Syllabus for A ED 812: Diversity, Visual Culture, and Pedagogy

In this course we will examine diversity, pedagogy, and visual culture in various settings: the artworld, popular media, and cultural settings such as schools and museums. As defined in this course, diversity pertains to gender, sexual identity, social class, ethnicity, ability, age, and other attributes that shape our identities. In the course we will pay special attention to issues of power and privilege in relation to diversity and visual culture. We will examine the ways that various forms of visual culture, situated in various social contexts, teach us who we are, what is “normal” in our society, and how we might change existing social conditions.

*Visual culture* includes paintings, sculptures, prints, and other forms of fine art as well as advertisements, news images, scientific images, television programs, and films. It includes toys, comic books, children’s art—and more. All manifestations of cultural life that are significant for their visual features are included in the term visual culture.

*Pedagogy* refers not only to formal methods of instruction, such as teaching and learning in classrooms. It also includes informal instruction through the arts, the media, popular forms of entertainment, and other social practices. Pedagogy includes being addressed in certain ways by various forms of visual culture. It includes the ways we actively interpret, use, and recreate forms of visual culture in our lives.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the course are related to understanding issues of diversity and pedagogy in visual culture, and developing skills in examining these issues. By the end of the course, you should:

- Understand diversity in relation to various forms of visual culture.
- Understand the complex interactions of ethnicity, class, gender, sexual identity, and other aspects of diversity in visual culture.
- Understand pedagogical issues related to visual culture, including forms of address and interpretation, as well as pedagogical practices such as teaching and learning in classrooms.
- Understand issues of power and privilege in relation to visual culture.
- Be able to critically examine social constructions of race, class, gender, sexual identity, and other aspects of diversity in various forms of visual culture.
- Be able to critically examine pedagogical issues related to visual culture.
- Be able to critically examine issues related to diversity and pedagogy through both writing and visual analysis.
• Be able to prepare and teach a unit of instruction on diversity and visual culture in a PreK–12 class, a museum, or some other instructional setting.

TEXTBOOK AND OTHER COURSE MATERIALS


Other materials for the course include films, readings, handouts, and links to web sites on the course ANGEL site. The course materials (like visual culture itself) will be multiple and varied.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

During the semester, there will be three major writing assignments in which you critically analyze diversity and pedagogy in various forms of visual culture. You will post these visual analysis assignments on discussion forums on the course ANGEL site, and you will also post comments on others’ analyses. There will be a final project in which you develop a unit of instruction on diversity and visual culture or, as an alternative project, you apply the concepts from the course to one or more works of fine art. See the Schedule of Topics and Assignments below for a schedule of the major writing assignments. The due dates for these assignments are also posted in the Calendar section of the course ANGEL site. For more detailed descriptions of each assignment, including assessment criteria for each assignment, see the relevant folders in the Lessons section of the course ANGEL site.

Throughout the semester, you will also post responses to films and readings on designated discussion forums, and if you wish, comment on other students’ responses. Comments on others’ responses to films and readings will be optional, but I encourage you to comment. Although we will not be meeting face to face in this course, we will still be able to share ideas and projects throughout the semester. See the Schedule of Topics and Assignments below for a schedule of required readings, optional readings, and films for each week. The due dates for responses are also posted in the Calendar section of the course ANGEL site.

All assignments will be submitted through the course ANGEL site using the designated discussion forums. These discussion forums are located in the folders for each week on the course ANGEL site. Also located in the folders are descriptions of assignments, assessment criteria, and other materials that are relevant to each week’s topic. Let me know if you are unable to find anything.

SPECIAL FLU PROTOCOLS

In compliance with Pennsylvania Department of Health and Centers for Disease Control recommendations, students should NOT attend class or any public gatherings while ill with influenza. Students with flu symptoms will be asked to leave campus if possible and to return home during recovery. The illness and self-isolation period will usually be about a week. It is very important that individuals avoid spreading the flu to others.

Most students should be able to complete a successful semester despite a flu-induced absence.
Faculty will provide students who are absent because of illness with a reasonable opportunity to make up missed work. Ordinarily, it is inappropriate to substitute for the missed assignment the weighting of a semester's work that does not include the missed assignment or exam. Completion of all assignments and exams assures the greatest chance for students to develop heightened understanding and content mastery that is unavailable through the weighting process. The opportunity to complete all assignments and exams supports the university's desire to enable students to make responsible situational decisions, including the decision to avoid spreading a contagious virus to other students, staff, and faculty, without endangering their academic work.

Students with the flu do not need to provide a physician's certification of illness. However, ill students should inform their teachers (but not through personal contact in which there is a risk of exposing others to the virus) as soon as possible that they are absent because of the flu. Likewise students should contact their instructors as quickly as possible to arrange to make up missed assignments or exams. If you have questions about academic policy-related issues, please call the Associate Dean/Chief Academic Officer of your college. For health-related questions you can contact University Health Services.

GRADING POLICIES

Due dates are always at the end of the week (the end of the day on Sundays), so that you will have a full week to do the readings and watch films, and to complete the responses, writing assignments, and comments on others’ work. You will be expected to complete all assignments by the dates they are due. (See the Schedule of Topics and Assignments below and on the Calendar on the course ANGEL site.) You may submit an assignment for half credit, up to one week after it is due. After that, you will not receive any points for the assignment. If you are ill or if there is an emergency that prevents you from submitting work on time, there will be opportunities to make up the missed points through extra credit assignments. You may submit up to two extra credit assignments, worth 5 points each, for a total of up to 10 extra points.

Please note that this policy applies to the special flu protocols. If you are unable to complete an assignment because you get the flu, then you can make up the lost points by completing one or two extra credit assignments. (For descriptions of the extra credit assignments, see the folder titled “Extra Credit” in the Lessons section of the course ANGEL site.)

Your final grade in the course will be based on a distribution of 100 points:

- Three visual analysis writing assignments (10 points each) 36
- Reflections on films and readings (six weeks’ reflections, 5 points each) 30
- Final project:
  - a unit of instruction on diversity and visual culture, or 34
  - an analysis of 1–3 works of fine art using concepts from the course 100
- Extra points possible (2 extra credit assignments worth 5 points each) +10

I will use the following scale in calculating final grades:

95–100 points A
90–94 points   A-
87–89 points   B+
84–86 points   B
80–83 points   B-
77–79 points   C+
70–76 points   C
60–69 points   D
below 60 points   F

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

University Policies and Rules Guidelines states that academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts. Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to acts such as cheating on exams or assignments; plagiarizing the words or ideas of another; fabricating information or citations; facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others; claiming authorship of work done by another person; submitting work completed in previous classes; and/or submitting the same work to multiple classes in which a student is enrolled simultaneously.

A NOTE TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

It is Penn State’s policy to not discriminate against qualified students with documented disabilities in its educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for modifications in this course, contact your instructor and the Office for Disability Services (located in 116 Boucke Building) or the Disability Contact Liaison at your Penn State location. Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible. You may refer to the Nondiscrimination Policy in the Student Guide to University Policies and Rules 1997.

SAFETY INFORMATION

Students in the School of Visual Arts may find themselves working in the shop or in their studios or classrooms using a variety of materials and power and hand held equipment, which may cause injury. Given this possibility, equipment is provided and ventilation systems have been installed that are regularly inspected and maintained to ensure the safety of all students working in classrooms, studios and the shop. Students should use the shop only after having received an orientation in the use of such equipment and when supervised by faculty or shop personnel. Should any injuries occur in the shop, studios, or classrooms in the School of Visual Arts, please
report them to the Shop Supervisor immediately.

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Week 1:**

Introductions and overview of the course

Optional readings:


Overview of concepts: Visual texts, spectatorship, viewers make meaning (PowerPoint and worksheets).

Bibliography of books, articles, and films related to teaching visual culture.

These materials are in the folder titled “1. Introductions and Overview: “located in the Lessons section of the course ANGEL site.

*Activities this week:*
Complete the following exercises: Post an image of yourself (or an image that represents you in some way) on the course ANGEL site using the Profile Editor. Send two practice emails, one to me only and one to the whole class, using ANGEL’s Communicate section. Post an attached image and/or identity map, along with a short written introduction of yourself, on the discussion forum titled “Introductions.” This discussion forum is located in the folder titled “1. Introductions and Overview,” located in the Lessons section of the course ANGEL site. Post a reply to at least one other person’s introduction, using the “Reply” button at the bottom of the discussion forum.

These activities will not be graded.

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**Week 2:**

*Visual texts: Images of power & privilege*

*Constructions of gender*

Reading:
Films:


Optional readings:


Reflection assignment:
Post a reflection on the films, the required reading, and/or the optional readings on the discussion forum titled “Constructions of Gender,” located in the folder titled “2. Visual Texts: Your reflection should be at least 300 words.

Optional:
Post comments on other people’s reflections on the films and/or readings for this week. Position your comments under the reflections to which they are related by using the “Reply” button at the bottom of the discussion forum.

Week 3:
Visual texts: Images of power and privilege (continued)
Constructions of gender and race

Films:


Optional reading:
Hodgson, K., & Earp, J. Study guide for What a girl wants. Available online from the Media Education Foundation: http://www.mediaed.org/

Reflection assignment:
Post a reflection on one or more of the films or the optional reading for this week on the discussion forum titled “Constructions of Gender and Race,” located in the folder titled “3. Visual
Texts (continued): Your reflection should be at least 300 words.

Optional:
Post comments on other people’s reflections on the films and/or readings for this week. Position your comments under the reflections to which they are related by using the “Reply” button at the bottom of the discussion forum.

Weeks 4 & 5:
Visual texts:
Visual Analysis Writing Assignment #1

Handouts:
The assignment and assessment criteria for the first visual analysis writing assignment are located in the folder titled “4-5. Visual Texts: Visual Analysis Writing Assignment: in the Lessons section of the course ANGEL site.

Assignments:

Post comments on at least one other person’s analysis. Position your comments under the analysis (or analyses) to which they are related by using the “Reply” button at the bottom of the discussion forum.

Week 6:
Viewers make meaning:
Dominant, negotiated, and oppositional readings
Readings of gender, class, and race

Reading:

Films:


Optional readings:
Myers, L. Teacher’s guide for *People like us: Social class in America*. Available online from PBS at [http://www.pbs.org/peoplelikeus/resources/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/peoplelikeus/resources/index.html)


**Reflection assignment:**
Post a reflection on one or more of the films or the readings for this week on the discussion forum titled “Readings of Gender, Class, and Race,” located in the folder titled “6. Viewers Make Meaning: Your reflection should be at least 300 words.

Optional:  
Post comments on other people’s reflections on the films and/or readings for this week. Position your comments under the reflections to which they are related by using the “Reply” button at the bottom of the discussion forum.

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**Weeks 7 & 8:**

**Viewers make meaning:**
*Visual Analysis Writing Assignment #2*

Handouts:
The assignment and assessment criteria for the second visual analysis writing assignment are located in the folder titled “7-8. Viewers Make Meaning: Visual Analysis Writing Assignment: in the Lessons section of the course ANGEL site.

**Assignments:**
Post your analysis of the ways viewers make meaning of 1–3 works of visual culture by Put your analysis in the drop box titled “Viewers Make Meaning,” located in the folder titled “7-8. Viewers Make Meaning: Visual Analysis Writing Assignment” in the Lessons section of the course ANGEL site.

Post comments on at least one other person’s analysis. Position your comments under the analysis (or analyses) to which they are related by using the “Reply” button at the bottom of the discussion forum.

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**Week 9:**

**Spectatorship: The gaze and the other Western and pornographic gazes**

**Reading:**
Films:


Optional reading:

Reflection assignment:
Post a reflection on one or more of the films and/or readings for this week on the discussion forum titled “Western and Pornographic Gazes,” located in the folder titled “9. Spectatorship: . Your reflection should be at least 300 words.

Optional:
Post comments on other people’s reflections on the films and/or readings for this week. Position your comments under the reflection(s) to which they are related by using the “Reply” button at the bottom of the discussion forum.

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**Week 10:**
*Spectatorship: The gaze and the other*
*Looking at sexual identity and ethnicity*

Films:


Optional readings:


Reflection assignment:
Post a reflection on one or more of the films or the readings for this week on the discussion forum titled “Looking at Sexual Identity and Ethnicity,” located in the folder titled “10. Spectatorship (continued). Your reflection should be at least 300 words.
Optional:
Post comments on other people’s reflections on the films and/or readings for this week. Position your comments under the reflections to which they are related by using the “Reply” button at the bottom of the discussion forum.

Week 11 & 12:
Spectatorship:
Visual Analysis Writing Assignment #3

Handouts:
The assignment and assessment criteria for the third visual analysis writing assignment are located in the folder titled “11-12. Spectatorship: Visual Analysis Writing Assignment: November 1–14” in the Lessons section of the course ANGEL site.

Assignments:
Post your analysis of the subject position or “gaze” suggested by a work of visual culture. Put your analysis in the drop box titled “Spectatorship,” located in the folder titled “11-12. Spectatorship: Visual Analysis Writing Assignment: ” in the Lessons section of the course ANGEL site.

Post comments on at least one other person’s analysis. Position your comments under the analysis (or analyses) to which they are related by using the “Reply” button at the bottom of the discussion forum.

Week 13:
Consumer culture:
Advertising, desire, and coolness

Reading:

Film:

Optional reading:

Reflection assignment:
Post a reflection on the film or the readings for this week on the discussion forum titled “Consumer Culture,” located in the folder titled “13. Consumer Culture: Your reflection should
be at least 300 words.

Optional:
Post comments on other people’s reflections on the film and/or readings for this week. Position your comments under the reflections to which they are related by using the “Reply” button at the bottom of the discussion forum.

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**Weeks 14 & 15:**

*Final Project:*

*Unit of Instruction on Diversity and Visual Culture*

—or—

*Art as Visual Culture*

Readings:


Handouts:
The assignment and assessment criteria for the final project are located in the folder titled “14-15. Final Project: November 29–December 12” in the Lessons section of the course ANGEL site.

**Assignment:**
Post your final project. Put your project in the drop box titled “Final Project,” located in the folder titled “14–15. Final Project: Lessons section of the course ANGEL site.”

Optional:
Post comments on others’ final projects. Position your comments under the projects to which they are related by using the “Reply” button at the bottom of the discussion forum.

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**Extra credit assignments:**
Extra credit assignments: Post one assignment per drop box: If you did one extra credit assignment, put it in the drop box titled “Extra Credit I.” If you did two extra credit assignments, put one in “Extra Credit I” and the other in “Extra Credit II.”