

Art 2826C

## The Culture of the Image

3 credits

### Section A (lecture)

Instructor: Sergio Vega

Meeting Time: Wednesday period 9-10 / 4:05-6:00 PM

Location: FAC 120

Office Hours: Wednesday 3:00 PM (by appointment only)

Office Location: FAD 229

Email: [veryvega@ufl.edu](mailto:veryvega@ufl.edu)

### Course Description

Images do not exist in isolation, but often find their meaning within specific social, geographical and historical cultural conditions. People are aroused by images, they break them, mutilate them, kiss them, cry before them, and go on journeys to them; they are calmed by them, stirred by them, and incited to revolt. By analyzing images, we are able to better understand the cultural formations that sustain them and better equipped to find strategies for how to make our own meaningful images. Where does our power to create images reside?

This is an introductory course that focuses on the critical processes by which images acquire meaning, and produce knowledge. The objective is to provide students with an overview of visual representation that facilitates their understanding of the issues involved in the production, distribution and reception of images. In addition to thinking about why visual representations are produced in the context of artistic ideas, (Why is an image made in this or that way?) the goal is for students to learn how art, and other forms of cultural production, have been created within historical and contextual paradigms. Further, students learn a variety of strategies for including theoretical concepts as a catalyst and method of articulation in their own practice.

### Course Methods

This course is a combined lecture and experiential course that will consist of lectures, readings, discussions, critiques, individual presentations and the creation of an image-based story. The lecture series will explore various still contested interpretations of images, the inner workings of image making and what has been called the different realms of "imageness" and how those function within the distinct areas of the sensible. The experiential learning or studio/lab portion (section B) of the course will consist of critiques, student presentations related to course content, and the development of an independent project where students take/create and sequence images to tell a story.

### Course Objectives

*Course objectives are designed to actively engage independent and collaborative research, theory/art historical content, professional practice, communication and critical thinking.*

- Critically interrogate the variety of visual messages in the world.
- Understand the relationship between a visual artifact, audience and culture.
- Develop a knowledge base of modern and contemporary artists/designers/cultural producers as a resource to inform your research and practice.
- Effectively initiate individual and collaborative research and clearly present the resulting creative work.
- Read, reflect upon and articulate verbally and in writing artists' influences, motivations, and processes.

- Demonstrate the ability to use language and discipline specific terminology, oral or written, to identify, describe, analyze and contextualize visual material or production.
- Recognize how the meaning of art objects and images are affected both by the social, cultural and economic environment existing at the time of its creation, as by the politics, beliefs and established visual systems of contemporary audiences.
- Recognize how the visual can be used to communicate culture and as a form of resistance to the status quo.
- Question who gets to tell the story, who gets represented and begin to develop an independent voice, demonstrated through critical analysis of visual representation.
- Engage in ethical practices and situate your work, in the context of the broader field of art and visual representation.
- Attend campus and community lectures and exhibitions as a means to expand your perspective and influence your art practice.
- Effectively engage in respectful dialogue that honors diversity.

## Texts / Bibliography

Required Bibliography:

*On Photography*, Susan Sontag

Suggested Bibliography:

*The Power of Images: Response and Repression*, David Freedberg

*Becoming Revolutionary; On Kazimir Malevich* (eflux #47), Boris Groys

*Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, Slavoj Žižek

*Black Looks: Race and Representation*, Bell Hooks

*Perfect Wave*, Dave Hickey

*Photography After Art Photography*, Abigail Solomon-Godeau

*Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, Laura Mulvey

*Totem and Taboo*, Sigmund Freud

*Man and his Symbols*, Carl Jung

*Visual Literacy*, James Elkins

Films:

*October*, Sergei Eisenstein

*Man with a Movie Camera*, Dziga Vertov

*Vertigo*, Alfred Hitchcock

## Calendar / Weekly Topics

### WEEK 1

**Into to the course: Semiotics and the Construction of Meaning**

Roland Barthes: *Image, Music, Text*

### WEEK 2

**How do we relate to images? Desire, Idolatry and Iconoclasm**

David Freedberg, *The power of Images: Response and Repression*, pp. 1-26

Carracci, Fra Angelico, Baldun Grien, Veronese

Case study: *The Venus of Urbino*, Titian, Giorgione, Manet

### WEEK 3

**Introduction to Post–Enlightenment Art**

XIX Century, *The battles of mimetic representation: Romanticism, Classicism, Realism and Photography*

Delacroix, Ingres, Courbet, Daguerre, Nadar

#### **WEEK 4**

##### **Transhistorical / Transcultural Archives of Images** Archetypal images and the collective unconscious

Aby Warburg's *Atlas Mnemosyne* and Carl Jung's *Man and his Symbols*, Archetypal images and the collective unconscious

Case study: *Atlas Mnemosyne*

#### **WEEK 5 & 6**

##### **Against the Icon**

Art in the Soviet Avant-garde and in Weimar Germany, Abstraction, Constructivism, Design and the Bauhaus.

Abstraction, collage and designed images. Cinema Montage.

Boris Groys. *Becoming Revolutionary; On Kazimir Malevich* (eflux #47)

Alexander Rodchenko, Varvara Stepanova, Sergei Eisenstein, Kazimir Malevich, Vladimir Tatlin, Lazlo Moholy Nagy

Screenings: Sergei Eisenstein, *October* and Dziga Vertov, *Man with a Movie Camera*

#### **WEEK 7**

##### **Surrealism and the Culture of the Unconscious** (Psychoanalytic theory, surrealism and the imaginary)

Sigmund Freud. *Totem and Taboo* (excerpts)

Rosalind Krauss, *The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism*, pp. 87-118. The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths

Man Ray, Claude Cahun, Lee Miller, André Kertesz

Case studies: Claude Cahun and the construction of queer Jewish identity, Lee Miller on the crossing over between art (surrealism) and photojournalism

#### **WEEKS 8-9-10**

##### **Modernist Photography, Photo Journalism and Socially Engaged Photography**

Europe and America before and during the Great Depression

Mathew Brady, Atget, Brassai, Cartier-Bresson, Robert Doisneau, Willy Ronis, Ed Steichen, Alfred Stieglitz, Jacob Riis, Lewis Hines, Ben Shawn, Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans

#### **WEEK 11**

##### **The Family of Man Gone Sour**

The Family of Man exhibition, Robert Frank, Diane Arbus, Duane Michals

#### **WEEK 12 & 13**

##### **Desire and the Male Gaze**

Laura Mulvey, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*, pp. 362-374, Brian Wallis, *Art After Modernism*

Screening: Alfred Hitchcock, *Vertigo*

Cindy Sherman, Richard Avedon, Helmut Newton

#### **WEEK 14**

##### **Photography and Contemporary Art**

Abigail Solomon-Godeau *Photography After Art Photography*, pp.75-86

Brian Wallis, *Art After Modernism*

Rauschenberg, Warhol, Jeff Wall, Greg Crewdson, Philip Lorca di Corcia

#### **WEEK 15**

**Final Exam: April 30th**

## **Section B (studio)**

Instructor: Lindsay Carlton

Classroom: FAD 0329

Meeting Time: period 3-4/ 9:35-11:30 AM

### **Course Methods**

Section B is conducted by the Teaching Assistants and is where students discuss, conceptualize and produce their assignments in close collaboration with their instructors. In this section, students will have the opportunity to flesh out their ideas, learn techniques, show their work, and receive feedback from classmates and instructors on regular basis. There will be three main assignments that will culminate in a twenty-image portfolio due on Friday April 28th. In addition, there will be several technical and research-based assignments throughout the semester.

### **Topical Outline**

This section of the course focuses on the study of the basic principles of photography: 1) Handling Equipment Functions of the camera. Aperture and time of exposure, equivalence charts. ISO sensibility. Depth of field and focusing. Optics, functions of different lenses. Using tripods. 2) Exposure Composition. Portraiture. Landscape. Figure and ground. Bracketing your exposure. 3) Processing of digital images Overview of Adobe Photoshop software. Tools. Levels and exposure correction. Lightness and contrast. Working with layers. Filters. 4) Printing Functions of the printer demonstration. Kinds of paper.

### **Assignments**

There will three assignments:

#### **1) The Nuts and Bolts**

Gaining control over the camera is an imperative for any photographer. The relatively simple mechanical operations provide us an endless array of possible combinations for recording, interpreting and abstracting the world around us. More than just a tool for inscribing on film or digital sensor the world as it is, the camera allows us to project our personal vision, to record the world as we see it. The tools for the creation of photographic subjectivity are many, but in this course, we will begin with the basic mechanisms of the camera: shutter, aperture, ISO, lens. The objectives for project 1 are as follows:

1. Complete 10 fully edited images, converted to black & white.
2. 3-4 images focusing on aperture control, at least two images each, showing shallow depth of field and deep depth of field.
4. 3-4 images focusing on shutter control, at least two images each showing stopped motion, blurred motion and panning.
5. 3-4 images focusing on exposure control featuring images made at various times of day and lighting conditions, ie; morning/noon/night and indoor/outdoor

Grading Criteria:

25pts Complete list and number of images

25pts Originality/Creativity

25pts Craftsmanship/Technical Proficiency

25pts Formal Elements of Design and Composition

## 2) Framing

Now that you have an understanding of the basic mechanisms of the camera and how to control the technical quality and character of your images, it's time to focus on composition. Many of the same strategies employed in design, drawing and sculpture can be employed within the photographic frame. Strategies such as symmetry, rule of thirds, figure ground, contrast (tonal and content), balance, leading lines, visual weight, etc. can be employed to add dynamism to your images. For this project, challenge yourself to use the frame as the space to express how you visualize the world around you. Question the way things are supposed to look and highlight the unique way the photographic apparatus mediates our perceptions. Remember, as useful as understanding the elements of good composition can be, using a formula for making photos will only render formulaic images.

1. Complete 10 fully edited images, converted to black & white.
2. Produce at least one interpretation of each of the compositional elements discussed in class.

Grading Criteria:

25pts Complete list and number of images

25pts Originality/Creativity

25pts Craftsmanship/Technical Proficiency

25pts Formal Elements of Design and Composition

## 3) Floridian Stories (Final Portfolio due Friday April 28th)

For this assignment you will have to produce a portfolio of at least 20 final images. There will be work in progress critiques of this project throughout the semester in order to arrive at the final selection, conceptualization, and complete processing of these images.

Think about aspects of Florida that may be unknown to most people, but are relevant to you. Look at your surroundings in a critical way. Dig into your past or that of your family and town. Explore stories you may have heard. Think that Florida is perhaps the quintessential site where surrealism found its final incarnation. Explore the paradigmatic character of Florida as a scenario where contradictory forces coexist in various layers of the social and cultural strata.

Get out with your camera on regular basis and explore, look for sites, situations, things, people and anecdotes. Plan on taking at least 20 photographs per day. This assignment entails the production of a photo portfolio that presents a cohesive personal and critical vision of Florida both technically and conceptually.

Grading Criteria:

25pts Complete list and number of images

25pts Originality/Creativity

25pts Craftsmanship/Technical Proficiency

25pts Formal Elements of Design and Composition

## Late Work

Specific due dates will be clearly communicated for each assignment or project on e-learning. Students with a legitimate documented excuse who are absent on an assignment due date will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up the assignment. Students with an unexcused absence are encouraged to complete assignments, but late submissions will result in a drop of one full letter grade for the assignment per class period it is late. All assignments are due at the beginning of class, turning it in at the end or after class is considered late. Full participation by having completed work is required along with active participation through shared ideas and commentary.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent

with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx - absences>

## Sections A & B

### Critical Dates

Final Exam: April 30<sup>th</sup>

Portfolio due on April 25<sup>th</sup>

### Grading and Evaluation

Lecture 50%

Lab 50%

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100%

#### Lab

-Class Participation 20%

-Critiques (Projects 1-3) 30%

-Final Portfolio 50%

#### Lecture

-Class Participation 30%

-Final Exam 70%

### Grading Criteria

Percentage Points/ Letter Grades (\*):

100-93 A: Present at all class/ lab meetings-Significant engagement with course material and excellent results-both technical and conceptual. Significant contribution to group discussions and presentations.

92-90 A- : Present at all class/ lab meetings-Significant engagement with course material. Good technical development. Significant contribution to group discussions and presentations.

89-88 B+ : Present at all class/ lab meetings-Very good engagement with the course material and group discussions.

87-80 B: Present at all class lab meetings-Good engagement with the course materials and group discussions.

79-78 C+: Present at most or all of class/lab meetings-Good engagement with the course materials and group discussions.

77-70 C: Present at most or all of class/lab meetings-Satisfactory engagement with the course materials and group discussions.

69-60 D: Student has missed class/ lab meetings and has not engaged the course material in a satisfactory manner. Student's engagement with discussions is minimal. Additionally, this mark may reflect excessive absence from class and lab meetings.

59-0 E: Student has not satisfactorily engaged nor met the class criteria. Additionally, this mark may reflect excessive absence from class and lab meetings. (\*) This course follows University of Florida grading regulations and guidelines: UF grading policy website: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

## **Counseling**

University Counseling Services/ Counseling Center 301 Peabody Hall P.O. Box 114100, University of Florida  
Gainesville, FL 32611-4100

Phone: 352-392-1575 Web: [www.counsel.ufl.edu](http://www.counsel.ufl.edu) If you are experiencing problems or difficulties with the academic requirements of this course you may also contact the Departmental Advisor in Fine Arts: +1 (352) 392-0207. Further, the Dean of Students Office can assist you with a range of support services.

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/supportservices/>

## **Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

## **Academic Honesty**

University policies regarding academic honesty, the honor code, and student conduct related to the honor code will be strictly enforced. Full information regarding these policies is available at the following links: - Academic Honesty:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html#honesty> - Honor Code:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php> - Student Conduct:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php>

## **Health and Safety**

1) The link below includes information and policies regarding health and safety in the School of Art and Art History at UF. <http://www.arts.ufl.edu/art/healthandsafety>

## **Class Attendance**

Participation in class is necessary to achieve the course objectives. Students are expected to arrive on time and be prepared to participate in all activities. Please mute cell phones prior to class.

Attendance is taken at the beginning of class. Students are considered tardy if they arrive after roll is taken. Students are permitted two absences without penalty; additional absences will reduce the final grade by one letter grade per occurrence. Three "tardies" will equal one absence.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

## Online Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

## In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code.