

Module: Ways of Seeing
Allocation of Marks: 100% Continual Assessment

Intended Module Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this module the student should be able to:

- Competently identify and apply the basics of visual analysis methodologies
- Understand the importance of historically specific cultural indicators in decoding visual forms of communication.
- Show an understanding of the language of visual communication; interpreting the creative and communicative elements within an image.
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- Assess, interpret and evaluate images on different levels including culturally and historically

Module Objectives

- Introduce students on how to interpret and evaluate images from a cultural, sociological and historical perspective.
- Develop skills in the structuring of the photograph to communicate meaning.
- Open discussion on the power relationships inherent in the process of representation.

Module Curriculum

The psychology of Vision and Visual Language:

What is human perception and interpretation of colour? A third of the human brain is devoted to vision and this is directly related to how we understand the world around us, this lecture introduces the psychology of perception.

Introduction to John Bergers Ways of Seeing:

Berger writes about how we read images in culture. In this lecture we analyze photography and painting in relation to text. Berger claims "It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by what we see"

The Nude – Representations of Women in the History of Art and the Media:

Analysis of the way Berger discusses the way women are seen in a different way than men within culture, this is analyzed through the history of oil painting and the media. The concept of objectification is introduced and how this myth continues to evolve throughout history.

Notes on the Gaze:

A focus on power relationships implied by the various practices of looking. An analysis of the way that the gaze is constructed to please the spectator within cinema and advertising. Introduction to the concept of voyeuristic pleasure.

The Importance of the Medium:

A discussion of the importance of the material nature of representation in its influence on how it is read or understood.

The Rhetoric of the Image.

A discussion of Roland Barthes' use of semiotics to decode visual communication. An introduction to the science of signs. How they can take the form of words, visual images and sounds. Saussure's categories of the signifier and the signified.

The Importance of the Medium:

What is photography, what are its particular qualities? Discussion of the importance of the material nature of representation in its influence on how it is read or understood.

Discussion of the Work of Contemporary Photographers:

Attempts to tackle the problematic theories of photographic representation.