

# Introduction to Visual Culture, Fall 2020

## SCHEDULE

*\*Schedule subject to change – check-in for updates throughout the course*

### Week 1

#### **Tuesday, August 18: First Zoom Meeting 10:15-11:30**

- Introductions, class policies
- Lecture (10-15 minutes): What is visual culture?
- **After class:** Please introduce yourself in the “general” discussion on our [Duke Teams space](#). In a few sentences, tell us about yourself and your interest in the course. Please also post a piece of “visual culture” of recent interest—we engage with visual media constantly in our daily lives; the first thing that comes to mind will work. Think about the broad definition of visual culture we discussed in class: this could be an artwork, advertisement, news image, music video, movie, gif, meme, etc. etc. Please embed this media directly in your post, and give us a sentence or two of context (who is the creator? when is it from? what are we looking at?). **Add your post by midnight on Wednesday, August 19.**
- **Read for Thursday, August 20th/Friday August 21:** Practices of Looking, Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-49

#### **Thursday, August 20: Images, Power, and Politics**

- Lecture (10-15 minutes): Thinking about Looking as a Practice
- Activity (30+ min): Practicing Looking
- Finish reading (Practices of Looking, Intro + Chapter 1) for discussion

#### **Friday, August 21: Discussion Sections**

- Quiz # 1 on *POL*, Introduction & Chapter 1
- Reading for Tuesday: *POL*, Chapter 2, pp. 51-88

### Week 2

#### **Tuesday, August 25: Viewers Make Meaning I**

- Reading Due: Practices of Looking, Chapter 2, pp. 51-88

- For Thursday: [Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding"](#) and start collecting visual culture objects for your Time Capsule

## Thursday, August 27: Viewers Make Meaning II

- Reading Due: [Stuart Hall, "Encoding/Decoding"](#)
- For Friday: assemble preliminary Time Capsule objects in a PowerPoint or Google Slides you can screen share on Zoom

## Friday, August 28: Discussion Sections

- Quiz #2
- Preliminary "Time capsule" objects due; 25-minute in-class small-group presentation and discussion of objects
- Homework:
  - start drafting blog posts for discussion on Friday, September 3
  - Read Foucault and Barthes for Tuesday, Sept. 1

## Week 3

### Tuesday, September 1: Lecture – Politics of Authorship

- Reading Due:
  - [Barthes, Roland. "Death of the Author." \(1967/1977\)](#) In Image-Music-Text. London: Fontana Press. Pp.142-148
  - [Foucault, Michel. \(1969/1998\). "What is an Author?"](#) in Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology (Essential Works of Foucault, 1954-1984, vol. 2). New York: The New Press. Pp. 205-222.
- Homework:
  - rough draft of blog post due Thursday, Sept. 3 @ 12 AM: please send a google docs link to your group
  - Read Abreau and Parham articles for Thursday

### Thursday, September 3: Lecture – Politics of Authorship II: Authorship, Identity & Social Media

- Reading Due:
  - Manuel Arturo Abreu, ["Online Imagined Black English," \(2016\)](#) Arachne #0–on gender, labour, and technology
  - Jason Parham, ["TikTok and the Evolution of Digital Blackface" \(Aug 4, 2020\)](#) Wired.

### Thursday, September 4: Discussion Sections

- Rough draft blog post – group feedback session during discussion sections

## Week 4

### Tuesday, September 8: Lecture – Modernity, Spectatorship, Gaze and Power

- Reading Due: Practices of Looking, Chapter 3: pp. 89-113

### Thursday, September 10: Lecture – Modernity, Spectatorship, Gaze and Power

- Reading Due: Practices of Looking, Chapter 3: pp. 113-138
- Assignment #1 Blog Post Due at 11:59 PM

### Friday, September 11: Discussion Sections

- Quiz #3

## Week 5

### Tuesday, September 15: The Colonial Gaze

- Reading Due: Mirzoeff, “[Introduction: The Right to Look, or, How to Think Within and Against Visuality](#),” in *The Right To Look* (2011), Durham, Duke University Press, pp. 1-30

### Thursday, September 17: Perspective from Renaissance Painting to Digital Media

- Reading Due: Practices of Looking, Chapter 4, pp. 139-177

### Friday, September 18: Discussion Sections

- Quiz #4
- Watch over the weekend: [John Berger's Ways of Seeing, Episode 1](#) (30 minutes)
- Read over the weekend: Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”
  - Note: This is a dense text. The John Berger film will directly address many of the changes to visual media with the introduction of “mechanical reproduction” that Benjamin discusses in the text. It was based on a close reading of Benjamin. It might be helpful to watch the Berger film before reading, then watch it again after.

## Week 6

### Tuesday, September 22: The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

- Reading Due: Benjamin, 1939. "the Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility (Second Version)." In *The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, Edited by Michael W. Jennings et al., The Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 2008., pp. 19-55.

### Thursday, September 24: Visual Technologies, Reproduction and the Copy

- Reading Due: Practices of Looking, Chapter 5, pp. 179-215.

### Friday, September 25: Discussion Sections

- Quiz #5

## Week 7

### Tuesday, September 29: Lecture – Simulacra and Simulations

- Reading Due: Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations"

### Thursday, October 1: Lecture – Brand Culture, The Images and Spaces of Consumption

- Reading Due:
  - Practices of Looking, Ch. 6, pp. 257-278, 288-296
  - ProPublica: "[Facebook Doesn't Tell Users Everything It Really Knows About Them](#)"

### Friday, October 2: Discussion Sections

- Quiz #6

## Week 8

### Tuesday, October 6: Lecture – Media in Everyday Life, Part I

- Reading Due: Practices of Looking, Chapter 6, pp. 219-256

## **Thursday, October 8: Lecture – Media in Everyday Life, Part II: The Interface**

- Reading Due: Alexander Galloway, *The Interface Effect*: Chapter 1, “The Unworkable Interface”

## **Friday, October 9: Discussion Sections**

- Quiz #7
- Discussion: group work on Assignment 2 on the Interface

## ***Week 9***

## **Tuesday, October 13: Lecture – Postmodernism: Irony, Parody, Pastiche**

- Reading Due: Practices of Looking, Chapter 8, pp. 301-336

## **Thursday, October 15: Lecture – Scientific Looking, I**

- Reading Due: Practices of Looking, Chapter 9, pp. 337-357

## **Friday, October 16: Discussion Sections**

- Assignment #2: Interface Analysis Due

## ***Week 10***

## **Tuesday, October 20: Scientific Looking II**

- Reading Due: Practices of Looking, Chapter 9, pp. 357-377

## **Thursday, October 22: Thea Ballard Presents Something on Sound Studies**

- Reading Due: TBD

## **Friday, October 23: Discussion Sections**

- Quiz #8

## Week 11

### Tuesday, October 27: Surveillance

- Reading due: Simone Browne, *Dark Matters: on The Surveillance of Blackness*, “What did the TSA Find in Solange’s Fro?: Security Theater at the Airport”
  - Suggested: [Dark Matters Introduction](#)

### Thursday, October 29: Rebecca Uliasz Presents Machine Vision & Critical Algorithm Studies

- Reading Due (tentative, may change):
  - Trevor Paglen, “Invisible Images (Your Pictures are Looking at You)” (2016) *The New Inquiry*
  - James Bridle, “Failing to Distinguish Between a Tractor Trailer and the Bright White Sky” (2019), *E-flux Journal* #101.
- Optional Listening: Data Science Ethics Podcast on Deepfakes, <http://datascienceethics.com/podcast/deepfake/>

### Friday, October 30: Discussion Sections

- Quiz #9

## Week 12

\*Individual Meetings for Assignment #3 this week

### Tuesday, November 3: The Global Flow of Visual Culture I

- Reading Due: *Practices of Looking*, Chapter 10, pp. 379-402

### Thursday, November 5: The Global Flow of Visual Culture II

- Reading Due: *Practices of Looking*, Chapter 10, pp. 402-433

### Friday, November 6: Discussion Sections

- Assignment #3 Draft / Discussion

## Week 13

## Tuesday, November 10: Visuality, Countervisuality, and “The Space of Appearance”

### \*Individual Meetings for Assignment #3 this week

- Reading Due:
  - Nicholas Mirzoeff, “[The Space of Appearance: #BlackLivesMatter](#)”
  - Isis Davis Marks, “Jammie Holmes, The Artist Who Sent George Floyd’s Final Words Across the Sky”  
Artsy.com, 16 June 2020: <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-jammie-holmes-artist-george-floyds-final-sky>

## Thursday, November 12: Final Exam Review

## Friday, November 13: Final Discussion Sections

- Final Exam Review Session

>> \*Assignment #3 Close Theory Reading Due on Tuesday, Nov. 17th \*

## Final Exam: Nov 21, 2020. Take-home, un-timed (24 hrs access)

EDIT

Introduction to Visual Culture, Fall 2020 is powered by [WordPress](#) at [Duke WordPress Sites](#). Please read the [Duke Wordpress Policies](#). Contact the [Duke WordPress team](#).