

**University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media & Film**

Communication and Media Studies COMS 401.50 L01

Modernity and Visual Culture

Fall 2022

Wed., Sept. 7-Wed., Dec. 7 (excluding Nov. 7 and 9)

Lectures: Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30-10:45

This course is offered in-person and will be held in ES 054

Instructor: Dr. Annie Rudd
Office: SS 312
E-Mail: annie.rudd@ucalgary.ca (when emailing, please mention "COMS 401" in the subject line)
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: Mondays, 10:30-12:30 via Zoom (please make an appointment by sending me an email)

Course Description

In this course, students will learn about historical connections between visual culture and modern life, considering the convergences of modernity and the visual in an array of cultural spaces and practices. Focusing on the period from approximately 1830 to 1950, this course explores the ways in which modern subjectivity was predicated on people's exposure to new varieties of visual experience. In investigating visual culture thematically rather than chronologically, students will be well positioned to consider points of historical continuity and rupture. They will also be encouraged to explore connections between historical developments in visual culture and the visual culture of the present day. Topics to be covered include, among others, the visual experience of urban life; visual constructions of race; cultures of exhibition and display; visual culture and social movements; and advertising and consumer culture.

Additional Information

The weekly schedule of topics and readings can be found at the end of this outline and on D2L. The course will be offered in-person on the University of Calgary campus. Students are responsible for reading and following all course and university policies discussed in this outline.

Objectives of the Course

This course aims:

- to familiarize you with major developments and themes in the modern history of visual culture;
- to equip you with a theoretical apparatus and a vocabulary that will enable you to critically interpret a broad range of visual material;
- to introduce you to techniques of historical research involving visual artifacts;
- to provide you with historical context for the visual cultures of the present moment.

Textbooks and Readings

The textbook for this course is *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*, edited by Vanessa R. Schwartz and Jeannene M. Przyblyski, which is available in the University Bookstore. A copy of the course textbook is also available on reserve at the Taylor Family Digital Library. All other readings will be posted to D2L. Please be sure to bring the assigned readings with you to class.

Learning Technologies and Requirements

In order to complete courses, University of Calgary students are required to have reliable access to the following technology:

- A computer with a supported operating system, as well as the latest security and malware updates, with current antivirus software enabled;
- Broadband internet connection, and a current and updated web browser;
- A webcam (built-in or external), and a microphone and speaker (built-in or external) or headset with microphone (for online synchronous courses only).

If you need access to other software programs to complete assignments, your instructor will provide relevant information and links.

If you have technical difficulties, contact IT support services. See

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/student-campus-services-information-technologies-it.html>

Policy on the Use of Electronic Communication Devices

Computers are permitted in this class, provided they are used solely for note-taking and other in-class activities, and they do not present a distraction to you or others. The use of phones is not permitted in class—they must be silenced and placed in your bag during class. The use of electronic devices for audio and video recording is prohibited unless you have received permission from the instructor in advance.

If distraction due to electronic devices is impeding class participation, a policy prohibiting the use of all electronic devices may be introduced. Therefore, it's in your best interest to ensure that you are using laptops exclusively for class work.

A Note on Email Communication

Emails to your instructor should have "COMS 401" mentioned in the subject line. Please do not use email to ask questions that can be answered by looking at the course outline or D2L. I aim to answer emails within 48 hours of receiving them, excluding weekends—if you have emailed me and have not heard back within this timeframe, please feel free to send a follow-up message. You are expected to check your University of Calgary email regularly, as important course information will be sent out via email from time to time.

Assignments and Evaluation

Please note that this is a reading- and writing-intensive course. If you anticipate difficulty keeping up with the readings or satisfactorily completing a significant amount of written work, this course may not be a good choice for you.

Your grade in this course will be determined based on the following criteria; see details on each component below. If you would like more details on the criteria or expectations of any assignment, please don't hesitate to ask.

Weight	Assignment	Due
15%	Participation in discussion and in-class activities (not including in-class writing prompts)	Throughout semester
20%	Artifact analysis	October 14 (submit via D2L Dropbox)
15%	Class facilitation	Throughout semester (presentation dates will be chosen during second week of classes and posted to D2L)
20%	In-class writing prompts (5 in total; lowest mark will be dropped)	Throughout semester
30%	Final research project	November 25
Extra 2%	Optional extra credit assignment: essay presentation	Notes uploaded to D2L by December 2, presentations take place during final classes

Participation

Regular participation is expected and will be essential not only to your success, but to the experience that each student has in the class. Your participation will be assessed based on the frequency and quality of your contributions to class discussions and your participation in various in-class activities that will take place throughout the term. Given the importance of participation, regular attendance is essential. You should come to class with the readings completed and in hand, ready to discuss them.

Attendance will be taken in this class, and you are expected to arrive on time, avoid distractions while in class, and stay for the duration. Chronic absences or lateness will negatively affect your grade.

Artifact Analysis

This writing assignment is intended to encourage you to think critically and creatively about visual culture in modernity. By design, it is flexible so that you're able to take your analysis in a direction that you find most interesting and useful. For this assignment, you are asked to choose an artifact dating to between 1830 and 1950 (it can be a photograph, an article, an advertisement, or any other historical artifact, but you should be able to identify with specificity when and where it is from), and interpret its significance using at least two of the readings assigned in this class, as well as at least one other academic source (an academic book or peer-reviewed journal article). A short list of potential artifacts will be provided on D2L, but you are welcome to choose one of your own—if you're unsure whether an artifact is suitable, please ask.

Your analysis should take the form of a short essay that is at least 800 words in length, and any sources that you discuss should be properly cited in Chicago or MLA Style. Further assignment details, as well as information on citation, will be provided on D2L and discussed in class. This assignment is due by the end of the day (11:59pm Calgary time) on October 14 and it should be submitted via the D2L Dropbox labeled “Artifact Analysis.”

Class Facilitation

In groups of about 4, you will lead a class discussion for approximately 20 minutes. You will be asked to prepare a slide presentation in which you discuss one of the week’s assigned readings and pose discussion questions to the class. Successful presentations will likely involve:

- a) Focusing on what you see as the most important ideas, sections, and/or passages and discussing those in depth, rather than summarizing the entire reading;
- b) Providing important quotations from the reading as appropriate (with page numbers);
- c) Offering compelling visuals (images or videos) on your slides along with text (ideally, you’ll show at least one image or video you can interpret—or have the class interpret—through the lens of the reading you’re discussing);
- d) Posing questions that will encourage productive, valuable class discussion. (Yes-or-no questions are unlikely to do this. Questions that get your classmates to reflect on the broader themes of the reading, to make connections between the reading and others we’ve done in the class, or to connect the reading with contemporary life are more likely to elicit good discussion.)

Sign-up for class facilitation will take place in the second week of classes. It’s essential that each group submits their presentation notes and slides at least 48 hours before they are scheduled to give their presentation; these files should be uploaded to the D2L Dropbox labeled “Class Facilitation.” Late submissions will be docked marks, and groups that do not submit their notes and slides in advance will not receive credit for this assignment.

In-Class Writing Prompts

In addition to the in-class group activities that will be counted toward your participation mark, you will be required to complete five short in-class writing assignments throughout the semester. These writing assignments will ask you to reflect on some aspect of the course content and discuss at least one of the week’s readings. Dates of these writing assignments will not be provided in advance, and no make-ups are possible, so it’s essential that you attend class regularly in order to avoid missing these assignments. That said, only your top four writing assignments will be counted toward your final grade.

Final Research Project

Your major assignment for this class will be a final research project, due by the end of the day (11:59pm Calgary time) on November 25. Building on the writing and visual analysis you have done in this course throughout the term, you will craft a well-researched, thoughtfully argued essay that offers critical and historical analysis of one or more visual artifacts, with reference to course readings as well as at least two outside readings. Your final research project can take the form of a traditional research paper (between 1500-2000 words) or a digital research project (between 1200-1500 words). A set of essay questions and a short list of suggested artifacts will be provided to you well in advance of the due

date, but you are also permitted to propose your own essay topic. You can propose your topic via email or by visiting office hours. Technical details relating to the essay and proper citation will be provided in class and on D2L. Before class on November 28, essays must be submitted via the D2L Dropbox labeled “Final Essay.”

Optional Extra-Credit Assignment: Essay Presentation

You will have the option to deliver a concise, compelling presentation of your final essay to the class during our final classes. If you want to complete this optional assignment, upload a slide presentation to the D2L Dropbox labeled “Final Essay Presentation” no later than December 2. This will be the only opportunity to complete an extra-credit assignment in this course.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: You do not have to complete all the assignments and exams in order to receive a passing grade in this course.

Submission of Assignments

Please submit all assignments by uploading them to the designated D2L dropbox. Include your name and ID number on all assignments. Be sure to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to submit the proper version. It is your responsibility to ensure that all assignments have posted to the D2L Dropbox correctly—you are encouraged to double-check.

Private information related to individual students is treated with the utmost regard by University of Calgary faculty. Student assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty, and personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. Please note that instructors may use audio or video recording for lesson capture, assessment of student learning, and self-assessment of teaching practices.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late. Brief extensions may be given by the instructor provided the student has a compelling reason to request one, and the request is made well in advance of the deadline.

Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS); SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/. Students who require an accommodation based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. For the full policy on Student Accommodations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-accommodation-policy>

Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) or another legitimate reason should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should provide supporting documentation to support their request; however, instructors may not require a

medical note. For information on the use of a statutory declaration, see the *University Calendar*: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

Expectations for Writing

Department policy directs that all written assignments and, to a lesser extent, written exam responses be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.) but also general clarity and organization and proper documentation of research sources. For further information, please refer to the *University of Calgary Calendar* section on writing across the curriculum: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-2.html>

Grading & Department of Communication, Media and Film Grade Scale

The following table outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Final grades are reported as letter grades. For components graded using percentages or numerical scores, those values will be used directly in calculating the final course grade, while for components graded using letter grades, the letter grades will be converted to the midpoint values listed in the final column of the table below in calculating the final course grade.

In this course, percentage grades will be used to assess all assignments.

Grade Point Value	Description	Grade	Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents*	Letter grade % equivalent for calculations*
4.00	Outstanding performance	A+	96 - 100%	98.0%
4.00	Excellent performance	A	90 - 95.99%	93.0%
3.70	Approaching excellent performance	A -	85 - 89.99%	87.5%
3.30	Exceeding good performance	B+	80 - 84.99%	82.5%
3.00	Good performance	B	75 - 79.99%	77.5%
2.70	Approaching good performance	B-	70 - 74.99%	72.5%
2.30	Exceeding satisfactory performance	C+	65 - 69.99%	67.5%
2.00	Satisfactory performance	C	60 - 64.99%	62.5%
1.70	Approaching satisfactory performance	C-	55 - 59.99%	57.5%
1.30	Marginal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D+	53 - 54.99%	54.0%
1.00	Minimal pass. Insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject	D	50 - 52.99%	51.5%
0.00	Failure. Did not meet course requirements.	F	0 - 49.99%	0%

* Column 4: If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades. Column 5: These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. **In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin.** Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there.

For information on citation and documentation styles (MLA, APA, Chicago, IEEE, etc.), visit the Student Success Centre resource links at <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support> or the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) Research and Citation Resources at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html

If you need help with your writing or have questions about citing sources, consult your instructor or visit the Student Success Centre, Taylor Family Digital Library. To book an appointment, go to <https://ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/writing-support>

Instructor Intellectual Property & Copyright Legislation

Course materials created by the instructor (including lectures, course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed, or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the same course section and term may be allowed under fair dealing. Check with the instructor if you have any questions about sharing materials with classmates.

To ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes & electronic versions of textbooks), all students are required to read the *University of Calgary Policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright* at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> and the requirements of the *Copyright Act* (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the *University of Calgary Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants, including surveys, interviews, or observations as part of your university studies, you are responsible for obtaining research ethics approval and for following university research ethics guidelines. In some cases, your instructors may apply for course-based research ethics approval for certain assignments, and in those cases, they must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, please see

<https://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/arts-researchers/resources-researchers-and-instructors/ethics>

Deferrals of Course Work and Requests for Reappraisal

For university regulations and procedures related to deferral of term work, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

For information about deferrals of final examinations, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>

For information about requesting a reappraisal of course work or of a final grade, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Student Support Services and Resources

Please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for information about student support services and resources, including Wellness and Mental Health Resources, Student Success programs and services, the Student Ombuds Office, the Student Union, and Safewalk. For resources on D2L, Zoom, Yuja, etc., see <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/resources-for-students/>. (Find the topic menu under the icon to the left of the ELEARN banner.)

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Please see D2L for the full schedule of topics and readings.