

**HUMA 16000: Media Aesthetics: Image****Fall 2020****Instructor:****Email:****Writing Intern:****Office Hours:****Meeting time:**

The Media Aesthetics sequence teaches skills of analyzing and interpreting images, texts, and sound; it also considers the philosophical and methodological questions raised when we seek to understand the effects of these media. In the fall quarter, we concentrate on visual images –like paintings, photographs, and films–as well as writings about images and the visual arts. We will reflect on the particular kinds of knowledge and experience that visual media generate. One of the questions posed by the artifacts we study this quarter is whether images are better understood to reflect and imitate the real world, or to instantiate something new and transform the world in which they appear. To this end, our class will ask not only how visual media work but also why the relation between creating and copying, and between reality and imitation, has long occupied a central place in western culture. Our goals are to develop skills as spectators of visual media, readers of philosophical arguments, writers of sharp critical prose, and discussants of complex matters of representation; meanwhile, we'll also seek to continue growing as analytical thinkers.

Course Texts (at the Seminary Coop)Plato, *Republic*, trans/ed. Reeve, ISBN 0872207366 (you much purchase this edition)Suzan-Lori Parks, *Venus*, ISBN 978-1559361354

All other readings available on Box

SAMPLE COURSE POLICIES -- YOU MAY IMPLEMENT POLICIES AT YOUR DISCRETIONGrading

Attendance &amp; Participation: 15%

Short Assignments: 20%

Paper One (750 ww.): 20%

Paper Two (1000 ww.): 20%

Paper Three (1500 ww.): 25%

Class Participation

Participation in this course consists of contributing to discussions, arriving on time and fully prepared, and actively listening to your peers.

Short Assignments

I will frequently assign short assignments to be completed in conjunction with your reading. Assignments may include brief responses to questions, close reading of a sentence or image, outlining an argument, and so on.

### Writing seminars

You will be divided into seminar groups in which you will meet regularly with your writing intern, who will help you to devise drafts and workshop papers before and after final submission. These sessions are mandatory; missing a session is grounds for failing.

### Papers

You'll write three papers for this course, due X/XX (1000 words), X/XX (1000 words), and X/XX (1500 words). Formatting and citation: Papers should only make reference to works on the syllabus. Papers must be formatted as follows: Word Document format, 1-inch margins, Times typeface, double spaced, pages numbered, a header on the first page with your name, the professor's name, the name of the course, and the date. Papers must have titles. MLA or Chicago Style citation should be used with every piece of writing you turn in.

### Attendance

You may miss one class. If you miss more than one class, your final grade will drop a half grade (e.g. B to B-) for each class missed. If you miss more than three classes, you may be given an incomplete.

### Late work/extensions

Late work will be marked down. I will give extensions when warranted but you need to ask at least a day in advance of the deadline.

### Life events

Communicate with me immediately if something is going on that prevents you from fully engaging with this class. I am willing to make exceptions to policies under appropriate circumstances.

### Accessibility

I am committed to ensuring that all students can fully participate in class. If you have a documented disability and require accommodation for this course, please provide me with a copy of your Accommodation Determination Letter (provided to you by the Student Disability Service office) so that we can begin discussing how you can best thrive through this course. If your disability is not registered but you have, or believe you may have, a disability, contact the office at 773-702- 6000/TTY 773-795-1186 or disabilities@uchicago.edu, or visit the website at disabilities.uchicago.edu. If you need help navigating these services, please let me know.

If you have a documented disability, I encourage you to register with Student Disability Services. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met. Here is their contact information:

Address: 5501 S. Ellis Avenue  
Chicago, IL 60637

Phone: (773) 702-6000  
 Email: [disabilities@uchicago.edu](mailto:disabilities@uchicago.edu)  
 Web: <https://disabilities.uchicago.edu/>

### Academic dishonesty and plagiarism

It is your responsibility to ensure that all of your written work conforms to accepted standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism is not only copying others' work; any improperly documented use of ideas can constitute plagiarism. Please consult the discussion of plagiarism and academic honesty in *Doing Honest Work in College: How to Prepare Citations, Avoid Plagiarism, and Achieve Real Academic Success*, which you will be given by your writing intern. It is crucial that you are familiar with these standards, and it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with them. If these standards are in any way unclear to you, please consult with me. **Academic dishonesty is a very serious offense, even if it is unintentional. Any form of academic dishonesty may result in immediate failure of this course and disciplinary action.**

### Course Schedule

#### Week 1 Introduction: Image and Medium

A  
*Las Meninas*

B  
 Foucault, "Las Meninas"

#### Week 2 The Problem of Images

A Plato, *Republic*, Book 7 (pp. 208-214)

B Plato, *Republic*, Book 2 (p. 56-end), 3 (through p. 86) and 10 (all)  
 Optional/in class:  
 Motion Picture Production Code

10/11 12-2pm -- SCREENING OF *CLOSE UP* AT DOC FILMS, Ida Noyes Hall, 1212 E 59th St

#### Week 3

A *Close Up*  
Aristotle, excerpts from *Poetics*

B *Close Up*

**Week 4**                      **Photography and the Promise of Images**

A Andre Bazin, “The Ontology of the Photographic Image”  
Charles Baudelaire “Modern Public and Photography”

Optional:  
Poe, “The Daguerrotype”  
Holmes, “The Stereoscope” (pairs well with special collections  
stereoscopes)

B Coco Fusco, “Racial Time, Racial Marks, Racial Metaphors”  
Angélica Dass, *Humanae*

Optional:  
Omar Diop, *Diaspora*

**Week 5**

A SPECIAL COLLECTIONS OR SMART VISIT FOR EARLY  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
(see document on chalk which outlines special collections resources)

**For those not visiting SCRC or Smart:**

Pair 1:  
Jeff Wall, *Picture For Women*  
Eduard Manet, *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*

Pair 2:  
Cindy Sherman, *Untitled (Bacchus)*  
Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *Sick Bacchus*  
Optional/in class: [Cindy Sherman Instagram account](#)

B Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological  
Reproducibility”

Possible material to teach alongside Benjamin:  
Text:  
Vertov, “WE: Variant of a Manifesto”

Eisenstein, "Montage of Attractions"  
 Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction"

Film/image:

Early cinema clips

Dziga Vertov, *Man with a Movie Camera*, excerpt (in class)

Eisenstein, *Que viva Mexico*, excerpt (in class)

Sergei Parajanov, *The Color of Pomegranates*, excerpt (in class)

Greenaway, *Eisenstein in Guanajuato*, excerpt (in class)

Mickey Mouse

first ten minutes of *Modern Times*

Lascaux cave paintings

Riefenstahl, clips from *Triumph of the Will*

Svankmajer, *Down under the Cellar*

### Week 6

- A Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological  
 Reproducibility"
- B Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological  
 Reproducibility"

**11/6 5-6pm, Kent 107: Distinguished Faculty Lecture: Professor Allyson Field**

**11/8 3-5pm SCREENING OF *VERTIGO* AT DOC FILMS, Ida Noyes Hall, 1212 E  
 59th St**

### Week 7

#### **Looking and Gazing**

- A Alfred Hitchcock, *Vertigo*  
 Laura Mulvey "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"
- B Hitchcock, *Vertigo*

### Week 8

- A Suzan-Lori Parks, *Venus*
- B Suzan-Lori Parks, *Venus*

### THANKSGIVING WEEK

### Week 9

- A Kerry James Marshall, *School of Beauty, School of Culture*

B Open class/wrap-up