HON 317  
Visual Literacy in a Generation of Visible Surplus: Its Theory, Practice and Applications  

Catalog Description: Prerequisites: Acceptance to the University Honors Program, or consent of instructor. The generation of online social networking, competitive commerce, instantaneous global and local media, and excessive visual diversion is changing the way we filter, access and understand the world around us. This course will explore the histories, theories and strategies of visual literacy and apply them to personal experience as well as professional case studies, including business, social, political and cultural applications. (Offered interterm, as needed.) 3 credits.

Restrictions: Acceptance to the University Honors Program, or consent of instructor.

Essential Equipment and Facilities:
- Seminar-style classroom; video and computer facilities; projector hook-up for a Mac laptop.

Students will need to bring:
- Digital camera
- Pen drive

Course Goals, Objectives and Content:
1. Students will understand the basic fundamentals of visual literacy
2. Students will be able to analyze, critique and diagnose case study applications
3. Students will explore methodology and theory of visual literacy through experience and reflective discussion and assignments.
4. Students will be able to identify strategies used in various applications

Content:
1. History
   a. The Scientific Image: from cave to computer by Harry Robin
   b. Michael Twyman and Isotope Collection

2. Theory
   a. Richard Saul Wurman “Information Anxiety”
b. Cognitive introduction in processing visual information
   c. Intro to Semiotics
   d. Practice of looking by Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright

3. Strategies
   a. The “Plain Language” Bill
   b. Language of everyday life by Judy Delin
   c. Visual narratives in space and time by Edward Tufte
   d. Designers, writers and artists: professional contributions

4. Applications
   a. The legible cities: Bristol and London
   b. Sao Paulo: a city without ads
   c. Deborah Adler and David Sless on visual language for medicine information
   d. Kalle Lasn: Adbusters and True Cost
   e. Road to Clarity: international road system
   f. Traffic controllers interface by Linda Reynolds
   g. Elections, voting and democracy
   h. Business case for visual literacy
   i. Infographics, propaganda and education for the masses
   j. Virtual museums and other social places

**Current Required Text(s):**

**Instructional Strategies:**
1. *Writing assignments*
   Writing assignments will be required for each case study as well as a final paper

2. *Seminar: essentials of dialogue*
   Seminars will require readings and student-lead discussions

3. *In-class exercises*
   Short assignments that relate to the lecture will provide interactivity between subject matter and understanding

4. *Final presentation*
   Students will be required to give a formal presentation about their final paper topic

**Methods of Evaluation:**
1. *Writing assignments* 25%
2. *Seminars* 25%
3. *In-class exercises* 15%
4. *Final presentations* 20%
Chapman University Academic Integrity Policy:
Chapman University is a community of scholars which emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated anywhere in the university.

Students with Disabilities Policy:
In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the term. The University, through the Center for Academic Success, will work with the appropriate faculty member who is asked to provide the accommodations for a student in determining what accommodations are suitable based on the documentation and the individual student needs. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

Bibliography:


Colin, Ware. *Information visualization: perception for design*. Morgan Kaufmann. 2000


Lynch, K. *The image of the city*. Cambridge, Massachusetts. 1960

MacEachren, Alan M. *How maps work: representation, visualization, and design*. Guilford Press. 1995


Norman, Donald. *Turn signals are the facial expressions of automobiles*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. 1992


Powazek, Derek M. *Design for community: the art of connecting real people in virtual places*. New Riders. 2001


Tonfoni, Graziella. *Information design*. Scarecrow Press. 1998


West, Thomas G. In the mind’s eye: visual thinkers, gifted people with dyslexia and other learning difficulties, computer images and the ironies of creativity. Prometheus Books. 1997

Wildbur, Peter. Information graphics: a survey of typographic, diagrammatic and cartographic communication. 1989


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