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COMX 140L.01: Introduction to Visual Rhetoric

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
MISSOULA COLLEGE
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES
SPRING SEMESTER, 2021**

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE: COMX 140L, Introduction to Visual Rhetoric

SEMESTER CREDITS: 3

PREREQUISITES: None

PROFESSOR: Kimberly Reiser

E-MAIL ADDRESS: kim.reiser@umontana.edu

Please communicate with me via university email. You are welcome to request a telephone or Zoom call via email or on my voice mail at 243-7839. If you do so, be sure to include your contact information as well as a variety of times that you are available. I will arrange a time with you that matches up with my schedule. If your questions or concerns pertain to Moodle, please call UMLine Tech Support at 243-4999.

Office Location: Rm 424, Missoula College building at 1205 E. Broadway

Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom, telephone, or face-to-face.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Visual rhetoric is an area of communication studies that focuses on visuals as persuasive “texts.” Throughout this course, we will examine how visual symbols are interpreted, focusing on social issues such as power, culture, and gender. Exemplary readings will include historical to contemporary rhetorical criticisms on advertising, billboards, bodies, cartoons, memorials, and photography.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Explain how visual symbols work as persuasive texts.
2. Identify rhetorical theories that have been used as a framework to analyze visual symbols.
3. Develop arguments that critique visual texts from a variety of rhetorical frameworks.
4. Explore the connection between our interpretation of visuals and politics, culture, and social power.
5. Demonstrate informed and reasoned understanding of democratic ideas, institutions and practices from historical and/or contemporary perspectives.

GRADING:

Quizzes – 20% of grade

Assignments – 45% of grade

Discussion Forums – 35% of grade

GRADING SCALE: 100-90 (A), 89-80 (B), 79-70 (C), 69-60 (D), 59 and Below (F)

QUIZZES:

Quizzes will cover the assigned readings and video content. These will consist of true/false and multiple choice questions.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments will ask students to engage with the course material. These will vary in format and focus, but will oftentimes take the form of written reflections asking students to analyze a rhetorical artifact or to apply course concepts to the world around them.

DISCUSSION FORUMS:

Once we get into the reading in the course, there will be bi-weekly discussion forums that will prompt students to reflect on and apply concepts from the reading. Students will also be asked to post visuals of choice and reflect on their social significance.

MAKEUP POLICY:

All quizzes and assignments will be submitted electronically in Moodle by midnight on the day they are due. If there are extenuating circumstances, please let me know prior to that due date. You may be asked for documentation or verification of your excuse. If there is not a reasonable excuse for missing the deadline, assignments will be accepted for half credit up to a week after the due date. Beyond this date, assignments will not be accepted.

Due dates will be communicated in weekly announcements. It is your responsibility to keep track of due dates and check announcements regularly. If you encounter “technical difficulties” that prevent you from completing an assignment, please notify me via phone or email at the time that occurs. I will verify the status of the issue in Moodle.

STUDENT CONDUCT:

Please conduct yourself in a way that promotes learning for all students in the classroom (i.e. do not use language that might offend others, avoid disclosing too much personal information, and be respectful of others thoughts and opinions).

TITLE IX:

Title IX protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance. Title IX states that:

No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

In accordance with Title IX laws, all employees at The University of Montana are considered “**Responsible Employees**,” which requires us to report incidents of gender-based discrimination (e.g. sexual violence, sexual harassment, rape, sexual assault, domestic violence, and/or stalking) to the Title IX Coordinator, **Alicia Arant (243-5710, eoa@umontana.edu, University Hall, Room 006)**. Please know, we will work with you when we do this. Once an incident is reported to Title IX, the student will be contacted by the Title IX Coordinator for follow up. Students can also report directly to the Title IX coordinator in regards to any gender-based discrimination.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University.

All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/SAV/VPSA/index.cfm/page/1321>.

DISABILITY STUDENT SERVICES:

Eligible students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course when requested in a timely way. Please communicate needed accommodations with me, providing a letter from your DSS Coordinator.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION:

Missoula College values the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff as an essential strength that contributes to our shared educational mission. Students of all backgrounds and perspectives are recognized and respected in this class. Course content and activities are intended to honor diversity of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, culture, religion, age, disability, socioeconomic status, and all dimensions of diverse human experiences and their intersection. Please notify your instructor if components of this course present barriers to your inclusion. Students can also reach out to Dr. Salena Beaumont Hill in the Office of Inclusive Excellence for Student Success, which provides student support for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ students and student groups. To explore making a formal report about discrimination or harassment, please visit the Equal Opportunity / Title IX office. For counseling or advocacy related to discrimination, please visit SARC.

*COURSE POLICIES ARE APPLIED AT THE DISCRETION OF THE INSTRUCTOR.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Sellnow, D. D. (2018). *The rhetorical power of popular culture: Considering mediated texts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

To purchase an electronic copy of the Sellnow textbook, click on the following link:

<https://www.vitalsource.com/products/the-rhetorical-power-of-popular-culture-deanna-d-sellnow-v9781506315225?term=9781506315218>

Print textbooks are available through the UM bookstore.

Additional required reading will be posted in our Moodle supplement.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Posted in Moodle.