

University of Montana

## ScholarWorks at University of Montana

---

University of Montana Course Syllabi

Open Educational Resources (OER)

---

Spring 1-2016

### COMX 140L.01C: Introduction to Visual Rhetoric

Kimberly S. Reiser

*University of Montana - Missoula*, [Kim.Reiser@mso.umt.edu](mailto:Kim.Reiser@mso.umt.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi>

**Let us know how access to this document benefits you.**

---

#### Recommended Citation

Reiser, Kimberly S., "COMX 140L.01C: Introduction to Visual Rhetoric" (2016). *University of Montana Course Syllabi*. 4026.

<https://scholarworks.umt.edu/syllabi/4026>

This Syllabus is brought to you for free and open access by the Open Educational Resources (OER) at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in University of Montana Course Syllabi by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@mso.umt.edu](mailto:scholarworks@mso.umt.edu).

**THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA  
MISSOULA COLLEGE  
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED ARTS AND SCIENCES  
FALL SEMESTER, 2015**

**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

It is my preference we schedule face-to-face appointments or discuss minor course issues via email; this is the easiest way to reach me. It is essential you use your university email for this communication. If necessary, you may leave messages for me at 243-7839.

**OFFICE LOCATION:** HB 02, or the fishbowl, on the East Missoula College Campus in the Health and Business Building

**OFFICE HOURS:** Monday 11:15-12:15, Wednesday 1-2, or By Appointment

**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.

**GRADING:**

Exams (2) – 35% of grade

Inquiries – 35% of grade

Quizzes – 20% of grade

Shared Visual or Article – 10%

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

### **Exams**

There will be two exams given over the course of the semester. They will be essay in nature. A week before each exam, students will be given 10-12 essay questions. Seven of these questions will be on the exam. Each student will choose five of those questions to answer. Questions will require student to analyze the use of visuals as persuasive texts, tying in specifics from the reading, videos or class material.

### **Inquiries**

Students will be asked to complete three typed reflections during the course of the semester. These inquiries will vary, but will ask you to either 1)analyze one of our texts from a political, cultural, or social perspective, or 2)apply a rhetorical framework to a visual of the student's choice.

### **Quizzes**

Over the course of the semester, students will be given 8-10 quizzes. These will be administered randomly and will cover daily reading. Each quiz will be worth 25 points. At the end of the semester, your two lowest quiz scores will be dropped from this final grade.

### **Shared Visual or Article**

During the course of the semester, students will be required to post two examples of visual rhetoric or popular articles concerning an instance of visual rhetoric in the designated Moodle discussion forum. The examples should reflect how these intentional visual acts reflect significant social issues.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

It is my belief that what you gain from a course is dependent on what you put into it. Attendance will determine a student's level of success. If you miss a class, you will miss a learning opportunity.

**\*Students who sleep, leave early/come late, or work on other assignments during class will not be counted as present.**

**Test makeup policy:** I believe the classroom setting should be treated like any other professional setting. Employers and coworkers tend to be forgiving of a person's absence for an important meeting or engagement **if** that person has proven to be dependable in the past. My policy follows this principle.

If the following conditions are met, you may be given an opportunity to make up a test:

1. You must be in good standing in the class. This means fewer than four absences, no late assignments and passing grades on all completed assignments.
2. You must notify me prior to missing the test that you will be unable to attend that class period, and provide an explanation for your absence. Personal illness, family

emergencies and unexpected events are acceptable reasons for rescheduling a test. You may be asked for documentation of verification of your excuse.

3. Within 24 hours of missing the test, you must schedule an appointment with me to make up your test.

**ASSIGNMENTS TURNED IN A CLASS DAY LATE WILL BE GRADED OUT OF HALF CREDIT. BEYOND THIS DATE, ASSIGNMENTS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. IF YOU MUST MISS A CLASS PERIOD WHEN AN ASSIGNMENT IS DUE, PLEASE USE YOUR UNIVERSITY EMAIL ACCOUNT TO EMAIL ME YOUR ASSIGNMENT BY MIDNIGHT ON THE DAY THAT IT IS DUE.**

**\*USE MY MAILBOX AT YOUR OWN RISK. IT IS NOT MY RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE SURE ASSIGNMENTS PLACED IN MY BOX GET TO ME.**

#### **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, use laptops for note taking only, avoid disclosing too much personal information, turn off cell phones, absolutely no text messaging, and avoid monopolizing class discussion).

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

#### **ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:**

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or 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/SA/VP/SA/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 speak with me after class or in my office. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator.

For students planning to request testing accommodations, be sure to bring the DSS testing form to me **in advance of the two-day deadline for scheduling in ASC.**

#### **DROP POLICY:**

Beginning the 46<sup>th</sup> day of the semester through the last regular class day (i.e. Friday) before Finals Week, students may drop courses only by petition. Note that not all petitions are approved and documentation is required. Some examples of documented circumstances that may merit approval are accident or illness, family emergency, or other circumstances beyond the student's control. Instructors and advisors have the right to indicate that they do not recommend the drop - the UM's Academic Policies and Procedures (see <http://www.umt.edu/catalog/acad/acadpolicy/default-print.html> ).

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Olson, L., C., Finnegan, C., A., and Hope, D., S. (2008). *Visual rhetoric: A reader in communication and American culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

A Moodle supplement will be utilized for this course. Additional required reading will be posted in our supplement.

\* Please bring a print or electronic copy of the reading material to class the day it is due. Our classroom discussions will be guided by specifics from the articles.

**COURSE OUTLINE:**

The following readings, inquiries, and exams are due on the day they are listed.

**January**

26 Class Introductions

28 Class Discussion, Topic: Introduction to Visual Rhetoric

**February**

2 **DEFINITIONS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS UNIT BEGINS**  
Read Chapter from Sellnow, 2013 (Moodle)

4 Read Chapter from Faigley, George, Palchick, and Selfe, 2004 (Moodle)

9 **CONSUMING UNIT BEGINS**  
VIDEO: "Consuming Kids", Media Arts Foundation

11 Read Chapter from Croteau and Hoynes, 2014 (Moodle)

16 Read Chapter from Sturken and Cartwright, 2009 (Moodle)

18 **CONFRONTING AND RESISTING UNIT BEGINS**  
Read Harold and DeLuca, 2005, p. 257-272

23 VIDEO: "The Murder of Emmett Till", PBS

25 **INQUIRY #1 DUE**  
Read Brower, 1998, p. 205-226

**March**

1 Read Demo, 2000, p. 241-256

3 **POLITICAL IMAGE MAKING UNIT BEGINS**  
Read Erickson, 2000, p. 357-374

- 8      **Read Parry-Giles, 2000, p. 375-392**
- 10     **EXAM #1**
- 15     **REPRESENTING UNIT BEGINS**  
Read Stelter, 2012 (Moodle)
- 17     **Read Chapter from Dines and Humez, 2015 (Moodle)**
- 22     **Read Fitzgerald, 2013 (Moodle)**  
VIDEO: "The Lone Ranger, Episode 1", YouTube
- 24     VIDEO: "Latinos Beyond Reel", Media Arts Foundation
- 29     **REMEMBERING UNIT BEGINS**  
Read Lancioni, 1996, p. 105-118  
HISTORICAL VIDEO EXCERPTS
- 31     **INQUIRY #2 DUE**  
Read Biesecker, 2002, p. 157-174

April 4-8 Spring Break

**April**

- 12     VIDEO: "Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision"
- 14     **ESTABLISHING PLACE UNIT BEGINS**  
Place Walk  
Read Blair and Michel, 2000, p. 139-156
- 19     TOUR OF PAYNE FAMILY NATIVE AMERICAN CENTER  
**LAST DAY TO POST SHARED VISUAL OR ARTICLE**
- 21     **Read LaWare, 1998, p. 227-240**
- 26     **INQUIRY #3 DUE**
- 28     VIDEO, "Freedom Riders", PBS

**May**

- 3      VIDEO CONTINUED
- 5      Discussion of Place as Rhetoric and Place-Based Rhetoric

**EXAM #2** will be held during our final time, Tuesday May 10, 1:10-3:10.