

**HUMA 16000: Media Aesthetics: Text
Winter 2021**

Instructor:

Email:

Writing Intern:

Office Hours:

Meeting time:

Course Description

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 Winter quarter, we focus on textual representation, and on the medium of writing in particular. Our readings and discussion will be organized around a number of key themes and questions:

Writing, Materiality, Textuality: What is a text? How do texts mean, and what else do they do? What is the difference between a written text and spoken discourse? In what ways does writing shore up, shape, or unsettle our sense of self? In what ways does writing aid memory, or corrupt it? How and when does writing serve as an instrument of power or discipline, and how might it open avenues of resistance, freedom, or play?

Reading and Interpretation: What does it mean to read a text? When and how is interpretation called for, or constricted? What makes one interpretation “better” than another? Are there criteria for valid interpretations, and can these be shared? Are there different ways of reading and can we articulate their various pleasures, purposes, or values?

Course Texts (at Seminary Coop)

Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Arden) ISBN 1408133474

Plato, *Phaedrus* (Hackett); ISBN 9780872202207

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (Mariner Books); ISBN: 978-0618871711

Course Requirements and Policies

Papers

You’ll write three formal papers for this course.

[end of week 3]: 750 words

[end of week 7]: 1000 words

[after week 10]: 1500 words

In order to prepare these papers, you will be divided into seminar groups in which you will meet regularly with [WRITING INTERN], who will help you to devise drafts and workshop papers before and after final submission. **These sessions are mandatory.**

Reading Period

March 12-13 is Reading Period; no class sessions or due dates may fall on these days.

Grading

Attendance & 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 1/29 (1000 words), 2/26 (1000 words), and 3/19 (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
 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.**

Class Schedule

Week 1 What is a Sign? Convention, Arbitrariness, and Difference

- A Magritte, *The Treachery of Images*
 Joseph Kosuth, *One and Three Chairs*
- B Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*: 1) "The Object of Linguistics"; 2) "Nature of the Linguistic Sign"; 3) "Linguistic Value"; 4) "Syntagmatic and Associative Relations"

- Week 2 Narrative theory and poetics**
- A Faoud Laroui, “Dislocation”
- B Shklovksy, “Art as Technique”
 Genesis Chapter 11
 R. Crumb, “Genesis 11” *The Illustrated Book of Genesis*
 Jorges-Luis Borges, “The Tower of Babel”
 The Rosetta Stone
 Joseph Kosuth, *Ex Libris J.-F. Champollion*
- Week 3 Interpretation and Authorship**
- A Paradise Lost, Lines 1-82
 Ronald Johnson, from *Radi Os*
 Tom Philips, *A Humument*, pp. 1-75
 William Burroughs, “The Cut Up Method”
 Tristan Tzara, “To Make a Dadaist Poem”
- B Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author”
- Week 4 Persuasive speech; Writing as technology**
- A Plato, *Phaedrus*
- B Plato, *Phaedrus*
- Week 5 Oral literature and the ethics of transcription**
- A Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (selections)
 Folk song recordings made by Hurston
<https://www.loc.gov/collections/florida-folklife-from-the-works-progress-administration/about-this-collection>
<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/guides/Hurston.html>
- B Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (selections)
- Week 6 Speech Acts and Performative Utterances**
- A J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*
- B J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*

Week 7 *The Tempest*A Shakespeare, *The Tempest*B Shakespeare, *The Tempest***Week 8** **Narrative, truth-telling, and the language of film**A Kurosawa, *Rashomon*B Kurosawa, *Rashomon***Week 9** **Text and Image**A Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*B Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*