

# VISUAL AND CRITICAL STUDIES (VIST)

## VIST 102 Visual Culture (3 credits)

This course introduces an interdisciplinary approach to the study and research of the visual world. Students will be critically introduced to a variety of image-types (ranging from fashion and popular culture to fine art), and how those types developed throughout history. Through readings culled from the arts, sciences, humanities, and social sciences, the introductory application of varied, interdisciplinary research methods, and ongoing critical discussions, students will learn to recognize and interpret how different kinds of images produce different kinds of meaning; how images work in concert with text, sound, smell, and touch; why the study of 'visual culture' is so important in today's image-saturated world. Equivalent course ARHT 102 effective through Summer 2021.

## VIST 105 Global Foundations in Art and Visual Culture (3 credits)

This course will survey global art and architecture from the beginnings of image production, during the prehistoric period, through to the end of the Middle Ages. Week to week, the material will be focused thematically, organized in rough chronology, and located within specific geographic regions and cultural formations. Major topics will include the multiple and foundational definitions of 'art' found in various cultural contexts; the origins and development of systems of writing in relation to the visual arts; art's relation to power and propaganda in the defining of empire; the role of art in relation to myth, religion, and ritual. The course will also focus on developing a set of critical concepts and vocabularies, which are key to understanding global arts practices in their historic and their contemporary contexts. Meets the Graduation Writing Requirement for majors in Animation and Illustration, Fashion Studies, Product Design, Visual Arts, and Visual Communication Design. Equivalent course ARHT 105 effective through Summer 2021. Satisfies Great Works/Influences GenEd requirement; satisfies SEEDS Literary and Artistic Analysis student learning outcome in alignment with Educated Citizenry and Diversity and Intercultural Competency values.

## VIST 106 Modern Visions 1400-1945 (3 credits)

This course will survey global art and visual culture from the Fifteenth Century through the middle of the Twentieth Century, paying special attention to the development of Modernism and its many discontents. Major topics will include: visual culture's role in modern imperialism and nation-building; art and ritual in the age of secularism; the role of technology in art and design; art and the politics of (self-)representation. Meets the Graduation Writing Requirement for majors in Animation and Illustration, Product Design, Visual Arts, and Visual Communication Design. Equivalent course ARHT 106 effective through Summer 2021. Satisfies Great Works/Influences GenEd requirement; satisfies SEEDS Literary and Artistic Analysis student learning outcome in alignment with Educated Citizenry and Diversity and Intercultural Competency values.

## VIST 109 Special Topics in Global Art Cultures (3 credits)

Students will learn about the development of art and design practices from different parts of the world using changing thematic lenses and geographic foci. Topics include art's intersections within a given society's political, religious, environmental, economic, and social orders, as well as local aesthetics and critical systems of thought. For specific subjects, please inquire with the department. Fulfills the Special Topics requirement for majors. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits. Equivalent course ARHT 101 effective through Summer 2021. Satisfies Global Cultural Perspective GenEd requirement; satisfies SEEDS Analyzing Cultures and Societies student learning outcome in alignment with Diversity and Intercultural Competency; Educated Citizenry value.

## VIST 202 Material Matters (3 credits)

Prerequisite(s): VIST 105 and VIST 106 or departmental approval. This course takes 'things' seriously — the little things and the big things. It asks what anvils, comic books, iMacs, juice boxes, Tupperware, wedding rings, and zippers can teach us about the beliefs and values of the people who made, consumed, and discarded these objects. Students will learn how to 'read' physical objects by using the interdisciplinary theories and methods employed in Material Culture studies. Key thinkers and case studies will be introduced, and students will also chart where and how this field of study departs from the traditional disciplines of Art History and Cultural Anthropology.

## VIST 203 Modern Philosophies of Art (3 credits)

Prerequisite(s): WRIT 105 or HONP 100; students in the SEEDS program can take ENGL 110, ENGL 111, ENGL 114, HUMN 151, HUMN 160, HUMN 288, PHIL 106, or SPAN 242 in place of WRIT 105. Often how we see the world and evaluate it remains structured by major texts in aesthetics. This course presents how the major Western aesthetic paradigms articulate art. It connects those ideas to contemporary visual culture: for example, Plato's anxieties about art relate to current concerns about video games; Hume helps us think about taste and social media posts. Through careful reading of each philosopher's argument, students apply them to assorted contemporary visual culture objects from art to virtual reality. Equivalent course ARHT 203 effective through Summer 2021.

## VIST 205 History of Contemporary Art (3 credits)

Prerequisite(s): VIST 102; and VIST 105 or VIST 106. This course introduces the artists, critics, and global developments that transformed art across the second half of the 20th century and into the 21st. The course will look at the historical avant-garde in order to cast pop culture and postmodernism in high relief and examine the changing roles of artists and art institutions, the shift in art practices, and the rise of theory. By developing a knowledge of the historical role that minoritized populations, capital, globalization, and technology have recently played in art, students will be prepared to grasp the issues underlying much work produced today. Equivalent course ARHT 205 effective through Summer 2021.

## VIST 225 Special Topics in Health and Visual Studies (3 credits)

Prerequisite(s): WRIT 105 or HONP 100; students in the SEEDS program can take ENGL 110, ENGL 111, ENGL 114, HUMN 151, HUMN 160, HUMN 288, PHIL 106, or SPAN 242 in place of WRIT 105. Issues of health have always been propagated visually. This course provides an opportunity for students to explore a special topic in medicine and healthcare through the lens of art and visual culture. Topics may include: The AIDS Crisis in Visual Culture; Cleanliness and Medical Advertising; "Freaks" and the historical depictions of medical abnormalities; Plagues, Germs, and Contagions. Contact program for the specific topic presented each semester.

**VIST 235 Style Wars (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): WRIT 105 or HONP 100; students in the SEEDS program can take ENGL 110, ENGL 111, ENGL 114, HUMN 151, HUMN 160, HUMN 288, PHIL 106, or SPAN 242 in place of WRIT 105. Yves Saint-Laurent famously quipped that “fashion fades, style is eternal.” This enigmatic statement does much to elucidate the powerful place style holds in many contemporary cultures. This course suggests that tracing style’s fluctuating features and movements across varied social, political, aesthetic, and philosophical terrains is important work— and that this is particularly true within the realms of fine art, design, art history, and visual studies, as many important figures within these fields have come to both claim and contest the ownership of this term.

**VIST 251 Black Aesthetics: African American Arts and Visual Cultures (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): WRIT 105 or HONP 100; students in the SEEDS program can take ENGL 110, ENGL 111, ENGL 114, HUMN 151, HUMN 160, HUMN 288, PHIL 106, or SPAN 242 in place of WRIT 105. This course focuses attention on the way art and popular visual culture can help us understand the construction of race in the United States. Attention will be paid to conventional modes of representation, alongside those practices aimed at increasing equity. Fulfills People & Politics Elective Requirement for VIST majors.

**VIST 253 Special Topics in the Visual Cultures of Asia (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): WRIT 105 or HONP 100; students in the SEEDS program can take ENGL 110, ENGL 111, ENGL 114, HUMN 151, HUMN 160, HUMN 288, PHIL 106, or SPAN 242 in place of WRIT 105. This special topics course focuses attention on the way art and popular visual culture can help unpack the question, subject, and location of “Asian.” Attention will be paid to conventional modes of representation, alongside those practices aimed at increasing equity. Fulfills People & Politics Elective Requirement for VIST majors.

**VIST 254 Special Topics in the Visual Cultures of Africa (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): WRIT 105 or HONP 100; students in the SEEDS program can take ENGL 110, ENGL 111, ENGL 114, HUMN 151, HUMN 160, HUMN 288, PHIL 106, or SPAN 242 in place of WRIT 105. This special topics course focuses attention on the way art and popular visual culture can help unpack the question, subject, and location of “Africa.” Attention will be paid to conventional modes of representation, alongside those practices aimed at increasing equity. Fulfills People & Politics Elective Requirement for VIST majors.

**VIST 255 Special Topics in Visualizing Gender and Sexuality (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): WRIT 105 or HONP 100; students in the SEEDS program can take ENGL 110, ENGL 111, ENGL 114, HUMN 151, HUMN 160, HUMN 288, PHIL 106, or SPAN 242 in place of WRIT 105. This special topics course focuses attention on the way art and popular visual culture can help us understand the construction of gender and sexuality. Attention will be paid to conventional modes of representation, alongside those practices aimed at increasing gender and sexual equity. Fulfills People & Politics Elective Requirement for VIST majors.

**VIST 261 Camouflage (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 102. Camouflage embodies an adaptive practice of hiding, disguising and changing appearance as a strategy of protection from attack. This course traces the evolution of camouflage from nature to the fashion runway. We will also explore how the development of technology, modern warfare, surveillance, reconnaissance and drones have impacted how camouflage is conceptualized and applied in institutional, commercial and artistic practices and to mediate differing ideas of subjectivity, identity, privacy, and agency.

**VIST 262 See What I Mean: A History of Visual Communication Design (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 102; and VIST 105 or VIST 106. This course considers the long history of visual communication design -- from the earliest forms of icon-making and the invention of writing to the rise and eventual industrialization of print culture, the development of modern advertising and brand identities, and the ways that ‘the digital turn’ and the proliferation of screen culture is currently affecting the field. Students will be introduced to key designers and to watershed designs, while also working to thematize and deconstruct many of visual communication design’s most central terms: type, transparency, modularity, the grid, pattern, and notions of rhythm and balance will all be considered both formally and ideologically speaking. Equivalent course ARHT 262 effective through Fall 2021.

**VIST 263 Envisioning Value: Economy, Finance and Creative Practices (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 102. From the birth of coins and paper bills to political cartoons, as well as Hollywood blockbusters depicting the adventures of Wall Street tycoons, visualizations of money, finance and economy communicate social and political ideas and values. In this course, students will be introduced to films, popular objects, readings, and memes that reveal how our values of money and wealth are visually expressed, contested, and negotiated.

**VIST 266 Where the Garment Gapes: The Art of Addressing the Body (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 105 or VIST 106. Changing conceptions of ‘the body’ will be traced across a selection of the many styles and strategies used to represent the un- (or non-)dressed human form in Western arts and visual cultures dating from the Pre-Historic Era to the present. Among the themes to be addressed will be questions of: gender, race, sexuality, ableism, sizeism, youth and agedness, fecundity and potency, erotic art and pornography, Orientalism and the colonial imagination, social class and the ‘work’ of art.

**VIST 270 On Photography (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): WRIT 105, WRIT 106, HONP 100, HONP 101, or departmental approval; students in the SEEDS program can take ENGL 110, ENGL 111, ENGL 114, HUMN 151, HUMN 160, HUMN 288, PHIL 106, or SPAN 242 in place of WRIT 105. Discover photography’s roots, its ongoing social and historical impact around the world, and how it is being transformed by digitalization. Learn about photography’s relationship to truth and identity formation, its role in art as well as journalism and advertising, and how it revolutionized image making. Photography will be considered through technical, sociological, psychological, and political positions, while studying its significant international practitioners. Equivalent course ARHT 250 effective through Summer 2021. Satisfies SEEDS Historical Thinking student learning outcome in alignment with Diversity and Intercultural Competency value.

**VIST 271 On Display: Merchandising, Installation Art, and Material Culture (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): WRIT 105 or HONP 100; students in the SEEDS program can take ENGL 110, ENGL 111, ENGL 114, HUMN 151, HUMN 160, HUMN 288, PHIL 106, or SPAN 242 in place of WRIT 105. This course commences from the standpoint that the plate glass window is one of the most important visual technologies invented during the modern era. It considers the way new architectures and cultural practices first cohere around the visual forms of display enabled by plate glass windows, and the way these resulting visual grammars have come to shape a variety of artistic and design practices. Visual merchandising will be thought of in relation to tableau vivants and contemporary forms of installation art, while more personal modes of display are considered in relation to much more public forms of exhibition. Fulfills Materials & Technologies Elective Requirement for VIST majors.

**VIST 272 History of Product Design (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 102; and VIST 105 or VIST 106; and WRIT 105 or HONP 100; students in the SEEDS program can take ENGL 110, ENGL 111, ENGL 114, HUMN 151, HUMN 160, HUMN 288, PHIL 106, or SPAN 242 in place of WRIT 105. The History of Product Design course examines the products of the decorative arts and design from roughly 1700 to the present in Europe, the United States, and globally. Subject matter includes examples of furniture, household objects, textiles, fashion, graphic, and information design, and the built environment, in short, a large portion of "material culture" through which we seek to understand ourselves and the societies of which we are part and with which we increasingly interact. We will place an emphasis upon the raw and synthetic materials used in design, the role that these artifacts played in the lives of the people who designed, manufactured, and used them, and their intimate connection to the political, economic, and social conditions that provide their historical context and meaning. Fulfills the Special Topics requirement for majors. Equivalent course ARHT 272 effective through Summer 2021.

**VIST 275 Digital Cultures (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): WRIT 105 or HONP 100; students in the SEEDS program can take ENGL 110, ENGL 111, ENGL 114, HUMN 151, HUMN 160, HUMN 288, PHIL 106, or SPAN 242 in place of WRIT 105. Thinking about topics from artificial intelligence to XR, this course introduces the major issues and theories currently applied to digital art and culture, to include memes, robotics, digital art, video games, website design, and more. Readings explore an array of digital artefacts and present their complex histories and applications in order to think more clearly about how they proliferate meanings and ways of being across culture.

**VIST 282 History of Illustration (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 102. Illustration is a world-wide practice dating back to the earliest cave art, but our contemporary notion of illustration arguably stems from practices proliferating through the rise of mass media in the early 1800's, with global exchange and technology influencing the field at every turn. Students will analyze the evolution of illustration in conceptual and narrative thinking across various cultural contexts; examine the importance of the Golden Age of Illustration; study the progression of illustrative techniques in comics, children's literature, poster designs among other popular contexts; and be introduced to shifts in visual storytelling for animation and film, as well as the impact of emergent technologies on the visual culture and practice of illustration.

**VIST 290 History of the United States in Art (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 102, VIST 105, VIST 106, WRIT 105, HONP 100, or departmental approval; students in the SEEDS program can take ENGL 110, ENGL 111, ENGL 114, HUMN 151, HUMN 160, HUMN 288, PHIL 106, or SPAN 242 in place of WRIT 105. Art has played an important role in the history of the United States – from the prints that helped launch the Revolution, to the role of photography in revealing governmental neglect in modern tenement housing and beyond. This course proceeds through significant moments of United States history by surveying the popular images and artworks that powerfully supported ongoing fights for legal, economic, and social justice from the colonial era to today. Equivalent course ARHT 290 effective through Summer 2021. Satisfies SEEDS Political and Civic Life student learning outcome in alignment with Educated Citizenry value.

**VIST 302 Creative Practices and Enterprise (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 202. This course will introduce students to the multiple facets of the culture and creative industry echo system. Through collaborative work on a number of select case studies, students will examine the ways in which art, design, and emergent media intersect with economy, policy and society, including the art market; luxury industries; art and urban development; public policy; culture and globalization, artists collectives and self-organizing, and questions around labor and ethics.

**VIST 305 Theories of Looking: Critical Theory and Visual Culture (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 205, VIST 262, VIST 272 or VIST 282. This course introduces students to key texts and concepts that have contributed to the critical analysis of contemporary visual culture. Advancing new analytical skills, students will encounter discourse methods that address affect, cybernetics, economy and capitalism, gender theories, globalism, pop culture, post/trans-human and the anthropocene, psychoanalysis, and others. The emphasis will be on exploring how different critical frameworks expand our understanding of art and visual culture objects in any media. Students will cultivate interdisciplinary thinking and learn to apply the rapidly expanding field of critical visual studies. Equivalent course ARHT 305 effective through Summer 2021.

**VIST 306 Critical Design Studies (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 205, VIST 262, VIST 272 or VIST 282. This course offers students an opportunity to consider how 'the idea of design' has developed historically, while they simultaneously reflect on the way this idea functions within today's globalized world. Organized in a rough chronology, each week works to thematically introduce the different ways that 'the question', 'the practice', and 'the product' of design have all been mobilized, marketed, and theorized. The course challenges students to think across a complex, cross-cultural network of images, objects, services, interfaces, and experiences while working to determine the ever-fluctuating value that design has, as both a noun and a verb. Students will work to disentangle the idea of design from the complex webs of financial, cultural, and social capital that provide for its most practical and its most esoteric applications. Topics will include the ethics and the politics of design; the relationship between design and the arts and crafts; and how identity is shaped by design. Equivalent course ARHT 306 effective through Summer 2021.

**VIST 320 Special Topics in Visual Styles (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 205, VIST 235, VIST 262, VIST 272 or VIST 282. Each period of visual culture's history cultivates certain practices, styles, and values. This course offers students the opportunity to focus on a specific time period within a culture in order to learn about the stylistic criteria and major creative figures as they relate to the historical and cultural events of that time, but also to recognize their influence on subsequent movements and practices. Students will have the opportunity to pursue an independent research topic to investigate how some aspect of the cultural style influenced that historical moment or one since then.

**VIST 323 Special Topics in Visions of Social Justice and Practice (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 205. An interdisciplinary investigation of the role played by visual culture in the fashioning of social justice, within specially designated social and cultural contexts. Students will track how varied campaigns for social justice historically intersect and change via the close analysis of key, visual programs and campaigns for social change. Course will give students a sustained opportunity to closely consider the politics of representation and the representation of politics, and readings will introduce students to key voices and critical frameworks within the given special topic / area of study.

**VIST 360 Special Topics in Arts and Technology (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 202, VIST 205, VIST 270 or VIST 275. From telephones to computers, VR, robotics, digital networks and AR, technological developments have become a living context of our times. We live, communicate, pay bills, watch movies, vote, social interact, and learn about the world through these networked systems. How does technology influence everyday life? How does it influence art and cultural production? This series of special topic courses explores the myriad of ways in which art, technology and visual culture intersect. Contact the program for the specific topic presented each semester.

**VIST 361 Speculative Landscapes (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 205. Public discourse is dominated by debates over land. From the migrant crisis, gentrification, or the ballooning of real estate markets, to the erosion of public space, environmental disasters and drone aerial surveillance, these debates indicate broader questions about ownership, identity, and access. In this course, students will explore the ways visual practitioners question our place on earth as they imagine new territorial frontiers and homelands for humanity. It's like a visual Star Trek, but closer to home.

**VIST 373 Mining Material: Earthly Goods in Sight (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 202. Commodities such as coffee, cocoa, sugar, oil and minerals are steeped in heavy colonial history and patriarchal gender roles, as they are integral to contemporary debates around health, sustainability, community, and economic disparity. Many, once cultivated only locally, began trading in larger quantities across borders to serve the emerging markets of the "new world," or later the needs of a rapidly growing global market. In this course, students will engage with these commodities as visual objects and their associated underlying dynamics of extraction, production, consumption and waste.

**VIST 405 Seeing is Believing (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 305. In this first part of the two-part thesis capstone, a key, contemporary cultural issue will be presented by the instructor and students will research how visual culture works to give this issue its particular shape and texture, while critically analyzing how 'vision' is mobilized to help different publics 'believe' in this issue's importance. During the first half of the class, students will assemble the chosen issue's visual archive, determine its historical, visual antecedents, the primary visual logics at work in cohering this issue's overall image, and what (if any) counter-images are being made in relation to this issue. The second half of the class will challenge students to frame this issue as 'a visual matter' for a variety of audiences.

**VIST 406 Re:Frame (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 405. The second part of the two-part thesis capstone will challenge students to develop individually driven, analytical projects in relation to a cultural issue collectively researched and unpacked in "Seeing is Believing." These projects can take a variety of final forms, given the student's individual interests and professional goals. All projects will be collectively presented to the public in an end of the year research symposium that will include brief talks and a poster session that highlights each student's work.

**VIST 430 Theories of the Textile (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 305. Over the last half-century, many thinkers have worked to denaturalize common perceptions of 'the text' by capitalizing on those etymological and structural resonances that link it to 'the textile.' Interestingly, these thinkers' "radically materialist" theories seldom turned to the textile, itself, in the course of their investigations. This course moves beyond these theories' metaphorical textiles and looms, to explore the exciting, parallel insights produced by contemporary fiber artists and fashion designers located across the globe who are engaged in a variety of practices and cultural traditions.

**VIST 440 A History of the Future (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 305. This seminar concerns itself with some of the ways 'the future' has been differentially thought and represented through Modern and Contemporary Art and Design. From its outset, the course will be careful to attend to the notion that not all subjects have access to 'the future' in the same way and that much of modern political life is hinged upon managing this discrepancy. It will historicize and problematize how it is that contemporary artists and designers have come to be expected to always have an eye for the future/'what's next.' And it will, consequently, consider how thinking 'the history of the future' might provide an interesting way to think about the politics of art and design.

**VIST 460 Critical Hedonism (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 305 or VIST 301. This course focuses on modes of criticism, art, and design that oblige one to critically enjoy the world in ways that circumvent programs of conspicuous consumption and normative sexuality. It suggests that more 'repressed' forms of criticality and artistic practice are doomed to fail those subjects whose pursuits of pleasure are inherently marginalized or legislated against. It also considers how 'critical hedonism' might be particularly relevant in relation to the cultures of scarcity and austerity incurred by the recent global economic crisis, cultures which are presently compelling us to give-up on all sorts of 'frivolous' social and academic projects which are disproportionately located in the arenas of art, design, and interdisciplinary studies. In our pursuits, Louis the XIV will hold court with Louis Vuitton and turn-of-the-century dandies, decadents, and jazz musicians will all be considered alongside late 20th and 21st-Century Goths, hip hop heads and ravers.

**VIST 491 Independent Study in Visual and Critical Studies (3 credits)**

Prerequisite(s): VIST 302 or VIST 305; and departmental approval.

Independent study. May be repeated for a maximum of 12 credits.

Equivalent course ARHT 491 effective through Summer 2021.