

Knowledge: Studies in Visual Culture

The 1950s with Dr. Meredith Browne



John Abbott College

Humanities/ Philosophy/ Religion Department

COURSE NUMBER: 345-101-MQ Sec. 19

PONDERATION: 3-1-3 **CREDITS:** 2.33 credits **SEMESTER:** Fall 2017

COMPETENCY: 00B2: apply logical analytical process to how knowledge is organized/used

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INTRODUCTION: Visual Culture is a relatively new field of study which draws on ideas from cultural studies, art, art history, sociology and anthropology, among other disciplines. Visual Culture is a way of studying the contemporary or historical world through photographs, pictures, and images, rather than only through texts and words.

(See objectives and the course's role in General Education at the end of this document.)

CONTENT: The kinds of documents which can be studied in the field of Visual Culture are widely varied, including images ranging across the spectrum of high and low culture, artistic and commercial, and professional and amateur. This means that images from the Sear's catalogue, family snapshots, high modernist paintings, covers of books, and advertisements painted on the sides of barns are all potential objects of study. With such a diverse range of subjects, the question of methodology – that is, how you go about studying these images in a way which produces useful knowledge about their culture of origin – is of the utmost importance. As such, models from different fields, including history, sociology and art history will be introduced, before we move on to analysing a select body of images. To narrow the scope of the course, we will focus on a particular decade, using images from the period as a means of gaining knowledge about it. This knowledge will be grounded in an introduction to the decade under study via more traditional textual sources. See tentative schedule of topics to be covered below.

Required Text: Course Pack is at the bookstore. (Total readings 350 pages.)

METHODS: Methods include in-class discussion, presentations, films, group work, and projects online. This course requires regular, active attendance in class and attention to assignments. Reading and writing, as well as listening and speaking in class, are all major aspects of exploring and understanding ideas about the study of visual culture. If you must miss a class, notify me and use the schedule/website to keep up with assignments.

COLLEGE AND DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES:

Attendance Policy:

Students' regular, active presence is vital to success in the course. Since attendance is an integral part of understanding and mastering competencies in Humanities, Philosophy, and Religion courses, students who miss more than 20% of class time can fail unless there are legitimate reasons. Participation consists of active, respectful listening, reading and viewing as well as appropriate and thoughtful contributions to class discussion.

Late Submission Policy:

Late assignments penalized 10% of the assignment mark per day.. All assignments are due at the beginning of class and must be submitted on paper unless otherwise stated. Assignments intended as

preparation for class activities (such as homework) will not be accepted late.



Classroom Behaviour: To maintain a good learning environment for all concerned, certain conditions must be maintained: The classes start on time and last 110 minutes. You are expected to arrive on time and remain for the duration. If you wish to speak, raise your hand and wait to be acknowledged. Disruptive behaviour in class will not be tolerated. Some behaviours which are not acceptable are sleeping, texting, surfing, or talking while the teacher or another student has the floor. Use of cell phones or other devices is not allowed. Laptops and tablets are only permitted for certain course-related activities. Offending students will be asked to leave and counted as absent.

Religious Holidays: Students who plan to be absent to observe religious holidays must inform the teacher in writing (MIO is fine) within the first two weeks of the semester so that arrangements can be made.

Changes to Evaluation Plan in Course Outline: Changes to the evaluation plan, during the semester, requires unanimous consent.

Mid-Semester Assessment (MSA): Students will receive an MSA in accordance with College procedures.

College Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism: Cheating and/or plagiarism are serious offences (Consult your "Agenda" and [IPESA](#)) and could result in failure of the course. This will also be discussed in class.

Returning of Graded Work: (Article 3.3, item 7): Students have the right to receive the results of evaluation, for regular day division courses, within two weeks. It may take up to three weeks before major assessments in Humanities, Philosophy and Religion are graded and returned to students.

Note: It is the responsibility of students to keep all assessed material returned to them for at least one semester in the event of a grade review. Students can also read about other rights and responsibilities in the IPESA.

Evaluation

- 5% – Star Gazing
- 5% – Visual Chapter Summary
- 25% – LIFE magazine analysis
- 20% and 15% – Tests One and Two
- 15% – Presentation
- (3%x5) 15% – Homework Completion*



*These points are awarded for showing up prepared and ready to participate in class activities. This can include showing notes on a reading, bringing images for a class discussion, in-class writing, quizzes, posting online, etc. Checks will be *random* and worth three points. Marked as pass/fail. There will be seven opportunities. (Tentative schedule below.)

*Optional Field Trip with Assignment can replace up to two Homework Completions.

In Humanities courses the evaluation of all competencies, performance criteria, and knowledge and ability objectives is integrated into all assignments, tests, essays, and research papers; however, competencies related to revision and editing are usually only involve longer pieces of written work.

Course Costs: Course Pack for this course costs \$20.00. You will also need to budget for photocopying or printing out images for some of your projects. (\$5-\$10.)

ROLE IN GENERAL EDUCATION:

"World Views" and "Knowledge" courses together constitute the A-block component of Humanities courses which are concerned with the most basic and general aspects of being human. These courses provide the background to the B-block course on "Ethical Issues."

OBJECTIVES: to apply a logical analytical process to how knowledge is organized and used. An appropriate field can be any serious body of knowledge relating to education, law, psychology, creativity, social behaviour, or other disciplines. Humanities approaches each from an interdisciplinary perspective. **Course objectives are realized in all elements of the evaluation plan**

Elements or "knowledge objectives"

1. to recognize the basic elements of a field of knowledge
2. to define the modes of organization and utilization of a field of knowledge
3. to situate a field of knowledge within its historical context
4. to organize the main components into coherent patterns
5. to produce a synthesis of the main components

Performance criteria or "ability objectives"

- 1.1 appropriate description of the basic elements
- 1.2 appropriate use of terminology relevant to fields of knowledge
- 2.1 adequate definition of the dimensions, limits, and uses of fields of knowledge
- 3.1 accurate identification of the main components in the historical development of fields of human knowledge
- 3.2 accurate description of the effects of historical development and societal milieu on the limitations and uses of a field of knowledge
- 4.1 coherent organization of the main components
- 5.1 appropriate analysis of the components
- 5.2 coherent synthesis of the main components
- 5.3 appropriate expression, including a significant individual written component, of an analysis of the context, importance and implications of the organization and uses of knowledge



NOTE: This course can count towards certificates, including Women's Studies and Gender Relations (Eileen Kerwin-Jones), Peace and Social Justice (Paul DiStefano), and Aboriginal Studies (Derek Maisonville). If you have questions about this, please feel free to ask me or get in touch with the coordinators.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Halberstom, David. "Chapter Thirty-Four." *The Fifties*. Ballantine Books, 1994, pp. 514-520.
- Halberstom, David. "Chapter Thirty-One." *The Fifties*. Ballantine Books, 1994, pp. 456-486.
- Hine, Thomas. "The Luckiest Generation." *Populuxe*. Knopf, 1987, pp. 15-36.
- Maral, Karal Ann. "Betty Crocker's Picture Cook Book: The Aesthetics of Food in the 1950s." *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s*. Harvard UP, 1996, pp. 203-240.
- Maral, Karal Ann. "Autoeroticism: America's Love Affair with the Car in the Television Age." *As Seen on TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s*. Harvard UP, 1996, pp. 203-240.
- Martin, Christopher R. "The Naturalized Gender Order of Rock and Roll." *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, vol. 19, no. 1, Spring, 1995, pp. 53-75.
- Meyer, Richard. "Rock Hudson's Body." *The Passionate Camera: Photography and Bodies of Desire*. ed. Deborah Bright. Routledge, 1998, pp. 340-360.
- Miner, Horace. "Body Ritual Among the Nacerima." *American Anthropologist*, vol. 58, no. 3, June 1956, pp. 503-507. <https://www.msu.edu/~jdowell/miner.html>
- Oakley, J. Ronald. "Generation in a Spotlight." *God's Country: America in the Fifties*. Dembner, 1986, pp. 267-290.
- Oakley, J. Ronald. "Women, Love and Sex in Eisenhower's America." *God's Country: America in the Fifties*. Dembner, 1986, pp. 291-310.
- Oakley, J. Ronald. "Entering the Fifties." *God's Country: America in the Fifties*. Dembner, 1986, pp. 3-21.
- Oakley, J. Ronald. "Good Times." *God's Country: America in the Fifties*. Dembner, 1986, pp. 228-248.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE:

- Week of Aug. 21 Alien Anthropologists and Archaeologists of the Future
- The visual culture of your birth year
 - READ Horace Miner's "Body Ritual Among the Nacirema"
- Week of Aug. 28 Centuries and Decades and Introduce the 1950s
- READ Thomas Hine's "The Luckiest Generation"
 - READ Richard Meyer's "Rock Hudson's Body"
 - Star-Gazing **Assigned** & Visual Chapter Summary **Assigned**
- Week of Sept. 4 1950s Cont'd and Understanding MLA Citation
- READ Ronald Oakley's "Entering the Fifties"
 - Visual Chapter Summary **Due**
 - *LIFE* Analysis **Assigned**
- Week of Sept. 11 As Seen on TV! Family Life in the 1950s
- READ "Television Families"
 - Star-Gazing **Due**
- Week of Sept. 18 Teen Angel
- READ Ronald Oakley's "Generation in a Spotlight"
 - *LIFE* Analysis Draft **Due** (drop deadline Sept. 19)
- Week of Sept. 22 Rock and Roll
- READ "The Naturalized Gender Order of Rock and Roll"
 - Cinema as a Window to the 1950s and *LIFE* Analysis **Due**
- Week of Sept. 25 Home Sweet Home
- READ Marling's "Betty Crocker's Picture Cook Book"
 - **Choose** Topics for Presentation
- Week of Oct. 9 **Catch up and REVIEW and TEST ONE**
- Week of Oct. 16 Ladies and Gentlemen
- READ Oakley's "Women, Sex and Love"
- Week of Oct. 23 Autoeroticism: Our Love Affair with the Automobile
(No class Monday)
- Bibliography for Presentation **Due**
 - READ Karal Ann Marling's "Autoeroticism"
- Week of Oct. 30 **Presentations** and Other Aspects of the Fifties
- Week of Nov. 6 **Presentations** and Other Aspects of the Fifties
- Week of Nov. 13 Cinema as a Window to the 1950s
- Week of Nov. 20 Cinema Continued and **Review**
- Week of Nov. 27 **Test Two** and **LAST DAY!**