

English 4313: Visual Rhetoric
Spring 2019
Texas A&M University - Central Texas

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Office Hours: M/W 1:30-2:30 PM; 4:00-5:00 PM and T 10:00-11:30 AM. Other times available by appointment.

911 Cellular: Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University-Central Texas

911Cellular is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in 911Cellular through their myCT email account.

In an effort to enhance personal safety on the Texas A&M University – Central Texas (TAMUCT) campus, the TAMUCT Police Department has introduced Warrior Shield by 911 Cellular. Warrior Shield [<https://www.tamuct.edu/police/911cellular.html>] can be downloaded and installed on your mobile device from Google Play or Apple Store.

Connect at 911Cellular [<https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management>] to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in 911Cellular, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.

COURSE OVERVIEW AND DESCRIPTION

Official Catalog Description

Introduces students to a variety of lenses that can be used to study visual texts, including (but not limited to) Content Analysis, Compositional Interpretation, Semiology, Psychoanalysis, Discourse Analysis, and Audience Studies. Emphasizes the importance of visual rhetoric in communication and argument.

Dr. Kirchoff's Description

With the proliferation of multimedia texts over the last decade, scholarship devoted to studying visuals (of all varieties) has significantly intensified. Yet to argue that visuals are only now of importance to society would be erroneous, as visuals have always played a significant role in meaning making. Perhaps the most obvious example of this is the use prehistoric cave paintings and Egyptian hieroglyphics—two pictorial modes that were relied on as principal forms of communication for their respective societies. Even our own alphabet draws heavily on the visual to convey tone, importance, and emphasis—how I present words visually impacts how the words are interpreted. While there are many examples of how the visual has pervaded our

everyday lives, the purpose of this overview is to point out that while a quick glance of scholarship might suggest that visuals are only now important, that is simply not the case: visual communication has always been valued, whether it has been studied seriously or not.

That said, what is unique about our moment in history is how easy it is to create texts that can a) integrate multiple visual modes and b) allow authors to efficiently manipulate visuals. We are in a unique moment—effectively known as Web 2.0—that encourages everyone, not just a select few, to become authors of multimodal texts that integrate a number of visual mediums. As a result, our culture has become even *more* reliant on visual communication than ever before. As such, it is becoming increasingly important for writers to develop a visual literacy—that is, an understanding of how visuals “work”—and become effective composers of visual text.

IN ENGL 4313, students will learn how to study and analyze images for rhetorical effectiveness. To that end, this semester, we will discuss a wide range of visual texts in an effort to understand how different modes of communication take up visuals; as such, we will discuss comics, posters, photography, games, and film (and other texts). Students will demonstrate their understanding of visual theory through short analyses of visual texts; at the end of the semester, students will also have the opportunity of putting theory into practice by crafting their own visual composition.

Learning Objectives

Required Textbooks

Visual Communication Design by Meredith Davis and Jamer Hunt. ISBN 9781474221573
Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen. 2nd Edition. ISBN 9780415319157

Other Required Materials

Dr. Kirchoff will provide additional readings on Canvas.

You will need computer access for essays and for your visual creation project.

Course Requirements

Graded Work

Assignment sheets will be distributed for the portfolio and all the required artifacts for said portfolio.

- Exam: 31%
- Portfolio (which includes essays, visual creation, and reflection): 48%
 - Essay 1: Chapters 2-7 Kress [5 pages]
 - Essay 2: Chapters 2-5 Davis & Hunt [5 pages]
 - Visual Creation + Reflection
 - Revision Statement

- Attendance and Participation: 21%

Grading Scale

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

70-79 = C

60-69 = D

59 and below = F

Grading Standards

A = A student has demonstrated thorough understanding and mastery (as can be reasonably expected of students at their current stage of educational development) of course content through participation, written work, presentations, and exams.

B = A student has demonstrated above average understanding of course material and is close to attaining mastery (again, as can be reasonably expected of students at their current stage of educational development) of course content; this is demonstrated through participation, written work, presentations, and exams.

C = A student has completed the minimum expectations of the course and has demonstrated an adequate understanding of course material, as demonstrated through participation, written work, presentations, and exams.

D = A student has not completed the minimum requirements of the course, struggling to demonstrate an understanding of course material. Participation, written work, presentations, and/or exams do not showcase the student's subject-knowledge.

F = A student has failed to complete the minimum-requirements. A student may have violated the attendance policy, failed to turn in in work, refused to participate or not followed the class's code of ethics.

Communicating with Dr. Kirchoff

As I note above, email is the best way to reach me. I typically check my email at least once a day, and will make a good faith effort to respond to email within 24 hours of my receipt of your message. If you would like to meet in person, I am available during office hours, and am often amenable to appointments outside my regular office hours.

Course Policies

Attendance: Because so much of the learning process takes place in the classroom, attendance is an integral part of this class; we're covering a lot of terrain in a short semester, so missing any class time will be detrimental to your success in this class. Additionally, I value all voices in the classroom and enjoy the dynamic a full class offers. That said, I understand emergencies do occur and that individuals have a life beyond academia. Thus, students are afforded four "free" absences (the equivalent of two weeks); please note I do not need to know about the nature of

your absence—just let me know ahead of time if you will miss class (a 24-hour notice is appreciated). For each absence after the fourth, your attendance and participation grade will be lowered by one grade. Additionally, if you miss eight or more classes, you will not earn a passing mark in the course.

Tardiness: Try to be on time. I'm a punctual sort of fellow, and I tend to get class started at the scheduled time. When people come in late, it disrupts the flow of class and more importantly, the late individual will miss key information from the beginning of class. I take attendance at the beginning of class; if you come in more than five minutes late, you will be marked absent for that class.

Late Assignments: I do not accept late work unless prior arrangements have been made. This is a non-negotiable policy; however, if you have questions or are worried about completing an assignment on time, talk to me well before the due date and we can come up with a plan of action. Note: "well before the due date" does not mean 24 hours before the assignment is due. I generally like to hold these sorts of conferences a week ahead of the due date. If someone contacts me 24 hours before a project is due, my response may not be very favorable. This policy extends to daily work as well.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when one person presents another person's words or ideas as her/his own. It is a serious offense that can result in an F for the course. Please see me if you have any questions concerning plagiarism.

Respect: My goal is for everyone to feel welcome and comfortable in the classroom, so please treat everyone in this class with respect. This should be a friendly, positive environment open to discussion and feedback. To that end, there is no tolerance for individuals who intentionally disrupt class or contribute to a hostile learning environment. Examples of disruptive behavior include (but are not limited to) talking or texting on a cell phone, speaking out of turn, facebooking, emailing, checking fantasy sport teams, swearing excessively, sleeping, attacking individuals verbally or physically, talking to friends while others are talking/working, or staunchly refusing to participate. Students engaging in disruptive or disrespectful behavior will be asked to leave the class and will be counted absent for that period. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these policies, let me know and I'll be happy to answer any questions.

Food is permissible, as long as it does not become a distraction.

Email is a great tool for communication. However, I ask that when you send me an email, you use a proper salutation (e.g. Hi Dr. Kirchoff), complete sentences, and identifying information. This is a matter of common courtesy. As I mention above, I will make a good faith effort in responding to email queries within 24 hours.

Sending documents as *attachments* to an email is a perfectly valid way to get feedback on a project. To ensure readability, please save your documents as a .rtf, .docx, or .pdf.

Lastly, I prefer to be addressed as “Dr. Kirchoff,” “Professor Kirchoff,” or “Jeff”—whichever you are most comfortable with. I will not respond to nicknames, Mr. Kirchoff, or other variations of my name.

PROGRAMMATIC ASSESSMENT

To ensure the learning outcomes are met in the English Department, there is a program-wide artifact collection process. To that end, some of the projects you complete for ENGL 4313 this semester may be used for programmatic assessment. Please note that all efforts will be made to keep your identity anonymous; as such, all identifying markers will be removed from your work if used for programmatic assessment. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Kirchoff.

DELIVERY OF COURSE MATERIAL

We will often have “hybrid” courses; that is, we will often meet face-to-face for part of the class (usually to discuss readings). However, there may be a component (usually working on your projects) that you will be required to complete at home.

COURSE CALENDAR

Note: This calendar is tentative and subject to change.

Week 1

Monday January 14: Introductions, Syllabus

- For Wednesday 1.16, read “Outlines of a Theory of Visual Argument” (Birdsell and Groarke) and “Aristotle’s Classical Enthymeme and The Visual Argumentation of the Twenty-First Century” (Smith), both available as PDFs on Canvas.

Wednesday January 16: Article(s) on Semiotics

- For Wednesday 1.23, read “The Semiotic Perspectives of Peirce and Saussure: A Brief Comparative Study” (Yakin and Totu) and “Semiology” (Rose) both available as PDFs on Canvas.

Week 2

Monday January 21 NO CLASS

Wednesday January 23: Semiotics Primer

- For Monday 1.28, read *Reading Images* pp. 45-78

Week 3

Monday January 28: Narrative Representations

Wednesday January 30: Narrative Representations

- For Monday 2.4, read *Reading Images* pp. 79-113

Week 4

Monday February 4: Conceptual Representations

Wednesday February 6: Conceptual Representations

- For Monday 2.11, read *Reading Images* pp. 114-153

Week 5

Monday February 11: Representation and Interaction

Wednesday February 13: Representation and Interaction

- For Monday 2.18, read *Reading Images* pp. 154-174

Week 6

Monday February 18: Modality

Wednesday February 20: Modality

- For 2.25, read *Reading Images* pp. 175-214

Week 7

Monday February 25: The Meaning of Composition

Wednesday February 27: The Meaning of Composition

- For 3.4, read *Reading Images* pp. 215-238

Week 8

Monday March 4: Materiality and Meaning

Wednesday March 6: Materiality and Meaning

- For Monday 3.18, bring a draft of your first essay for workshop/peer review.

SPRING BREAK March 11-15

Week 9

Monday March 18: Workshop Essay 1.

- For Wednesday 3.20, finish your first essay.
- For Wednesday 3.20, read *Visual Communication Design* pp. 20-33

Wednesday March 20: Essay 1 Due. The Vocabulary of Visual Messages

- For Monday 3.25, read *Visual Communication Design* pp. 34-91

Week 10

Monday March 25: Getting Attention

- For Wednesday 3.27, read *Visual Communication Design* pp. 92-133

Wednesday March 27: Orienting for use and interpretation

- For Monday 4.1, read *Visual Communication Design* pp. 134-169

Week 11

Monday April 1: Interacting, Interpreting, and Experiencing

- For Wednesday 4.3, read excerpt from *Understanding Comics* (McCloud) and “What do Pictures ‘Really’ Want?” (Mitchell), both available as PDFs on Canvas

Wednesday April 3: Discussion of McCloud and Mitchell

- For Monday 4.8, bring a draft of your second essay for workshop/peer review.

Week 12

Monday April 8: Workshop Essay 2

- For Wednesday 4.10, finish your second essay
- For Wednesday 4.10, read “The Persona of Typeface and Text” (Brumberger) and “The Awareness and Impact of Typeface Appropriateness” (Brumberger) both available as PDFs on Canvas

Wednesday April 10: Essay 2 Due. Article(s)

Week 13

Monday April 15: Visual Creation

Wednesday April 17: Visual Creation

Week 14

Monday April 22: Study Day (no class)

Wednesday April 24: Exam

Week 15

Monday April 29: 1-on-1 Conference with Kirchoff (no class)

Wednesday May 1: 1-on-1 Conference with Kirchoff (no class)

Week 16

Monday May 6: Portfolio Due. Course Evaluations.

Wednesday May 8: Relax. You’ve earned it.

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TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

- Students are encouraged to save work to multiple locations (e.g. computer hard-drive and thumb drive); papers lost due to technological issues will not be a sufficient excuse for failing to turn in work.

Technology Support

For technology issues, students should contact Help Desk Central.

Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu

Phone: (254) 519-5466

[Web Chat: http://hdc.tamu.edu](http://hdc.tamu.edu)

When calling for support please let your support technician know you are a TAMUCT student.
For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must go to the Registrar's Office and complete a drop request form.

Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the University Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled.

If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

Academic Integrity

Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

Access & Inclusion

At Texas A&M-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier free education. The Department of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information please visit <http://www.tamuct.edu/departments/access-inclusion>.

Tutoring

Tutoring is available to all TAMUCT students, both on-campus and online. On-campus subjects tutored include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111.

If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5796, or by emailing Kim Wood at k.wood@tamuct.edu.

Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables TAMUCT students to log-in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over forty subject areas. To access Tutor.com, go to the 'My Courses' tab in Blackboard.

University Writing Center

Located in Warrior Hall 416, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University–Central Texas (TAMUCT) is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday with satellite hours in the University Library Monday thru Thursday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. This semester, the UWC is also offering online only hours from 12:00-3:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the UWC is here to help!

Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by

visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available) or by making an appointment via [WCOOnline](#). In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu if you have any questions about the UWC and/or need any assistance with scheduling.

University Library

The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at TAMUCT are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the TAMUCT main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit <https://tamuct.libguides.com/>