: Not sentimental, cliché, Aware of the complexities of social context of schools. Can use collage with drawing, photos of diorama, staged tableaux, scanned drawings. Get inside the memory like we did in Lynda Barry exercise.

This website is an excellent resource to study images: <http://drawn.ca>

Booklet of graphic novel examples

This theme is very **flexible** and can be decided in consultation with the instructor.

Consider:

1. Popular Culture and Teacher Identity

Make a comic that critically reflects upon school culture, from the perspective of the teacher, and then the students.

Anonymity is important. One should not be able to identify specific students, teachers, or administration.

2. Popular culture and teenage identity

Explore the influence of advertising on adolescent identity. Still images can be collected, scanned, collaged, and taken with a digital camera. Generate your own images by drawing or staging tableaux to photograph.

(3) An analysis of the constructed image is written with reference to the readings as follows:

A. In-class Activity: Branding/Debranding 10%

The purpose of this workshop is to simulate industrial strategies and methods, while subverting them with critical awareness and sense of play.

You are the new wave of advertising. You are aware of how media savvy your audience has become and you will go to all lengths to attract and hold their attention. You have to become experts in the language of persuasion to compete with the millions of competing messages out there! You been approached by a client to design an ad campaign for their product. Your job is to design an ad campaign for your client.

Planning Steps: Consider the following details and questions in deconstructing/deconstructing your “brand”.

1. What is your Product?
2. What words or phrases do you want the public to think when they see your product?
3. How is text/language/print used? What is the relationship between the image and written text? How does the image add information to/beyond the text? What does it say?
4. What is the market of your product? How will your ad campaign appeal specifically to this market? What audience are you addressing? What are their desires, their secret fantasies? What are their insecurities? Are there any appropriations of social issues?
5. What colors are you choosing for your ad campaign? What do these colors have to do with your product and with your audience?
6. What strategies are you using to target your audience (relationships between people/figures, people/figures and product, people/figures and viewers)?
7. What rhetorical devices of media are you using to engage with your audience (persuasion, irony, satire, humor, hyperbole, etc.)?
8. What stereotypes (language, facial expressions, gestures, clothing) are you using?

Create a still image (tableau) of your ad. Consider stance, gesture, and relationship of people/figures to each other and to the product, background. Compose written or stated text in relation to the image you are creating. Use Photoshop or other photo manipulation software to make your constructed ad as believable as possible. Print as a poster.

B. Analysis 15%
DUE: July 18

Take-home assignment informed by the readings by Berger and Sturken: Write an in-depth critical analysis (two pages) of your advertisement using the discussion throughout your planning steps. Reference the readings and website images on Moodle and images in class, to make connections between the hands-on workshop and the theoretical component.

All components within Graduate Studies & Research in Education programs that use a percentage procedure will use the following table for determining the final grade.

Grading

GRADING SCHEDULE FOR GRADUATE CLASSES

Numeric Value	Letter Grade	Grade Point
97 – 100	A+	4.00
93 – 96	A	4.00
90 – 92	A-	3.70
87 – 89	B+	3.30
83 – 86	B	3.00
80 – 82	B-	2.70
Note: Any course with a grade of less than B- cannot be considered for credit in a Graduate Studies & Research in Education graduate program.		
77 – 79	C+	2.30
73 – 76	C	2.00
70 – 72	C-	1.70
67 – 69	D+	1.30
63 – 66	D	1.00
<63	F	0.00

Readings

Required text

Mc Cloud, Scott (2006). *Making Comics*, HarperCollins

Course reader

1. John Berger, "Chapter Seven"
2. Marita Sturken, "The Reproduction of Images"
3. Marita Sturken, "Popular Culture: Parody and Reflexivity"
4. C. Mitchell & S. Weber, "Reel to Real: Popular Culture and Teacher Identity"
5. David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, "Talking about *Talking Back*: Afterthought on the Making of the Disability Documentary *Vital Signs: Crip Culture Talks Back*"

6. Janice Rahn, "Digital Content: Video as Research"
7. Janice Rahn, "Painting Without Permission: An Ethnographic Study of Hip-Hop Graffiti Culture"
8. Janice Rahn "Video Sketchbook"
8. Lev Manovich, "Prologue"
9. Karen Gallas, "Introduction"
17. Karen Gallas, "On Being an Aboriginal"
18. Ian Parker, "Absolute PowerPoint"
19. Janice Rahn, "Technology as Material"

List of References Relevant to this Course

- Coles, R. (1989). The Call of Stories: Teaching and the Moral Imagination. (pp. 1-30) Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Du Gay, P. (1997) Doing Cultural Studies, The Story of the Sony Walkman, London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Gallas, K. (1994). On being an aboriginal: A model for teacher research. In K. Gallas The languages of learning: How children talk, write, dance, draw, and sing their understanding of the world. (pp. xiii-xix, 1-11) New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Graham, R.J. (1991). "Discovering autobiography in education. In Reading writing and the self, autobiography in education and curriculum. (pp. 1-16). Teachers College Press.
- Hooks, B. (1995). "Diasporic landscapes of longing. In Art on my mind: Visual politics. (pp. 65-73). New York, NY: The New Press.
- Hooks, B. ("to gloria, who is she: on using a pseudonym, and Writing autobiography. In Talking Back, thinking feminist, thinking black, (pp. 155-167). Boston, MA.: Southend Press.
- Hooks, B. (1990). Aesthetic inheritances. In Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics. (pp. 115-122). Boston MA: South End Press.
- Kruger, B. (1994). Arts and leisure. In Remote control: Powers, cultures, and the world of appearances. (pp. 2-15). Cambridge MA: The MIT Press.
- Mitchell, C. and S. Weber. (1999). Working back through memory." In C. Mitchell and S. Weber, Reinventing ourselves as teachers: Beyond nostalgia. (pp. 46-73). London: Falmer Press.
- Mitchell, C. and Weber, S. (1995). "Images, metaphors, and stereotypes: The struggle for identity." In That's funny, you don't look like a teacher.

- Mitchell, C. and Weber, S. (1999). Reel to real: Popular culture and teacher identity." In C. Mitchell and S. Weber, *Reinventing ourselves as teachers*. (pp. 164-188) London: Falmer Press.
- Rahn, J. (2010). New Media as art material: Tableau as inquiry, *Viewfinding: Perspectives on teaching new media in the arts*, New York: Peter Lang.
- Rahn, J. (2010). Video sketchbook. In *Viewfinding: Perspectives on teaching new media in the arts*, New York: Peter Lang.
- Rahn, J. (2009). Digital content: video as research. *Handbook of quantitative image-based research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Press.
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- Rahn, J. (1998). Autobiography as a tool in a teaching environment and studio practice." In E. J. Sacca and E. Zimmerman (Eds.) *Herstories, ourstories, future stories*. (pp. 100-111). Boucherville, Quebec: Canadian Society for Education Through Art.
- Rahn, J. (1999, Spring). Painting without permission: An ethnographic study of hip-hop graffiti culture. In *Material history review* 49. (pp. 20-38). Museum of science and technology.

Bibliography for Graphic Novel/Comics

- Ayers, W. (2010). *To Teach, the journey in comics*. New York and London: Teacher's College Press.
- Blegvad, P. (2009 Art Issue). *The Believer*, Nov/Dec, pp. 69-79.
- Brunetti, I. (2007). *Cartooning, Philosophy and Practice*, Oakland CA: Buenaventura Press
- Clowes, D. (2010). *Wilson*, Montreal : Drawn and Quaterly
- Decker, Elaine (2007). *Q. What's funny about teaching? A. Not Enough. Arguing for a comic pedagogy*. *Educational Insights*, 11(3).
- Duncan, R. and Smith M. (2009). *The Power of Comics*, New York : Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Eggers D. & Ware, C. (Eds.) (2004). *McSweeney's Quarterly Concern*. Issue Number 13.
- Groensteen, T. (2009). *The System of Comics*, Jackson : The University Press of Mississippi.
- Heer J. & Worcester, K. (Eds.), 2009. *A Comics Studies Reader*, Jackson : The University Press of Mississippi.
- Hignite, T. (Ed). 2006. *In the Studio, Visits with contemporary cartoonists*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press
- Hignite, T. (Ed). (2007). *Comic Art Annual*, No. 9. Oakland California : Buenaventura Press.
- McCloud, Scott (2000). *Understanding Comics*, New York: Paradox Press.
- Moriarty, J. & War, C. (2009). *In conversation. There is no clamor for my art, and I don't seek it*, In : *The Believer*, Nov/Dec, pp. 44-54.
- Varnum, R. Gibbons, C. (2001). *The Language of Comics : Word and Image*, University Press of Mississippi
- Versaci, R. (2007). *This book contains graphic language: Comics as littérature*, New York : Continuum International Publishing Group.

Graphic Novel List

Suitable for Elementary Grades

- Amelia Rules*, volumes 1-4. Gownley, Jimmy. Renaissance. 2008.
- Babymouse: Puppy Love*. Holm, Jennifer and Matthew Holm. Random. 2007.
- Babymouse: The Musical*. As above. 2009.
- Benny and Penny in Just Pretend*. Hayes, Geoffrey. Toon. 2008.
- Caroline*. Gaiman, Neil. HarperCollins. 2008.
- King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table*. Hall, M.C. & C.E. Richards. Stone Arch. 2006.
- Magic Pickle Graphic Novel*. Morse, Scott. Scholastic Graphix. 2008.
- Otto's Orange Day*. Cammuso, Frank and Jay Lynch. Raw Junior/TOON. 2008.

Owly, volumes 1-4. Runton, Andy. Top Shelf. 2007.

Rapunzel's Revenge. Hale, Shannon and Dean Hale. Bloomsbury. 2008.

The Shocking World of Electricity with Max Axiom, Super Scientist. O'Donnell, Liam. Capstone. 2007.

To Dance: A Ballerina's Graphic Novel. Siegel, Siena Cherson and Mark Siegel. S&S. 2006.

UFOs: The Roswell Incident. DeMolay, Jack. Rosen. 2006.

Spiral-Bound: Top Secret Summer. Renier, Aaron. Top Shelf. 2005.

That Darn Yarn. Millionaire, Tony. DH Press. 2005.

The Arrival. Tan, Shaun. Scholastic/Arthur A. Levine Bks. 2008.

The Wind in the Willows. Grahame, Kenneth. Adapted by Michel Plessix. Papercutz. 2008.

For an Older Audience

This list includes several resource texts (by Scott McCloud) as well as graphic novels for students about grades 8-12. Make sure to preview before using in the classroom or even lending to individual students. The subject material may not be suitable for the context in which you teach.

American Born Chinese. Yang, Gene Luen. Roaring Brook. 2007.

Bone: Eyes of the Storm. Smith, Jeff. Scholastic Inc. 2006.

Castle Waiting. Medley, Linda. Fantagraphics.

Maus: A Survivor's Tale. Spiegelman, Art. Scholastic Inc. 1986.

Making Comics: Storytelling Secrets of Comics, Manga, and Graphic Novels. McCloud, Scott. HarperCollins. 2007.

Pedro and Me. Winick, J. Henry Holt and Company. 2000.

Persepolis: The Story of Childhood. Strapi, Marjane. Random House. 2003.

Pride of Baghdad. Vaughan, Brian K. DC Comics/Vertigo. 2007.

Sloth. Hernandez, Gilbert. DC Comics/Vertigo. 2007.

The Jungle. Kuper, Peter. NBM Publishing Inc. 1991.

The Making of a Graphic Novel: The Resonator. Rollins, Prentis. Watson-Guption. 2007.

The 9-11 Report: A Graphic Adaptation. Hill & Wang. 2007.

The Tale of One Bad Rat. Talbot, Brian.

The Wall: Growing Up Behind the Iron Curtain. Sis, Peter. Farrar/Frances Foster Bks. 2008.

Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art. McCloud, Scott. HarperCollins. 1993.