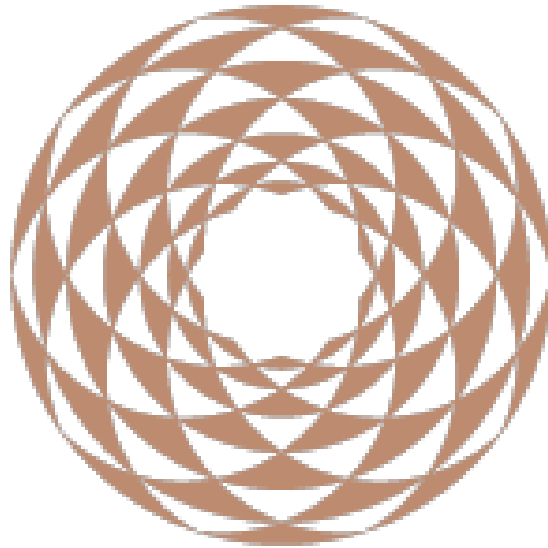
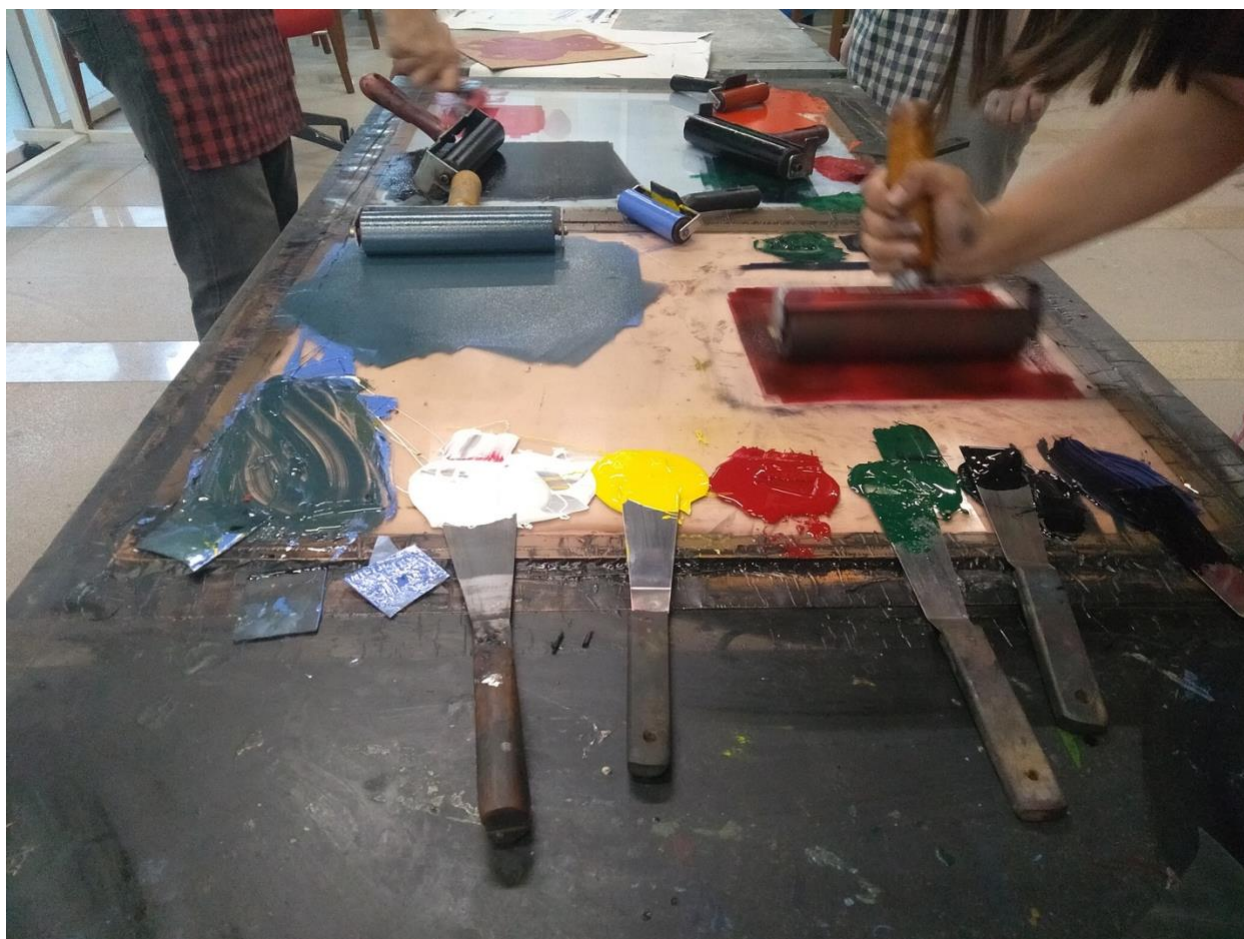


DEPARTMENT OF VISUAL ARTS



ASHOKA
UNIVERSITY

HANDBOOK
Academic Year 2023-24



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The Department of Visual Arts

The Department of Visual Arts at Ashoka University offers Minor and Concentration to undergraduate students from various departments. Our department combines courses in Art History and Visual Culture with training in material, media and site specific aspects of Studio Arts. While the Art History and Visual Culture courses offer historical and philosophical contexts in which visual arts has been developed and practiced, the Studio Arts courses help the students learn the fundamentals of an art form and develop it through practice. Both the components work in tandem and help the student acquire integrated understanding of arts. The Department actively seeks to create a robust culture of Arts and Practices through engaging scholarly and art research presentations, students' displays and exhibitions.

The Department offers two kinds of courses in our roster, Gateway courses and Elective courses. All courses carry 4 Credits.

Gateway courses are designed to offer thematic overview of various disciplines and media practices that constitute the field of Visual Arts. Considering Ashoka University's geographical and cultural location, Gateway courses introduce the students to the visual worlds of South Asian Art in its diverse forms, materials and media. These courses offer critical training to some of the basic terms and methods of reading histories of South Asian Art as part of larger global cultural formations. These courses explore sites of display of art in South Asia and beyond, and engage with practices of arts in various media and/or methodologies.

The Elective courses are designed thematically to introduce and address specific areas and questions that are central to the disciplinary fields in the realm of Visual Arts. These courses often extend beyond South Asia to raise larger questions around form, style, media and specificities of the visual image.

These courses engage with processes of production, reproduction, circulation and the impact of images on the viewing public, explore the shifting temporal and cultural locations of major art forms, movements, and dwell on methodological challenges posed by the turn to critical global art history.

Courses are interspersed with field trips to various sites in and around Delhi. Active field trips are designed by individual faculty with visits in various museums, galleries, public sites that provide out-of-classroom learning environment and produce an active engagement amongst the students.

The Department offers a common studio space with basic infrastructure facilities in Drawing and Painting, Woodcut and Lino-cut Printmaking, basic clay modelling and terracotta facilities with an electric firing kiln and electric wheels for pottery.

Courses are offered in the making of graphic narratives, photography and other forms of contemporary media.

Most practice courses encourage students to bring their works to a level of public exhibition or display within Ashoka campus, to be able to confidently receive informal feedback from their peers and larger university community.



*Students showing their work in a self-curated exhibition Fool's Paradise as an outcome of the course **Arts of Our Times II**, May 2023*

Faculty members (2023-24)

1. Rakhi Peswani
2. Sraman Mukherjee
3. Janice Pariat
4. Preeti Bahadur Ramaswami (Visiting Faculty)
5. Latika Gupta (Visiting Faculty)
6. Srinivas Aditya Mopidevi (Visiting Faculty)
7. Vishwajyoti Ghosh (Visiting Faculty)
8. Devan Barker (Visiting Faculty)

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Student Representative (Term 2023-24):

Shrradaa Ramesh

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Minor and Concentration Requirements

Minor:

Students pursuing a Minor in Visual Arts must complete **six courses** in Visual Arts. These include courses offered by the Department and/or those offered by other departments but cross-listed with Visual Arts (code VA).

For UG/ASP 2022 and onward: Four of the six courses taken should be Gateway courses. The four **gateways** are a balanced mix of courses across art history and art practices and they are :

Histories of South Asian Art : From the Earliest Times to the Present

Sites and Sights : Museums, Exhibitions and the Making of the Art

Arts of our Times I (Mediums and Media in Contemporary)

Arts of our Times II (Media as Material of Practice)

Rest of the two courses from the six mandatory courses for Minor pathway, can be any of the elective courses being offered by the department or cross listed courses from Visual Arts and other departments (For a detailed list of elective courses, please scroll down to see courses on offer during the academic year 2022-23.)

Concentration:

Students pursuing a Concentration in Visual Arts must complete **four courses** in Visual Arts. These include Gateway courses offered by the Department.

For UG 2022 and onward: All four courses for Concentration should be Gateway courses, which are:

Histories of South Asian Art : From the Earliest Times to the Present

Sites and Sights : Museums, Exhibitions and the Making of the Art

Arts of our Times I (Mediums and Media in Contemporary)

Arts of our Times II (Media as Material of Practice)

The Department recommends this sequence for the Visual Arts Gateway courses for batches graduating 2022 onwards.

Semester	Recommended Sequence (for batches graduating in 2024 onwards) - Visual Arts Compulsory Gateway Courses
1 st / 3 rd Semester (Monsoon)	Arts of our Times I: Mediums and Media in the Contemporary or Histories of South Asian Art: From the Earliest Times to the Present
2 nd and 4 th Semester (Spring)	Arts of our Times II: Media as a Material of Practice or Sites and Sights: Museums, Exhibitions and the Making of the Art
5 (Monsoon)	Arts of our Times I: Mediums and Media in the Contemporary Histories of South Asian Art: From the Earliest Times to the Present
6 (Spring)	Arts of our Times II: Media as a Material of Practice Sites and Sights: Museums, Exhibitions and the Making of the Art

Please note:

*Gateway courses are offered once every academic year, and sometimes over the summer semester. Histories of South Asian Art and Arts of our Times I are offered in the Monsoon semester, Sites and Sights and Arts of our Times II are offered in the Spring semester.

*The listing of Gateway and Elective Courses is provided in the Course Catalogue, and is subject to change.

Also note: No combination of co-curricular courses would count as a Minor/Concentration requirements against Gateway and Elective course for Visual Arts.

Cross-Listing Policy

While some of the courses offered by Visual Arts are cross listed with other Departments, the Department of Visual Arts also houses cross listed courses offered by other Departments. This is integral to the spirit of interdisciplinary enquiry that we seek to foster at Ashoka. Please note that all cross listing decisions are inter-departmental decisions keeping in mind the pedagogic objectives of specific courses.

Minor:

For UG/ASP 2022 and onward: A student completing a Minor in Visual Arts can take one such cross-listed elective course offered by another Department in conjunction with Visual Arts to count towards their minor.

Concentration:

For UG/ASP 2022 and onward: The number of permissible cross listed courses for students pursuing a concentration in Visual Arts offered by other Departments is zero, since there will be no academic space available for any as all four courses will be gateway courses.

Undergraduate 4th Year **(formerly ASP year)**

An additional year after 6 semesters of undergraduate Major, students can pursue 4th year with two additional semesters. Students can choose to write a thesis (Capstone) during the 4th year with the Department of Visual Arts. Alternately, they can choose to do an Independent Study Module (ISM) in Visual Arts , Art History or Art Practice.

The Capstone thesis can be of two kinds:

1. Visual Arts Thesis

- Requirement for this includes at least a Concentration in Visual Arts.
- The student, along with completing the thesis, will be required to take two visual arts elective courses to complete a Minor in the ASP year.

2. Interdisciplinary Thesis

- Such a thesis can be co-hosted by any other Department at Ashoka University along with the Visual Arts Department
- It is preferred that the student has done some visual arts gateway or elective courses
- Home and host departments collaborating on the thesis need to be mentioned in the SOP
- The SOP must mention certain specific areas of concern/ research interests in Visual Arts

The process to apply for an ASP thesis in the Department is as follows:

The student is encouraged to reach out to faculty within the Visual Art Department under whose supervision they're interested in developing their thesis further. The student has to subsequently submit the following documents:

1. Statement of Purpose: Addressing areas of research, specific set of questions; making a case for their interest in the field

of visual arts; identification of the problem, its scope, and the approach they will take. (Word limit: 500-1000 words)

2. Writing Sample of about 1500-2000 words.
3. If a student is interested in pursuing a practice based approach during their ASP in visual arts, a portfolio revision must be submitted to the Department at the point of application.
4. Covering Letter
5. Academic CV: Important areas to highlight are list of courses completed at Ashoka, extracurricular activities/achievements, internships, publications. Additionally, no personal details except the student's name and email ID are required.
6. Any other accompanying documentation such as artwork.
7. Further discussions about viability of ASP (Ashoka Scholars' Programme - Undergraduate Capstone year including thesis) and MLS (Masters in Liberal Studies) thesis need to be discussed on lines of methodology course/ courses to be offered by the Department.
8. For additional questions and clarifications, reach out to the acting Students' Representative, the department manager and the acting Head of the Department.
9. A tentative timeline of the project with particular deliverables.

Frequently Asked Questions

- a. What are the mandatory courses to complete a Minor in Visual Arts?

For UG and ASP 2022 onwards, the four mandatory (Gateway) courses are

- Histories of South Asian Art
- Sites and Sights
- Arts of our Times I
- Arts of our Times II

- b. What are the mandatory courses to complete a Concentration in Visual Arts?

For UG and ASP 2022 onwards, the four mandatory courses are the same as requirements for Minor. (Refer above, point a.)

- c. Do any courses have any pre-requisites?

Unless mentioned, most courses offered by the Department do not have prerequisites.

- d. Are courses to be taken in the order of levels (1000, 2000, 3000)?

It is not a mandatory requirement, but taking courses in the increasing order of levels is encouraged for the benefit of the students.





Studio Guidelines

1. The studio is open for public use only between 10am - 6pm from Monday to Saturday. The Studio is closed on Sundays.
2. The studio cannot be accessed by the public during class hours – 2:50-4:30 on Wednesday and Friday, 8:30-11:30am on Monday, and 6:30-8:30pm on Wednesday.
3. Students will have to check out and check in all the materials they are using in a register kept with the Studio Manager. Any damage to the materials will have to be compensated by the student who is responsible for the same.
4. Students taking studio classes can use the studio between 6pm-8pm between Monday-Saturday to finish course work only after booking it

by sending a mail to the Studio Manager, Mr. Anuj Yadav, at least 24 hours prior to when they want to use the studio.

5. The clay in the studio is primarily intended for the students enrolled in the following courses. If students who are not enrolled in any course but want to make use of the clay then they need to take the permission from concerned studio course faculty or Head of the Department.
6. The studio provides the following materials to students (enrolled in VA courses + rest of the students): drawing boards, easels, stools, printmaking press, glass tables for printmaking, Intaglio ink, pottery wheels, carving and ceramic tools, cutting mats, paper cutting knives, metal scales, measuring tapes, and masking tape.
7. Students will have to get their own paper, paints, paintbrushes, stationary, and printmaking blocks (wood/lino) and tools for use in the studio.
8. It is important to not leave materials lying around the studio and to keep the studio clean. Make sure you're responsible for your own space and that you don't damage others' artwork kept in the studio.

Course Catalogue (2023-24)

Gateway courses - Monsoon Semester 2023-24

VA-2004: Arts of Our Times I. (Mediums and Media in Contemporary)

Instructor: Rakhi Peswani

Course Level: 1000-2000 Gateway course

Course Prerequisites for students (if any): No pre-requisites

Class schedule: Thursday 3:10 to 6:20 pm.

Office hours: Thursday afternoon, 2pm - 3pm

Course Description:

This course will enable the fundamentals of contemporary artistic practices through the structures of Materiality, Space, Place, Time and (Im)materiality. Students will be urged to develop questions and expressions through a basis in practice of visual and other media forms. The course will engage experimentation in 2Dimensional, 3 Dimensional and time based media to arrive at ideas and concepts through formations of repetitions.

Framework and Objectives:

The objective of this course is to enable students with foundational clarity in contemporary artistic practices and its possibilities. The course is designed to provide students certain potentiality in observing or asking difficult/complex concerns or reflections with and through varying media of artistic practices.

The course will be based on certain guidelines of media specificity and expansion of concepts/messages through medium.

Since it is a studio based course, certain introductions to histories of abstraction and installation art will be provided through the framework

of revisionist art practices after 1960s as well as introductions to affective possibilities of artistic languages. Both these realms will be expanded through making of artistic forms, referring histories of art practices and artists, students presentations and classroom discussions. The overarching objective of the course is to provide students with faith and confidence in visual/aural/verbal languages that amalgamate other sense perceptions and to provide certain foundational understanding of language and affect in artistic forms.

Learning outcomes:

The objective of this course is to enable students with foundational clarity in contemporary artistic practices and its possibilities. The course is designed to provide students certain potentiality in observing or asking difficult/complex concerns or reflections with and through varying media of artistic practices.

The course will be based on certain guidelines of media specificity and expansion of concepts/messages through medium.

Since it is a studio based course, certain introductions to histories of abstraction and installation art will be provided through the framework of revisionist art practices after 1960s as well as provide introductions to affective possibilities of artistic languages. Both these realms will be expanded through making of artistic form and references towards art practices.

The overarching objective of the course is to provide students with faith and confidence in visual/aural/verbal languages that amalgamate other sense perceptions and to provide certain foundational understanding of language and affect in artistic forms.

Histories of South Asian Art: From the Earliest Times to the Present

Monsoon 2023

Course Code: VA-3006/ HIS-4007-1

Instructor: Sraman Mukherjee

Level 1000 to 2000 for Visual Arts and 3000 for History (Gateway course for Visual Arts and Elective Course for History)

Pre-requisites: This course has no pre-requisites

Monday and Wednesday 11:40 am to 1:20 pm.

Course Description

What is Art and who is it meant for? What is specifically South Asian about South Asian Art? What does it mean to think of South Asia and Art as analytical categories? Did South Asian Art always exist? Or were historical processes involved in the making of the field? Where do we locate the “genesis” of art in South Asia? Did art forms in South Asia emerge in a zone of cultural and social isolation? Or can we trace trajectories of trans-regional contacts, encounters, and exchanges as central to the shaping of the field of South Asian Art? What is space of tradition and innovation in the visual arts of South Asia? Did arts of South Asia “influence” artistic practices in other regions? How did artists at different points in history think about the region we identify as South Asia?

Seeking to address some of these questions, this course examines aspects of the visual arts of South Asia from its earliest traces in cave paintings and stone implements to sculpture, painting, illustrated manuscripts, calligraphy, and architecture. The course follows a chronological scale, from pre-history to c. 1980s. The vast geographical as well as the temporal span of the field will restrict the course from delivering an encyclopedic survey. Instead it will prioritize intensive analysis of selected themes. Rather than placing the teleology of South Asian “art” solely in the context of changing dynastic histories, the course takes up specific themes in art across a range of objects, artefacts, archaeological sites, built spaces, religious and political symbols, and institutions of art pedagogy and

exhibitions. In the process we address the questions of image, icon, and representations of body, landscape, portraiture in the context of social and ideological changes, aesthetic turns, shifting patrons and markets, and introduction of new material media. The course will probe both 'South Asia' and 'South Asian Art' as stable (art) historical categories and map the new methodologies and vocabularies employed by art historians.

Class discussions will form the basis for museum and (virtual) gallery visits to the National Museum of India (New Delhi), NGMA (New Delhi), National Handloom and Handicrafts Museum (New Delhi), Indian Museum (Kolkata), British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum and the MET which will enable us to study the works of art in their institutional locations and explore the visual dynamics of organization of exhibition spaces.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the course, we will be able to:

- a) Identify and analyze aspects of works of art and visual images in different material and medium using appropriate vocabulary.
 - b) Explore the main trends in the development of Art History and Visual Culture by accessing the critical essential skills.
 - c) Evaluate the approaches of artists, art historians, visual anthropologists and curators to the field of visual arts.
 - d) Develop the interests for a future training in critical art historical training and art curatorial programme.
-

Gateway courses – Spring Semester 2023-24

(Spring Timetable and course schedules are yet to be finalised.)

Sites and Sights: Museums, Exhibitions and the Making of the Art Spring 2024.

Instructor: Sraman Mukherjee

Course Code: VA-2005/ HIS-3802-1

**Level: Level 1000 to 2000 for Visual Arts and 3000 for History
(Gateway course for Visual Arts and Elective Course for History)**

Monday and Wednesday, 11:40 – 1:20 pm.

Course Specifics

Class Meets: Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:50 am to 1:20 pm

Office Hours: Wednesdays, Mondays 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm or by prior appointment

No Prerequisites

Description:

This is a gateway (compulsory) course for students pursuing a Minor/ Concentration in Visual Arts (both across UG/ and ASP. The course is cross listed with History and can be taken up as a Major/ Minor elective course by students of History. The course is also open for credit and audit to students across all departments (UG/ ASP/ MLS/ Graduate Studies).

Overview

What is Art and how do sites and spaces of encounter with the visual image condition our understanding of works of art? Seeking answers to these fundamental questions in art history and visual culture, this course brings in dialogue the works of art with the spaces that such works have come to inhabit in our present world – museums, art galleries, and other spaces of visual exhibitions. Moving beyond the established trajectories of looking at exhibitions, museums, and gallery spaces as storehouses of masterpieces of Art, or merely as spaces of ordering, classifying, and displaying objects and images, we will look closely at how exhibitionary practices of museums and public art galleries, constitute the very category Art around a select body of objects and images. Beginning with early modern royal and notable private collections, and cabinet of

curiosities across the world, the course will explore the specific moments of the coming into being of public museums and art galleries, freak shows and world exhibitions in Europe and across different parts of the world. It will explore how politics of collection, museum acquisition, display, and repatriation are tied with larger questions of colonialism, war, loot, postcolonial nationalist reassertions, and postwar encounters with race and ethnicity. With a specific focus on Asia, the course will map the connected global trajectories of art museums, art galleries and art fairs as diverse ways of engaging with the visual image. In the process it will highlight the role of the artists, curators, and museum/ gallery visitors in the production of a complex set of dialogues around artistic and curatorial visions. The course will end by looking at contemporary South Asia, mapping the challenges of redesigning exhibitionary orders of older museums and art institutions and spread of museum display modes for different intent in commemorative sites, theme parks, memorials, and new temples. This co-constitution of art and art museums will be addressed during class discussions and during visits to local galleries, museums, theme parks, and temples - to the Indian Museum, Kolkata, the National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi the National Museum, New Delhi, the National Handloom and Handicrafts Museum, New Delhi, the Rashtriya Dalit Prerna Sthal, Nodia, the Swaminarayan Akshardham Complex, New Delhi, the British Museum, London and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the course, we will be able to:

- a) Explore the main trends in the development of Art History, Visual Culture and Museum Studies by accessing the critical essential skills.
- b) Evaluate the approaches of artists, art historians, and curators to the field of visual arts and museum studies
- c) Explore curatorial practices in the art world
- d) Develop the interests for a future training in art curatorial programme and critical museum studies.

Arts of Our Times 2 (Media as Material of Practice.

Course Code: VA-3054
Spring 2024.

Instructor Rakhi Peswani

Course Level: Level 1000/2000 Gateway course

Course Prerequisites for students (if any): Recommended course as prerequisite (not mandatory) Arts of Our Times I: Mediums and Media in Contemporary

- Description of the Course:

This course will enable students to inculcate fundamentals of contemporary artistic practice through material or immaterial interventions within certain critical contexts of their choice. Students will be urged to develop questions and expressions through a basis in non-functional or fictional routes, basing their work in visual and/or other media forms. Students will be urged to produce a line of enquiry as an expression, in the formation of drawings, journaling, published material/blogs or any kind of public exposition of their ideas. Social/cultural contexts will be seen as terrains that enable artistic concerns through creative questions. Channels for information and communication will be seen as possible mediums to investigate and experiment in creation of artistic practices. 2 Dimensional, 3 Dimensional, time based media and other media forms will be explored to locate contexts of location and circulation. Arts will be seen as possible critical tool of communication, through interventions, provocations, positions, and reflections in social/political contexts.

- Learning outcomes:

- * To enable critical artistic practices outside the confines of studio based enquiry.

- * Enable a framework of practice that considers media as an amalgamation of social, political, cultural / aesthetic contexts and as a potential tool of creative and critical thinking.

- * To enable articulation of critical concerns through creativity and artistic continuities.

Elective courses offered 2023-24

Monsoon 2023

Empire, Nation and Art- Histories from the Visual Image

VA 3002/ HIS 3801

Level: 2000 to 3000, Elective

No Pre-requisite

Instructor: Sraman Mukherjee

Monday, Wednesday 3:10 – 4:40 pm.

This course explores global social formations from the fifteenth century of Common Era to our present times through the prism of visual images. We specifically focus on the centrality of visual archives in mapping histories of European colonialism under Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British empires. The course will address a range of colonial

formations and diverse articulations of nationalist thought and consciousness in different parts of the world through different visual forms across a range of media, sites, and objects. Beginning from naturalist paintings and drawings of unknown landscapes and oceans, descriptions of plants and animals, of unknown humans and exotic objects, the course moves on to explore diverse media and technologies of visual (re)productions like water colour, oil painting, lithographs, oleographs, chromolithographs, aquatints, photographs and the moving image, and maps different sites of visual simulations like cabinet de curiosities, 'freak shows', world exhibitions, metropolitan, colonial, and postcolonial public museums, art galleries, institutes of fine arts, crafts and design pedagogy. The course argues that global histories of colonialism, nationalism, and decolonization can be partially explored as histories of encounters, violent conflicts, tortuous negotiations, and often uneasy accommodations played out at the register of the visual image. The course urges us to rethink that notions of metropolis and colony, empire and nation, colonizer and colonized, alien and indigenous, as they are configured and reconfigured in the archives of the visual image, are historically relative, often fluid categories, having only situational relevance. Moving away from a purely Euro-centric discussion of the beginnings of Art and Art History, this course seeks to move towards a global history of art.

Visual Culture of Indian Paintings: Courtly Traditions

Monsoon 2023 - 24

Course Code: VA 2001/ HIS 3806

Instructor: Preeti Bahadur Ramaswami

Level : 2000

Monday and Wednesday, 10:10 am – 11:40 am.

Course Prerequisite: None

Attendance Policy: 90% mandatory

Course Description:

As mobile and portable objects, the visually saturated paintings made for Mughal, Rajput and Decani courts in pre modern India had many lives. Accessible today through museum collections the world over, they were once collected by elite patrons to fashion courtly identities. This course will lead students to explore pictorial language used in these paintings and see the framing of subjectivities within them. Beyond this, the course will uncover the social lives of these works as material objects, shaped by transregional networks that allowed cultural flows between people, places and artifacts.

Students will be led to examine the place of these paintings within the arts of the book with transcultural connections, from Europe to China. They will look at the histories of artistic practices involved in the making of these highly crafted works of art. What did visual style mean to artists and patrons, and how is it seen today? How do contemporary artists from India and Pakistan view this legacy and interpret it?

The course is interdisciplinary in approach. It will bring literary, performative and sensory studies to bear on understanding the visual using art historical frameworks. This will be explored through themes both as subject matter of the paintings, and as a lens for understanding the affective, cultural and political value of these works. The focus will be on paintings made between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries, and on contemporary reflections on this practice by artists from South Asia.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completing this course students will be able to:

- Locate transcultural and cosmopolitan encounters in premodern India through the arts of the book.
 - Read the past in the present through contemporary art works that reference these traditions.
 - Trace the agency of individual artists in the creation of highly calibrated art works.
 - Engage with a contemporary artist re- working miniature painting formats, and/ or an exhibition featuring works by 'contemporary miniaturists'
 - Curate a digital exhibition as term end project
-

Figure Drawing as Remembering and Reimagining

(Monsoon semester 2022-23)

Course Code: VA 2005-1

Instructor: Rakhi Peswani

Course Level : Elective 2000

Tuesday – 11:50 am to 1:20 pm, 1:30- 3:00 pm.

Course Prerequisites for students (if any): None

Course Description: The course focuses on the representations of the human body using drawing as a formal and conceptual tool. Through a practice led approach students will have the opportunity to develop a

three-dimensional understanding of anatomy and body structure by engaging with a wide range of materials, techniques and processes of drawing including cut-outs, stencilling, tracing & enlarging.

The course encourages students to think of observation based drawings as a process of dialogue between the physical and the visceral by working through a series of processes that reveal the transformation of the image at each stage. It values not just accuracy and attention to detail, but also the emphasis on developing a personal vocabulary by bringing in socio-anthropological layers of association with the body.

The course aims at presenting a wide perspective to figurative drawing with a focus on subjective visual explorations. It seeks to offer an insight into artistic practices wherein the human figure plays a pivotal role in communicating ideas, philosophies and experiences related to diverse socio-political, historical references. It is envisaged to familiarize students with skills and techniques that enable them to connect concepts, processes and materials into a concise whole through a hands-on approach.

The course will also introduce students to a range of drawing schemas from Italian and Northern Renaissance, Baroque and 19th C European Art. Student will also be shown figurative drawings from Ancient Egyptian Art, drawings from Indian painting traditions of Pahari, Mughal and Daccani portfolios.

Learning outcomes

- An understanding of drawing as a visual language with multi-dimensional possibilities.
- Experience of working with a range of drawing mediums and techniques.
- An insight into processes that enable the translation of concepts/ideas/emotions into visual forms.

Visual and Material Cultures of the Himalayas.

Monsoon Semester 2023-24

Course Code: VA-2006/ SOA-2215/ MS-3098-1

Course Instructor: Latika Gupta

Level of the Course: 1000/2000/3000

Tuesday and Thursday 8:30 am to 10:00 am

Prerequisites: None

Course Description:

This course focuses on the Western Himalayan regions of Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Tibet to understand how visual and material cultures are intrinsically connected with the idea of 'place'. It examines how places, cultures and people are constructed through representations — visual and written — both by outsiders as well as local communities. Students will engage with critical questions about the ethics of representation in imaging 'other' places and people through photography and writing, the political and social processes that inform the making of tradition, and the entanglements of politics and culture in the formation of regional and national identities.

We will study colonial and contemporary photography, travel accounts, art historical writing, contemporary fiction, material culture at temples and monasteries, performative rituals, museum displays, films and representations in popular culture. We will visit sites in Delhi to study material culture through its use, and look at the role that cultural markers such as architecture, clothing and food play in marking places of specific communities and cultures.

A key area of study will be major museum collections of Himalayan art in India, Europe and North America. Some of the questions we will be exploring include: How are cultures constructed through acts of museumisation? How did the field of Himalayan Art emerge? Where do we

locate this field; which geographical areas and religions are made emblematic of this discipline; which cultures are excluded and why? How were museum collections built and in what historical circumstances? What curatorial strategies are used to reconstruct the auras of objects? How are sacred objects of use segregated into categories of art and ethnography? The course will examine the recent museum-making impulse in the Himalayas through case studies of a range of museums situated in these borderlands — war memorial museums, community museums of conflict and trade route artifacts in the Kargil district of Ladakh, and museums in Buddhist monasteries to understand the relationship between heritage and religion, the impact of the movement of things from sacred sites to ‘secular’ museums, and to ask how a politics of remembrance may manifest in cultural production. The course will conclude with an introduction to contemporary Tibetan art and Tibetan/ Buddhist culture-in-exile where we will explore modern and contemporary art, poetry and literature, films and pop culture.

Learning Objectives:

- will be familiar with the broad field of the visual and material cultures in the Western Himalayas in Tibet, Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh.
- will learn about major museums and collections of Himalayan Art and be able to critically analyze the framing of objects as art/ ethnography, and questions of provenance research and label writing in object displays.
- will be conversant with critical questions around heritage, the politics of museums and the role of tradition in the construction of contemporary cultural identities.
- will acquire the critical tools to interrogate the nature and impact of representation of regions, cultures and communities through images and written texts.
- will be able to critically read images and texts, with a focus on meaning making through vocabularies and terminologies, and apply this critical thinking through a practical curatorial project with each student curating an independent exhibition.

Technology in Art: From New Media to the NFTs (Non-fungible Tokens)

Monsoon Semester 2023-24

Course Code: VA- 2011, MS 2397
Level 2000

Course Instructor: Srinivas Aditya Mopidevi

Level of the Course: 2000/3000 Undergraduate / Graduate

Elective Course

Prerequisites: None

Fridays, 3:10 pm to 6:20pm.

Course Description:

This course focuses on the relationship between technology and art from the New Media Art of the 1990s to the present global circulation of digital artworks registered as non-fungible tokens (NFTs). New Media Art that emerged in the wake of digital technology expanded the scope of artistic practice whilst being critical to the technologies it was mobilizing. Art in the time of the NFTs turned artworks into digital assets transacted predominantly through crypto and registered on a decentralized global network ledger called the blockchain. Mapping art's integral relationship with technology this course will unpack the diverse trajectories of video,

new media, and digital art forms that disrupted the clean categories of traditional art history. Further, it will investigate the economic dimensions that accompany the proliferation of digital assets discussing whether the emergence of the NFTs as a registering standard positioned art as an alibi to normalize crypto as a global tender.

The course begins by discussing the history of video art, from the early experiments of Nam June Paik to the immersive installations of Bill Viola, including seminal instances such as the Vision Exchange Workshop that led pioneering Indian artists Akbar Padamsee and Nalini Malani to explore the potentiality of video and animation. Drawing from the work of Ravi Sundaram, it will also discuss the proliferation of video and mobile phone technology across the Global South and how it transformed cultural production and consumption.

The course will also map the artistic responses to the internet & digital surveillance technology through the practices of Antoni Muntadas, Jodi Brothers, Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Trevor Paglen, CAMP (Mumbai), Hito Steyerl, Shilpa Gupta, Raqs Media Collective, and others. Further, it will introduce students to contemporary art practices driven by artificial intelligence including Refik Anadol, Entangled Others Studio, and Pindar Var Arman.

Followed by a detailed analysis of the seminal practices in the history of technology and art, the course also critically engages with the economic and ecological implications of NFTs on contemporary art.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students:

Will be well versed in the diverse histories of technology and art.
Will develop an understanding of art forms such as Video art, New Media art, AI art, and contemporary digital art in the NFT space.

Will develop a critical understanding of NFTs and their political and ecological impact.
Will learn the process of ideating, planning, and executing an art exhibition.

VISUAL STORYTELLING: Exploring visual storytelling with graphic narratives and comics

Monsoon Semester 2023-24

Elective Course

Instructor: Vishwajyoti Ghosh.

Course Code: VA-2010 , MS (1081 Level 1000)

Credits: 4

Semester: Monsoon 2022-23

Level: 1,2,3

Friday, 10:10-11:30 am, 11:40 am -1:20pm

Prerequisites: Basic interest in drawing and doodling, basic interest in mobile or DSLR photography, Visual research, basic mobile video making,

Course Description:

Introduction: Why tell stories visually

In the post pandemic world as the world's reading engagement is rapidly shrinking into a palm sized mobile, the engagement with the visual is rapidly becoming the new language, with the binaries between the texts and visuals fading away. In these times visual storytelling is making a strong space for itself in every form of information or content. Be it journalism, health information, economics or plain fiction, the visual approach is now here to stay, in an age where the best of storytelling, poetry, journalism or reportage are now visually led.

Visual Storytelling is an ever-evolving medium. From the cave drawings documenting the hunter's life or the Egyptian clay tablets that documented the Pharaoh's philosophy or the Persian miniatures that visually documented the Ruler's court or the wars, the Pahadi miniatures that visually articulated the leelas of Radha Krishna to the visual documentation in the modern era, from the peasant sketches of Van Gogh, the daily life depicted by Seurat, Degas and more or the nightlife by Lautrec, the Mexican muralists like Deigo Rivera, Orzoco, Chittoprasad, Indian artists like Ram Kinkar Baij, Somenath Hore to the best graphic narratives of our times by Chris Ware, Satrapi, Joe Sacco and now to the world of You Tube and Tik Tok animations the form has only grown both in terms of practice but also viewership and acceptance. In the visual world we live now, it is a form with a moving language now blending with technology. This course will blend these influences into ones' own practice to create comics and graphic narratives in sync with the practitioner's area of interest and discipline.

Graphic narratives can never be limited to a category but more than a form it has evolved to a medium that has embraced every subject which makes it a complete storytelling tool than an only entertainment or an informational one.

This course seeks to engage with this fast-moving genre of visual storytelling through comics and graphic narratives with a research led and inter-disciplinary approach, in sync with the student's core area of interest or discipline.

What this course is about

In sync with the time's media or information dissemination, it is important to learn and practice visual storytelling as both a language and a medium that can be incorporated in one's individual academic discipline. This approach can help the students in articulating their learnings, research and storytelling in multi-disciplinary formats that is much required in today's realm of information & content, where visual storytelling is an alternate and a popular form of information, opinion and communication.

Learning Objectives:

The semester will be a sequential flow from the history of visual documentation and articulation to the modern practices of graphic novels, political cartoons, comic strips, pulp comics and now mobile based visual narratives to a practice based approach.

In the fast-moving visual world, students will learn to negotiate between the visuals and the written word in the process of crafting their individual narratives. The students will also explore and practice the modes and methods of visual storytelling through their chosen styles and influences. The expected outcome for the students will be practice based learning to develop their visual storytelling language, exploring the fluid connections between fact and fiction.

Western Art and Propaganda

Course Code:

Course Instructor : Prof. Devan Barker

Monday, Wednesday, 8:30-10:00 am

Course Level: Course Prerequisites: None

Undergrad, Masters'

This course was designed as a general education elective and is conceived as an introduction to both the materials and the skills involved.

OVERVIEW

This course will focus on the use of propaganda, art, and other forms of persuasion starting with the Modern Era (approximately post-1860) and continuing to the present. Students will experience this topic through various social issues and cultural influences from around the world, including the visual, performing, and literary arts. This course emphasizes the development of aesthetic judgment and critical thinking.

4. Learning Outcomes

1. You will recognize how knowledge of the humanities can enrich your life as a disciple leader by promoting thinking, engagement, and empathy.
 2. You will interpret art and propaganda to understand what they reveal about history, culture, religion, and ideology.
 3. You will apply the tools needed to discern the meanings, messages, quality, biases and agendas found in the arts and propaganda.
 4. You will analyze the works of major composers, artists, writers, as well as cultures, movements, and themes of the modern era.
-

(Electives in Spring Semester 2023-24)

Spring timetable is liable to changes according to faculty availability.

Understanding Art

Course Code: VA-2079-1

Spring 2023-24

Course Instructor – Janice Pariat

Course Level – 2000 Elective

Course Prerequisites for students (if any): None

Description of the Course: This course explores the definitions of art developed by societies from the ancient Greeks to our globalised world. ‘What is art?’ is the question posed as we consider objects and activities in settings both remote in time and place and present around us. It attempts to build a critical language for classifying and evaluating a broad range of visual forms of expression. The disciplines of aesthetics, hermeneutics, iconography, and iconology are explored in order to find an approach that works across the cultures East and West. The course looks into connoisseurship, taste, and the role of the institutions of the art world.

Learning outcomes

- Demonstrate knowledge in various theories of art from Plato to Danto
 - Be familiar with the views of at least four philosophers of art
 - Critically evaluate at least two of the major problems in the philosophy of art
 - Distinguish between classificatory and evaluative approaches to art
 - Formulate their own critical responses to theories and problems in the philosophy of art
-

On Photography – Histories, Theories, Practice

Spring 2023-24

Course Code: VA 3018-1, MS-2239 (cross listed with Media Studies)

Instructors: Rakhi Peswani, Sraman Mukherjee

Course Level: 2000 to 3000 level

Elective course

Course Pre-requisites for students (if any) : Curiosity, interest in photography .

Description of the Course:

This course will bring together image making histories, concerns, theories and practices, based on photographic techniques and technologies. The course will comprehensively introduce proto-photographic methods and re-trace those with modern and contemporary material as well as some nineteenth and twentieth century cultural reactions and theories of photographic image-forms.

Considering its interdisciplinary nature, the media of photography will be introduced and explored through its contemporary usage as well as creative possibilities, bringing in perspectives from Art History, Visual Culture as well as artistic practice of the form.

Learning outcomes :

1. To recognize and locate photographic image-making language as a nuanced process with historical and theoretical underpinnings.
 2. To frame (reading) and craft (making) photographic practices from the discourse of technique, technology and aesthetics.
 3. To discern and gain confidence in situating and making of photographic image forms.
-

Crafting Identities: Arts, Crafts and Performative Practices from Central India

Spring Semester 2023-24

Course Code: VA 3040/PA 3009/ SOA-3103

Instructor: Preeti Bahadur Ramaswami

Level: 3000

Course description:

This course will focus on critically examining trajectories in artisanal and performative practices from the region of central India in post-Independence India. The states of Madhya Pradesh and the recently created state of Chhattisgarh will form the ambit of discussions. The course will acquaint students with case histories of practitioners, to trace trajectories of transformation. It will engage with questions of

caste and community, agency and selfhood to understand the shaping of art forms and their contexts as well as the role and modes of interventions in these practices, including the work of anthropologists, scholars, museums and institutions, and the market. Students will critically engage with discourses surrounding the representation of these forms, including the binaries of art versus craft, or the categories of folk and tribal.

Learning outcomes:

What are the forces that shape the lives and practices of individuals referred to in public discourse as craftsmen, or 'folk' and 'tribal' artists in post-independence India? How much agency do they have over their lives and practice and to what extent are they 'manipulated' by 'outside' mediators? How do caste and community shape their practice, and to what extent is it transformed when negotiating spaces beyond traditional contexts? And how do tradition and modernity parley with each other in the shaping of their careers? This course is designed to make students actively debate and engage with these issues and beyond, through case studies of practitioners of both crafts and performative practices from Central India. Oral epics, metal sculptures, clay reliefs, 'Gond' painting, body art (tattooing) are some of the practices that will form the focus of discussion. Students will also examine shifts in representation in museums and exhibitions and debate them.

Drawing as Extended Play

(Spring Semester 2022-2023)

Course Code: VA 3025-1

Instructor: Anni Kumari

Course Level

Elective 3000

Course Prerequisites for students (if any): None

Course Description: Can drawings be dialogues about provisionality, uncertainty, and change? Can drawings be explored as collaborative reflections on politics, history, identity, and culture? What is the purpose and relevance of drawing in contemporary times? In what ways can we think of drawings as something beyond, materials, materiality, skills, and techniques?

The course encourages students to engage with multi possibilities of drawings -as a thinking and visualization tool; as a visual tool to record factual details; as a process of blurring the boundaries between fiction and reality; and as a work of art meant to be viewed and admired by an audience. Through a practice-led approach, the course takes the students through various analog and digital processes that involve the creation of a set of drawings, transforming the drawings into GIFs, creating free-standing cut-outs, using the cut-outs for shadow projections and digital animations. Students will also be exposed to printmaking techniques, including drypoint, Lino, and woodcut, and will learn to experiment with text and sounds.

The core emphasis of the course is to 'free' the drawings from their background and allow them to make an intervention in space, time, memory, and history.

Classes will typically include experimentation with drawings of bodies in motion, representation of the human figure using lines, thinking of bodies in terms of positive and negative space, and the transformation of the image into a character. The assignments are aimed at encouraging students to think of the theatrical possibilities of drawing, assuming their role as that of a theatre director, planning the various stages of the composition and its interplay with light, sound, and text.

Learning outcomes

- An understanding of drawing as a visual language with multi-dimensional possibilities.

- Experience of working with a range of drawing mediums and techniques.
 - Practical understanding of working with free-standing cut-outs, shadow projections, GIFs, and drawing based video animations.
 - An insight into processes that enable the translation of concepts/ideas/emotions into visual forms.
 - Motivation to realize that visuals play a strong role in everyday communication.
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In Situ: Architecture, sculpture and painting in the Western Himalayas

Spring Semester 2023-24

Course Code: VA-3014/ SOA-3104/ HIS-3813-1

Course Instructor: Latika Gupta

Level of the Course: 1000/2000/3000

Prerequisites: None

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the architecture, sculpture and paintings of Buddhist temples and monasteries in the Western Himalayas, with a focus on extant sites in Tibet, Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh. We will study major sites of art historical and cultural importance, while tracing their roots and interconnections to developments in religion, iconography and aesthetics in the Kashmir valley, Bihar and Tibet.

The course focuses on studying monasteries and temples through their location, their usage, and changes in structure and style in response to religious and socio-political developments as well as changes in local

ecological conditions. The artistic strategies employed, the material used in making paintings and sculptures will be explored in relation to their geographic, architectonic and spatial contexts as well as ritual requirements. Students will be familiarized with artistic styles from the late 9th century onwards and the major iconographic programmes and deities of the 'Tibetan Buddhist' pantheon.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students:

- Will be conversant with major Tibetan Buddhist temples and monasteries in Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh.
 - Will have the ability to 'read' sites as architectonic spaces, and study the architecture, sculptures and paintings in relation to their usage.
 - Will be able to identify major deities of the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon and identify stylistic features of early Tibetan Buddhist art.
 - Will be familiar with developments in the art of the region in conjunction with changes in religion and socio-political contexts of patronage.
 - Will be able to write concise art historical notes and critically examine the lacuna in conventional museum records and display texts.
-

Collectivism in Art: Nodes from the 20th and early 21st Century

Spring 2023-24

Course Instructor: **Srinivas Aditya Mopidevi**

Level of the Course: **Undergraduate**

Prerequisites: None

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the multifaceted idea of the collective in artistic practices of the 20th and early 21st centuries. It unpacks how the idea of collective and collectivity evolved amid a diverse set of historical, cultural, and political contingencies in different parts of the world. From the Vernacular practices of art in India to The Situationist International in Europe, the idea of what constitutes a collective has seen radical shifts and transformations. Collectivism after Modernism, for instance, embraced the heterogeneous character of cultural formations and contested the established notions of individual artistic genius. The collectives that formed in the wake of the internet such as Sarai (New Delhi) began thinking beyond the framework of the nation-state with newly networked cultural communities across the world. At the same time, there are contemporary art collectives like the Gulf Labor Coalition, a temporary group of artists from New York who came together to fight for the betterment of labor conditions in the United Arab Emirates.

With an overview of collectivism in the 20th and early 21st Century, this course will unpack the radical potential and limitations of collective formations of the world. The geographical scope of the discussions will include South Asia, Aboriginal Australia, Indonesia, Russia, Japan to mention a few. The course aims to provide the students with a comprehensive idea of what it means to be a collective in the turbulent times we live in.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students:

- Will be well versed in the idea of collective and collectivism in the 20th and early 21st Century.
- Will develop an understanding of art movements such as Futurism, Dadaism, as well as the idea of collective in Vernacular practices of India and Aboriginal Australia.

- Will understand from a historical perspective the significance and limitations of a collective, especially in the turbulent times we live in.
 - Will be informed enough to embrace the idea of micro and macro creative collectives within the student community at Ashoka.
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VISUALISING THE MAJOR

Articulating the academic major through visual content

Course Code: VA-2050 /MS 2871

Semester: Spring

Level: 2000

Instructor: Vishwajyoti Ghosh

Prerequisites: Basic academic research based on one's Major, writing, basic drawing/ doodling, basic research and mobile photography.

Course Description:

Introduction: Visualising in the academic space

In these times as one's reading engagement is rapidly shrinking into our mobile handsets, especially in the post pandemic world, it is the interaction with the visual which forming a new reading relationship. Be it on an interest-based website or platform, or the social media platforms that are constantly pushing towards a stringer visual language. As the schism between the written word and visuals are challenged, often the text is now the new image. In these times visual articulation is

making a strong space for itself in every form of information or content, be it journalism, daily expression and even academics. In a post Covid world, much of the health information has moved to a visual plane, similar to explaining economics to the common man amidst the turbulence, or the Refugee crisis in Syria, and many others. The visual approach is now the new language of communication across the spectrum to make an engaged form of communication, information and understanding.

With the advent of social media and personalization of content consumption, visual communication has been fast and consistently evolving. From the black board in the classroom to the white board animations on social media, from informative visual pamphlets to educational comics, the blending of the academic information and the visual articulation, a new platform for educational dissemination and discussion has emerged both in the digital and analogue spaces.

The new forms of information, whether through print or the digital, through picture books to animations to pocket sized visual bites on the mobile, the new visual based forms have found both audience and acceptance. This has now brought forth a demand for content makers and practitioners who are willing to engage with it visually in terms of practice. In the visual world we live now, it is a form with a moving language now blending with technology. This course will blend these influences into ones' own academic major to create content that helps demystifying the respective discipline through visual content like comics, graphic narratives, zines and basic animations to reach out to a wider audience.

Visual led approach for awareness building, information sharing and education has now evolved both as a form and a medium that is now used in every discipline, as an independent genre both in the online and offline worlds. Today the visual form has drawn inspiration and been

influenced by multiple disciplines like painting, filmmaking, animations, the printed text, gaming pushing it to the next gen ux/ui platforms. It's this multi-disciplinary influence and framework this course seeks to work with.

This course seeks to blend one's academic interest with the omnipresent visual world through storytelling, visual narratives, blending academics and practice with a research led inter-disciplinary approach.

What this course is about

Exploring possibilities of visual based information dissemination, visual discussion and engagement, this course plans to engage with extending ones' academic learning to visual based practice. Exploring the genre as a tool and a form that can be incorporated in one's individual academic discipline. This approach can help the students in articulating their learnings, research and storytelling in multi-disciplinary formats. In these times when visual storytelling is a pervasive and a popular form of information, opinion and communication, the practice-based engagement will help students open up their learnings to a multi-disciplinary articulation as new age academic content creators.

Learning Objectives:

The semester will be a segmented flow from exploring multiple visual forms and practice like academic graphic novels, mobile episodes, zines, comic strips extending to a practice- based approach in sync with one's academic major.

Through the semester students will learn to negotiate between the visuals and the academic world and dive deep in the process of creating their individual content. The students will also explore and practice the modes and methods of visual practice through their chosen forms, styles and influences. The expected outcome for the students will be practice based learning to develop their visual storytelling language, exploring the fluid connections between academic learning and visual articulation.

Segmented timeline:

Weeks 1-2: Discuss works of visual based academic information through presentation, film clips, relevant visual narratives, academic comics, mobile episodes, comic strips, web shows and academic narratives in social media.

Weeks 3-5: Ideate, research, explore academic themes and its relevant visual mediums.

Weeks 7: Conceptualize through possibilities of form, information, medium, architecture etc.

Weeks 8: Presentation of idea followed by discussion on similar ideas & influences.

Weeks 9-14: Final completion with a mid-semester presentation in week 11.

Total Weeks: 14

Output Participation:

Though the output will be individual, the process of production will be based on field research, short studio collaborations and conversations with subject experts and work-in-progress presentations at regular intervals as discussed above.

Course Deliverables: Every student will be expected to develop, produce 1 research-based short visual story on the lines of graphic narrative/comic.

Attendance Policy: 90% minimum attendance

Elective Courses from Other departments- cross listed with VA

Courses from Department of History cross listed with VA

Stone, Paper, Bamboo, Silk: Sinophone Textual Cultures.

Course Code: His 3511, VA 3026

Email: eloise.wright@ashoka.edu.in

Course Description:

Today, when so much of our daily communication occurs via text or email, it can be difficult to imagine a world in which writing was the preserve of a tiny minority. Chinese characters are frequently cited as the oldest continuous written tradition, beginning over three thousand years ago, but in that time the physical form of the characters and the materials they were written on have transformed over and over again. We will consider what questions these problems raise for historians' use of textual sources by looking at writing as a social, material, and political act. What were the symbolic meanings attributed to writings that most people could not understand? What practical uses could writing serve? How did access to writing intersect with other social hierarchies, like gender and class? Beginning with the invention of writing in the Yellow River region, we will discuss problems such as: the relationship between speech and writing; changes in writing materials; writing for display and writing for use; censorship; Chinese characters in non-Chinese societies; and debates over script reform.

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the range of written artefacts produced in Chinese script across its history.
- Think critically about the material and social production of historical sources.

- Identify historical questions in historians' writing, and begin to formulate them for yourself.
 - Express arguments in coherent written and spoken English.
-

Courses from Department of Media Studies cross listed with VA

MS 1001 / VA 2014

Introduction to Audio Visual Production A K Ranjit Course cap 20

Overview : This is an introductory technical course on audio-visual media; students will learn to listen, watch and create audio-visual stories of their own. This includes an introduction to handling audio and video recording systems. From microphones to cameras, basic audio and video editing. The course would begin with a brief introduction of the various roles required to be taken up for the smooth running of a studio. We will cover camera handling and basic techniques to take good-quality videos. We learn about the kinds of different microphones and where and when to use which one. While learning audio and video, we will simultaneously begin basic editing to stitch together the shots and audio samples we take. Gradually we get into more nuanced editing techniques followed by studio lighting.

There will be a total of three assignments spread across the semester. Apart from the skills demonstrated at these points, students will also be assessed for maintaining proper records and logs and showing leadership skills when donning the various roles in the normal functioning of a studio.

Course name: Storytelling in the Digital Age

Course code : [MS-3051/ CW-2051] [MS-3051/ CW-2051-1] / VA 2015

Faculty: Natasha Badhwaj

Course cap : 25

Overview;;

This course will focus on the creative process of using digital technology as a medium and a tool of narrating personal histories. We will create podcasts and videos using apps and software, but more importantly our own talent and skill with scripting, drawing, interview, monologue, multimedia visualization, videography, design and editing.

AIM: The aim of this course is two-fold. Students will experiment with form using multimedia tools to combine audio, images, and video clips to tell a story. They will learn to create digital stories that explain a concept, make an argument, reflect on a personal experience and retell a family or community history.

Through workshops and targeted assignments, each student will be encouraged to craft personal narratives that delve into conflicts of identity and privilege and lead to a deeper understanding of one's own location in the intersecting grid of socio-economic, cultural as well as political hierarchies that dominate the times we live in.

Cinemas of India

Course code : [MS-3451] [MS-3451-1], VA 3019

Faculty: Aakshi Magazine

Course cap : 25

Overview:

The course will explore the cinematic language of Indian cinema developed over years and different industrial contexts. We will focus on 1950s 'golden era' of Hindi cinema, New wave of the 1980s and 'middle' cinema, and contemporary non-Hindi cinema. Engaging with the narrative style, formal elements, industrial and social context of the chosen films, the course will discuss key concepts like the Indian melodramatic form, realism, role of the song sequence and independent cinematic practices.

Learning Outcomes

Develop skills in film analysis and criticism
Introduction to Indian cinema

Writing Narrative Non-fiction: Craft and Practice

Course code : [MS-2241] [MS-2241-1]. / VA 2013

Faculty: Natasha Badhwar

Course cap : 25

Overview:

A short, succinct description of creative nonfiction is: True stories, well told. As a genre, narrative non-fiction relies on identifying the core questions and conducting deep research and interviews to seek answers and connections. The craft borrows from the toolkit of fiction to create compelling, honest writing that resonates with readers and kindles their curiosity.

This practical course will include reading and writing of reported narratives, profiles, first person essays, reviews, travel, food, history, films, true crime and memoir. The focus will be on both substance and style, guiding students with tips, prompts, exercises and analysis to learn and experiment with form and write visually. Students will be encouraged to find their voice and create honest, evocative, publishable essays.

Communication Theory and Behavioral Change

Course code : [MS-3210/ PSY-3141] [MS-3210/ PSY-3141-1 / VA 3020

Faculty: Purnima Mehrotra

Course cap : 25

Overview

“There is nothing so practical as a good theory.” — Social psychologist Kurt Lewin

We live in an era in which the processes of content production and the patterns of media consumption are changing rapidly. Even the most seasoned media professionals are struggling to determine what the media landscape of the future will look like and what business models can be

used to support it. It is in times like these when theories of mass communication are particularly valuable. The broadly explanatory concepts of theory help us understand some of the underlying ways in which humans respond to and share different types of information, and can help us make some informed predictions about what the future may hold. This course will introduce students to mass communication theory, and will focus on theories of audience and effect. This class will provide you with an overview of some of the important theories in the field, and will encourage you to think about how these apply to the real world and how they will inform your future work, perhaps, as a media professional. This course is cross-listed with Psychology as the two disciplines are closely related. Some studies that are considered seminal in the field of communication were originally conducted by psychologists, e.g. works by Hovland, Bandura, Lasswell, Lewin, Festinger and Fishbein. The two disciplines continue to enrich and enhance each other such that there are many common publication platforms, partnerships among scholars, and common faculty across departments. In terms of the historical evolution of the two fields psychology is an older and more established discipline than communication, hence communication continues to draw on the more consolidated approaches of psychology.

Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes

Understand the historical development of Mass Communication theories and how they link with historically important social, political and technological developments in the field of communication

Develop an understanding of the most often used theories of mass communication and the ability to apply them in research and practice
Critically evaluate theories as applied to practical mass communication problems e.g. media portrayals of sex and violence
Understand how mass communication is a powerful tool of persuasion and how it has been and continues to be used across sectors - advertising, politics, development etc.

Gender Lens Reporting

Course code : [MS-2115] [MS-2115-1] / VA 2012

Faculty: Neha Dixit

Course cap : 20

Overview:

Patriarchal agendas still form the bedrock of public discourse. Media outlets refuse to treat marginalised genders as equal participants in the nation and its politics.

Many news organisations believe that they are pulling their weight because they publish a few pieces that cater to gender – the odd inspirational business story, something about reproductive health, the occasional report of domestic or sexual assault, harassment, violence, government schemes or aid for the trans community.

So, how can we begin to fix this problem? The answer is that we can apply something known as a gender lens. A gender lens is not a tangible object; it is a way of looking at things, a means to critically assess a wide range of social and political situations, to see how gender-inclusive or gender-sensitive they are.

It highlights the difference in interests for various genders– within the same household, state, country, or globally – and also shows how they interact.

Simply put, it is like a pair of spectacles that correct the prevailing view of marginalised genders and their place in the world.

In this course, you will learn how across the global media, gender stereotypes are used to trivialise, objectify and sexualise. With the application of the gender lens, you will be provided with a viewfinder that filters all of that out and exposes the roots of inequality. It will help the students place the spotlight on the realities, needs and perceptions of all genders.

With a few exceptions 'gender issues' are always seen as exclusive of the wider world of economics, politics, sport and current affairs. This class will study reportage on women, men, and LGBTQI issues from an intersectional perspective, as tempered by race, ethnicity, nationality, caste and class – as well as other factors such as religion, culture and ideology. Through, news reports, films, exercises, field trips, seminars, and discussions, the students will learn how to cover essential stories – be they of war, poverty, or crime – objectively and responsibly, by looking for the intersections of gender and these “bigger” issues. The students will be taught how to use these intersections to write ground reports, narrative pieces and profiles.

Gateway course in Department Roster but not offered in 2023 -2024 :

Methods in Art History

Course Code: VA 4001-1

Course Specifics: Compulsory/ Gateway course for students pursuing ASP Capstone thesis or MLS Thesis in Visual Arts.

Prerequisites: The course is restricted to students pursuing ASP Capstone thesis or MLS Thesis in Visual Arts.

Course Description

This course introduces theories and methods of art history that have played a major role in its intellectual and professional formation of the discipline. From the pre-disciplinary cusp of Vasari and artistic biography in the Renaissance, the course will explore the origins of art historical scholarship in the eighteenth century, and then touch on a wide range of subsequent approaches, including Marxist, feminist, and post-colonial interpretations of art. The course approaches the discipline of art history as an archival mediated site of cultural critique and construction. Special attention will be given to the adequacy of established art-historical paradigms of formal, stylistic, and iconographic analysis in dealing with the “expanded field” of visual studies and image theory today. In addition, some consideration will be given to the professional structure of art history and visual studies as an increasingly “globalized” mode of inquiry.

Learning Outcome

The course is designed to help MLS and ASP Capstone students in Visual Arts develop their specific research skills for writing their thesis in Art History.

Gallery



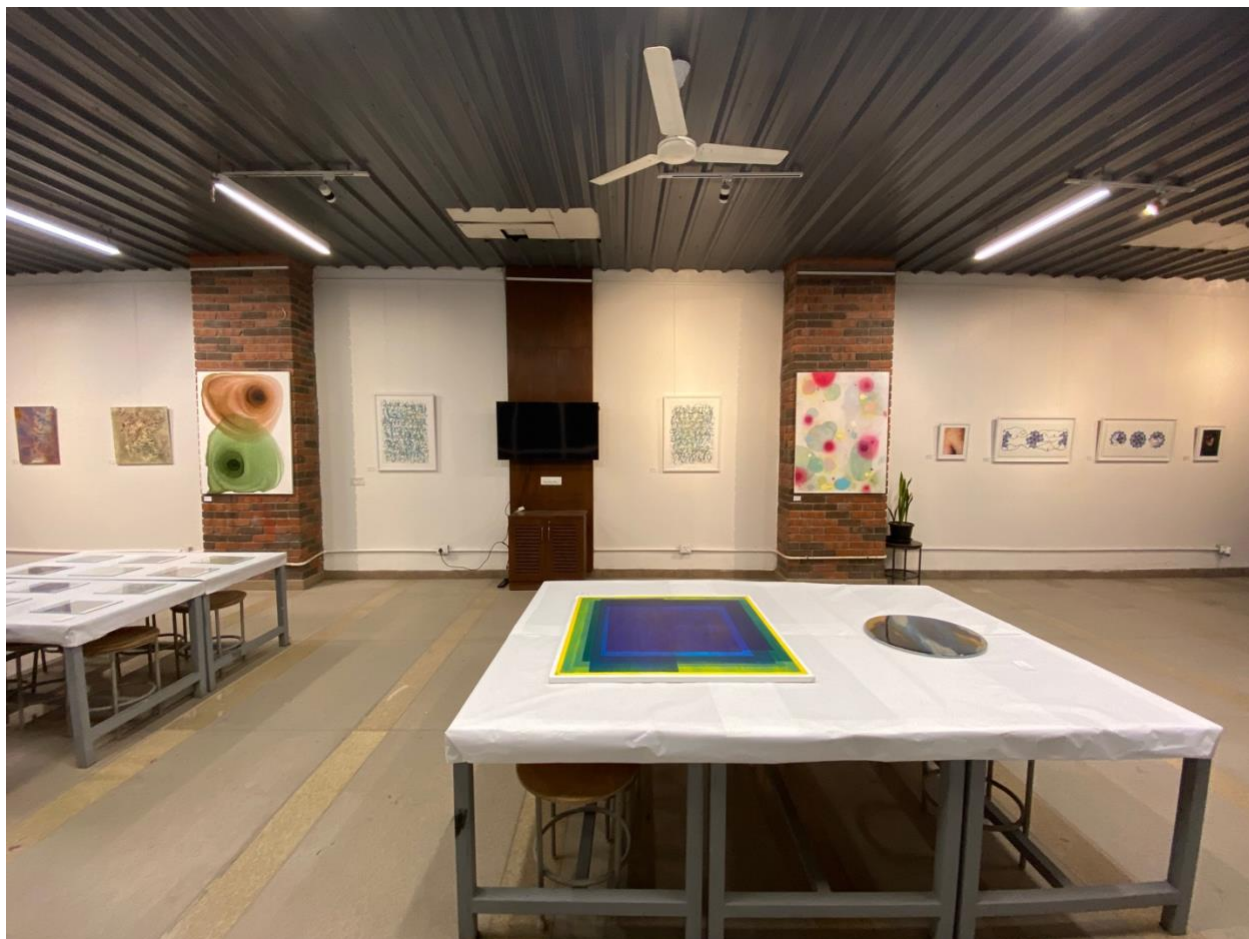
Students out on a field trip to Lodi Art District. March 2023



Students showing their work in a self-curated exhibition *Fool's Paradise* as an outcome of the course *Arts of Our Times II*, May 2023, Ashoka University.



*Students led on a curated walk by the Founder, Director Mr. Aditya Arya, at Museo Camera, Gurugram. As part of field work from the course On Photography.
A field trip was arranged by the department to the museum. March 2023.*



From the exhibition Blue and Other Things. Self Curated, students exhibition from the course Collectivism in Arts. May 2022. The works were generously donated for the exhibition by Terrain Art.

In Memory of



Prof. Kavita Singh

6th Nov 1964 - 30th July 2023

The Department of Visual Arts at Ashoka University is indebted to Prof. Kavita Singh, part of our esteemed Board of Studies panel. She provided formative mentorship to the program. An erudite scholar, a generous educator and a visionary institution builder, her elegant and electrifying presence has left an indelible mark on all who knew her.

The department will miss an excellent colleague and a dear friend.

Department of Visual Arts

