

Introduction to Visual Culture

VC1001

MODULE DESCRIPTOR

ECTS credits ¹	10	Programme	BA Visual Culture
NQF level	8	School	School of Visual Culture
Stage	1	Module Co-ordinator	Fiona Loughnane
Trimester	1	Module Team	Fiona Loughnane
Contact	Neasa Travers, Secretary School of Visual Culture: visualculture@staff.ncad.ie		
Responsibility	The NCAD Academic Council and the School of Visual Culture Board have responsibility for this module.		

1. Introduction

This module introduces students to the field of Visual Culture. In particular students are introduced to key debates and central figures who have shaped the field since the 1990s. Students will test different approaches to diverse image practices drawn from modern and contemporary Visual Culture encompassing vernacular, commercial and visual art contexts. Students will, in this way, develop key image-analysis skills. They will also be taught how to apply concepts in the practice of image-analysis. Such concepts include remediation, hauntology, performativity, post-colonial theory, and spectacle. This module is offered before a second introductory module on art and design historical methods and concepts such as style, expression, originality.

In the assessment task, a presentation, particular emphasis will be placed on developing an understanding of the approaches of key figures in Visual Culture studies including Laura Mulvey, Hito Steyerl, Mark Fisher, Lev Manovich, Stuart Hall, Jack Halberstam, Susan Sontag, Giuliana Bruno and WTJ Mitchell. As a presentation, students will be engaged in sharing perspectives and understanding with their peers. The module is supported by an emphasis on learning presentation skills.

The aims of this module are to develop critical understanding of:

1. Different approaches to Visual Culture, and how these are situated within particular intellectual traditions and histories.
2. Key historical categories and concepts in Visual Culture studies.
3. Key methods and tools of critical visual analysis.

¹ European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, where 60 ECTS credits equate to the workload of a full-time academic year

2. What will I learn?

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

1. RESEARCH: Identify and apply an appropriate range of key historical definitions and concepts used in the field of Visual Culture studies.
2. ANALYSE: Apply some key methods of visual analysis to different aspects of modern image making.
3. COMMUNICATE: present research in an appropriate, coherent and relevant form.

Module content

An indicative list of subjects to be addressed in the module include;

- What is Visual Culture?
- Display, Spectacle and Consumer Society
- Image Ethics
- Remediation
- Postcolonialism
- Hauntology
- Graphic Narratives
- Music Video
- Performance and Protest

3. How will I learn?

Learning will take the form of weekly seminars, in preparation for which students will be required to read primary and secondary texts in advance. As a seminar, each class will take the form of tutor-led discussion of the skills and concepts required to analyse Visual Culture, and to critically assess the merits and limits of approaches advocated in the field.

Learning tool	Hours
Lectures and seminars	30
Specified Learning Activities	60
Autonomous Student Learning	110
Total Workload	200

4. What learning supports are provided?

Each seminar class is supported by a course outline in which essential and background readings are identified. In the case of key readings for a particular class, students will be given guidance about how and what to read in advance. Indicative works include:

- Azoulay, Ariella (2012) *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography*. London: Verso.

- Bal, Mieke (2006) A Mieke Bal Reader. University of Chicago Press.
- Baudrillard, Jean (1994) Simulacra and Simulation. Translated by Sheila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Barthes, Roland (1981) Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Benjamin, Walter (2008) The Work of Art in The Age of its Technological Reproducibility and other Writings on Media. Cambridge MA and London: Belknap Press
- Bruno, Giuliana. (2002) Atlas of Emotions: Journeys in Art, Architecture and Film. London: Verso
- Bruno, Giuliana. (2016) Surface: Matters of Aesthetics, Materiality and Media. University of Chicago Press
- Bryson, Norman (1988) "The Gaze in the Expanded Field." In Foster, Hal (Ed.) Vision and Visuality. Seattle: Bay Press.
- Butt, Gavin and Rogoff, Irit (2013) Visual Cultures as Seriousness. Berlin: Sternberg Press.
- Crary, Jonathan (1999) Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and Modern Culture. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Dikovitskaya, Margaret (2005), Visual Culture: The Study of the Visual after the Cultural Turn. Cambridge MA: MIT Press.
- Elkins, James (2003) Visual Studies: A Skeptical Introduction. New York: Routledge.
- Evans, Jessica and Hall, Stuart (Eds)(1999) Visual Culture: The Reader. London: Sage.
- Foster, Hal (Ed.) (1988) Vision and Visuality. Bay Press, Seattle.
- Hall, Stuart (1997) Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. London: Sage.
- Howells R., Negreiros J. (2012) Visual Culture. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Heywood, Ian and Sandywell, Barry (1999) Interpreting the Visual Culture: Explorations in the Hermeneutics of the Visual. New York: Routledge.
- Jenks, Chris (Ed.) (1995) Visual Culture. London and New York: Routledge.
- Jhally, Sut (1987) The Codes of Advertising: Fetishism and the Political Economy of Meaning in the Consumer Society. London: F. Pinter.
- Kocur, Zoya (Ed.) (2011) Global Visual Cultures: An Anthology. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas (1998) Visual Culture: Reader. London and New York: Routledge.
- Mirzoeff, Nicholas (1999) An Introduction to Visual Culture. London and New York: Routledge.
- Mitchell W.J.T. (1986) Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology. The University of Chicago Press.
- Mitchell W.J.T. (1994) Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Pictorial Representation. The University of Chicago Press.
- Mitchell, WJT, (2005) What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images. University of Chicago Press.
- Mulvey, Laura (1986) "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." In Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader, edited by Philip Rosen. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Nancy Jean-Luc, (2005) The Ground of the Image. Translated by Jeff Fort. Fordham University Press: New York.
- Rampley, Matthew (2005) Exploring Visual Culture: Definitions, Concepts, Contexts. Edinburgh University Press.
- Rogoff, Irit (2000) Terra Infirma: Geography's Visual Culture. London: Routledge.
- Rose, Gillian (2012) 3rd Ed. Visual Methodologies. An Introduction to Researching with Visual

Materials. London: Sage.

- Steyerl, Hito (2012) *The Wretched of the Screen*. Berlin: Sternberg Press.
- Sturken, M. and Cartwright, L. (2001) *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. Oxford University Press.
- Virilio, Paul (1994) *The Vision Machine*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Virilio Paul (1989) *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*. Translated by Patrick Camiller. London: Verso.
- Walton K. (2008), *Marvelous Images. On Values and the Arts*. Oxford University Press.
- Wollheim R. (1990) "Seeing-as, Seeing-in, and Pictorial Representation." In Wollheim, R. *Art and Its Objects*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wright, Terence (2008) *Visual Impact: Culture and the Meaning of Images*. Oxford: Berg.

5. Am I eligible to take this module?

Module Requisites and Incompatibles

Pre-requisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Incompatibles	None
Prior learning	Where a student can demonstrate that they have achieved at least 80% of the learning outcomes of this module, by academic certified achievement, or through quantifiable and documented experience, they can apply to the School for that prior learning to be recognised. Applications must be received prior to the commencement of delivery of the module.
Recommended	None

6. How will I be assessed?

Assessment tool	% of final grade	Timing
Student Presentation and Illustrated essay	100%	Week 12
Total	100%	

Assessment tool	Learning outcomes assessed
Student Presentation	Learning outcomes 1, 2, 3

Students will prepare a presentation about a key theorist of visual culture. This allows students to approach Visual Culture from a different direction (through a consideration of key figures, rather than through the central thematic concerns which guide the lecture/ seminar content). Students are expected to outline and examine the central ideas of this thinker/ writer’s work, drawn from a range of their books/ essays and other texts, and apply these ideas to specific images. The presentations are delivered to the class group, and to the lecturers on the course.

7. Feedback, results and grading

Assessment of this module is based on the presentation itself, and on the presentation slides and notes which students upload to Canvas.

The work is assessed and graded following the College's [NCAD Grade Descriptors](#).

As students attend all of these presentations, some informal peer-to-peer discussion and feedback is built into the assessment task.

Written feedback is delivered to students at the end of the module.

8. What happens if I fail?

Resit Opportunities

Opportunities will be provided during or at the end of Trimester 2 to students who do not complete all assessments in Trimester 1, but students will not be able to progress to the next stage of the programme until they have successfully completed all Year 2 modules, equivalent to 60 credits.

9. When and where is this module offered?

The module is delivered in School of Visual Culture seminar and lecture rooms, during weeks 1-11 of Trimester 1.

10. How will I have the chance to evaluate the module?

It is important to NCAD that students inform the development of teaching and learning at NCAD. We encourage all students to communicate their concerns and their observations about their study to members of staff so that any changes can be made in a timely manner.

About two-thirds of the way through the year, a student forum will be convened to gather students' comments about their study and the delivery of the programme. In addition, at the end of Trimester 2, students have the opportunity to complete an online evaluation of their study and experience at NCAD. These evaluation events are important to current and future students, to ensure we can enhance the delivery of programmes at NCAD.

In addition, you are invited to discuss your experience on the module with your lecturers at any point during the year. You can also relay your comments to the class student representative who will communicate your comments to the staff.

**For further details on the content of your module and teaching arrangements,
consult your Programme or Module Handbook**