Universidad de Navarra

Visual Culture

Teaching guide 2026-27

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF DESCRIPTION: In this introductory course, we will study the transformations that the world of the image has undergone. We will learn to analyze different types of images, from painting and sculpture to films and photographs. You will learn to apply two methodologies of analysis: iconology and formal analysis. This class aims to help each student develop their own aesthetic judgment and acquire the necessary tools and skills to deeply understand our visual culture.

- **Degree**: Comunicación Audiovisual (Screen Studies Program); Periodismo (Global Journalism)
- **Module in the degree program**:
- Audiovisual Communication;
  - Modeule II. Audiovisual Communication milieu; 1. Historical and sociocultural context.
- Journalism;
  - Module II. Journalism milieu; 3. Historical and cultural context.
- **ECTS**: 6
- **Year**: 2º, Spring Semester
- **Type of course**: Required
- **Instructor**: Lourdes Esqueda Verano
- **Language**: English

Lecture schedule: Tuesday 12:00-14:00 (FCOM-04); Friday 12:00-14:00 (FCOM-01)

Calendar

LEARNING OUTCOMES (Competencies)

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students must acquire basic theoretical notions about specific art movements and other cultural manifestations.
2. Students should be able to properly interpret the meaning of artworks applying Erwin Panofsky's and Roger Fry's methodologies.
3. Students should be able to recognize and distinguish images made in different times and link them to their socio-cultural context.
4. Students must be able to define the visual culture of contemporary society and to explain how viewers create cultural meaning.

AUDIOVISUAL COMMUNICATION DEGREE

1. KNOWLEDGE

RA1 - Students should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the subject area based on a general secondary school education. They should have a general level that is well supported by advanced texts, but that also encompasses aspects that suggest knowledge of the leading edge of their field of study.

RA2 - Understanding and valuing the impact of audiovisual communication on society, culture, history, economics, business, law, science, ethics and technology.

RA3 - Knowing, understanding and contemplating the different components of the human personality (biological, affective, mental, spiritual features) and how they relate to different dimensions of the environment.

RA4 - Identifying the main forms of cultural, literary and artistic expression in Western culture from the beginning to the present day.

2. SKILLS

RA10 - Students should be able to apply their knowledge to their job or vocation in a professional way. They should be able to prove their general competencies by developing and defending arguments and solving problems within their subject area.

RA12 - Accurately expressing knowledge and ideas in speech and writing in the field of audiovisual communication.

RA14 - Engaging in responsible decision making and problem solving by applying teamwork and leadership skills.

3.COMPETENCIES

RA19 –Students should be able to gather and interpret relevant data (normally within their field of study) in order to make judgments that encompass consideration of social, scientific and ethical topics.

RA21 - Understanding, analyzing and critically evaluating defining elements of human beings and contemporary society from anthropological, historical, cultural and social points of view.

JOURNALISM DEGREE

1. KNOWLEDGE

RA1 - Students should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the subject area based on a general secondary school education. They should have a general level that is well supported by advanced texts, but that also encompasses aspects that suggest knowledge of the leading edge of their field of study.

2. SKILLS

RA11 - Students should be able to apply their knowledge to their job or vocation in a professional way. They should be able to prove their general competencies by developing and defending arguments and solving problems within their subject area.

RA13 - Accurately expressing knowledge and ideas in speech and writing in the field of audiovisual communication.

3.COMPETENCIES

RA22 –Students should be able to gather and interpret relevant data (normally within their field of study) in order to make judgments that encompass consideration of social, scientific and ethical topics.

RA24 - Understanding, analyzing and critically evaluating defining elements of human beings and contemporary society from anthropological, historical, cultural and social points of view.

PROGRAM

This course is a transversal journey to painting, sculpture, photography, cinema and more recently produced images and actions through five modules:

1. What is Visual Culture?

a. Object of Study

Universidad de Navarra

*_Reading_: "Introduction," E.H. Gombrich, *The Story of Art* (ADI)

b. Methodology and Analysis

- Iconology (visit to Occidens)
- Formal analysis

c. Contemplation

* Reading *Moemnts of Vision* (excerpt), by Kenneth Clark.

2. What images reveal

a. Art Destruction: Iconoclasts and Vandals

*_Exercise_: modern iconoclasms

b. The Purposes of Art

- *_Screening_: *Los destellos*, Pilar Palomero, 2024.

3. Craftsmen and Artists

a. Renaissance

*_Screening_: *Purple Noon*, René Clément, 1960.

b. Romanticism

c. Pre-Raphaelites

- Exercise using iconology and formal analysis

d. Major aesthetic categories (the beautiful, the sublime, the comic, etc.)

4. Photography, cinema and how they came to change everything

a. The arrival of photography

*_Reading_: *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanica Reproduction*, Walter Benjamin

b. Photojournalism: information and aesthetics

- Truth claim ("What's the Point of an Index," Tom Gunning)
- Exercise: 1000 words for an image

c. Photos beyond documents

- Early artistic uses of photography
- Photographic specificity: *studium and punctum*

d. Representation and overrepresentation

*_Reading_: *On Photography*, by Susan Sontag

e. Realism, Avant-garde and Abstract Expressionism

*_Reading_: *The Story of Art*, by Gombrich (personal study, chapters 25-28)

- Formal analysis

5. The end of art, Pop Culture, and minor aesthetic categories

a. Ready-made

b. Fluxus

c. Minor aesthetic categories (the cute, the interesting, etc.)

d. Final remarks

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Classes: 60 hours

Lectures: 50

Hands-on*: 10 horas

2. Student's workload: 90 hours

Personal or team assignments: 5

Mentor: 1

Evaluation: 3

Personal study: 81

* we'll split the group in two

TOTAL: 150 hours

ASSESSMENT

MAY SESSION

Final Exam / evaluation: 70% (The first part consists of a filter of direct questions. The second part involves an essay based on a visual analysis.)

Assignments: 20%

Each student will hand in a diary before Easter Break. Craftsmanship, organization, neatness, legible handwriting, content, and originality will be taken into account.

The journal is a personal project; however, it is possible to work on it with two or three people, provided there is a valid reason for a larger team (video essays, professional craft journals, cultural magazines, or other types of artistic projects).

In-class participation: 10%

The Story of Art by E.H. Gombrich is required reading.

There will be three museum visits in this course. Class will be held in situ.

If you have special learning needs, please inform Noelia Romero so she can notify the professors, and we can adapt to your needs.

Students who are late without a valid excuse will not be allowed to attend class.

Spelling and proper behavior in class will be taken into account in the final grade.

Students are not allowed to use mobile devices or computers in class unless otherwise indicated.

Universidad de Navarra

Recurring students may opt for a 100% final exam evaluation

JUNE

Exam 100%

OFFICE HOURS

Dra. Lourdes Esqueda Verano (lesqueda@unav.es)

- Office 2571, Ismael Sánchez Bella Building (second floor)
- Thursday and Friday (schedule here or drop me a line)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mandatory bibliography:

E.H. Gombrich, The story of art, Phaidon, London, 2011 Find it in the library

Other readings will be assigned to the students via hard-copy handouts or by posting materials on the course website (Aula Virtual ADI>Readings>Mandatory).

Recommended bibliography:

Gillian Rose, Visual Methodologies, 2001. Find it in the Library

William Fleming, Art & Ideas, 1980. Find it the Library

Richard Howells, Visual Culture, Polity Press, 2006 Find it in the Library

John Berger, Ways of Seeing, BBC & Penguin, 1987 Find it in the Library

Roger Fry, Vision and Design, Chatto & Windus, 1920. Find it at Archive.org

Jameson, F, *Postmodernism: Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism,* Verso London, 1991.Find it in the Library

Gillian Rose. "The question of method: practice, reflexivity and critique in visual culture studies." In:

Heywood, Ian & Sandywell, Barry eds. The Handbook of Visual Culture. London: Berg, 2012, pp. 542–558.Find it in the Library printed version Find it in the Library electronic version

Recommended museum links:

-Louvre (Paris)

-Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam)

-Tate Gallery (London)

-Thyssen Madrid

-Bayeler Basilea

-Prado Museum (Madrid)

-Centre Pompidou (Paris)

-George Kolbe Museum (Berlin)

-Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson (Paris)

-Donation Henri Lartigue (París)

-Juan March Foundation (Madrid)

-De Menill Collection (Houston)

-MOMA (New York)

-Guggenheim curated “obras maestras” (Bilbao)

-Hermitage Museum

Other resources:

To understand Aby Warburg's Atlas Mnemosyne: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b5158e097d9c48b3bc15b844a33ae355

Hokusai: one of the Masters of Ukiyo-e: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/82d10f48016346d78dcc38b5cdcd1d23

A lesson on looking: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_jHmjs2270A&t=291s

On beauty: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9pg2j2oGy0&t=831s

The Cultural Tutor: https://twitter.com/culturaltutor?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor

The Art Assignment: https://www.youtube.com/user/theartassignment

One Hundred Years of Cinema: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbM9iT_PqBCUOQdaREDAP3g

The Nerdwriter: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJkMlOu7faDgqh4PfzbpLdg

Glossary of Art Terms (MoMA): https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/glossary

Cesare Ripa, Iconologie où la science des emblèmes, devises, &c. qui apprend à les expliquer dessiner et inventer : ouvrage très utile aux orateurs, poëtes, peintres: https://objects.library.uu.nl/reader/index.php?obj=1874-197053&lan=en#page//10/75/63/10756398002341449595643700435858711788.jpg/mode/1up

Google Art Project: https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/u/0/?hl=es

Khan Academy: https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-history-basics/beginners-art-history/a/cave-painting-contemporary-art-and-everything-in-between

The Art Story: http://www.theartstory.org/

The Cultural tutor on art moments