



UNSW Course Outline

MDIA2094 Visual Communication - 2024

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General Course Information

Course Code : MDIA2094

Year : 2024

Term : Term 3

Teaching Period : T3

Is a multi-term course? : No

Faculty : Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture

Academic Unit : School of the Arts and Media

Delivery Mode : In Person

Delivery Format : Standard

Delivery Location : Kensington

Campus : Sydney

Study Level : Undergraduate

Units of Credit : 6

Useful Links

[Handbook Class Timetable](#)

Course Details & Outcomes

Course Description

Note: The course code for this course was previously ARTS2094

Communication in contemporary media is as much about the visual as anything else, which

makes understanding visual communication vital if you want to work in media. As you will examine in depth in this course, visual communication typically combines a range of resources - written, visual, aural, spatial. By examining a wide range of media from newspapers to advertisements to memes, you will develop a set of techniques and frameworks to analyse these complex texts, especially their visual components. Understanding these techniques will allow you to develop a 'grammar' for analysing these texts and the role they play in making meaning, in professional, public, and personal contexts.

This course builds a complementary sequence when taken together with the course MDIA3011 Communication Design.

Course Aims

The course aims to develop students' analytical skills in relation to a range of contemporary visual texts, including those which combine aural and spatial dimensions. It aims to use analysis to explore interpretation, and to provide the foundation for critical discussion of visual texts. It aims to locate their analysis and critique of these texts in relation to questions of socio-cultural context, including the special demands placed on contemporary visual texts in professional domains.

Relationship to Other Courses

This course provides a set of analytical tools for understanding and critiquing visual communication, and is complementary to other courses in media including media studies, journalism, public relations, and advertising. It forms a complementary sequence when taken with MDIA3011 Communication Design.

Course Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes
CL01 : Identify the key principles of a social-semiotic approach to the analysis of visual texts.
CL02 : Systematically analyse a wide range of contemporary visual texts.
CL03 : Argue for an interpretation of these texts based on the analysis.
CL04 : Situate and critique these texts in relation to social, cultural and professional contexts.

Course Learning Outcomes	Assessment Item
CL01 : Identify the key principles of a social-semiotic approach to the analysis of visual texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-class Presentation• Knowledge Test• Take-home exam
CL02 : Systematically analyse a wide range of contemporary visual texts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In-class Presentation• Take-home exam
CL03 : Argue for an interpretation of these texts based on the analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge Test• In-class Presentation• Take-home exam
CL04 : Situate and critique these texts in relation to social, cultural and professional contexts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge Test• Take-home exam

Learning and Teaching Technologies

Moodle - Learning Management System

Learning and Teaching in this course

I use a dialogic and interactive style of teaching and students will benefit most if they are fully engaged in their learning via careful preparation of readings. The text book can be quite challenging and the main purpose of the lecture is to mediate this, but you need to have a go at reading it first, then go back to it after the lecture (yes, reading it at least twice!).

It's also important in this course to APPLY the frameworks to examples of your own choosing. This will activate the frameworks for you and help it all make sense. Plus, it's a lot more interesting if you choose the things you are interested in!

Additional Course Information

n/a

Assessments

Assessment Structure

Assessment Item	Weight	Relevant Dates
In-class Presentation Assessment Format: Individual	20%	Start Date: As allocated. Due Date: As allocated.
Knowledge Test Assessment Format: Individual	30%	Start Date: Please see Moodle Due Date: Please see Moodle
Take-home exam Assessment Format: Individual	50%	Start Date: Please see Moodle Due Date: Please see Moodle

Assessment Details

In-class Presentation

Assessment Overview

Individual presentation (3 minutes) with Powerpoint slides uploaded to Moodle.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Identify the key principles of a social-semiotic approach to the analysis of visual texts.
- CL02 : Systematically analyse a wide range of contemporary visual texts.
- CL03 : Argue for an interpretation of these texts based on the analysis.

Detailed Assessment Description

Please see full description on Moodle.

Assessment Length

3 minutes

Assessment information

Please see full description on Moodle.

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Generative AI Permission Level

Simple Editing Assistance

In completing this assessment, you are permitted to use standard editing and referencing functions in the software you use to complete your assessment. These functions are described below. You must not use any functions that generate or paraphrase passages of text or other

media, whether based on your own work or not.

If your Convenor has concerns that your submission contains passages of AI-generated text or media, you may be asked to account for your work. If you are unable to satisfactorily demonstrate your understanding of your submission you may be referred to UNSW Conduct & Integrity Office for investigation for academic misconduct and possible penalties.

For more information on Generative AI and permitted use please see [here](#).

Knowledge Test

Assessment Overview

Online test with multiple choice and short-answer questions.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CLO1 : Identify the key principles of a social-semiotic approach to the analysis of visual texts.
- CLO3 : Argue for an interpretation of these texts based on the analysis.
- CLO4 : Situate and critique these texts in relation to social, cultural and professional contexts.

Detailed Assessment Description

Please see full description on Moodle

Assessment Length

30 Minutes

Assessment information

Please see full description on Moodle

Assignment submission Turnitin type

This is not a Turnitin assignment

Generative AI Permission Level

No Assistance

This assessment is designed for you to complete without the use of any generative AI. You are not permitted to use any generative AI tools, software or service to search for or generate information or answers.

For more information on Generative AI and permitted use please see [here](#).

Take-home exam

Assessment Overview

In response to a set question, students will write an essay based on a number of supplied

images. 2000 words.

Course Learning Outcomes

- CL01 : Identify the key principles of a social-semiotic approach to the analysis of visual texts.
- CL02 : Systematically analyse a wide range of contemporary visual texts.
- CL03 : Argue for an interpretation of these texts based on the analysis.
- CL04 : Situate and critique these texts in relation to social, cultural and professional contexts.

Detailed Assessment Description

Please see full description on Moodle

Assessment Length

Please see Moodle for full description

Assessment information

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General Assessment Information

Please see course Moodle site for full details.

Grading Basis

Standard

Requirements to pass course

Please see the School of the Arts and Media information on attendance requirements.

Students must submit all assessments and make a valid attempt at all in order to pass the course.

Course Schedule

Teaching Week/Module	Activity Type	Content
Week 1 : 9 September - 15 September	Lecture	INTRODUCTION This week we do all the background stuff, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our texts: what kinds of visual texts will we be considering?• Our approach: social semiotics;• Our tools: meaning - denotation/connotation vs metafunctions• The core technical tools of system networks will be introduced, as well as some background on visual-verbal relations. Yes, it's a LOT! Don't miss this one :) READING: SEE MOODLE TUTORIAL: Each week, the tutorial is aligned with the Monday lecture content, with discussion and a range of activities. You need to be prepared for the tutorial by having completed the reading IN ADVANCE, and attended the lecture. Also this week, your tutor will allocate your presentation week.
Week 2 : 16 September - 22 September	Lecture	REPRESENTATIONAL MEANING: NARRATIVE PROCESSES READING: SEE MOODLE TUTORIAL: As led by your tutor, on narrative processes.
Week 3 : 23 September - 29 September	Lecture	REPRESENTATIONAL MEANING: CONCEPTUAL PROCESSES READING: SEE MOODLE TUTORIAL: As led by your tutor, on conceptual processes.
Week 4 : 30 September - 6 October	Lecture	INTERACTIONAL MEANING: CORE SYSTEMS READING: SEE MOODLE TUTORIAL: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (as allocated): NARRATIVE PROCESSES, CONCEPTUAL PROCESSES; + Further work on Interactional meaning: core systems, as led by your tutor.
Week 5 : 7 October - 13 October	Assessment	NO LECTURE ON MONDAY, AS IT IS A PUBLIC HOLIDAY YOUR KNOWLEDGE TEST (30%) WILL BE THIS WEEK, ONLINE, AS ADVISED ON MOODLE THERE ARE NO (GROUP) TUTORIALS THIS WEEK. YOUR TUTORS WILL BE AVAILABE FOR 1-TO-1 CONSULTS AS NEEDED. FURTHER DETAILS ON MOODLE.
Week 6 : 14 October - 20 October	Other	THIS IS YOUR FLEX WEEK. NO LECTURE OR TUTORIALS THIS WEEK. GET AHEAD ON THE READINGS FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. CONSOLIDATE YOUR SUMMARIES FOR THE FINAL EXAM. CLEAR, SUCCINCT SUMMARIES OF EACH SYSTEM WILL HELP TO MAKE THE EXAM A BREEZE!
Week 7 : 21 October - 27 October	Lecture	INTERACTIONAL MEANING: VALIDITY (/Modality) READING: SEE MOODLE TUTORIAL: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (as allocated): INTERACTIONAL MEANING: CORE SYSTEMS + Further work on Week 4 content, ie Validity (/Modality), as led by your tutor.
Week 8 : 28 October - 3 November	Lecture	COMPOSITIONAL MEANING READING: SEE MOODLE TUTORIAL: As led by your tutor, on Composition
Week 9 : 4 November - 10 November	Lecture	BRINGING IT TOGETHER: visual-verbal relations, developing an argument, foregrounding. READING: SEE MOODLE TUTORIAL: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (as allocated): Compositional meaning + Further work, as led by your tutor, on bringing it together, plus exam prep.
Week 10 : 11 November - 17 November	Lecture	MATERIALITY, THE THIRD DIMENSION, APPLICATIONS READING: SEE MOODLE TUTORIAL: As led by your tutor, plus fnal exam prep.

Attendance Requirements

School of the Arts and Media mandatory attendance requirements

The School of the Arts and Media recognizes that to equip students with UNSW Graduate Capabilities to be Scholars, Professionals, Leaders, and Global Citizens, it is vital to ensure regular attendance. Only through ongoing engagement with peers can students develop effective skills to communicate, collaborate with, and lead others, including the ability to negotiate cultural differences and the awareness to act ethically and respectfully around others. Furthermore, only in the classroom will students be able to voice their opinions, hear those of others, engage in debate to develop their knowledge, and learn first-hand from world experts in their field of study.

The School has a minimum attendance requirement of 80% for all non-lecture classes (tutorials, seminars, workshops, etc). Failure to meet the minimum attendance requirement will result in an Unsatisfactory Fail (UF) for the course regardless of performance on assessment tasks or other requirements for the course.

A student may be advised by the Course Convenor to withdraw from the course if they have already missed more than 20% of classes by the term census date. Students may also be refused final assessment if they have not met attendance requirements at the end of term.

An artefact of student attendance will be recorded by tutors and kept by the School. If a student has legitimate, documented explanation for absences (including adjustments provided by Equitable Learning Plans), the Course Convenor may choose to prescribe supplementary tasks in lieu of attendance.

Mandatory attendance requirements for SAM courses are aligned with these Program Learning Outcomes:

Bachelor of Arts (3409)

4. Collaborate effectively with others and engage sensitively with diverse cultural perspectives.
5. Communicate and debate complex ideas in a range of different contexts using a variety of suitable media.
8. Act ethically, respectfully and responsibly.

Bachelor of Media (3341)

2. Critically analyse the evolving media landscape in relation to historical, social, political, material and theoretical contexts, including settler colonialism
5. Deploy a critically informed approach to ethics, justice, and social engagement in media practices, industries, and contexts.
7. Collaborate effectively with local and international communities of practitioners across media contexts.

Bachelor of Fine Arts (4830)

4. Communicate complex ideas about art and culture using coherent methods for a variety of audiences.
6. Contribute to contemporary creatives fields through self-reflexive, ethical, and sustainable practices that incorporate principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
7. Employ professional practice principles to realise independent and collaborative initiatives.

Master of Communication and Journalism (8232)

4. Investigate and analyse issues and, through a range of media, articulate their complexities to a range of specialist and non-specialist audiences
6. Act ethically, respectfully, and responsibly in the context of professional and regulatory frameworks
7. Collaborate effectively with others

Master of Public Relations and Advertising (8281)

4. Shape nuanced, media-aware communication strategies and tactics for a range of specialist and non-specialist audiences
6. Act ethically, respectfully, and responsibly in the context of professional and regulatory frameworks
7. Collaborate effectively with others

General Schedule Information

There is one lecture of two hours' duration. Don't worry, we'll have a break in the middle!

Students are allocated to one tutorial class, also of two hours' duration. You must attend the class you are allocated to.

Course Resources

Prescribed Resources

The main reading for this course is the textbook, Kress, G. and van Leeuwen, T. (2021) *Reading Images: The grammar of visual design* (Routledge, 3rd Edition).

You must have access to this book, and please make sure it is the 2020/21 **3rd Edition**, as there are a lot of changes from the 2nd edition.

You can buy it via the bookshop in either [print](#) or [digital](#) form. The choice is *entirely* up to you.

Due to copyright restrictions, we can only make one chapter available electronically (see the Leganto [Library] link on Moodle).

Recommended Resources

Most weeks, there will be further readings, some of which are required, many of which are optional. These are listed in the weekly sections and will be available via the 'Leganto' library link on the course Moodle site. These will give further depth, and further examples of applications in different contexts.

Additional Costs

n/a

Course Evaluation and Development

Overall, this course is rated highly, but in 2023, students felt there was too much pressure with a long presentation, so that has been reduced this year. Some students also said there was too much focus on the textbook, but.... that's what the course is about!! This course teaches a particular approach to the analysis of visual images. Yes there are others, but this is not a survey course, and by the end of it, you should have a strong set of analytical tools that you can apply in a range of different contexts.

I welcome your feedback at any point during the course: online, in class, in an email... whatever works for you.

Staff Details

Position	Name	Email	Location	Phone	Availability	Equitable Learning Services Contact	Primary Contact
Convenor	Louise Raveli		Webster 311N	Contact by email: l.ravelli@un	Contact by email: l.ravelli@unsw.edu.au	Yes	Yes

Other Useful Information

Academic Information

For essential student information relating to:

- UNSW and Faculty policies and procedures;
- Student Support Services;
- Student equity and disability;
- Special Consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- Examination information;
- Review of results;

Please see: <https://www.unsw.edu.au/arts-design-architecture/student-life/resources-support/protocols-guidelines>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

- Copying: Using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This includes copying materials, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document, presentation, composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original information, structure and/or progression of ideas of the original without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's

ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

- Collusion: Working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student for the purpose of them plagiarising, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.
- Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.
- Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): Submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

The UNSW Academic Skills support offers resources and individual consultations. Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study. One of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items. UNSW Library has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW, but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time
- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Use of AI for assessments

As AI applications continue to develop, and technology rapidly progresses around us, we remain committed to our values around academic integrity at UNSW. Where the use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, has been permitted by your course convener, they must be properly credited and your submissions must be substantially your own work.

In cases where the use of AI has been prohibited, please respect this and be aware that where unauthorised use is detected, penalties will apply.

[Use of AI for assessments | UNSW Current Students](#)

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, alternative submission details will be stated on your course's Moodle site. For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle>

Late Submission Penalty

UNSW has a standard late submission penalty of:

- 5% per calendar day,
- for all assessments where a penalty applies,
- capped at five calendar days (120 hours) from the assessment deadline, after which a student cannot submit an assessment, and
- no permitted variation.

Students are expected to manage their time to meet deadlines and to request [Special Consideration](#) as early as possible before the deadline. Support with [Time Management is available here](#).

Important note: UNSW has a “fit to sit/submit” rule, which means that if you sit an exam or submit a piece of assessment, you are declaring yourself fit to do so and cannot later apply for Special Consideration. This is to ensure that if you feel unwell or are faced with significant circumstances beyond your control that affect your ability to study, you do not sit an examination or submit an assessment that does not reflect your best performance. Instead, you should apply for Special Consideration as soon as you realise you are not well enough or are otherwise unable to sit or submit an assessment.

School-specific Information

Use of Recording Devices

"To protect privacy and intellectual property, the School of the Arts and Media prohibits the use of recording devices in class (including live translation apps) without the explicit permission of

the tutor and other class members. Doing so will be considered a breach of the UNSW Code of Conduct and Values."

School Contact Information

School of the Arts and Media

Location: Room 312, Level 3 Robert Webster Building

Opening Hours: Monday -Friday, 9am - 5 pm

Email: sam@unsw.edu.au

Phone: +612 9385 4856

web: <https://www.unsw.edu.au/arts-design-architecture/our-schools/arts-media>