VA 315/515 - Visual Culture | Spring 24-25

Wed 09:40-12:30

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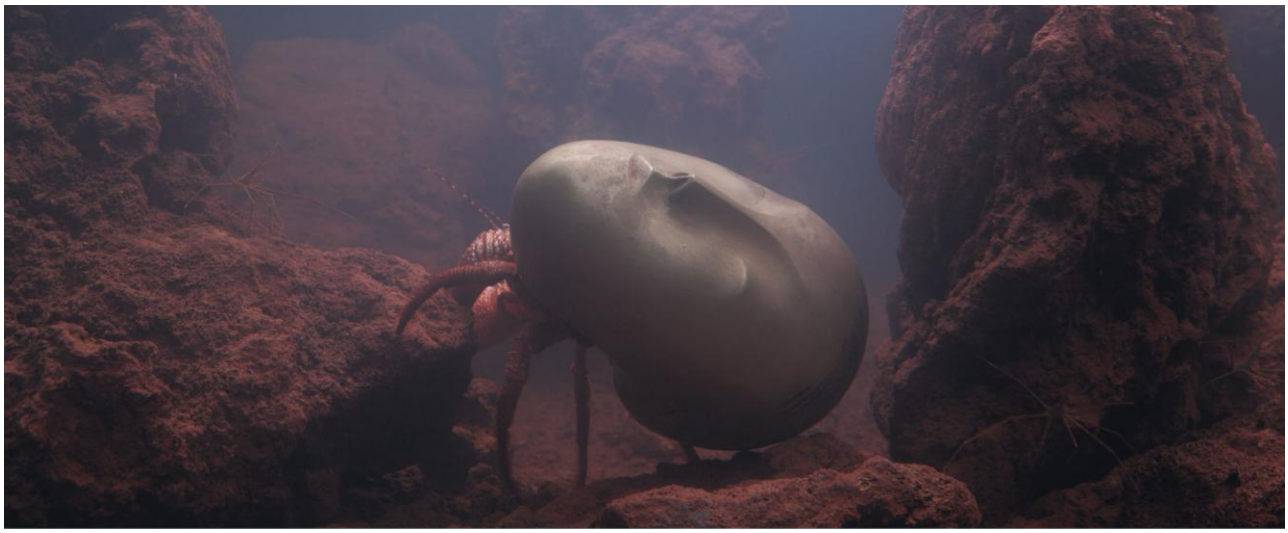


Course Description

Images do more than depict; they shape systems of meaning, power, and perception. This course examines how visual media function within contemporary cultural, technological, and environmental contexts, exploring their roles in producing identities, mediating interactions between human and non-human actors, and representing global phenomena. Drawing on foundational theories and applying contemporary methods, students will explore the production, circulation, and impact of images across digital and planetary contexts, developing critical skills for analyzing their influence on modern systems and relationships.

Learning Outcomes:

- Critically analyze foundational theories and pivotal shifts in visual culture studies.
- Examine the role of visual media in constructing systems of meaning and power.
- Investigate the intersections of visuality, identity, technology, and cultural systems through contemporary examples.
- Analyze how visual media mediate human and non-human interactions in digital and planetary contexts.
- Evaluate operational and machine-generated images in systems of governance, surveillance, and control.
- Assess the role of visual media in framing ecological crises and representing the Anthropocene.
- Apply methods to study the production, circulation, and systemic impact of images.
- Synthesize theoretical and practical insights to critique and produce projects on contemporary visual phenomena.

Course Overview

Week 1: Visual Methodology

This week serves as an introduction to the course and the key book that will guide our exploration of visual culture throughout the semester: *Visual Methodologies* by Gillian Rose. We will discuss the core concepts and frameworks presented in the book, including the "sites" and "modalities" of visual analysis, setting the stage for our engagement with various theoretical approaches and methodologies in the weeks to come.

Course Book:

Gillian Rose, Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials. 4th ed., SAGE, 2016.

Weeks 2–4: Visuality and Its Turns

This unit introduces foundational theories and methods for analyzing visual culture. It examines shifts in how images are studied, focusing on the pictorial turn and the material and digital dimensions of visuality. You will engage with semiotics, representation, and the agency of images, laying the groundwork for critical approaches to visual media.

Primary Texts (In Recommended Reading Order):

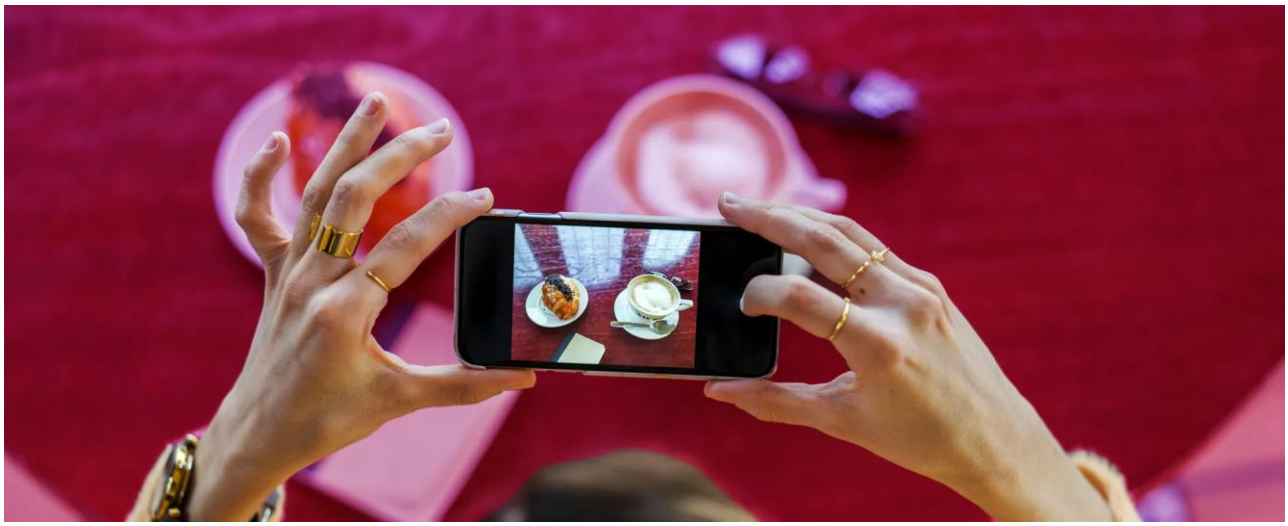
1. **W.J.T. Mitchell**, "There Are No Visual Media," *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2005, pp. 257–266.
2. **W.J.T. Mitchell**, "Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture," *Journal of Visual Culture*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2002, pp. 165–181.
3. **Nicholas Mirzoeff**, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*, Introduction, Routledge, 1999.
4. **W.J.T. Mitchell**, "The Pictorial Turn," in *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, University of Chicago Press, 1994.

5. **Inés Dussel**, "Visuality, Materiality, and History: The Semiotic Approach," in *Visuality, Materiality, and History*.
6. **W.J.T. Mitchell**, "What Do Pictures 'Really' Want?" *October*, vol. 77, 1996, pp. 71–82.
7. **Hito Steyerl** "A Thing Like You and Me." Journal #15. Accessed February 20. https://www.e-flux.com/journal/15/61298/a-thing-like-you-and-me/.

Supplemental Texts:

1. **André Bazin**, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," *Film Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 4, 1960, pp. 4–9.
2. **Roland Barthes**, "Rhetoric of the Image," in *Image-Music-Text*, translated by Stephen Heath, Hill and Wang, 1977.
3. **Jane Bennett**, *Vibrant Matter*. Excerpt: "Thing-Power," Duke University Press, 2010.
4. **Gustav Roßler**, "Do Pictures Have Agency? Reflections on the Agency of Things in the Light of Works of Art and Image Acts," in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 2010.
5. **Bruno Latour**, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, Oxford University Press, 2005, Chapters 1 and 5.
6. **Lev Manovich**, *The Language of New Media*, MIT Press, 2001, Introduction.

Weeks 5–8: Aestheticization of the Everyday



This unit explores how individuals construct and curate identities in media-driven environments. It focuses on the concept of self-design, examining the pressures of aestheticization and the intersection of identity, technology, and cultural systems. You will analyze how visual media mediate personal and collective expressions in contemporary society.

Primary Texts (In Recommended Reading Order):

1. **Nathan Jurgenson**, *The Social Photo: On Photography and Social Media*. "Aesthetic Life," Verso, 2019.
2. **Geert Lovink**, *"Overcoming the Disillusioned Internet." Sad by Design: On Platform Nihilism, Pluto Press, 2019, pp. 13–22. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvg8p6dv.6. Accessed 20 Feb. 2025.*

3. **Geert Lovink** "Distraction and Its Discontents." *Sad by Design: On Platform Nihilism, Pluto Press, 2019, pp. 33–44. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvg8p6dv.8. Accessed 20 Feb. 2025*.
4. **Byung-Chul Han**, *The Transparency Society*. Stanford University Press, 2015.

Supplemental Texts:

1. **Walter Benjamin**, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, edited by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn, Section V, Schocken Books, 1969.
2. **Jean Baudrillard**, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*. Chapter 3: "Sign-Value and the Logic of Consumption," translated by Chris Turner, Sage Publications, 1998.
3. **Roland Barthes**, "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text*, translated by Stephen Heath, Hill and Wang, 1977.
4. **Maurizio Lazzarato**, "Immaterial Labor," in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, edited by Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt, University of Minnesota Press, 1996.
5. **Boris Groys**, "Self-Design and Aesthetic Responsibility," *e-flux Journal*, no. 7, May 2009.
6. **Sherry Turkle**, Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other. Chapter 8: "Always On," Basic Books, 2011.

Weeks 9 –12: Operational Images and Machine Vision

This unit investigates images created and processed by machines, emphasizing their roles in systems of surveillance, governance, and control. You will study operational images and machine vision technologies, focusing on their technical, systemic, and political implications. The unit challenges traditional understandings of images by examining their function beyond human perception.

Primary Texts (In Recommended Reading Order):

1. **Trevor Paglen**, "Operational Images," *e-flux Journal*, no. 59, October 2014.

2. **Jussi Parikka**, "Operational Images: Between Light and Data," *e-flux Journal*, no. 133, February 2023.
3. **Eyal Weizman**, "Violence at the Threshold of Detectability," *e-flux Journal*, no. 64, 2015.

Supplemental Texts:

1. **Harun Farocki**, *Eye/Machine I-III*, video installations, 2001–2003.
2. **Paul Virilio**, *The Vision Machine*, translated by Julie Rose, Indiana University Press, 1994.
3. **Paul Virilio**, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*, translated by Patrick Camiller, Verso, 1989.
4. **Hito Steyerl**, "In Defense of the Poor Image," *e-flux Journal*, no. 10, November 2009.
5. **Thomas Elsaesser**, "Simulation and the Labour of Invisibility: Harun Farocki's Life Manuals," *animation: an interdisciplinary journal*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2017, pp. 219–230.
6. **Aud Sissel Hoel**, "Operative Images: Inroads to a New Paradigm of Media Theory," in *Image-Action-Space: Situating the Screen in Visual Practice*, edited by Luisa Feiersinger, Kathrin Friedrich, and Moritz Queisner, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 95–114.
7. **John Durham Peters**, *Marvelous Clouds: Toward a Philosophy of Elemental Media*, University of Chicago Press, 2015.
8. **Rosi Braidotti** and **Matthew Fuller**, "The Posthumanities in an Era of Unexpected Consequences," *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 36, no. 6, 2019, pp. 7–34.

Weeks 13 – 16: Media, Affect, and Visuality in the Anthropocene

This unit examines how visual media represent environmental change and engage with planetary-scale challenges. You will analyze the role of visuality in shaping emotional and material responses to ecological crises, focusing on the media's capacity to frame and influence human and non-human interactions in the Anthropocene.

Primary Texts (In Recommended Reading Order):

1. **T. J. Demos**, "The Agency of Fire: Burning Aesthetics," *e-flux Journal*, no. 98, 2019, pp. 1–2.

2. **Irmgard Emmelhainz**, "Conditions of Visuality Under the Anthropocene and Images of the Anthropocene to Come," *e-flux Journal*, no. 63, March 2015.
3. **Benjamin Bratton**, "Some Trace Effects of the Post-Anthropocene: On Accelerationist Geopolitical Aesthetics," *e-flux Journal*, no. 46, June 2013.
4. **Steven Shaviro**, *Post-Cinematic Affect*, 2016.

Supplemental Texts:

1. **Brian Massumi**, "The Autonomy of Affect," *Cultural Critique*, no. 31, 1995, pp. 83–109. JSTOR.
2. **Nicholas Mirzoeff**, "Visualizing the Anthropocene," *Public Culture*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2014, pp. 213–232.
3. **Timothy Morton**, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology After the End of the World*, University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
4. **Jonathan Beller**, *The Cinematic Mode of Production: Attention Economy and the Society of the Spectacle*, UPNE, 2012.

Assessment and Marking Breakdown

Title	Weight
Weekly Reflections and Assignments	20%
Group Visual Practice Presentations	30%
Final Project: Visual Culture Portfolio	35%
Class Participation	15%

Weekly Reflections and Short Assignments (20%)

- Every two weeks, you will submit a short written or visual response based on the assigned readings, visual practices, or in-class discussions. These assignments are designed for consistent engagement with the material. *See Appendix 1 at the end of this document for detailed information.*

Group Visual Practice Presentations (20%)

- Throughout the semester, you will work in small groups to apply the methodologies and analytical tools from Gillian Rose's Visual Methodologies to specific visual materials. Each group will choose a different chapter from Rose's book (excluding the introduction and chapters 1, 3, and 15), focusing on the specific methodology outlined within. Each group will select relevant visual examples (found images) to analyze and interpret using the chosen methodology. Groups will then deliver presentations showcasing their analyses to the class. *See Appendix 2 at the end of this document for detailed information.*

Final Project (35%)

- **Description**:A cumulative project that includes a visual and written component. You will create a project that applies the course's methodologies to analyze or produce visual material. The project may include:A series of visual analyses (e.g., advertisements, operational images, media representations). A creative visual work (e.g., a short film, photo essay) with an accompanying critical analysis (1,000–1,500 words). A research-based exploration of a specific topic within visual culture. *See Appendix 3 at the end of this document for detailed information.*

Class Participation (10%)

- **Description**:Active engagement in discussions, group activities, and peer feedback sessions.
- **Assessment Criteria**:Consistent attendance and preparation. Quality and relevance of contributions to discussions. Constructive participation in group work and peer feedback.

Course Guidelines

Attendance and Participation

- **Attendance**:Attendance is mandatory. Students are allowed up to **two unexcused absences**. Additional absences may result in a grade penalty unless prior arrangements are made for extenuating circumstances. Arriving more than **5 minutes** late will be considered an absence.
- **Participation**: Active engagement in class discussions, group activities, and visual practices is required. Participation grades are based on the quality and consistency of contributions.

Assignments and Deadlines

- **Submission**: Assignments must be submitted via SUCourse by the posted deadline. Late submissions will incur a grade reduction of **5% per day**, up to a maximum of five days, after which the assignment will not be accepted without prior approval.
- **Extensions**: Extensions must be requested at least **48 hours** before the deadline and will only be granted for valid reasons (e.g., illness, emergencies).

Academic Integrity

- **Plagiarism**: All work must be original. Plagiarism, including improper use of sources or presenting others' work as your own, will result in disciplinary action as per university policy.
- **Use of AI Tools (e.g., ChatGPT)**: Students may use tools, including AI-based systems like ChatGPT, to assist with brainstorming, drafting, or refining their work. However, the final

submission must reflect critical depth, originality, and precision. Submissions should demonstrate the student's ability to synthesize ideas, engage meaningfully with course readings, and produce thoughtful analysis, avoiding sweeping statements or unsupported claims common in generic outputs. If AI tools are used, their role must be explicitly acknowledged in a footnote or endnote (e.g., "ChatGPT was used to generate an initial draft of this paragraph"). Work that lacks depth, specificity, or originality will not meet the course's academic standards and will be graded accordingly. Students are encouraged to critically evaluate all content, including AI-generated text, to ensure it aligns with the course's expectations for intellectual rigor.

Media Sensitivity and Ethics

- **Content Advisory**:Some visual materials may include sensitive or challenging content. Students are encouraged to discuss concerns with the instructor in advance.
- **Respectful Engagement**:Class discussions must be conducted respectfully. Students are expected to engage thoughtfully with diverse perspectives and avoid discriminatory or offensive remarks.

Feedback and Support

You are welcome to discuss your work, challenges, or ideas with me or the teaching assistants at any point during the semester. Don't hesitate to reach out!

Scheduled Feedback

Formal feedback will be provided during critiques and one-on-one project discussions throughout the course.

Office Hours

Wednesday 12:30 - 14:40 | Friday 12:30 - 13:30

You can schedule a meeting during office hours for detailed feedback on your work or to address any concerns.

Informal Feedback

Feel free to approach me or the TAs during breaks or after class for quick questions or informal input on your progress.

Peer Feedback

Take advantage of peer critiques and discussions to gain different perspectives and insights into your work.

Course Privacy Statement

Students may not audio or video record class meetings without permission from the instructor (and guest speakers, when applicable). If the instructor grants permission or if the teaching team posts videos themselves, students may keep recordings only for personal use and may not post recordings on the Internet, or otherwise distribute them. These policies protect the privacy rights of instructors and students, and the intellectual property and other rights of the university.

Course Resources

- Andrews, Jorella, and Simon O'Sullivan, editors. *Objects and Affects*. Sternberg, 2013.
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas, editor. *The Visual Culture Reader*. Routledge, 2010.
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas. *An Introduction to Visual Culture*. Routledge, 2006.
- Rose, Gillian. *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*. 4th ed., SAGE, 2016.
- Rose, Gillian, and Divya Praful Tolia-Kelly, editors. *Visuality/Materiality: Images, Objects and Practices*. Ashgate, 2012.
- Sturken, Marita, and Lisa Cartwright. *Practices of Looking*. Oxford UP, 2001.
- Woodward, Sophie. *Material Methods: Researching and Thinking with Things*. 1st ed., SAGE, 2019.

Media

Films and Documentaries

- *The Truman Show* (1998, Dir. Peter Weir)
- *Her* (2013, Dir. Spike Jonze)
- *Images of the World and the Inscription of War* (1989, Dir. Harun Farocki)
- *All Light, Everywhere* (2021, Dir. Theo Anthony)
- *Lo and Behold: Reveries of the Connected World* (2016, Dir. Werner Herzog)
- *The Great Hack* (2019, Dir. Karim Amer and Jehane Noujaim)
- *Grace Jones: Bloodlight and Bami* (2017)
- *Southland Tales* (2006, Dir. Richard Kelly)
- *Melancholia* (2011, Dir. Lars von Trier)
- *Gravity* (2013, Dir. Alfonso Cuarón)

- *Gamer* (2009, Dir. Mark Neveldine and Brian Taylor)
- *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004, Dir. Roland Emmerich)
- *2012* (2009, Dir. Roland Emmerich)
- *World War Z* (2013, Dir. Marc Forster)
- *Powers of Ten* (1977, Dir. Charles and Ray Eames)
- *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929, Dir. Dziga Vertov)
- *The Gleaners and I* (2000, Dir. Agnès Varda)
- *In the Mood for Love* (2000, Dir. Wong Kar-Wai)
- *We Live in Public* (2009, Dir. Ondi Timoner)
- *Leviathan* (2012, Dir. Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Véréna Paravel)
- *Anthropocene: The Human Epoch* (2018, Dir. Jennifer Baichwal, Nicholas de Pencier, and Edward Burtynsky)
- *HyperNormalisation* (2016, Dir. Adam Curtis)
- *The Conversation* (1974, Dir. Francis Ford Coppola)

Music Videos

- Grace Jones – *Corporate Cannibal* (2008)
- Björk – *All Is Full of Love* (1999, Dir. Chris Cunningham)
- FKA twigs – *Cellophane* (2019)
- Childish Gambino – *This Is America* (2018)
- ANOHNI – *Drone Bomb Me* (2016)

Short and Experimental Films

- Beny Wagner and Sasha Litvintseva – *A Demonstration* (2020)
- Chris Milk – *The Treachery of Sanctuary* (2012)
- *Sans Soleil* (1983, Dir. Chris Marker)
- *La Région Centrale* (1971, Dir. Michael Snow)
- Jean-Luc Godard and Anne-Marie Miéville – *The Old Place* (2001)

- *Ten Skies* (2004, Dir. James Benning)
- *The Pearl Button* (2015, Dir. Patricio Guzmán)
- Miranda July – *Are You the Favorite Person of Anybody?* (2005)

Installations and Artworks

- Harun Farocki – *Eye/Machine I-III* (2001–2003)
- Hito Steyerl – *How Not to Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File* (2013)
- James Bridle – *Autonomous Trap 001* (2017)
- Lawrence Abu Hamdan – *Saydnaya (The Missing 19dB)* (2016)
- Trevor Paglen – *It Began as a Military Experiment*
- Edward Burtynsky – *Anthropocene* (2018)
- Olafur Eliasson – *Ice Watch* (2014)
- Amalia Ulman – *Excellences & Perfections* (2014)

Video Games

- *The Stanley Parable* (2013, Designed by Davey Wreden and William Pugh)
- *Death Stranding* (2019, Designed by Hideo Kojima)
- *Papers, Please* (2013, Designed by Lucas Pope)
- *Everything* (2017, Designed by David OReilly)

Appendix 1 : Weekly Assignments

Objective: The purpose of these assignments is to reinforce key concepts, encourage critical thinking, and consistent engagement with course materials. There will be **a total of six (6)** assignments, submitted **every two weeks**. Each assignment will be based on the assigned readings, visual practices, or in-class discussions.

Assignment Structure

- **Submission Format:** Written (500-800 words) or visual response (with accompanying short explanation)
- **Submission:** Upload to **SUCourse** by the specified deadline

Step 1: Understanding the Prompt

- Each assignment will be based on the themes and methodologies discussed in class.
- Prompts will be provided on **SUCourse** and may include:
    - Reflecting on a reading's key arguments
    - Analyzing a visual material using a specific methodology
    - Discussing a case study relevant to the week's topic
    - Creating a short visual response related to the themes explored

Step 2: Crafting Your Response

- **Written Response:**
    - Introduce the topic and its relevance.
    - Engage with the readings and class discussions.
    - Provide an analysis rather than just summarizing.
    - Use clear arguments supported by examples.
- **Visual Response:**
    - Can be a collage, photograph, short video, presentation or another creative format.
    - Must include a **short written explanation (250-300 words)** discussing its relevance to the topic.

Step 3: Submitting on SUCourse

- PDF for written responses, PDF (with text, images or video links) for visual responses.

Step 4: Class Discussions

- Selected reflections will be shared and discussed in class.

Evaluation Criteria

Your submission will be graded based on:

- **Relevance & Understanding (30%)** – How well does your response address the theme?
- **Depth of Analysis (30%)** – Are the arguments insightful and well-supported?
- **Originality & Creativity (20%)** – Does the response demonstrate unique thought or approach?
- **Clarity & Structure (20%)** – Is the submission well-organized and clearly presented?

Appendix 2 : Group Project

Objective: This is a recurring project that will take place in each unit starting from **Week 5**. Throughout the semester, groups will engage in visual analysis exercises based on the topics covered in the syllabus. Each group will choose a methodology either from *Gillian Rose's Visual Methodologies* (excluding the introduction and chapters 1, 3, and 15) or from other relevant methodological frameworks covered in the course. Your task is to analyze selected visual materials and present your findings to the class. You may choose to present your analysis as a **presentation, workshop, or any other collaborative creative activity** that engages the class in discussion and participation.

Step 1: Forming Groups and Selecting a Methodology

- You will be assigned to a group of 3-5 students. Work closely with the Teaching Assistants (TAs) to organize your group assignments and ensure alignment with the course calendar.
- As a group, review *Gillian Rose's Visual Methodologies* and the other methodological texts from the course.
- Choose one methodology to apply in your analysis. Some options include:
    - Content Analysis
    - Semiotic Analysis
    - Discourse Analysis
    - Psychoanalysis
    - Anthropological or Ethnographic Approaches
    - Actor-Network Theory
    - Media Ecology

- Get TA approval for your selected methodology before proceeding.

Step 2: Selecting Materials

- Choose 2-4 visual examples to analyze (e.g., photographs, advertisements, paintings, social media images, digital artworks, film stills, etc.).
- The selected materials must align with the unit topic to ensure relevance to the course themes. Unit Topics for Reference:
    - Weeks 5-8: Aestheticization of the Everyday – Focus on self-design, platform aesthetics, or media representations of identity.
    - Weeks 9-12: Operational Images and Machine Vision – Explore surveillance imagery, AI-generated visuals, or algorithmic representations.
    - Weeks 13-16: Media, Affect, and Visuality in the Anthropocene – Analyze images related to ecological crises, post-human perspectives, or planetary-scale visualities.
- **Tips for Selecting Engaging Materials:**
    - Pick visual materials that provoke thought, debate, or emotion.
    - Consider visuals with cultural, historical, or technological significance.
    - Look for materials that connect to contemporary issues or trends.
    - Select visuals that can generate diverse interpretations.
    - Ensure your chosen images align well with your methodology.
- Keep a record of your sources and credits for your visual materials.

Step 3: Conducting the Analysis

- Use your chosen methodology to analyze the visual materials systematically.
- You may consider the following example questions:
    - What meanings, narratives, or ideologies are embedded in the visuals?
    - How does the medium influence the interpretation?
    - How do power, identity, and agency operate in these images?
    - What is the historical, social, or technological context of the images?
    - How do different audiences interpret the images?
- Organize your findings into key themes and insights.

Step 4: Preparing the Presentation or Workshop

Your group will present your analysis to the class in a **maximum 30-minute presentation or workshop**.

Step 5: Submitting Your Work

Each group must submit a **PDF file** containing their visual materials and key presentation slides to **SUCourse** before the presentation day. The PDF should include:

1. Group members' names and selected methodology.
2. A brief explanation of why the methodology was chosen.

3. A description of the visual materials.
4. The key analytical findings.
5. A reflection on the strengths and limitations of the approach.
6. Discussion Questions for the Class (at least two).
7. Proper citations and references.

Evaluation Criteria

Your project will be graded based on the following criteria:

- **Application of Methodology (30%)** – How well you apply the chosen visual methodology.
- **Depth of Analysis (30%)** – The quality and depth of your visual analysis.
- **Presentation Clarity & Engagement (20%)** – The organization, clarity, and effectiveness of your group presentation or workshop.
- **Collaboration & Participation (10%)** – Evidence of teamwork and equal participation.
- **PDF Submission (10%)** – Clarity and structure in the PDF file uploaded to SUCourse.

Appendix 3: Final Project

Objective: The final project is a cumulative assignment that integrates both visual and written components. You will create a portfolio that applies the course's methodologies to analyze or produce visual material.

Project Options

Your portfolio may take one of the following forms:

1. **A Series of Visual Analyses**
    - This option is image-driven and focuses on directly analyzing visual materials.
    - The primary objective is to apply different methodologies to dissect and interpret specific visual examples.
    - Examine 3–5 visual materials (e.g., advertisements, operational images, media representations, historical images).
    - Apply different methodologies from the course to each analysis.
    - Write a **2,000–2,500-word critical analysis** linking your findings.
    - Examples:
        i. Analyzing **advertisements from different decades** to explore the evolution of gender representation using semiotic and discourse analysis.
        ii. Examining **social media images of climate activism** to assess how environmental crises are visually framed in the digital age, applying media ecology and affect theory.
        iii. Investigating **operational images in surveillance footage** to understand the role of machine vision and control in contemporary society.

        iv. Comparing **historical and contemporary propaganda posters** to analyze shifts in political messaging using content analysis.
        v. Studying **film stills from cyberpunk movies** to examine representations of post-humanism or technological anxieties.
2. **A Creative Visual Work + Critical Analysis**
    - Produce a creative visual work (e.g., a short film, a photo essay, a mixed-media collage, an interactive digital piece).
    - Accompany it with a **500 –1000 word critical analysis** explaining the conceptual framework, methodology, and influences behind your work.
    - Examples:
        i. Creating a **photo essay on urban gentrification** that documents changing landscapes and includes a critical analysis using spatial aesthetics or visual anthropology.
        ii. Producing a **short experimental film on digital identity**, reflecting how social media influences self-representation and including a written analysis of performativity.
        iii. Designing an **interactive digital collage** that visualizes environmental data, exploring the aesthetics of information representation.
        iv. Developing an **AR project** that overlays historical images onto current urban sites, analyzing memory, history, and visual culture.
3. **A Research-Based Exploration of a Topic in Visual Culture**
    - This option is concept-driven rather than image-driven.
    - The focus is on developing a theoretical argument about visual culture, often drawing from historical, social, or technological contexts.
    - Conduct an in-depth study on a specific aspect of visual culture.
    - Develop a **2,000-word research paper** incorporating methodologies and theories discussed in class.
    - Include relevant visual examples to support your arguments.
    - Examples:
        i. Examining **the role of memes in political discourse**, analyzing their effectiveness as ideological tools using media theory.
        ii. Studying **the aestheticization of everyday life on Instagram**, exploring how platform capitalism influences visual trends.
        iii. Researching **the evolution of cinematic depictions of artificial intelligence**, using film analysis.
        iv. Analyzing **how news media visually construct narratives of migration**, applying critical discourse analysis and framing theory.

Step 1: Proposal Submission

- Submit a **one-page proposal** outlining your chosen project type, topic, and initial research questions.
- Deadline: **April 1, 2025**
- Feedback will be provided by the instructor and TAs.

Step 2: Developing Your Project

- Engage with relevant readings, case studies, and methodologies from the course.
- Ensure your analysis is critically informed and well-structured.
- If producing a creative work, document your process and explain how it relates to the course themes.

Step 3: Final Submission Requirements

- File Format: Submit as a PDF file (for research-based projects and analyses) or a ZIP file or links (for multimedia projects).
- Upload to SUCourse by **May 26, 2025**

Step 4: Presentation & Peer Review

- Each student will present their project to the class (10–15 minutes).
- Presentations will take place during the final week of the semester

Evaluation Criteria

Your project will be assessed based on:

- Application of Methodology (30%) – How well course concepts are applied.
- Depth of Analysis (30%) – Insightfulness and originality of arguments.
- Visual Engagement (20%) – Creativity and relevance of visual elements.
- Clarity & Structure (20%) – Organization and coherence in written analysis.

Dates

- Proposal Submission Deadline: **April 1, 2025**
- Final Submission Deadline: **May 26, 2025**
- Presentation Dates: **May 29, 2025**