

# ANTH 209

# **Visual**

# **Anthropology**

# Summer

# 2019

Full term  
MW 12:00-2:10  
DEM 024

# Syllabus

**Your instructor:**  
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Chan

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## Learning outcomes

**Understand, describe, and critique the history of anthropology and its use of images and film.** Inversely, understand and critique the history and production of images and film using anthropological methods.

**Critical reasoning:** strengthen written and verbal skills in the analysis and interpretation of visual media (like film, photography, art, or digital content)

**Develop and improve practical skills in a visual form** (like photography, documentary or narrative filmmaking, visual art, memes, an instagram feed, vlogs, a food blog or cookbook, etc)--culminating in a final portfolio of your best work.

## Evaluations

### Grade distribution

Discussion posts	Updates on your Visual Project; studio workshop evaluations; reading responses.	20%
Workshop facilitation	Facilitate one Analytic Workshop (see calendar) with a small group.	15%
Visual project	Final portfolio, including all your visual artifacts & studio workshop evaluations	25%
Midterm	Take-home test (administered as a quiz on Canvas)	15%
Final	Take-home test (administered as a quiz on Canvas)	25%

## Required Texts & Materials

### Textbook

Sturken, Marita, and Cartwright, Lisa. Practices of Looking : An Introduction to Visual Culture. Third ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2018.

**This textbook is available at the University Bookstore as well as the UW library system, and digitally on Canvas.**

### Other readings

Additional texts are available on Canvas under “Files”

### Other materials

**No new camera, nor equipment, is required for this course** (the camera on your phone is good enough.) Depending on your own visual projects, you may need access to software or other physical equipment; please check the UW’s existing student resources (from the library, or the Student Technology Fund) before spending your money.

## Policies

### Grading and evaluations

To accommodate illness, family or work obligations, traffic, or other miscellaneous interruptions, **I’ll drop your two lowest or missing discussion posts and one of your lowest or missing visual project submissions.**

### Attendance and Participation

I won’t be taking attendance, but you won’t be successful without regular attendance. For full points, please come prepared having done the readings, participate collegially with your classmates, and contribute to class discussions and other programming. **Material covered in class—including student discussions and activities—will be on both the midterm and final exams.** Please arrange to get notes from your classmates if you have missed a day.

### Deadlines

Are firm. Please let me know at least 72 hours in advance if you will not be able to submit an assignment or exam on time.

Late work and make-ups

**Late assignments will be graded at 50% their original evaluation in the first 24 hours after the deadline, and no assignments will be accepted after 24 hours after the deadline.** Make-up work will **not be accepted** without documentation of an unavoidable absence (medical/mental health issues etc).

Academic integrity

Plagiarism, whether or intentional or accidental, is a significant problem that has serious consequences. This includes copying or paraphrasing other authors, students, or me without citation. If you are unsure if any activity constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please contact me or refer to the official College of Arts and Sciences policy on academic dishonesty.

Emails, discussion posts, and communication

I expect all of us to engage with each other collegially and professionally. Please consult this syllabus before asking questions about the class. **Please allow up to 48 hours for email responses.**

Classroom and class discussion conduct

The University of Washington is committed to fostering an environment where the free exchange of ideas is an integral part of the academic learning environment. Disruption or domination of classroom discussions can prohibit other students from fully engaging and participating. Any student causing disruption may be asked to leave any class session, and, depending on the severity and frequency of that behavior, an incident report may be filed with Community Standards and Student Conduct. As a condition of enrollment, all students assume responsibility to observe standards of conduct that will contribute to the pursuit of academic goals and to the welfare of the academic community.  
**Harassment, discrimination, antagonism, and bullying will never be tolerated under any circumstance.** For more detailed information on these standards, please visit: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=478-120>

## Visual Project

You will sustain a quarter-long Visual Project that culminates in a final portfolio. You can think of this as an opportunity to conceptualize an eight week-long visual project, workshop your progress with your classmates, and finally, leave with a final portfolio that you can use for your own career, advanced study, or creative development.

Your project should be manageable (you should be certain that you will have enough time and interest in your project to submit a fresh piece every week.) It should also be in a format that you genuinely want to explore, practice, and develop fluency in. Your project must involve the creation of visual work, and you must create a new piece or segment every week. Your ideas are free to develop and change throughout the quarter.

Each week, you will post your latest installment on the Canvas discussion board, alongside a one-paragraph statement that **describes your intentions, any challenges or problems that you addressed, and a reflection about how the last week's class/reading themes informed your process.**

### Example projects (not an exhaustive list):

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- A photojournalism series of candid photographs
- A portraiture series
- Landscape or architectural photography
- An instagram meme account
- A fashion/beauty blog
- Food photography, or a cookbook
- A vlog or YouTube channel
- Visual artwork (paintings, sketches, sculpture, ceramics, street art, etc)
- Industrial or graphic designs in a series
- A short film, either documentary or narrative fiction (you can submit scenes or shots every week)
- Scientific imaging (IE, astral photography, medical imaging, botanical or naturalist illustrations, etc)
- Schematics, sketches, or renderings (for urban planning, transit planning, engineering projects, etc)
- Printmaking, bookbinding, calligraphy, typography, or other book or textual arts

## Visual Project: Studio Evaluations

Every other week, you'll give and receive feedback about your visual project and its progress. These evaluations will be necessary for our in-class Studio Workshops. These posts are to be included in your final Visual Project portfolio.

## Discussion Posts

Type	Due Date	Instructions
Visual artifacts	Mondays by 5:00 PM	As part of your quarter-long visual project, submit one piece <b>with a one paragraph statement about how you interpreted your latest work in the context of the course's weekly themes, readings, and discussions.</b>
Peer reviews	Wednesdays by 11:00 AM	Fill out a peer review evaluation for your workshop group members, as posted on Canvas. <b>This evaluation may require engagement with texts from class.</b>

You posts will be evaluated out of 4 points, according to this rubric:

1. It's posted on time
2. Demonstrates an engagement with, and understanding of, the readings and class discussions during which the post is made
3. Displays intellectual rigor (a willingness to engage with, and experiment with, ideas)
4. Engages other students' comments (in-class or otherwise), posts, and/or visual artifacts

I reserve the right to give exceptionally insightful, incisive, or apt posts—or posts that demonstrate an exceptional commitment to collaboration and dialogue between students—an extra credit point, at my discretion.

## Analytic Workshop

You'll be assigned a small group to present the key terms and ideas from every other week. Your group is responsible for facilitating a 45-60 minute discussion on the day labelled on the course schedule. This discussion should:

1. Outline an agenda and a set of outcomes that the class should leave with after the workshop
2. Clarify the key terms and ideas from the week's readings
3. Address the excerpts we've read to the best of your abilities (which may include contextual information about authors, or historical moments in which they were written)
4. Present visual material (video clips, images, or other matter) that gives us context or conversation starters; or, open up these viewings for the class to read through the theories we are working with
5. Have a list of questions or interactive activities (as a large group or in small groups) that contribute to our understanding, or help problematize certain ideas
6. Puts student content (from discussion posts and Visual Project submissions) in dialogue with the readings.

I am available to advise your workshop planning, so feel free to cc me on your correspondence or share me on any documents you are using (if you would like.)

**You will evaluate your own participation by completing a short self-assessment questionnaire at the end of the workshop.**

## Midterm and Final Exam

My job is to ensure you know exactly how to prepare for the exams, and that you will have adequate materials and opportunities to practice. **Historically, the strongest indicator for exam success is regular in-class attendance and punctual assignment submissions.** I will also maintain and update a weekly list of keywords that you can use to study. I recommend collaborating with other students to study for both.

Both exams are take-home, and can be taken from any environment. They will be designed to be completed in a one-hour sitting, but **I will give you up to three hours** to accommodate different learning styles, language skills, and technical issues. The questions will be short essay responses drawn from class discussions, studio workshops, your own (and other students') Visual Project, the textbook, and other course readings.

The final exam, like the rest of the course content, will be cumulative.

## Keywords

I'll update this list of keywords for your own study preparations. You should be able to:

- Clearly define or identify these terms
- Describe them through examples of phenomena out-in-the-world
- Interpret any given image or video clip using these keywords or people
- Understand the historical, cultural, and political contexts behind the keywords
- Bridge keywords together; does one idea support another? Does it conflict with another?
- Take an independent perspective on how these keywords are used and deployed (beyond “I agree/disagree with...” —how are these keywords useful or not useful for certain ends?)

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Image	Semiotics	Anthropology: four fields	Ethics in anthropology & debates about representation
Moving Image	Signifier	Visual anthropology	Aesthetics
Composition	Signified	Ethnography	Taste (theories of taste and predisposition)
Framing	Sign	Visual ethnography	Labor
Angle	Sigmund Freud	Ethnographic methods	Aspirational labor
Archive	Psychoanalysis and semiotics	Relationship between knowledge, image, and vision	Gendered labor
Vernacular photography	Feminism and semiotics	Ocularcentrism	Playbor
The social life of the image	Karl Marx	Sensory ethnography	
Visual culture	Commodity fetishism		
Visual economy	Use-value		
	Exchange-value		
	Advertising (as semiotic practice)		
Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8
Gaze	Walter Benjamin	Cinematic Mode of Production	Cyborg, cybernetics
Subject, subjectivity	Aura	Postmodernism	Machine vision
The production of subjects (subjectivation)	Reproduction (politics and practices of)	Reflexivity	Relationship between vision and truth
Spectatorship	Attention economy	Algorithms and archives	
	Visual technologies	Technology and subjectivity (especially race, class, gender, and other axes of difference)	
	Motion, sequence		



## Course schedule

Actual schedule subject to change—double check on Canvas for the latest update.

	Scheduling Notices	Conceptual Theme	Readings & Viewings	Assignment Submission Deadline (on Canvas by 5 PM on Mondays and 11 AM on Wednesdays)	Exams, Projects, and Workshop Evaluations
<b>June 24 (Monday)</b>		Introductions and orientations		Post one selfie, respond to discussion questions	
<b>June 26 (Wednesday)</b>		The social life of images	ANTH 209 Syllabus  Excerpt: Campt, <i>Image Matters</i> (pp 1-20)	Getting-to-know-you survey	
<b>July 1 (Monday)</b>		Introduction to semiotics (how things mean)	Sturken & Cartwright, Ch 1 (pp 13-49)  Excerpt: Barthes, <i>Camera Lucida</i> (pp 1-7)	Artifact #1, with creator's statement	Analytic workshop
<b>July 3 (Wednesday)</b>	NO CLASS (Holiday)	x	x	x	x
<b>July 8 (Monday)</b>		Genealogies of visual anthropology: photography, ethnography, empire	Sturken & Cartwright, Ch 10 (pp 379-423)  Excerpt: Pinney	Artifact #2, with creator's statement	Studio workshop: group evaluations
<b>July 10 (Wednesday)</b>	No on-campus meeting; participate on Canvas	How-to: visual anthropology (a practical guide)	Pink (pp 2-21)	Studio: Peer reviews posted	
<b>July 15 (Monday)</b>	No on-campus meeting; participate on Canvas	Ethics in visual ethnography / alternatives	Pink (pp 2-23)  Excerpt: Suhr	Artifact #3, with creator's statement	Studio workshop: group evaluations

	Scheduling Notices	Conceptual Theme	Readings & Viewings	Assignment Submission Deadline (on Canvas by 5 PM on Mondays and 11 AM on Wednesdays)	Exams, Projects, and Workshop Evaluations
July 17 (Wednesday)		Aesthetics and taste	Sturken & Cartwright, Ch 2 (pp 51-88)  Excerpt: Duffy	Studio: Peer reviews posted	Analytic workshop
July 22 (Monday)		Gaze, subject, spectatorship	Sturken & Cartwright, Ch 3 (pp 89-138)  Excerpt: Duffy	Artifact #4, with creator's statement	Studio workshop: group evaluations
July 24 (Wednesday)	Take-home midterm	x	x	x	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
July 29 (Monday)		The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction	Sturken & Cartwright, Ch 5 (pp 179-218)  Excerpt: Benjamin	Artifact #5, with creator's statement	Studio workshop: group evaluations
July 31 (Wednesday)		Attention economies	Sturken & Cartwright, Ch 6 (pp 219-256)  Excerpt: Gürtzel	Studio: Peer reviews posted	Analytic workshop
August 5 (Monday)		Cinematic mode of production	Sturken & Cartwright, Ch 7 (pp 257-300)  Excerpt: Beller	Artifact #6, with creator's statement	Studio workshop: group evaluations
August 7 (Wednesday)		Computation, capitalism, the data-driven image	Excerpt: Noble	Studio: Peer reviews posted	Analytic workshop

	Scheduling Notices	Conceptual Theme	Readings & Viewings	Assignment Submission Deadline (on Canvas by 5 PM on Mondays and 11 AM on Wednesdays)	Exams, Projects, and Workshop Evaluations
<b>August 12 (Monday)</b>		Science and technology	Sturken & Cartwright, Ch 9 (pp 337-378)	Artifact #7, with creator's statement	Studio workshop: group evaluations
<b>August 14 (Wednesday)</b>		Closing thoughts	TBA	Studio: Peer reviews posted	
<b>August 19 (Monday)</b>	Potluck? Final Review			Final portfolio	
<b>August 21 (Wednesday)</b>	Take-home final				<b>Final Exam</b>