NOTE-TAKER for COM 270: Visual Rhetoric
Dr. Carroll

The Quotebook

You think seeing is believing? No, believing is seeing. – The elf in The Santa Clause

The art of looking sideways. Denaturalizing.

The hardest thing to see is what is in front of your eyes. – Goethe

Typography is a beautiful group of letters not a group of beautiful letters. – Steve Byers

What distinguishes man from animal? Three things:

- A soul
- Silverware
- Symbols

Less is more. – Mies van der Rohe

The problem of pictorial representation "presses inescapably now, and with unprecedented force, on every level of culture, from the most refined philosophical speculations to the most vulgar productions of mass media." – Tom Mitchell

Symbols are the instruments that convert raw intelligence into culture. Without them, man's life would be one of immediate appetites, immediate sensations.

We are on the trail of images as they circulate, are appropriated and re-appropriated. They're leading us somewhere, right?

You cannot save souls in an empty church. –David Oglivy

Whereas painters are concerned with solving their own problems, the designer's role is to solve someone else's problems. The good ones design solutions with elegance.

Design is thinking made visual. – Saul Bass

Good design is as little design as possible.

Every appearance is also a disappearance.

There is no stone in the street and no brick in the wall that is not actually a deliberate symbol. –GK Chesterton

A fetish is a story masquerading as an object.

A sign is less than the concept it represents, whereas a symbol is something more.

How does stereotype work? It is created.

There is no word in Japanese for "art." Instead, "geijutsu, a word synonymous with function, purpose and aesthetics.

The last word in the 12-volume Oxford English Dictionary: "zyxt." "To see."

The brain is the densest object in the universe – 200 billion neurons.

We live with an unstoppable invasion of visual signs. They are broadcast, streamed, projected, posted, shared, liked, tweeted and texted, YouTubed, emailed, blogged. We live with a ubiquitous iconic presence. A pervasive preponderance of graphic signs and symbols. Pictures are everywhere, a cancerous growth of vision.

We consume pictures and no longer ideas. – Roland Barthes

Ekphrasis: the picturability of language, and language's capacity to make us see.

"As storytellers, what we do is remember. And to remember this world is to create it." – Tony Morrison

The more you know, the more you see. The more you see, the more you know. –Aldous Huxley

Something is seen not because it's visible; it's visible because it is seen . . . it was the magician's creed." – Daniel Wallace, The Negro Magician

Definitions of culture

Culture – the lifeblood of a people, the flow of moral energy that holds society intact.
--Gottfried Herder, who coined the term (kultur) in the mid-1700s

Perhaps it would be useful to consider visual culture less as objects and disembodied and more as a process, a dynamic exploration of the social context of both the 'seeing' and the 'seen' but also . . . the intentionality of the practices that relate these two moments.
--Chris Jenks, "Visual Culture" (1995)

Cultures are maps of meaning through which the world is made.
-- Peter Jackson

Culture is everything you don't have to do . . . Cuisine is culture, but eating is not; fashion is, clothing is not.
-- Brian Eno

Culture is a process – fluid, interactive, communal, ongoing, and always negotiated.
--Brian Carroll

Culture is what we do with the contradictions in our lives.
--Carol Greenhouse, Princeton anthropologist

Culture is the software of social life.
-- Townsend Stewart

Culture . . . is a suite of traits we inherit and also choose to disavow or to stress. It consists in part of the arts. It is something made and consumed, in socially revealing ways.
-- Michael Kimmelman

Culture identifies crucial ruptures, rifts, gaps and shifts in society. It is indispensable for our understanding of the mechanics of the world in this respect, pointing us toward those things around us that are unstable, changing, that shape how we live and how we treat one another. If we're alert to it, it helps reveal who we are to ourselves, often in ways we didn't realize in places we didn't necessarily think to look.
-- Michael Kimmelman

'Culture' names a rather amorphous entity. Human beings produce culture in the same sense that they produce carbon dioxide; they can't help it, but the stuff has absolutely no value in itself. It's just there.
--Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club*

It is one thing to attribute a group's characteristics to its culture; it's another thing to elevate that culture into a discrete set of traditions and

practices in which the members of the group can take pride simply because they are, willy-nilly, theirs.
--Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club*

Culture is only a response to the conditions of life; when those conditions change – and in modern societies they change continuously – culture changes, as well.
--Louis Menand, *The Metaphysical Club*

There are at least two ways of using the word 'culture.' The evaluative use has been more common when we are thinking about 'the arts' and 'literature;' to be 'cultured' is to be the possessor of superior values and a refined sensibility, both of which are manifested through a positive and fulfilling engagement with 'good' literature, art, music, and so on. The analytic one is used in the social sciences and especially anthropology: it seeks to describe **a whole system of significations by which a society or a section of it understands itself and its relations with the world.**
-- Cairns & Richardson, *Writing Ireland*

Culture exists as a form of politics, as a means of reshaping individual and collective practice for specified interests, and as long as individuals perceive their interests as unfilled, culture retains an oppositional potential. – George Lipsitz

SOME LECTURE NOTES

Introduction to Visual Rhetoric

We live with an unstoppable invasion of visual signs. They are broadcast, streamed, projected, posted, shared, liked, tweeted and texted, YouTubed, emailed, blogged. We live with a ubiquitous iconic presence. A pervasive preponderance of graphic signs and symbols. Pictures are everywhere, a cancerous growth of vision.

Influences on this?

- Mechanical means of digital production and reproduction
- Internetworked computers
- Social networks
- Dominance in culture of advertising
- Mobile devices primarily visual in nature and in metaphor
- Nature of popular culture, as a process and a product
- Dominance of mass media

Imagomania, videation, tyranny of the visual, a civilization of images.

It is natural for us to imitate, to make artifice, to produce representation. Why?

France and visual culture

France was the epicenter of modern painting during the second half of the 19th century. Its scientists and technicians paved the way for the inventions of both photography and the cinema. (The film Hugo pays homage to this.)

France has an impressive record of thinking about vision, visual representation, images, and still influential are Barthes, Foucault, Marker and Duchamps.

"The image has always had in France its commentators, its historians, its own debates. . . . There is a uniqueness to the image in France, a French genius for images even, in how we use, produce, practice and especially interpret them." – film scholar Antoine de Baecque

Images used to asked questions about power, vision, spectatorship, reality and other aesthetic and epistemological concerns. What do images do? What are they? How do they work? How are they structured? What doe they mean? How do they create meaning?

French writers in particular are interested in the place of visuality in language through a manifest desire to construct an entire text as an evocation, incorporation, or substitute for a visual object or experience.

The French have a more visual way of reading, in other words, rousing readers to see the images not with their eyes but with the mind's eye. Envisioning images with words, pictures as theme, evoking visual representation to generate the stories they tell, exploiting the world of the visual as or for structure, as a structuring metaphor.

None of this is about using images as ornamentation or consequentially, but as models for writing – graphical, visual, plastic models.

These writers "mobilize the image as a prism through which to view texts that are explicitly engaged with the visual. They interrogate the tenuous relationship between vision and understanding, suggesting that to see is not necessarily to know."

Visuality

Three types of visual messages.
- Mental
- Direct
- Mediated

All messages, be they verbal or visual, have both literal AND symbolic components.

Example, The New York Times flag. Literal meaning: The New York Times. Symbolic: Trusted. Traditional. Minted truth. One of a kind. Changeless.

We sense, select, perceive, remember, learn & know. A virtuous cycle suggested by Aldous Huxley. The more we see, the more we know; the more we know, the more we see.

None of us see ALL. We all select and attempt to make sense of what we've selected.

The brain readily responds to four major attributes in all viewed objects, all viewed artifacts and surfaces.

The Big Four

- COLOR
- FORM
- DEPTH
- MOVEMENT

Three "methods" to describe or explain color:

1. Objective. Color's three physical characteristics:
    - CHROMA (or hue, or wavelength)
    - VALUE (or amount of concentration)
    - BRIGHTNESS (amount of light that is emitted in or by the color)

Net effects of these physical characteristics:

- Blue: A cool color. Used for men's shaving products, pharmaceuticals.
- Blue-green is associated with constancy and is often used for packaging of intimate products, like toiletries.
- Orange-red is seen as related to activity, so it's a common choice for travel ads, leisure and pleasure.
- Bright yellow is associated with modernity. Combine both yellow and red and you get Kodak and Shell.
- Red: A hot color. STOP! Passion. Roses. Blood. Car and truck ads.
- Pink: Soft, calming. Used in some jails.

2. Comparative: red is like blood. Blue is like the ocean.

3. Subjective: the symbolic. Green = growth, nature. Black = night, danger, mystery, etc. Connotations.

FORM

We look for form; we look for (and see) patterns. We do this by looking for shapes, for connections. This explains stereotype, by the way.

DEPTH: Foreground & Background, Figure and Ground

Eight depth factors or elements

- Space

- Size
- Color
- Lighting
- Texture (or textural gradients)
- Interposition (the interplay of magazine titles with the cover art)
- Time
- Perspective (illusionary, conceptual, geometrical)

We also look at relationships of background to foreground, left to right, top to bottom.

MOVEMENT

We see or perceive movement even in static images. Film produces "apparent movement." It's not real, or actual, but perceived through the rapid juxtaposition of still image quickly viewed.

Another example: the ways movement is connoted in comic books. Nike's swoosh logo.

Visual implies the cultural practices of seeing and looking, as well as the artifacts produced in and by communication and media. These artifacts permeate our culture; they constitute our culture.

Rhetoric concerns persuasive symbolic actions. Rhetoric primarily seeks public audiences through symbolic interaction and identification situated in specific historical times, places, and contexts.

How is visual persuasion different from verbal persuasion? Can you make an argument using only images? Through imagery alone? Are images more emotional than words, or better somehow at communicating or eliciting emotion than are words? Are words more informative than images? More trustworthy?

Photos cannot say "ain't." What does this mean? Photos acknowledge. They certify that something is, or was. Images, the visual, are presentational, therefore. Words and language are propositional. Language has a syntax for making claims, whereas the visual does not. Images are uninflected representation.

Visual rhetoric affects the whole range of our activities:
- how we perform
- how we see literally
- how we see metaphorically

- how we remember, both individually and collectively
- how we memorialize
- how we confront and resist
- how we govern
- how we anoint or reify

Important, too, how meaning changes as images circulate, are appropriated, re-used. The example of The Migrant Mother, the flag raising at Iwo Jima, etc.

In this class we go beyond the texts and speeches that have dominated rhetorical study to examine how visual practices and artifacts influence and construct reality. This course acknowledges the pervasive presence of the visual in our society and in and through our culture.

We will learn to see in this class, to really see. To discriminate, to decode, to think about the visual messages that bombard us every day and that as Communication students we are asked to create. We will learn how rhetorical acts mobilize symbols.

Let's discuss signs and symbols for a moment. Distinguishing us from animals?

- Silverware
- A soul
- And symbols

SIGNS & SYMBOLS

In decoding or making meaning of advertising, to name just one example of visual culture, we draw on an entirely learned vocabulary of visual symbols, like an alphabet. What does the Apple logo mean or connote? Nike swoosh?

In fact, even the alphabet is a set of purely visual symbols.

Let's think of some interesting examples of visual rhetoric. Man-made v. God-made, or natural.

Is all of this culture? Visual culture? Can we come up with a definition of culture?

Flash poll

- What is culture?
- What is visual culture?
- What is visual rhetoric?

Identity, and defining who we are. Who invents or produces culture? Who accepts, rejects or ratifies culture? How virtuous is culture? How toxic can it be (porn, for ex., Confederate memoria)? "Our" culture? Hmm…. Who is the "we" here? Commercialism and capitalism trading in culture, producing culture. The swooshification of American culture.

High culture v. low culture

So, there is no one definition (or even two or three) that are RIGHT, making all others wrong. And these definitions are being negotiated; they are changing all the time.

Visual rhetoric, like language, constitutes or creates reality as well as describes and reflects it. In this way, what we do is apply sight as a social practice, not as simply a physical operation or activity – how meaning is created, negotiated, and contested.

In doing this, of course we learn a lot about ourselves, as well – how we perceive visual artifacts as products of our culture and of our experiences. We are conditioned, even taught to see and consume images in very particular ways.

Some organizing questions for us in this course:

- In what ways might the apparently simple activity of viewing be conditioned by custom, socialization and culture? (viewing ads, landscapes, other people, whatever)
- How and why are certain visual images recorded, preserved, or conveyed to specific audiences, while others are not? Why are some taboo?
- In what respects do presumptions about what is private and what is public inform each other's gaze or view and, as a result, his or her beliefs about how or even whether something is watched or seen?
- Who is seen, by whom, in what locations or sites or contexts, by what means, and for what reasons?

In this class we study images a lot like texts. We attempt to read them. We interpret meaning, but we more so give them meaning. We take from them meaning. We negotiate with them. They communicate. We sometimes even look to them for identity, even pleasure.

We also study ways or modes of seeing. Psychological, social, even neurological patterns and capacities of seeing and perceiving. This is more about the practices of seeing as opposed to the images (as texts) themselves.

The brain is the densest object in the universe. 200 billion neurons. Yet we have two blind spots in our field of vision. We're not even aware of them. We can't see 20 degrees right of center in our right eye, left in the left eye. The world simply vanishes. Our brains fill in those blank areas for us. We don't, therefore, see what is actually there, but an image our brain furnishes us. Hmm…. We perceive depth and dimension, 3D if you will, but we don't actually see it. We see flat images.

The mirror as reality? Nope. We see a reversed image at 50% the size. Don't believe me? Measure it.

If properly trained, we could see 10,000 different colors, depending on how we define color. Those untrained in the visual arts "see" or perceive about 4,000, though we can't name them all. In other words, we don't "see" most color variations, even though they are there.

Culture, as we just described and discussed it, heavily influences how and what we see. Red to us means stop, or love or passion or romance. Red to a Malaysian means death. To an Australian aborigine, something else. A Christian and a Muslim will see Memorial Library quite differently,

as we discussed, or the Eiffel Tower. A farmer and a rancher will look at a landscape very, very differently. (Texas/Colorado joke)

We see what we expect to see (stereotype), what we want to see, what interests us. We focus on what is conspicuous to us, and we filter out what does not apply. We are attracted to what is moving, what is large, bright, different or incongruous, new, beautiful, sexy, and as we just discussed, round or circular.

From *On Color*, David Scott Kastan, 2018

Paul Cezanne: Color is a collaboration, of the mind and the world.

Color marks our emotional and social existence. Our psychological states have color: we see red, feel blue, are tickled pink, and are green with envy. Gender is distinguished by color: we dress baby girls in pink and baby boys in blue, though at one point in history, we did it the other way around. We have rednecks and bluebloods, red states and blue states and green parties.

But we don't know much about color. We aren't quite sure what it is, or maybe we should say, where it is. Chemists tend to locate color in the microphysical properties of colored objects; physicists in the specific frequencies of electromagnetic energy that those objects reflect; physiologists in the neural processing of this information by the brain. So color seems to inhabit some borderland between the objective and the subjective, the phenomenal and the psychological, with chemists and physicists on one side and neurolobiologists and physiologists on the other. Philosophers patrol this border like NATO peacekeeping troops. For artists and graphic designers, the precise scientific nature of color is irrelevant. What matters is what color looks like.

Although what we are able to see is a function of a common human physiology, what we call it is a function of culture. If we don't have a word for "blue," obviously we don't use it to name the color sensation English speakers normally identify as that color. And this is true for some cultures vis-à-vis some colors. Physiology determines what we see; culture determines how we name, describe, and understand it. The *sensation* of color is physical; the *perception* of color is cultural.

The color names are not, then, related to intrinsic properties; they are how we come to know about those properties. The eye sees what it is disposed to see, in other words, and language does a lot of the disposing. Language may not be as much a garment as a prepared road

or groove. It focuses our vision, providing the lenses through which we look, defining the visual field.

No two people, even if they are standing next to each other, ever see exactly the same rainbow, and each eye of each observer sees a different one. The rainbow is constantly being re-formed as the light strikes different water droplets. The rainbow is not an object; it is a vision – a vision dependent on sunlight, water, geometry, and a sophisticated visual system.

Cornsweet illusion: Two seemingly tilted square tiles of obviously different colors, the lower white, the upper darkish gray. But place your finger over the line that separates them. Same color. But it is impossible to see them this way. Our brains *create* the sharply contrasting colors we think we see.

Color is always something created rather than merely detected, and not just in cleverly created optical illusions. A red rose. Which is its "true" color? The red we see in daylight? But notice that daylight shadows will make different parts of the same rose appear to be different colors. Is it the red by firelight? What? What is "real"? And how do we know? Our brains not only create color but also correct for lighting conditions, normalizing what we see. We see the daylight red and say, "That is the color of this rose." We discount the shades in shadows. And here's the kicker: Prove it. Prove that one red is the "real" or "true" red and not the others. To illustrate, ask how long or tall the rose is. What might you do? Get out a ruler and measure. Disbelieve the result? Get another measuring device and do it again. Now you know. But color? Length is extension in space. But what is color? We know only by sight, and we see differently.

Is color, then, something external to us, the result of a cause? Or, is it something that belongs to something else – the red to the rose? Or is it mostly a function of light, the light by which the object is seen? Or is it a function of the mind, of how we use that light to see something as color (or not as color). Perhaps it would help to say that color *happens*, not that it simply *exists*. Perhaps not.

Stare at an illustration of the US flag for about 30 seconds, then look at a blank piece of paper. You will see an image of the flag, but one in which the red stripes appear to be blue-green. This is called an after-image. The color distortion is produced by the fatigue of the retina's red color receptors to be excited by the white light reflected off the blank paper. We see a flag of blue-green stripes even though no such flag is there.

How many colors are there? How many in a rainbow? Newton thought seven. Some say 10. Some scientists maintain there are 17 million distinguishable colors. Others 2.3 million. Still others 346,000, with tints and shades in between. Maybe we can agree on 10 basic colors, with innumerable intermediate gradations in between.

The Dress, 2015
Is it gold and white, or blue and black? How do you know? How can it be proven?

Different kinds of sight: Eagles. Pigeons.
Pigeons have photoreceptors in their eyes that function much like the human eye, but with an additional set of cones. They are, therefore, tetrachromats, while humans are trichromats. This means is that where our three kinds of cones have specialized sensitivities to light of different wavelengths, which makes a visible spectrum of color possible, a pigeon has four, maybe five, allowing a much more complex color experience than that of humans. What does the rose look like to the pigeon? And is that the "real" or "true" color?

Culture: Asians looked white to Western eyes when, to be blunt, Asians were candidates to become Christians, to 16th century Jesuit missionaries. China and Japan. They became "yellow" when they seemed to become a threat to Western interests. Yellow's connotations include cowardice, duplicity, degeneracy, corruption, disease. "Yellow" skin was, therefore, produced by prejudice, not pigmentation. This perception then becomes normalized by the machinery of culture, with grave consequences.

Green: What is it? It's not a primary color. It can be made by mixing blue and yellow. But green is resident in most default palettes, like that of color television (red, green, blue) and color printers (cyan, magenta, yellow, and black). The English word comes from a proto-Indo-European root that means "grow," which makes sense. The French *vert* and the Spanish *verde* come from a Latin root meaning "sprout" or "flourish." So this etymological link between the color's name and natural growth is built in.

Green also has, historically, been associated with Muhammed and, therefore, with Islam. He was reputed to have a green turban and a green cloak, and when he died, his body was covered with an embroidered green garment, we are told. It became the color of the Fatimid Caliphate, which ruled all of North Africa from the 10th to the 12th centuries. The Green Path of Hope. The Iranian Green Movement.

The Saudi Arabian flag, and the flags of Iran and Libya. In the Great Mosque of Muhammad in Cairo.

The Impressionists. They weren't interested in producing or representing immediate visual sensations. These were artists "drinking in the intoxicating effects of the sun," wrote Philippe Burty in a review. Landscapes became lightscapes. But important here is that these painters were committed neither to optics nor to objectivity. They were painting something in between. Not objects as we see them, but the luminous air and light in between the eye and those objects. Monet: "I want to paint the air in which the bridge, the house, and the boat are to be found – the beauty of the air around them – and that is nothing less than the impossible. To me the motif is insignificant. What I want to reproduce is what lies between the motif an me."

What "lies between" is real, though transparent and insubstantial. It affects the appearance of objects, but it is not itself normally perceived. Thus, the impossibility of painting it. Cezanne called this "the atmosphere of objects." Light and air, which demand color, not contour.

The objects mattered to Impressionists only as they provided the particular occasions and necessary scaffolding for painting this in-between.

Monet said that "Color, any color, lasts only an instant, sometimes three or four minutes at a time." Sometimes the atmosphere appears to be enchantingly violet, but these are fleeting moments, occurring mainly in the liminal moments between daylight and darkness.

Why does Monet return again and again to violet? He didn't believe violet to be the atmosphere's "true" color, whatever that might be. It is no or less true than any other color produced by particular light. But it's not an arbitrary choice, either. It becomes for Monet a symbol as much as a sensation. He chose violet, not purple. Think about that. Why? Violet, unlike purple, has a sense of being magically lit from within. Monet is interested in painting something that by its perception changes as the conditions of illumination change, as those conditions de-stabilize color, the idea of color. What color is a haystack? A sunset? The cathedral at Rouen? Monet's answer is that they are the color (or colors) they seem to be at the moment of looking, the colors they have created in collusion with the light of that particular moment when they were viewed. Impressions. No one color is more "real" than the other. "Real" is the wrong word.

Monet turned from painting things in the light to painting the light of things, then ultimately to painting the light itself. The lily pond at Giverny provided a structureless "object" for displaying almost pure forms of luminosity, as color struggled to separate itself from the shape.

Black: Mexican painter Frida Kahlo punned in her diary, "Nothing is black; really, nothing is black." So is black nothing? The sum of everything? Physicists really do think that nothingness is black, where there is no color at all. There is only energy. The human visual system detects and processes particular wavelengths of energy as color, color we then name to label the visual experience of this processing. Black in this scheme has no wavelength. So for a physicist, black is not a color.

But we know better. Think Art Deco and Coco Chanel. Audrey Hepburn in Breakfast at Tiffany's. Think Dark Knight. Black Panther. Black might be a different kind of color than the seven basic colors, but it is used and perceived as a color. The seven (blue, red, green, orange, yellow, green, purple) are chromatic, meaning they are the constituent colors of light we see in a rainbow. Black is achromatic, a color that can't be seen anywhere among the gradients of color between those seven colors. Black is at the extreme of the range of tonal colors that exist between white and black, or all the shades of gray that can be made by their mixing.

WHITE: Colors don't "mean." Colors have their own meanings, but color can't tell us what those meanings are. We do that work. The dichotomy between 'pure' white and black or darkness. Good versus evil. Purity v. mystery, threat, deception. The One Drop Rule in Plessy v. Ferguson. White Supremecists. Black fists and black power. The black male body as threat (protests, the fist, Colin Kaepernick, etc.). This stuff is real. And note that white people aren't really white and black people aren't really black. We're doing this work, not pigmentation. White and black as colors had nothing to do with it. We make colors mean what we want them to, and this happens with little help or influence from our visual perception or reception.

CHAPTER 42 OF MOBY DICK: "The Whiteness of the Whale"

"It was the whiteness of the whale that appalled him."

A sign of beauty, innocence, majesty, joy, fidelity, and holiness. And yet, the "innermost idea of this hue" is what Moby Dick tries to explain.

It was the whiteness of the whale that above all things appalled me. But how can I hope to explain myself here; and yet, in some dim, random way, explain myself I must, else all these chapters might be naught.

Though in many natural objects, whiteness refiningly enhances beauty, as if imparting some special virtue of its own, as in marbles, japonicas, and pearls; and though various nations have in some way recognised a certain royal preeminence in this hue; even the barbaric, grand old kings of Pegu placing the title “Lord of the White Elephants” above all their other magniloquent ascriptions of dominion; and the modern kings of Siam unfurling the same snow-white quadruped in the royal standard; and the Hanoverian flag bearing the one figure of a snow-white charger; and the great Austrian Empire, Cæsarian, heir to overlording Rome, having for the imperial colour the same imperial hue; and though this pre-eminence in it applies to the human race itself, giving the white man ideal mastership over every dusky tribe; and though, besides, all this, whiteness has been even made significant of gladness, for among the Romans a white stone marked a joyful day; and though in other mortal sympathies and symbolizings, this same hue is made the emblem of many touching, noble things—the innocence of brides, the benignity of age; though among the Red Men of America the giving of the white belt of wampum was the deepest pledge of honor; though in many climes, whiteness typifies the majesty of Justice in the ermine of the Judge, and contributes to the daily state of kings and queens drawn by milk-white steeds; though even in the higher mysteries of the most august religions it has been made the symbol of the divine spotlessness and power; by the Persian fire worshippers, the white forked flame being held the holiest on the altar; and in the Greek mythologies, Great Jove himself being made incarnate in a snow-white bull; and though to the noble Iroquois, the midwinter sacrifice of the sacred White Dog was by far the holiest festival of their theology, that spotless, faithful creature being held the purest envoy they could send to the Great Spirit with the annual tidings of their own fidelity; and though directly from the Latin word for white, all Christian priests derive the name of one part of their sacred vesture, the alb or tunic, worn beneath the cassock; and though among the holy pomps of the Romish faith, white is specially employed in the celebration of the Passion of our Lord; though in the Vision of St. John, white robes are given to the redeemed, and the four-and-twenty elders stand clothed in white before the great white throne, and the Holy One that sitteth there white like wool; yet for all these accumulated associations, with whatever is sweet, and honorable, and sublime, there yet lurks an elusive something in the innermost idea of this hue, which strikes more of panic to the soul than that redness which affrights in blood.

This elusive quality it is, which causes the thought of whiteness, when divorced from more kindly associations, and coupled with any object terrible in itself, to heighten that terror to the furthest bounds. Witness the white bear of the poles, and the white shark of the tropics; what but their smooth, flaky whiteness makes them the transcendent horrors they are? That ghastly whiteness it is which imparts such an abhorrent mildness, even more loathsome than terrific, to the dumb gloating of their aspect. So that not the fierce-fanged tiger in his heraldic coat can so stagger courage as the white-shrouded bear or shark.*

In various languages, the word for "white" is related to the English word "blank." Spanish *blanco* and French *blanc*, most obviously. This sense of "blank" did not mean empty or vacant, but pale or white. Chalk was "blank" in the 18th century. Birds were often described as blank, or white. Milton's pale moon is "blank" in *Paradise Lost*. White isn't blank. It is not an "innocent" color, though we've made that connotation: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow" (Isaiah 1:18). Are sins red? Is the absence of sin white? No. Connotation. This leaves black what options? As the opposite, black becomes dark, stained, impure, sinful. What happened to color as simple optical facts?

Melville again: For Ishmael, white is pre-eminent, applying to the human race itself, giving the white man "ideal mastership over every dusky tribe." For the Liberty Paint Company in 1952, "Optic White" became its signature color, "the purest white that can be found," even though it was made by adding 10 drops of black paint. "If It's Optic White, It's the Right White," was the slogan. Ralph Ellison in *The Invisible Man* added, "If you're white, you're right." A lot of people actually believe this.

What does Ryman's painting mean? How do you know? This helps us get at the lie, the social construction of "white" and "whiteness." Is the painting white? Sort of. But not really. Language is the domain from which lies come. Truths in painting is visual; they are color. They come from the color, not the color of something and not a color that means something. This is why Ryman painted the color and not an object, not a thing, not a scene or whatever. He painted the "truth," the color. One critic called this painting "too perfect for words." Exactly. As soon as we generate words, we travel away from the painting's – and really the color's – "truth." Ryan's white is a white freed from language and, therefore, symbol. His painting is saturated with color, not with significance. Ryman: "The painting should just be about what it's about, and not other things." Ryman's white is not about other things; it is not symbolic. (Symbols must be learned before they can be recognized.) This white asks only to be seen. It's not classical, Christian, whatever. It is there before our eyes in place of what we think is supposed to be there before we looked. So we have to look again. We have to un-*see* before really seeing.

GRAY

Henri Cartier-Bresson: "You know, William (Eggleston, photographer), color is bullshit."

Bresson, Edward Weston, Ansel Adams, Edward Steichen, Berenice Abbott, Alfred Stieglitz, Diane Arbus, Walker Evans, Richard Avedon,

Irving Penn, Mary Ellen Mark, Robert Adams: All chose black-and-white photography over color (though it isn't truly b/w; it's grays; should be called gray photography, right?). Why? Why would they CHOOSE to discard color?

To these photographers, color was seen as something secondary, decorative, maybe even deceptive, and certainly distracting. Its absence then can be seen as a kind of purifying, as a sort of mechanical drawing.

The photo has no color. Blurry, grainy, fixed on a pewter plate, it is a view from the attic window of a country house in France. What happens when we add color?

Driving to Bryce Canyon, through the "Red Rocks" that weren't red. How to name or identify the colors we saw. Trying to imagine it all in gray photography. The landscapes and rock structures. Which would be more "real" or "true" – color or gray/b/w? We talked in the car about how to photograph what we were seeing, and what our goals would be in using color or in eschewing color. We agreed that there would be a truth in the gray photos that the color photos cannot convey. We also talked about how to photograph what we were seeing in b/w without seeming clichéd, without it becoming a self-conscious gesture. "Look at me, I'm retro! Artsy! Timeless!"

So there are different kinds of authenticity. There are assertions of artistic intent. These can become affectation, designed to produce a nostalgia for something we never had. A "look."

Dorothea Lange's Migrant Mother, 1936

What strikes you about this photo? It's iconic, a shared cultural memory, so it's difficult even to really see the photo.

What happens if it is in color? We would lose the sharp contrasts and the striking "facts" of the photo. What are these "facts"?

Color would individualize what the grays universalize, what they take out of time. Color would make specific what the grays have made immortal. Hence its iconoclastic appeal. That and its form – Madonna and Child. Once it is immortal, however, it exists outside of history, outside of the reach of any reform that it might have been intended to spur. It is too beautiful.

What does the photo mean? How do we know? According to whom?

Doug Kuntz's Migrant Mother, 2016

Which photo is better? On what basis? Is even asking to miss a larger point here? Which photo better depicts suffering and, therefore, does the better job of engendering our concern? How? What happens if Lange's is in color and Kuntz's is in grays?

The second photo is of course in color. That places the content in the "now" or the very recent past, in contrast to Lange's Migrant Mother. Kuntz puts this event back into the flow of time and history.

Is there something moral going on here? Does it matter that she's wearing jewelry, eye shadow, colorful clothing? That she and her kids are benefiting from relief and relief workers? (The silver blankets.)

Are these photographers "taking" photos or "making" them? Lange posed hers. I don't know what Kuntz did. But he chose color. The medium is very much part of the message, even the choice of whether to use color. Color can distract. It can also satisfy, and when depicting suffering, maybe that's a lesser choice. Grays seem to withhold comfort. Gray isn't the sound of silence, but it might be its color.

The film *Pleasantville* nibbles at some of these questions, but it never goes beyond a very superficial exploration of some of these questions. It's pop culture, after all. In the film, color slowly begins to appear throughout the TV town. One red rose, to return us to our beginnings here. A red rose signifying passion, feeling, individuality and some sense of personal identity and freedom. Red. Sin. Carnal. A rose. The garden of Eden. Original sin. It appears after two of the high school characters have a sexual encounter, something previously impossible for scripted TV characters. A battle over the future of the town ensues, with the power brokers attempting to preserve their gray world. "No Coloreds" signs begin appearing, a symbolic reference to race relations and those battles in Southern cities, also over basic human dignity, choice and freedom. There's even a courtroom scene with a special section for the "Coloreds," perhaps a reference to To Kill A Mockingbird. Of course, color eventually wins, taking over the entire town, bringing with it wonder and possibility, as well as complexity and challenge. Pleasantville "falls" into color.

RED: The History of a Color, by Michel Pastoureau

"A color never appears in isolation. It takes on its whole meaning only when it is combined or contrasted with one or several other colors."

“The first color humans mastered, fabricated, reproduced, and broke down into different shades, first in printing, later in dyeing.

Stop signs, fire engines, sirens, the red zone in football, the red carpets of Hollywood, red dot sales, red label products, correcting in red ink, the Red Cross and Santa Claus, red corvettes and Red China. Satan, forbidden fruit, original sin >> menstruation >> SIN

The “color” of Christianity? Red. Passion, spilled blood, forbidden fruit, blood and the wine, Satan. The Crusades, and the English flags and crests. For Catholicism, the robes, caps, mantles for Cardinals. Popes once wore red, now white, except for red slippers. Holy Roman Empire. Judges and justice. (England: Judges wear red. Our own Supreme Court started out red.)

>>Love, beauty, passion. Mystical and carnal. Cherries: I love you. Red apple from a man means love. From a woman, means poison. Red light districts. Scarlet letter.

Seven deadly sins:

- Pride, anger, lust, gluttony all symbolized by red
- Avarice by green
- Envy by yellow
- Sloth by red and yellow

Murder, debauchery, treachery, all symbolized by red. Hell symbolized by red, orange, yellow, black. Fire, a furnace. Debt symbolized by red ink, “bleeding” cash. Judas is usually depicted with red hair. The Bible is silent on his hair color. Cain’s hair, too, shown red. Mordred, Irish, Reynard, Esau, Fauvel – all depicted as red-haired. Witches in the Middle Ages.

Protest Reformation declared war on colors, embracing instead the black-gray-white palette. Anything else was considered immodest, excessive, anti-Catholic. Chromophobia.

For a class session coming up, read some comics, and ask yourself, as a way of beginning to think the way we think in this class, for this medium of comics, the medium of comics and cartooning:

- What is its vocabulary?
- What is its grammar?
- What is missing or absent?
- What is its rhetoric (how does it persuade, communicate)?

ARCHITECTURE as visual culture, with its own visual rhetoric

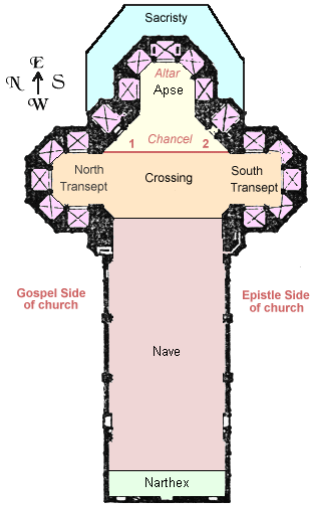
We can see architecture (and, really, ONLY architecture) in its original context. We won't be able to do that for the rest of the semester. Everything else we look at – advertising, cinema, television – all are mediated, and likely copies of copies of copies. These buildings are first iterations. In their own context, not moved, not appropriated, not copied, not printed on a coffee mug or a wall calendar or t-shirt.

- What is architecture's vocabulary? Columns, pilasters, cornices, brick, stone, concrete, metal and glass . . . lines, angles, curves . . .

  Library:
  - The bust is Athena, goddess of knowledge, a persuader and rhetorician, the originator of our western judicial system
  - Rosary emblems above the columns: a reference to nature. Natural. Environment.
  - Columns: Romanesque. Stability. Permanence. Enduring.
  - Grecian urn: Preservation. Western civilization.
  - Bricks and stone: Solid. Pieces of a whole. Enduring.
  - Spire/cupola: Gold, a precious metal. Reaching up to the skies. Martha wanted us looking up to God. Windows: Transparency, light, seeing!

  Chapel:
  - Compass arrow: Pointing north, facing east, the rising sun. Direction.
  - The building as a cross. The building with a cross.
  - Spire reaching to heavens. God.
  - The windowed-spire – all-seeing, omniscient, but transparent >> You can look in!
  - Candescent light shining from within, welcoming, warming. Light! Knowledge! Truth!
  - See how the church lines up with original entrance of the College, right to the President's house. Alignment. Central. Compass North. President could SEE who was going to chapel. Surveillance. Power.
  - Colonial architecture! Colonial! Imperialism!

Floor Plan:



Cage Center:

- Large and imposing. Huge. Grandiose.
- Sits on its own pedestal (earth moved to create that pedestal).
- Wide steps either inviting – everyone, all at once! – or imposing, grandiose. Look at me!
- Colonial architecture. A gym inside but saying, "I am NOT a gym!"
- Windows. Cupola and spire.
- What is it trying to say? To our generation, it says controversial things – looking across, thumbing its nose at the old lady in a shawl, Evans.

- What is its grammar? Architecture's grammar come from form and function.
- What are these buildings saying? How are they saying it?
- What are they NOT saying?
- From what tradition do they come? What style? Why that style and not another? We are always closely inspecting the choices communicators make.
- What is purely functional (and, therefore, of that particular grammar), and what is merely form (a different grammar)? What is merely for effect? How did function limit the architect?

This safari introduces us to signs, symbols, iconography, and semiotics. Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols, but not the signs and symbols themselves. Zen with this distinction.

In terms of semiotics, look for towers (power, phalluses), look for windows (eyes, light, truth, transparency, openness), look for emblems of knowledge, truth (books, scrolls, plumes), look for bells (one of the

very first mass media, broadcasting announcements of funerals, weddings, births, crises, invasions, celebrations, the time). Look for signs of permanence – stone, pillars, rock. Look for eco-friendliness. Earth tones. Natural. Re-used/returned. Not ostentatiousness. Part of what the campus itself is trying to say, to communicate through its rhetoric, the rhetoric of architecture.

Let's also talk about visual rhetoric, like any other communication, as a *transaction*. What do you bring to the communication, to the message. We are not blank slates or canvasses. We have our own experiences, beliefs, likes and dislikes, backgrounds and education.

- How does the building make you feel? Why do you think?
- What do you bring to this transaction?
- How choreographed is the message you are receiving? (How intentional, or indirect?)

What would be an appropriate reaction? Looking at intentionality here, which is all assumption, interpretation >> We don't KNOW what the architect intended for sure.

ARTFUL DESIGN (from Arthur Danto's *What Art Is*, 2013)

Case study: Andy Warhol's 'Brillo Box' (1964) in wood, paying homage to James Harvey's commercial design for Brillo packaging

What did Warhol do? And how is what he did significant, because nothing of what makes the box work as visual persuasion contributes to Warhol's version as art, potentially even great art?

What is art? What is visual rhetoric? What are the differences? What does it mean to call Harvey's box "commercial art"?

As a commercial artist, Harvey faced a problem and was asked to come up with a solution. Warhol's expression needed no utilitarian purpose.

Harvey's box is a prominent star in the galaxy of visual culture, specifically American commercial culture. Warhol's is, too, but as tribute and homage, as art. What they share is the vernacular – a product for daily living mass produced and colorfully packaged. Low culture. But to know what Warhol was doing – that's high culture.

A parallel example of all of these things is Roy Lichtenstein's painting, The Kiss, which depicts a pilot and a girl kissing. Lichtenstein wanted to bring vernacular art like comic book art into the art gallery – low culture re-presented as high culture. He painted panels seemingly from comic strips, but in his own refined style.

My favorite definition of art: 'A wakeful dream.' Rene Descartes.

Another: That which embodies meaning. A site where meaning is made.

Another that combines the two: That which elicits, enables, mediates a wakeful dream.

French philosopher Rene Descartes explored perception and dream, dreaming and perceiving in his book, *Meditations*. A wakeful dream is perceptive, public, and, therefore, not the dream of sleep. So, it can be shared, a la a gallery or museum.

But art as wakeful dream isn't pure mimesis (imitation).

Art, design, homage, memory.

And we haven't said anything about aesthetics. What do I mean by that term? What are aesthetics, or the aesthetic experience? For this, we

might think again of the differences between Brillo the packaging and Brillo the wood sculpture or artpiece. Are they aesthetically identical? No, not at all. How so? Are they aesthetically similar? Maybe. Let's complicate things further with the introduction of 100 fake Brillo sculptures made in 1990 by Pontus Hulten, after Warhol's death. Are they fakes? Yes. How so?

Warhol's Brillo denotes Harvey's Brillo, but with entirely different connotations. Hulten's Brillo seeks only to exploit Warhol's and Harvey's Brillos for commercial gain. (Hulten even printed off counterfeit certificates of authenticity.) Each are tokens, but in a sense, Hulten's is simply a 3D photo or 3D print job of Warhol's art. Warhol appropriates Harvey; Hulten steals from both.

This discussion perhaps us consider notions of "truth" and "reality." If we want or perhaps need a medium more suited to communicating truth, as opposed to sculpture or oil paints, what are our options?

Photography at least promises to be able to communicate a visual truth, if not THE visual truth, right? A great thinker on the rhetorical possibilities of photography at the very birth of photography, John Ruskin, wrote in the *London Times* in 1851 that since Raphael, artists sought to paint fair pictures rather than stern facts. Does photography communicate "facts"? Do these facts add up to "truth"?

If all you need or want is merely to show how things really look, why paint what the camera achieves without effort? This was the question facing the art world with the advent of photography, and the very question Picasso both asked and answered with cubism.

But presumably the camera can only show what the lens can see, and nothing more. Is this visual truth? Is this optical truth? Is visual truth really truth? Or is it something else masquerading as truth?

An example: Ask yourself, do horses' hooves ever touch the ground at the same time when they run? How do you know? The human eye can't distinguish this. Sequential photographic images by Eadweard Muybridge show us that they do. (Muybridge conducted several photographic studies of motion, including that of humans.)

Degas believed that photography can instruct us as to how we *might* see, but that there are many, many different sorts of seeing, of sight.

Another example: Look at yourself in the mirror. What do you see? Truth? Hmm. . . the image you see is ½ of your face's actual size. Go

ahead, measure it. Look at a photo of yourself. I'm guessing in a selfie age you have one or two at your disposal. What period or length of time does that image represent? It's approximately 1/60th of a second. Can that fragment of time communicate truth? Or in pretending to, is the image actually deceiving or at least so partial as to be merely an impression of something we might call optical truth?

We might call this 1/60th of a second fragment "between expressions," or not the you that you might see in the mirror if for no other reason than the human eye cannot register 60 different images in a single second. This is perhaps why we look at a photo and say, "I don't look like that!" Because the image de-familiarizes us with ourselves in being so fragmentary. The image might be optically true but at the very same time not perceptually accurate.

COMICS: A Visual Rhetoric

Terms:

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Syntax
- Rhetoric
- Personification | Abstraction | Silence
- Signs v. symbols
- The Gutter (interstitials where the meaning is made)

We looked at architecture as a visual rhetoric. The buildings are speaking, and they have been speaking all this time. We just weren't listening.

For example, what are these buildings saying, what is this campus saying, with its colonial architecture. Imperialism. Domination. Exploitation. Western. Male-dominated. These are not feminine structures, right? We noted that what these buildings are saying is different for each of us, depending on what we bring to the negotiation.

When I say architecture is one form of visual rhetoric, I mean that there are ways of communicating specific to architecture. A language all its own. The simplest definition of visual rhetoric that I can think of is how and, to a lesser extent, why visual images communicate meaning. Methods of discourse, of communicating. Specific rhetorics, or a rhetoric specific to the medium. So, the class should really be titled, Visual Rhetorics, because we look at many different kinds.

PROGRAM NOTE: The notion of a safari, of going out, seeing something in its natural habitat, capturing it, dragging it back in a cage into our classroom for inspection. It's a bit awkward, and not as good as being in the bush country or on the savannah to "catch" them in their natural habitat, but it's the best we can do. We drag the artifacts in here to better understand them, how they were made, why this one roars and this other one has stripes. What is it trying to say?

The goal in the class is for each of us, all of us, to achieve visual literacy across several media >> film, television, print advertising, photography, Web media. Achieving visual literacy involves all the processes of knowing and responding to a visual image, as well examining all of the thought that might have gone into constructing (and/or manipulating) an image.

It's why we added this class. Your education with words never stops. Writing, writing, writing. And that's great. But your education in the visual stops whenever they took your crayons away. The rest is just supposed to happen, but osmosis, by exposure. And that's not good, as I hope you discover when we discuss product placement, multi-billion dollar conglomerates are spending millions on very slick, very sophisticated, cross-media messages aimed at children with no apparatus or critical thinking skills to know what's coming at them. Think of how branded your childhoods were. On how many of your childhood things was something of/from/for Disney?

I want to start with comics because most of us have had some experience with them, reading them, watching them. Comics are very accessible. Graphic novels are their close cousins. The way we analyze, or deconstruct, the visual rhetoric of comics is the way we analyze or deconstruct any visual rhetoric. Each medium has its own rhetoric, its own language. We are learning how to read the visual.

Let's define "comics"

- sequential art (Will Eisner)
- words juxtaposed with images presented sequentially (McCloud).

Often these sequences form a narrative through sequential spatial arrangements. This is the rhetoric of comics, or how comics "work" or communicate meaning.

And like the language of Japanese (and its music and art, not coincidentally), what isn't said is every bit as important as what is said. Much in comics is silent, in the gutter, between the panels. It must be assumed. We imagine what isn't there.

So look (see!) what isn't there. Silence. Every appearance is a disappearance; every disappearance is an appearance.

All media are defined in part by their relationship with time. For television, everything is NOW. Even a documentary of WWII, it's happening NOW. When Bogie kisses Elsa, he loves her NOW. Comics communicate time in really subtle ways, all of them trafficking in symbols. Comics are thoroughly symbolic worlds.

The reader's collaboration with the comic author, cartoonist, is a key part of this specific rhetoric, therefore, which makes it very persuasive. This is how persuasion works. We participate. We imagine. Another contributor to this is the heavy reliance of comics on symbols, which are

learned (it's part of the definition). Think of Athena, the goddess of knowledge, on the library. We all learned that Monday. Athena now is symbolic of knowledge, wisdom, justice.

The basic grammar of comics? Panels. Speech balloons. Text boxes. Images. Borders. Gutters.

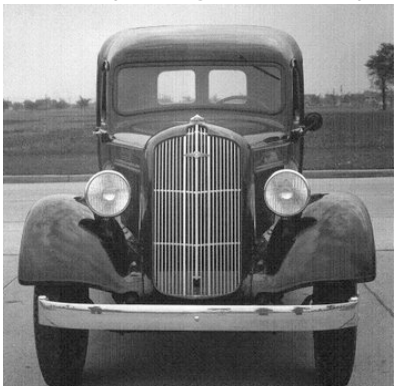
Vocabulary of comics? Symbols. Icons. Very few cartoons attempt realism. Can you think of any? What would be the point? All are abstractions to some extent. The more abstract, the more universal.

(Words, by the way, are completely abstract. So the spectrum, from realistic to abstract >>

 >>>  >>>  >>> face

Realism <<<>>>>Abstraction AND uniqueness <<<>>>>universality

We see the human face in everything, or we try to.



The more realistic and, therefore, unique, the more we merely receive it. The more abstract, however, the more we have to perceive. This means that much of comics will be perceived, because they are largely abstract. The medium lends itself to perception versus reception. Film/cinema, by contrast, is way over on the reception side, very realistic. Why, after all, do we say, “It was all so real, like in a movie.”

So cartooning is a way of seeing. The medium focuses our attention on certain ideas.

The more realistic something is in a comic, the more objectified it is. Good or evil or danger can be represented by a sword that is only abstractly a sword. But a particular sword is just that, a particular sword. It has weight, texture, physical complexity. And a history.

Vocabulary: how to indicate motion? Lines. Effects.

We saw architecture unmediated. Originals, in their original context. Everything else we will come in contact with will be mediated, often mass mediated. This means that ALL media are indirect, their messages processed, almost always in a multi-phase process. Comics are no exception.

En medias: In the middle.

EXAMPLE:

A  B

What does this mean to you? Two letters and a right-facing image of a little car?

We also talked a bit about style on our architecture safari. Style in the categorical sense, colonial, moderne, art deco, Gothic. Also style in an individualized sense, "Oh, he's very minimalist."

This is true in all media, which has much to do with HOW one particular person uses that medium. Scorcese v. Shyamalan v. Bigelow v. Peele, for example.

Styles evolve, mature, become increasingly distinctive. Think Hemingway, Mozart, van Gogh, Joyce, Pollock. Think Schulz, Eisner, Nakazawa

Finally, COLOR

Why is Superman the colors he is? Why those colors?
Why is Batman of Dark Knight so very different in terms of his color palette from the Batman of DC Comics 30 years ago? The four-Color print process. Exaggerated primary colors on newsprint. The medium is an intrinsic, inseparable part of the message. This is true for each medium, for all media. Dark Knight wasn't possible 30 years ago, in terms of colors.

Always track the forces of commerce and technology. Inexorable forces in, for any medium.

Sources:
Will Eisner, Comics & Sequential Art (New York: Poorhouse Press, 1985).

Scott McCloud, Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994).

Comics collections:
Edwin and Terry Murray Comic Book Collection (HUGE) at Dook
Also has good collection of graphic novels
http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/rbmscl/murraycomics/inv

Grand Comics Database Project
Volunteer-maintained searchable database
http://www.comics.org/

Comics Research
Annotated bibliography site for comics research
http://www.comicsresearch.org/

Images are made. They are produced. They do not just happen. Seeing is believing? No, believing is seeing! We are looking at constructed realities. Constructs. And we negotiate their meanings.

Visual images can be made, moved, displayed, sold, censored, altered, venerated, discarded, blown up, exploited on calendars for sale, stared at, ignored, hidden, confiscated, recycled, sampled, damaged, *touched*.

The seeing of an image always occurs in a particular time and place, a specific social context. These variables mediate or vary the impact or effects of the seeing.

Let's analyze the image below, specifically through observation and by considering the sites at which the meanings of an image are constructed or made.

SITES or MODALITIES of MEANING

Visual images are made. They do not just happen. Seeing is believing? No, believing is seeing. And myth is all about what we believe. What we believe to be true. What seems naturally true, God-given. Visual images, even photographs, are constructs. They are not simple realities. They are constructed realities. (What's just outside the frame, for example? What happened in the very next instant?)

Visual objects – photographs, for example – mobilize certain ways of seeing and prevent other ways of seeing. We look today at one way of seeing mobilized by the photograph: The Gaze. Who is looking at whom? Who is supposed to be looking? Who is implied? Whose point of view is being presented? How does it relate to our point of view. Voyeurism, for example.

Visual images can be made, they can be moved, displayed, sold, censored, altered, venerated, discarded, blown up, put on calendars and mugs, stared at, ignored, hidden, confiscated, recycled, damaged, touched. Oooh. Touched.

The seeing of an image always occurs in a particular social context, a particular time and place. These variables mediate or vary the impact or effects of the seeing.

Photographs are "captured." I like that. A caged beast, removed from its natural habitat, paraded in front of the masses to be ogled at, stared at, but trapped. It was running free until someone trapped it. It no longer behaves or belongs as it once did. And now it is watched. Observed. The Gaze. That changes everything. We're going to look at a photograph, and we're free to use all of the power tools we've been using, plus a new one. Sites, or modalities. Looking and analyzing a visual artifact by looking at its site of production, its site of reception, and the image itself (composition, emphasis, omission). It is at or in these sites that meaning is made, or constructed.

Site of the image: What do we see?

- List or inventory all the elements
- Note the image's composition
- Study visual cues of color, form, depth, movement

What clues does the image offer as to its contexts? What is foregrounded; what is in the background? Also in this site, what genre is

this? Slice of life common to the period? This would be significant. Is it one in a series of shots? What would the others show?

Site of production

The circumstances of the image's production. Genre. Purpose. Technology. Who, what, when, where? An oil painting with texture v. water colors. Black and white v. four-color. Resolution? Zoom (distance)? Light and shadow? Portraiture? Remember, snapshot technology after the Civil War changed everything. Cooperation was no longer necessary. Is it posed? What is the POV? Where the photographer would have to be to get the shot, the fact that zoom lenses were not available yet. Snapshots were technologically possible. Photoshop wasn't possible/available then. Circumstances of the image's production >> Who, what, when, where, with what? What does the image maker *want* you to see. What is emphasized? De-emphasized? Missing?

Composition. Emphasis. Omission. It's never merely a reflection of what the camera saw; it's a reflection of what the photographer wanted to see, and what he or she wanted us to see. What is on display here? What did the photographer choose to show? To emphasize? To de-emphasize? Objects. Figures. How does the photographer invest himself?

Site of reception

How you perceive and negotiate the meaning of the image? Let's consider the power of myth. Believing is seeing. What we believe to be true in and about the image will in large measure determine what we actually see. Where the image is seen, where the meanings are attached, decoded, renegotiated, in *specific* circumstances. Language, culture, personal history and experience, context >> all these matter.

More here on the Gaze, this time from the reception side: We can use the Feminist Gaze just hinted at above. A Male Gaze. A power gaze, or gender gaze. Whose POV is presented here? Why? What (or who) is she looking at? Why? Other "gazes"? Race, class, gender.

The site of reception, the audience: Perhaps the most important modality, this is where meaning is attached. The image is negotiated. Believing is seeing. Myth. Audiences look in and from very specific circumstances. You've all been to a movie in a full movie theater, hearing the laughter, the energy. You later watch the movie alone; it's not the same.

We each bring our own sensitivities, experiences, knowledge, values, priorities, even our own abilities to see and interpret. I'll say it again – seeing isn't believing, believing is seeing. What you believe about this photo determines or at least influences what in fact you see. Do you see that? That's Barthe's power of myth. Mythic truth. This is the most important site because it's all up to you, it's all up for grabs. The meaning or meanings are negotiated. You are negotiating with the photographer, who is dead, by the way.

My experience in the Peggy Gugenheim museum – conversations with the painters. Pollock was yelling, nonsensically. I didn't listen. He obviously was yelling at someone else. Marcel Duchamp whispered. I could barely hear him, but when I got the joke, I laughed out loud. He was talking to me. He was laughing with me, not at me. Together we were laughing at the world. Complicity. That's powerful.

But the museum was not crowded. What if it was? What if it was packed like the Louvre was when I went to see the Mona Lisa? How does that change the conversation? (The cherub in the other corner of the room, whispering to me.)

Why do we applaud at the end of a movie? Why don't we applaud David's Michelangelo?

The point >> Circumstances are terribly important. We're sitting in Laughlin 102 looking at a grainy Xerox copy of an imaged reproduced in a mass-produced book, a reproduction likely of a reproduction. Standing alone in a dark room with one spotlight on the image, glorifying it? That changes everything. Spaces and how something is displayed is critical. We stand where the displays tell us to stand. We see what they choose to reveal. So, there is legislation (or encoding) in addition to negotiation (and decoding).

THEORY (CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE): The engine room of this course

"Every culture has had its graven images. What do ours say about us?"

Second Commandment:
"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." --Deuteronomy 5: 4, 5

The role of theory

Why we have or use theory.

We'll discuss four theories that can be used in visual rhetorical analysis, two that are classified as sensory and two classified as perceptual:

- PERCEPTUAL: Gestalt and Semiotics
- SENSORY: Cognitive theory and Constructivism

First, the simplest, really to get it out of the way: Constructivism. How the eye works, how it senses and selects. How with the brain it constructs meaning. Constructivism is an offshoot or outgrowth from Gestalt research and theory.

Gestalt. The whole is different from the parts, the whole is more than the mere sum of the parts. Some sub-theories or principles or dimensions of Gestalt theory:

- Similarity >> Dissimilarity. We note what is different
- Proximity.
- Continuation
- Common fate (or grouping) >> why celebrities are used to endorse products. Air Jordans. Matthew McConaughey and Buicks. Scarlett Johansson and Chanel.

These four parts or laws add up to how we perceive, or ways we perceive.

Semiotics. We discussed some of this in our first safari, architecture. Semiotics is the study of signs, explicit and implicit. A sign is something that stands for something else, anything that stands for something else. The meaning must be learned, in other words. For something to be a sign, the viewer must understand its meaning(s).

mundane examples:

- Various types of stars >> Star of David, Sheriff's star, etc.
- Various types of mere signage (as opposed to symbols)
-

Example: Target ad. Symbols, plus latent sexuality = an offensive ad for many women, understandably:

Charles Sanders Peirce's types of signs:

- Iconic
- Indexical
- Symbolic

Iconic – They are much like what they depict; there is resemblance and, therefore, universality. Icons are usually abstract. We discussed this with comic books. A human face. Cave drawings. Chinese characters, Japanese kanji. The male and the female figures on restroom doors. Stick figures.

Indexical – These signs demonstrate cause-and-effect, referencing something that is not visually present. A footprint in the sand: A human was here recently. The footprint is an index of the recent presence of a person. Exhaust for pollution. A sundial for time, and for the sun. Smoke for the presence of fire, heat. Google balls showing movement. Comic

book movement with whooshes and streaks. Wavy lines over a pie to index heat – "hot right out of the oven."

Indexical signs have a logical connection to the thing or the idea they represent, but not a direct resemblance, as iconic signs have. A man with a lightbulb over his head. The light bulb indexes light, or enlightenment, or an idea. (This is also light as metaphor. It is also a visual analogy.) The juxtaposition with the human head leads us to perceive it as HIS idea, which is common fate grouping, as well. The head for the human brain. Another example: A car ad with the FAST FORWARD button from a CD player to index motion.

Symbolic – These signs are completely learned. They work by convention, and they are culturally embedded. Contextual. Is it a swastika or a Bhuddist symbol for peace? Is it KKK garb or a Catholic priest's frock? Each is learned. Bears and bulls for Wall Street. Why is there a giant bronze bull in front of the NYSE? What does a Tar Heel mean? How can you tell the UGA "G" from Green Bay's? There is no logical relationship or representational connection between, say, white sheets and notions of racial supremacy. A Nike swoosh is just an abstract mark. It has to be learned that it represents a footwear company.

Frenchman Roland Barthes talked about codes or systems or rules for signs, for semiotics. "The chain of association," he called it. Societies produce these codes, or combinations of signs, to communicate complicated ideas.

Asa Berger, symbolic codes:

1. Metonymic code (or metonymy) – A collection of signs that elicit or promote certain associations or assumptions. Similar to indexical in Peirce's framework. There is signified the presence of something that is unseen.

2. Analogical code (analogy) – A code or visual analogy that spurs comparison: X is (or is like) Y. These signs as a code or collection invite us to make certain associations by comparison. For example, the AmX ad we saw earlier in which we 'see' human faces in everyday objects. We used it as a demonstration of personification, and personification is almost always analogical. My car, Betsy, is like a woman.

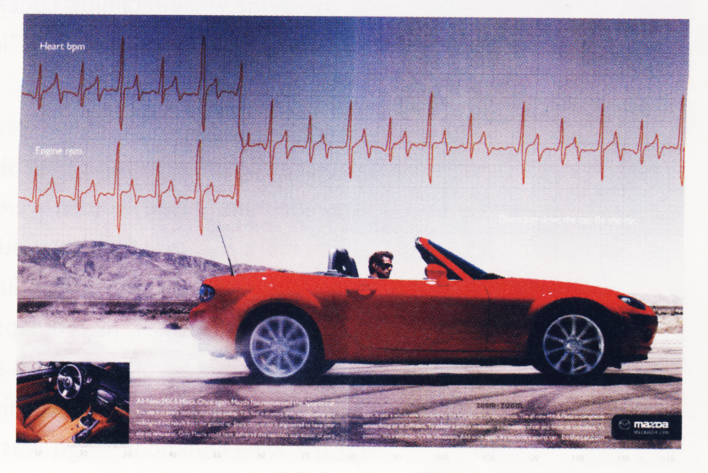
Another example: The Marlboro Man. Smoking that brand is like or makes you men like cowboys. This was once a woman's cigarette that wasn't selling. It was recast as a men's cigarette with a rigidly enforced

brand and visual ad campaign – cowboys doing manly things. Even the typeface. The product did not change at all.

3. Displaced code – We take the meaning from one set of signs and transfer it to another set of signs and visual cues. Really important here is that it is the symbolic code that is displaced, not the objects themselves. If animals are being used in a symbolic way, that's not a displaced code just because they belong in a zoo. It has to be symbols that are removed and replaced into a new context.

example:

This Mazda Miata ad, taking the signs and symbols of the heart and of an ER and transferring it to the car and the open road. Result? Passion, life, freedom, buy the car and truly live!! (You also see indexing in the blur, the smoke and streaks.)



4. Condensed code – Signs and symbols that when combined take on a new meaning, signs and symbols that don't otherwise belong or cohere.

Some examples:

1. Madonna's music videos and religious iconography. In fact, music videos in general, especially those that use surrealism.
2. Andy Warhol's art, which is also a form of displacement.
3. Goths' use of religious imagery, death imagery, studs and piercings, crosses and skulls to create a new meaning.
4. The Village People – signs and symbols of hypermasculinity but with homoerotic twists. It's a visual joke; they are flamboyantly gay.
5. Joker in Batman with a crooked smile, makeup, playing cards, practical jokes transferred to the criminal mind to mean EVIL – wild, maniacal evil. You complete me!

6. Ezekiel, chapter 1.

Cognitive Theory

- The mental activities of perception.
- How the brain works.

"Everything only exists by virtue of perception." -- Victor Pelevin, in *The Sacred Book of the Werewolf*

Several dimensions of cognition: salience, culture, dissonance, memory, projection, expectation, selectivity, habituation.

Projection: This is seeing the Virgin Mary in a piece of toast or in a bathtub stain. It's seeing the Man on the Moon or a bunny in a cloud. It's the ways we personify objects, car grills, TV remotes, boats and airplanes (AmX TV spot). It's when my wife looks at me and says, "What!?!" She's projecting onto my facial expression, or lack of it, some elaborate narrative about something. I'm quite literally just sitting or standing there thinking about absolutely nothing. (Male v. female case study of brusque morning meeting, all day going by, then cold front when she opens the door to him that night.)

Expectation: This is how stereotypes work. We (often) see what we expect to see. We make snap judgments of people. We (often) fail to see what we don't expect to see. Sorry to throw my wife under the bus again, but "women drivers" for her. She expects it, so she sees or witnesses it, discounting anomalies. I see what I expect to see in Dookies.

Habituation: We don't see what we see all the time. We grow dull or blind to that which we see all the time. The prints and photos on the walls of our home. This explains how we can drive home and not remember how we ended up in our own driveway. Walk down Broad Street with the sole purpose of noticing architectural details. You'll be amazed.

Salience: We see something only when it matters to us or means something, and for the person standing next to us, that same artifact might not exist at all, because to him or her it isn't salient. For example, Tar Heel hats at Braves' games, even on TV. A North Carolina license plate driving down I-75. Air Jordans in Brooklyn. Typefaces EVERYWHERE. I see them; most people I'm with most of the time don't even see the typefaces. Salience is why when we buy a new VW Bug,

suddenly we see thousands of them out there. They were there the whole time, but they weren't salient until you bought one.

Selectivity: We take all sorts of shortcuts to select out of the blizzard of visual information barreling toward us all the time that which we think is useful or important. Do we see a duck? Or a bunny? For example, when I walk across campus on a scorching hot day. All I select visually to see is shade, and my mind creates a path of maximum shade and minimum sunlight. A female walks into a room filled with people and immediately spots the one person wearing the same dress. Selectivity.

Dissonance: Visual information that doesn't make sense causes us dissonance. We will not tolerate dissonance. This is the KKK, to make sense out of the enslavement of human beings. We rationalize. We make the incompatible or illogical to seem or be understood as rational or compatible. We try very hard to resolve the conflicting information we get, especially from two authoritative sources. Someone you know to be kind is curt, perhaps even harsh. You reason, "Oh, she's just having a bad day."

Culture: We are often blind to cultural norms. I've mentioned before the Japanese and silence, for example. I've also mentioned the absence of logo-emblazoned clothing in Europe, except on American tourists. Conservative Islam sees towers and skyscrapers as blasphemous, as truly offensive. Norms about and for what makes a person beautiful are often culturally determined, or products of a culture. Huge butts in Brazil. High jaw bones in France.

Memory: This is the big one. So we'll return to this one a great deal. Highly imaginative, created, not simply "remembered." Film director Chris Marker: "Memory not as something we *have*. Memory as something we *are*." AND "Nothing distinguishes memories from ordinary moments. Only afterwards do they become memorable by the scars they leave."

"The heaven of the past is a promised land destroyed in the reaching." This statement explains the pull and tug of nostalgia. My desire for a 1973 VW Camper, orange, with plaid interiors, my ride in college.

Carlton Fisk has remarked that he's watched the videotape of his famous 1975 World Series home run against the Reds only a few times, lest it overwrite his own recollection of the event.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4P3n2TCgEE

Marcel Proust knew that memory is "a skittish creature that peeks from its hole only when it isn't being sought. Mementos, snapshots, reunions – all of them modes of amnesia, foes of true remembering. The past should stay in the heart, where it belongs."

Because what appears disappears everything else.

DENOTATION & CONNOTATION

The poem is a little myth of man's capacity of making life meaningful. And in the end, the poem is not a thing we see --it is, rather, a light by which we may see -- and what we see is life. –Robert Penn Warren

"Treat me the same but respect that I am different." – Keith Williams, Poynter

Our analytical toolbox

We have some smaller tools, like making connections between sign and that signified. A screwdriver or wrench. And we have power tools that can do amazing things if plugged in: Peirce's typologies of and for signs, Berger's metonymic and analogical codes. These are circular saws and power drills.

Today we add another tool to our toolbox: Denotation & Connotation
To Peirce and Berger, today we add Roland Barthes, a titan in French semiotics, who gave us "chains of association," as well.

An image can denote certain apparent truths or messages or meanings. A photo of you riding a horse denotes a human on top of an animal, an animal as transportation or amusement, and a human somehow in control of the animal. Man (or woman) and horse. That same image can connote more culturally specific messages or meanings. Connotation relies on cultural or historical contexts, contexts of both the image and the viewer. For connotation, we would observe the horse rider's apparel, the context or situation of the rider and horse (a circus, a rodeo, a ranch, the open West), etc.

Let's try out our tool.

We'll use a fairly well-known photo by Robert Frank, who photographed in the 1950s and 1960s. What does is denoted in the photo? Passengers on a trolley or train or tram.

But its meaning is much deeper. So, what does the image connote? And how does the image make these connotations? And how do historical and cultural context help us make sense of it, make meaning with it?

Connotations: A journey. Race relations. Class and privilege. Segregation.

To help us drill deeper here, more on the context. From the photo itself, what can we discern about the cultural and historical contexts? And note where you are going purely on the evidence -- what is actually present -- and when and where you are using evocation, what is evoked by the image. You bring a specific experience, background, upbringing and memory to this photo. You of course will be influenced by these things.

Roland Barthes, a semiotician and philosopher, called this second category, what is evoked by the transaction or negotiation between the image and the viewer as **MYTH**. It's what we believe. It is what we value, what we don't value in the image.

Myth, Barthes believed, had the very real power to appear real, to appear as truth, to appear literal or natural. It is how stereotypes are born.

I will tell you that the historical context for this photo is New Orleans 1955. Now what conclusions might we draw?

We decode the image using clues, both intended and unintended. We look for suggested meanings. We look at color, tone, contrast, composition, proximity, depth, style of address. We bring to it our own socio-cultural contexts. And what meaning we make of it all seems natural or God-given. But it isn't, of course. It is a system of beliefs that a culture or sub-culture produces to function in a particular way.

We are making these transactions, these negotiations ALL THE TIME. And these negotiations are heavily influenced by culture. They are, in other words, culturally specific, and therefore mythic. What seems naturally true in one culture, or by one people, might seem very odd or even wrong to another. And what says one thing at one point in history might say something quite different in another time, even though the image itself has not changed. This, too, exemplifies Barthes' notions of myth.

JRR Tolkien to CS Lewis: This is the power of myth. The myth of Jesus is even more powerful because it actually IS true. Lord of the Rings, mythic.

So Barthes is really helpful to us to examine how images, even photographs, can be constructs. Man-made. Man-signified. They aren't objective truths, in other words.

Now let's look at some examples from contemporary culture to make the important point that what we mean to communicate can be radically, even dangerously different from what is received, and how the meaning is negotiated. And these examples demonstrate that if we feel like there is the possibility we are being insulted, we will believe that we are. All of us do this. Southerners. Berry students. Whatever. We all do this.

Treat me the same but respect and acknowledge that I am different.

New York Post cartoon

Notice that virtually everything that "happens" in this cartoon is connotation and myth.

"They'll have to find someone else to write a stimulus bill."

- Who is the speaker? White, male, middle-class speaker.
- Who is the listener, and how does this affect or change what is seen?
- What is the context? The stimulus bill, economic crisis, first black president, police violence, an ape that had to be shot in Connecticut, evolution.

HARTFORD, Connecticut (AP) — *A 200-pound pet chimpanzee once seen in TV commercials mauled a woman visiting its owner Monday and cornered a police officer in his cruiser before being shot and killed, authorities said. Stamford police Capt. Richard Conklin said the injured*

woman was hospitalized late Monday in "very serious" condition at Stamford Hospital; her identity was not immediately released. Conklin said she suffered "a tremendous loss of blood" from serious facial injuries. The 15-year-old chimpanzee's owner and two officers also were hurt, though police said the extent of their injuries was not immediately known.

What do we know of the speaker? Is it the white policeman? The cartoonist? Rupert Murdoch's tabloid newspaper? News Corp.?

Who is the listener? Americans? New Yorkers? Bloggers? Minorities? PETA? New York cops? Everyone.

Semiotics help us find these meanings and understand how they're made, why certain interpretations occur, and how central symbolism is to all of this.

The cartoon clearly is racially charged, but the context is **selective**, interpreted. Apes and monkeys have been used historically to symbolize and disparage blacks and browns in the United States. My children don't share this meaning; they don't know this. I know this. My parents know this.

Are we more sensitive today than ever before? Or is it that we simply have more outlets to be heard? Women didn't like to be called 'broads' long before we stopped saying it.

Would it change your interpretation of the Post cartoon if I told you the cartoonist is a 73-year-old from Starkville, Miss.? What if it is a 25-year-old from Seattle?

Is that Osama bin Laden in the monkey's hair?

Imagine interpreting this as a policeman. "Oh, we're the dunces!" How much debate is lost or avoided because of the incendiary power of the cartoon as a racially charged depiction?

Gone is the debate about the stimulus bill – every appearance is a disappearance.

Why are people angry about this cartoon? Where you are racially, historically, in terms of gender, time, place, and understanding will affect what you see, how you interpret, and what connotations and mythic truth you will negotiate.

The purpose here? Ethical decision-making, ethical image-making requires a process. Having diverse people in the room does you no good without a process, without systematic dialogue and conversation.

In the South, we are always on guard. We like to think the best of Northerners, but we don't. How will they make fun of our accent? How will they judge me? How will they judge the South because of slavery? We all are on guard all the time.

Buckwheat. Hillbillies.

What's wrong with being called Buckwheat?

http://www.wdsu.com/news/14573933/detail.html

HOUMA, La. -- *A state representative in a runoff election infuriated civil rights leaders after she ended a conversation with the mother of the NAACP's local president by saying, "Talk to you later, Buckwheat."*

State Rep. Carla Blanchard Dartez, of Morgan City, acknowledged she made the remark during a Thursday night telephone conversation with Hazel Boykin to thank her for driving voters to the polls.

What's wrong with what Dartez did or said? News media don't tell us that. We intuit that it is just cause for outrage. "They played the 'Race Card.'" This distances us from the real issue. Calling something "politically correct" does this as well.

What is your interpretation if a white males calls someone a 'redneck'? A black male? Does it matter who the speaker is? It makes all the difference.

Write about a time when you were 'The Other.' You didn't fit in. You were excluded.

Human dynamic: I will default to my worst fear. For a black seeing Annie, I fear you are perpetuating Aunt Jemima, so I am going to believe that. If Annie was white? The black stereotype and historical antecedent disappear. The default fear is gone. Perhaps there will be a gender stereotype or message that emerges, but it's buried behind or under race.

The elements here:

- Awareness

- Skills
- Critical thinking

- Voice
- Context
- Complexity

How can you tell real stories, stories with voice, complexity and context, stories worth telling, worth reading using only the web, Google, a Hubble telescope? You have to go into the inner sanctum, you have to care, you have to be curious, compassionate, vital, alive, listening. And you will never regret it!

ADVERTISING & VISUAL PERSUASION

- Deuteronomy: *Thou shalt make no graven image*.
- John 1: *In the beginning was logos, and the logos was with God and the logos was God*.

The form in which ideas are expressed affects what those ideas will be. The medium IS the message.

The word, not an image. Why does the Bible say these things? Why does God forbid ideas of Him to be trafficked in images? Why was it a Word in the beginning, a creative Word? Logos, and not an image?

Consider the freight images can carry, and the freight they can't carry.

Smoke signals. Church bells. Television. Books. A tweet. The medium is an intrinsic part of the message. The medium determines the way the message can and cannot persuade.

The Aristotleian Model of Persuasion:

- Ethos: the credibility of a source
- Logos: the logical arguments used to persuade (logos: word, logic)
- Pathos: Emotional appeals used to persuade

So, remember the Cymbalta ad. I want you to consider how you would argue with it? What's the counter-argument? Imagine attempting to argue rationally, logically, with the Cymbalta ad. It's ridiculous, right?

This points to the fact that it is all pathos. It is also bathos. We bathe ourselves in images -- an experience, not an argument. A feeling, an emotion washing over you.

Here's another test. Watch any TV ad. What do you learn about the product in terms of discrete facts? What do you learn about that very expensive automobile? About long-term financial planning? About Progressive's insurance benefits versus Geico's? A lizard? A cave man? Really?

The rhetoric is one almost completely of emotion, and typically that emotion is tied either to aspiration or fear. Your dreams or your nightmares. Your hopes or your pathologies. Or both.

And where does the ethos come from? The brand, right? And that it's on TV (a circular logic). A circular logic that takes us nowhere. It's on TV, therefore, it is credible.

Let's do a thought experiment. You are an alien from another planet sent to earth to learn about humans. You land, turn on a TV and watch television advertising for 24 hours. What assumptions would you make about Americans based on the advertising? What would you as an alien think you had learned about Americans, what they think, what they are afraid of, what they aspire to, what their shared problems are?

- We need and consume a lot of pharmaceuticals
- We are miserable in our jobs, in our workplaces
- Cleaning can be fun, thrilling, even joyous
- We drink so much beer, and usually at parties with lots of ethnically and raciall diverse friends exactly our age
- Our ultimate goal is sitting in a chair on the beach drinking a beer
- Anything else?

So, advertisements have texts and subtexts. The text is what we are presented with and shown: A man building a campfire while his wife or lover or really sexy friend beds down inside a tent, the two enjoying a romantic getaway in an exotic location.

The subtexts are those stories, myths and communication operating under the surface, latent. In the scene above, it's that if the man can't fulfill his woman sexually, no matter what else he might be, he is ultimately a failure and not a full man. But that's OK because Viagra is the answer. With Viagra, all will be well and he can be successful in the ways that matter most.

A more pedestrian example: You're talking about a friend or enemy. You imply a critique, finishing with, "Bless his heart." What, in the South at least, is meant by "Bless his heart." He's a fool, a nincompoop. Someone who needs help. But this is a subtext unique to the South. Culturally embedded.

Most of the "what an alien" would learn bullets above, too, are subtexts in the ads. That 9-to-5 jobs for most Americans most of the time are pure drudgery, misery. These are people for whom an exciting sub sandwich can turn the workplace into Mardi Gras. It's the default for a people rushing toward the weekend when they can drink enormous amounts of beer with their friends.

Also of help to us analyzing TV ads are **Stuart Hall and his Three Modes of Engagement** with popular culture, especially mediated pop culture

Hegemonic: Drinking the Kool-Aid. Buying it hook, line and sinker. Uncritically lapping up all that the advertiser is sending your way. Disney. Apple. Nike. The swooshification of American culture.

Negotiated: Critical. We at least push back and question what's going on? How are we being manipulated? What's the pitch? What's the message? What are the subtexts here? The mythic truth? This requires critical thinking, time, investment.

Oppositional: Reject, deflect, re-use for your own purposes. Oppose, protest, counter the otherwise hegemonic attempts at persuasion. Culture jamming. Dadaism and deconstruction (Guy de Bord), Situationalists (Jacques Derrida). Detournement. Advertising's lasers are aimed at us ; the oppositional mode holds up a mirror, returning the force of the laser at the message's creator (Joe Camel, Marlboro Man, the Met, etc.).

Advertisers are out to alter culture, its expressions, take them hostage, kidnap them, use them to say what they want them to say.

On our side, we engage in what **Claude Levi-Strauss called 'bricolage.'** We create sub-cultures. We mix and match. We condense, symbolically. We mashup, curate, collect and project. A baseball hat turned backwards. Goth's use of Christian imagery, Gothic motifs, body piercings, vampire culture, etc. Black culture's appropriation of, at different times, Tommy Hilfiger, Carhart work boots, Oakland Raiders, etc.

The point: Cultural meaning is and should remain fluid. We should have a say. We believe in the Commons, in Central Park and not DisneyWorld. Disney has TOTAL control in what is the penultimate example of **Baudrillard's simulacra**. You don't have freedom of Disney, only it's cardboard replica (and the hamburgers are actually made out of cardboard), only the illusion or appearance of democracy and freedom – a fake 'Main Street.' That isn't freedom of thought, an arena of true freedom in which we get to negotiate for ourselves meaning as we interact in complex ways by interacting with images, cultural products and artifacts, fellow viewers/readers/consumers.

All ads are stories.

Act I: set the scene and introduce the characters

Act II: conflict
Act III: resolve the conflict with the product or service as the hero, the solution, the panacea, the magic potion, elixir of love

Ads, fads & consumer culture

Whatever else it might be, advertising is a form of mass persuasion, and we must wonder about the social psychological, and cultural impact of this industry that plays such a large role in our media and everyday lives. Ask:

- Does advertising for fast foods and junk food play a role in the rapid growth of obesity in America?
- What should be done?
- Has advertising for expensive consumer drugs had a negative impact on the medical profession and on the health of Americans?
- Are children being taught to be self-indulgent and materialistic as they are "branded" by advertising?
- Has advertising shaped the way individuals perceive themselves and the way we perceive one another?
- How can people defend themselves against the way they are being affected or even manipulated by advertisers?

The average four-year-old American child can identify with more than 100 brands. Because children watch so much TV. It has been estimated that children are exposed to 20,000 30-sec commercials a year. Think about your media usage per day. How many hours and minutes for:

- Digital (Facebook, Snapchat, etc.)
- Television
- Radio
- Print
- Display advertising

Add it all up. Averages for the American public are:

- Digital: 5:09
- Television: 4:31
- Radio: 1:26
- Print: 0:32
- Other: 0:14
  Total – 11:52 hours PER DAY

Teenagers are still young enough to be total suckers for image, for all the blandishments of advertising, identity marketing, media messages, trends and labels. They still believe in a brand name's power to confer status, cool, charisma, knowledge. They construct their identities by the shopping choices

they make – they're a lot like adults were in the '50s, before we all became so wise in the way of image hucksters.

We like to think we can resist advertising, that it has little or no impact on us. We like to preserve our sense of autonomy. Others are brainwashed, but not us, even as we purchase products that we feel, somehow, we must have. Of course advertisers use this illusion against us. But why do we buy Bayer aspirin? What are you wearing right now? Why? Why the Nike t-shirt, the Doc Martens boots, the Ralph Lauren jeans, or whatever? Branded khaki pants? What soap and toothpaste did you use this morning? Why? DISCUSS THIS

Jean Baudrillard: In modern consumer societies, we feel obliged to have fun. Think about the kinds of Facebook/Snapchat/Instagram photos you feel obligated to gather and publish while you are here.

Success: We see in commercials, which suggest we emulate, people who use a given product or service and who are successful. To be successful is to know what to consume, to know what brands to associate with, to have product knowledge. Americans don't know history, literature, philosophy, music, art – but they know their brands and products. All they know is what they can buy.

At an exalted level, shopping promises to be a transformative experience, a method of becoming a newer, perhaps even slightly improved person. The products you buy turn you into that other idealized version of yourself. That dress makes you beautiful, this lipstick makes you kissable, that lamp turns your house into an elegant showplace. This is the illusion.

Advertising takes advantage of the desire we have for a better life for ourselves and our loved ones and uses our envy of others and of ourselves against us to manipulate us to buy "the right things."

Hauls? YouTube videos of mostly young women who introduce themselves and then show the clothing and products they "hauled" home from the mall that day. "This blouse is really cute. I like it so much I might go back and get another one in a different color." This combination of narcissism and materialism is a relatively new cultural phenomenon. "Prompetition"?? The competition that preparing for prom has become? Trying to out-do your 'friends' with elaborate proposals, dresses, arrivals, etc. And, more important than any of that – the photo spread.

And advertising is virtually unaffected by critiques of it. The industry has an uncanny ability to resist the effects of even the harshest criticisms. Why do you think? Why does it seem like tossing thumbtacks in front of a herd of stampeding elephants?

Ferdinand de Saussure: Signs divided into two parts, the signifier (sound or object) and the signified (the concept or idea generated by the signifier). Much of this relationship is governed by convention, like striped rotating poles

to signify a barber, for example. A sign is anything that can stand for something else.

THE SIX PERSPECTIVES
(see handout for descriptions of each)

Personal: Gut, personal reactions
Historical: history of the medium
Technical: use of light, quality of the recording, limits and possibilities of the technology used, the presentation
Ethical: ethics of the image's producer; several approaches possible here >> hedonistic, utilitarian, etc.
Cultural: symbols used, semiotics, memes, cultural context for the image
Critical: the most difficult. Can apply sites/modalities, Barthes, Berger, Peirce.

TYPOGRAPHY

What IS type? What is it for? Is it text or is it symbol, sign? It's both.

movie titles: typography as symbolic, underscoring theme, tone, mood, emotion

Typefaces have personalities. We very intentionally use or leverage these personalities. Two examples, one funny and one from the presidential campaign.

The power of type. The symbolic value of type. But ultimately type is to be read. "Look at me! Look at me!" That's not what type is supposed to do, except in rare situations, like a menu cover or signage.

Type helps connect text with reader, publication with target audience. A few examples. What can you deduce about the publication and about its audience strictly from its nameplate, its typeface?

Your task: Design a typeface for a new version of the Bible. What kind of type will you design? (Who is your audience? A grayhead crowd, very traditional? Tweens?)

Your task: Design a STOP sign. What kind of typeface?

$300 million/year spent on type. 40,000 different typefaces.

Six basic type families:

- Blackletter (Gothic, old style, Renaissance, medieval)
- Roman (legible, serifs, Caslon, Bodoni, Garamond, Baskerville. These are people's names who developed the types)
- Scripts (like handwriting)
- Miscellaneous or novelty (Comic Sans)
- Square serif (3-D, slab serif, Wild West, Egyptian)
- Sans serif (Gotham, Helvetica, Verdana, Arial)

These families are like Romance languages, Arabic, Germanic, Slavic. Fonts, on the other hand, are like dialects. English: New York. Boston. The South. Virginia. Canadian >> Italic (English accent), Boldface (New York/Bronx), Plain text (Broadcast anchors), smallcap, nderline

Typeface attributes:

- Size
- Color

- Font
- Text block size (line width, column width) >> Times New Roman is fairly slim; Blackoak Standard is very fat.
- Justification (R, L, center, full, ragged)
- White space (ALWAYS look at what's not there)

The carved Roman grandeur on a statue of stone.
The flourish of penmanship on the bistro awning.
The cracking English gothic on the dive bar sign.

First, a few basics:
ascenders
descenders
x-height
baseline
ligatures (Fl, the part almost touching in a cursive lowercase l)
counters
bowls
stems
point size
picas >> 12 points = 1 pica
6 picas = 1 inch
72 points = 1 inch, therefore

Fonts (regular upper case, regular lower case, bold, italic)
Typeface
Face
Styles

Serif, like Trajan
Sans serif, like Gill Sans

Kerning, the spacing between pairs of letters, the "kern" is the part of a character that overhangs or underhangs its body and invades the space of the letter next to it.

Style families:
Black letter – Pilsner beers, newspaper titles, heavy metal band names like Metallica, tattoos. Think of the word "Menace" in this style family as compared to the same word in, say, Helvetica.

Fraktur slide
Style families slide

Styles:

- Light
- Ultra light
- Book
- Bold
- Black

Type designers typically start with an “a,” an “n”, an “h” and a “p.” They go crazy with the lower case “g,” because of the double bowls, the connector – so much to work with to express the typeface’s character.

They will want to see the type in complete sentences: *The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.* This is a pangram, or phrase with all 26 letters of the alphabet,

Another one:
Quick, wafting zephyrs vex bold Jim.
Zany eskimo craves fixed job with guilty party.

To test fonts, how balanced they are, how the letterforms roll into each other, how their heights and weights and widths interact: h o p d

handgloves

These show all of the major curves and abutments in regular type usage. These words have the type’s DNA, like the straight “h” and the rolls and the distinctive lower case “g.”

Type designers are striving for the optical illusion of good letterforms. Typefaces aren’t actually symmetrical, but they’re designed to appear symmetrical. The dot isn’t always directly over the base, the lower case “t” might have a thicker base and a narrowing top. The slanted “O” in Windsor, for example.

Next, let’s look at several typefaces for an appreciation of what a visual art type design is.

Paul Renner, the type designer of Futura, was jailed for criticizing German black letter type, Fraktur, the official type of the Third Reich. In an irony, IKEA adopted Futura for its logo, ironic because Ikea’s founder, Ingvar Kamprad, was discovered to have been a member of the New Swedish Movement, a fascist organization, and as a teen having had pro-Nazi sympathies. Futura, designed in 1927, was used as the type for the Apollo 11 moon landing.

Some authentically American typefaces?

- Cheltenham, used by the *New York Times* for its headlines.
- Franklin Gothic, 1905, used by Lady Gaga's *The Fame Monster*, ROCKY film titles
- Goudy Old Style, used by Saks
- Gotham, from Hoefler Frere-Jones: True, solid, forward-thinking, but not edgy. Dynamic, but conscientious. Designed for GQ magazine in 2000. Selected by the Obama campaign. We chose it for Berry's Honors Program.

Hillary in 2008 chose New Baskerville bold (she's a lawyer).
John McCain used Optima, designed in the 50s, used a lot by health products.

Interested in nonconformity?
Neville Brody >> The Face type magazine >> typefaces Insignia, Blur

Comic Sans was designed in 1994 by Vincent Connare for Microsoft Bob. He modeled it on the type he saw in his Batman comic book, and he never intended it to become a commonly used typeface. Here's his explanation:

Why Comic Sans?
Comic Sans was designed because when I was working at Microsoft I received a beta version of Microsoft Bob. It was a comic software package that had a dog called Rover at the beginning and he had a balloon with messages using Times New Roman.

Comic Sans was NOT designed as a typeface ***but as a solution to a problem*** *with the often overlooked part of a computer program's interface, the typeface used to communicate the message.*

There was no intention to include the font in other applications other than those designed for children when I designed Comic Sans. The inspiration came at the shock of seeing Times New Roman used in an inappropriate way.

The designers and engineers at Microsoft spent lots of time drawing and coding the interface for MS Bob with comic characters but didn't bother to use a cartoon or comic font. I thought that was wrong and started to look at two comic books I happened to have in my office. I had been working with the Creative Writer team in the Consumer division at the

same time supplying them with fonts for Kids software, things like fonts looking like Pizza, monsters and ones with snow. There was a need for these fun fonts at Microsoft at the time.
--from http://www.connare.com/whycomic.htm

Connare also designed Trebuchet, which is used quite a bit in web design.

William Addison Dwiggins designed Electra for book printing in 1935. He also is credited with coming up with the term 'graphic design.'

Claude Garamond designed his typeface in the 1540s and is used widely by book publishers. The Harry Potter series, for example.

William Caslon was an early 18th century gunsmith, so of course his 'O' is a perfect form. Look at his wonderful ampersand, which is the joining of the "e" and "t" in the French "et," or and.

Hector Guimond created signage for Le Metro in Paris when it opened in 1900, in the Art Nouveau style. Today, the Paris Metro uses Parisine, introduced in the mid-1990s by Jean Francois Porchez.

Meanwhile, in London, Johnston Sans designed in 1915-16 was adopted for use throughout the London Underground. Look at its lower case "l," with a boot to distinguish it from the lower case "i." The diamond dot on the lower case "i." It's a straightforward, manly typeface very different from the Paris Metro typeface. Johnston Sans still in use today.

When Macintosh made its debut in 1984, there were approximately 100,000 fonts in the world. Of course there are many more today. They date back about 560 years. How many do we need? Maybe six.

The good type designer realizes that for a new typeface to be successful, it has to be so good that only a few recognize its novelty. – Stanley Morison, Times New Roman, 1920s

Good type designers can relax their eyes to see the negative spaces – the white space, the counters, the space in between.
The over-riding principle in typography is that typefaces should mostly pass unrecognized in daily life. They should inform but not alarm. Re-writing Pride & Prejudice? Try Didot. Or for a new audience, Ambroise Light.

"Beauty demands discipline."

Type can be pretty and still fail on the page as practical type, like so many dresses in fashion shows walking down the runway.

Some other typefaces to consider:

- Flieger for, say, a car nameplate in chrome
- Powerstation to post the voltage of an appliance
- Anglia Script for your wedding invitations
- Naiv for your new yogurt shop signage
- Aftershock Debris for a grunge choice

We use typography, which is both textual and graphical, to bridge to graphic design.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

- "All I need to make a comedy is a park, a policeman and a pretty girl." – Charlie Chaplin
- "It is virtually impossible to do something without restraints." – Charles Eames
- "Art is limitation." – G. K. Chesterton
- "The quality of a design depends on the economy of means used to achieve it."
- "The first move in any creative process is to introduce constraints."

First zen moment: Graphic design is about coming up with solutions to specific problems. (The quotes on the board.) There is an information problem; what is the graphic design aspect of the solution to that problem? These solutions almost always involve arresting people – stopping them in their tracks long enough to give the message a hearing, a viewing, some attention.

Think about the term just for a second: GRAPHIC DESIGN.

- Graphic: Visual.
- How about "design"?

What are the connotations? Planned, plotted, shaped, engineered. By design. No accidents. The notion or idea of "tools" that we've been using all semester provides a useful metaphor. As graphic designers, we are first and foremost problem solvers. We are not artistes. We are creators of solutions, for specific audiences, creators of very specific messages. It is not art. It is not magic. It is DESIGN. It is intentional. So have an idea behind every pitch (Warren Spahn).

The power of a singular visual mark with clarity and semiotic meaning beyond what is denoted. The lesson? It's the lesson of Apple design. Less is almost always more. A zen moment. This is true in everything, including and especially in graphic design. So make it clean. Make it elegant. Make it usable. Keep it simple. Strip it down. Be true. Be pure.

Before 1900 in England there were only 23 building materials in common use. Now there are more than 2,000. Is architecture any better? We have 100,000 typefaces. How many do we need? Three? Six?

I'll rely on you to read the 'history'.pdf available off the course webpage in this week's box. This is one of the Six Perspectives, albeit with a twist. We're looking at histories of media intertwined with the histories of the individual design eras or schools or philosophies.

Already we've reacted to some of the logos (PERSONAL). The linked "history" document provides, as does the textbook, an incredibly brief history of graphic design (HISTORICAL).

Now let's apply the TECHNICAL perspective by looking at a few ads and incorporating some of the principles.

The "Big Four" of graphic design:

- Contrast
- Balance
- Unity
- Rhythm

And to this list, we will add today: The Big Idea. Metaphor.

All good graphic design, be it for information or for persuasion (advertising), will excel in most of these five areas, and certainly in one.

Let's also consider color choices. What colors are selected for energy, to make an impression, to attract? And which colors are selected to establish foreground and background?

Consider both optical perception (neuroscience) and aesthetics (an art). Consider movement, temperature, and symbolism. For movement, for example, red and yellow are more forward on the page, more capable of grabbing readers by the lapels and pulling them in. Blue and gray are flatter, with less energy and motion. Recall that for temperature, red is hot. Blue is cool.

Each message is situated, in a particular place, and it is communicated through a particular medium. These – place or location and medium – influence our planning. A placard inside a store window. The side of an airplane. A semi truck. A business card. A soft drink vending machine. A tote bag. A trash can.

Typically we are serving someone or something else, like a brand, or a product, or an individual article or series of articles. It is, therefore, a puzzle, a puzzle with lots of possible solutions. There is no one "right" solution. There are lots of possibilities. Where do we start?

Know your audience. Understand the message. Plan how you are going to communicate the message to the target audience. Generate ideas. The best way to get a good idea is to get lots of ideas. Think sideways.

Graphic Design Toolbox

Contrast

- Isolation. Light & Dark, direction change, distortion/realism, sizes, shapes, colors, text (typefaces, text sizes, uppercase/lowercase)
- Center of visual impact or emphasis

How do we accomplish contrast?
Type, color, lack of color, shapes, white space, distribution of weight

Balance

- x and y axis
- distribution of weight
- All about using the grid

Unity

Gestalt: “great design synthesizes content”. Harmony.

How is unity achieved? Gestalt! Proximity. Repetition. Continuation (Hitachi ads). Continuity. Alignment (Giselle, Louisville Ballet).

Rhythm

Pace. How busy or at rest is the design? Think of your favorite magazine. Think of nameplates. Individual ads can possess or lack rhythm; even logos can.

Other considerations:

Focal point: Center of visual impact, or lack of a focal point.

How the brain works:

- The Z Pattern
- Congruity (things belong together)
- Continuation:
- The one thing different (dissimilarity)

Related here also is what kind of visual vocabulary we use, or the kinds of elements and objects we select.

Big ideas (may or might not be metaphorical).

PHOTOGRAPHY

We've discussed photography (and memory) throughout, but here we drill down into the attributes of the medium.

Photography is a grammar and, more importantly, an ethics of seeing
- Susan Sontag

To photograph is to:
- Confer importance
- Acknowledge (a "certificate of presence")
- Tell us what to attend to
- Beautify, to accord value to the subject

Photography is, or is like, what?
- Poetry?
- Intensive seeing?
- Truth-telling?
- Beautifying?
- Second sight
- a rebellion against time
- a secret that conceals as it discloses
- an emanation of a reality (Barthes)
- a proclamation of a reality
- memory
- a certificate of being

What does a photograph mean?
The meaning is the use. The use is the meaning.

There are many uses:
- Souvenir
- Civil rights text
- Memory, a record, certificate of existence
- Rite, ritual, social practice
- Identity negotiation and projection

But none of these uses can secure the meaning of the image.

Photographs disclose or reveal:
. . . the thing-ness of the living
. . . the humanity of things

Photographs can and do acknowledge. They cannot explain.
>>Emmett Till.

Imagine what it would be like to use or see a camera for the first time.

From Brassai's Conversations With Picasso, quoting the painter:
"When one sees what you express through photography, one realizes everything that can no longer be the concern of painting. Why would the artist stubbornly persist in rendering what the lens can capture so well? That would be crazy, don't you think? Photography came along at a particular moment to liberate painting from literature of all sorts, from the anecdote, and even from the subject. In any case, a certain aspect of the subject now belongs to the realm of photography. Shouldn't painters take advantage of their newfound freedom and do something else."

As a visual culture, images are central. Image-making has become a sort of second language. Camera phone photography is the most widespread image-making in human history. About 4,000 photos are snapped every second in the United States alone, as of late 2013, or more than four times that in 2003. In 1977, nearly 9 billion snapshots were taken each year. Today that number is around 1.6 trillion, and that's only with smartphones, no other photographic technology. U.S.: 125 billion photos taken in 2013.

When people had family albums they used to be private and only for the eyes of the family. Now the role of the photograph has totally changed. We consume images every day. We don't digest them, however. They go in and they go out. Vapor. Like breathing.

There is an aggression implicit in every use of the camera. There is something predatory in the act of taking a picture. To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed.

The best photographs move us. They allow us to enter a frozen instant of time and somehow make it our own. Photos also have a social role, as rite or ritual.

Why do people take photos? Social rite. Ritual. Memory. A wedding without a minister or a wedding without the wedding photographs, which is more difficult to imagine? Photography as celebration, as a marking. The ceremony takes 15 minutes, the photo session to craft the inscribed, re-created memory of that 15 minutes takes an hour and a half and no one minds.

A hall of fame in your house? (or wall of shame?) Family photos up a staircase or down a hallway. What do photos mean? How they are used. Records. WE ARE A FAMILY. WE BELONG TOGETHER. WE EXIST. MEMORY. You looked like THAT. And THAT.

Through photographs, each family constructs a portrait-chronicle of itself—a portable kit of images that bears witness to its connectedness. It hardly matters what activities are photographed so long as photographs get taken and are cherished.

When Kodak introduced the snapshot camera, for the first time in history large numbers of people regularly traveled. It seems positively unnatural to travel for pleasure without taking a camera along. Photographs will offer undisputable evidence that the trip was made, that the program was carried out, that fun was had.

Are photographs are an instrument of memory? OR, are they an invention of it, or a replacement for memory. STORY OF BOBBY POPE and the DUOMO in Florence. Carlton Fisk and the homerun that beat the Reds in the 1974 World Series.

I am struck by how our memories and vision of the past often are inseparable from the form of the prints. I stare at the sepia-toned, fading images from the 1920s and see my great-grandparents. I look at the serrated-edge prints of the 1950s, with month and date in the margin, the fading Polaroids of the 1970s. The medium is part of the message.

The medium is the message, so let's consider what aspects of whatever a photo does or can mean are intrinsic to the medium itself. The gaze it permits. The lie in terms of communicating time that it represents. The dignifying it invariably does, as well as the miniaturization effect.

Think of iconic images, like the Migrant Woman in your book, taken by Dorothea Lange. Iwo Jima we saw on the first day of the course. The execution of a Vietcong guerrilla by the police chief.

What does each of these images mean?
Why? How?
Does it tell the truth? THE truth?

The lie that tells the truth. The truth that tells a lie. (The Things They Carried)

“Harrowing photographs do not inevitably lose their power to shock. But they are not much help if the task is to *understand*.” Susan Sontag.

Photography cannot explain anything, but it can acknowledge. It can make us aware.

From Ghostwalk, Rebecca Stott (2007):
“The flash of the camera made several people glance in our direction at the same time. I opened up the screen. There was Dilys, now a series of pixels in my digital camera. Fixed. Framed. Imprisoned. Her head rose over your shoulder, the smoke from the cigarette she held in her left hand curling upwards, a snake trail against the polished metal door of an old bread oven set into the fireplace behind her. your cheek and jaw filled a third of the screen. I zoomed in past you to see how clear the cropped picture of Dilys would be. Her eyes were half closed but she was looking straight at the camera, as if she knew she was being photographed.”

“Photography is like . . .” What?

- Poetry (transcendent, resonant, ‘crafting’)
- Memory (history, marking, valorizing)
- Sight (vision, a way of seeing, a window)
- Art (drama, music, interpretation)
- Power (editing, framing, capturing, taking)

Dignifying an object, a person, a point in time
Reaching above the everyday, or celebrating it
Immortalizing, valorizing, treasuring

Oliver Wendell Holmes, civil war hero and USSC chief justice, called photography a “mirror with a memory”. He was floored by it.

John Ruskin, English artist and scientist: “Daguerreotypes taken by this vivid sunlight are glorious things. It is very nearly the same thing as carrying off a palace itself – every chip of stone and stain is there.” (1845)

The Ruskin quote gets at “capturing” a photograph, or its subject. Capturing, invading, exploiting. AH, ethical questions!

Example of the International Programs exhibit in the library, the ‘Other,’ the exotic. No one knew ANY of their names! Totally exploited.

The only “art” that renders a complete work with one push of a button. Eastman Kodak’s tagline: “You push the button – we do the rest!”

Of course, many photographs aren’t fixed in meaning. Their meanings change. Iconic photographs become so for a variety of reasons. Their composition, the way they evoke other images in our visual memory, their impact at the moment. And they are put to various purposes, become clichés, or are drained of their original understandings. The Iwo Jima photograph morphs from civic piety to slapstick in The Simpsons when Bart plants a flag at a beach party.

On Wednesday, we’ll analyze the place culturally and historically the now iconic and still deeply disturbing photograph of Emmett Till. The meaning of a photograph is its use, and the Emmett Till case study will demonstrate this.

We’ve also looked at street photography. Their First Murder by Weegee, the trolley car in New Orleans by Robert Frank, the store shop window by the French photographer. For a street photographer, randomness is everything, because that is one thing the world has in abundance. The photographer is just passing through it with a snare. Randomness becomes structure, therefore, and the best photographs capture something immediate, but at their best, also something timeless, unique, not seen before, or not seen that way before.

How important is the individual photographer? The more important, the less important the “reality” being depicted, right? The less important, the less photography is an art, an expression of individuality, subjectivity. The paradox of the universality and the subjectivity, the reality and the depiction of that reality, individuality and something that transcends.

From (mostly) *On Photography*, by By Susan Sontag

Photography is a system of visual editing. At bottom, it is a matter of surrounding with a frame a portion of one’s cone of vision, while standing in the right place at the right time. Like chess, or writing, it is a matter of choosing from among given possibilities, but in the case of photography the number of possibilities is not finite but infinite. –John Szarkowski

Cliché: French term that means both a trite expression and photographic negative.

In teaching us a new visual code, photographs alter and enlarge our notions of what is worth looking at and what we have a right to observe. They are a grammar and, even more importantly, an *ethics of seeing*. Instagram is yet another derivation of this, furnishing its users with a new ethic, and one that is at least problematic in terms of its relationship with truth.

The most grandiose result of the photographic enterprise is to give us the sense that we can hold the whole world in our heads – as an anthology of images.

Photographed images do not seem to be statements about the world so much as pieces of it, miniatures of reality that anyone can make or acquire.

Images that idealize (like most fashion and animal photography, and much of what we find on Instagram and Pinterest) are no less aggressive than work which makes a virtue of plainness (like school class pictures, mug shots, and still lifes of the bleaker sort. There is an aggression implicit in every use of the camera.

Photography is not practiced by most people as an art. It is mainly a social rite, a defense against anxiety, and a tool of power. . . For at least a century, wedding photography has been as much a part of the ceremony as the prescribed verbal formulas, as much if not more than even the pastor, priest or officiator.

Which is more unimaginable – a wedding without photos or a wedding without the minister? Or vows? Or proclamation? What does this say about us as a society?

Through photographs, families construct portrait-chronicles of themselves — portable kits of images that bear witness to those families' connectedness. It hardly matters what activities are photographed so long as photographs get taken and are cherished. Every home's 'wall of shame.' Bad haircuts. Christenings and beach fun. The trip to Disney. Graduation.

During industrialization, for the first time in history large numbers of people could regularly travel out of their habitual environments for short periods of time. It seems positively unnatural to travel for pleasure without taking a camera. Photographs will offer undisputable evidence that the trip was made and that fun was had.

There is something predatory in the act of taking a picture. To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed. Reactions? The Migrant Woman, for example.

To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt.

Each still photograph is a privileged moment, a slim object that one can keep and look at again. Photographs like the one that made the front page of most newspapers in the world in 1972—a naked South Vietnamese child just sprayed by American napalm, running down a highway toward the camera, her arms open, screaming with pain—probably did more to increase the public revulsion against the war than a hundred hours of televised barbarities.

To suffer is one thing; it is another thing to traffic in the photographed images of suffering. This does not necessarily strengthen conscience and the ability to be compassionate. It can corrupt them. Images anesthetize.

An event known through photographs certainly becomes more real than it would have been if one had never seen the photographs. Think of the Gulag Archipelago, the Soviet forced labor and concentration camp system, of which we have no photographs.)

But, after repeated exposure to images, that "realness" lessens. The event becomes less real.

With the Holocaust and its photography in mind, we might agree that "concerned" photography has done at least as much to deaden conscience as to arouse it.

How? The camera makes reality atomic, manageable, and opaque. It is a view of the world which denies interconnectedness, continuity, but which confers on each moment the character of mystery.

Any photograph has multiple meanings. Photographs, which cannot themselves explain anything, are inexhaustible invitations to deduction, speculation and fantasy. Conspiracy theories, anyone?

To photograph is to confer importance. There is probably no subject that cannot be beautified; moreover, there is no way to suppress the

tendency inherent in all photographs to accord value to their subjects. Isn't this the motivation behind most selfies?

In the normal rhetoric of the photographic portrait, facing the camera signifies solemnity, frankness, the disclosure of the subject's essence. That is why frontality seems right for ceremonial pictures (like weddings, graduations) but less apt for photographs used for billboards to advertise political candidates.

For politicians the three-quarter gaze is more common: a gaze that soars rather than confronts, suggesting instead of the relation to the viewer, to the present, the more ennobling abstract relation to the future.

Nobody ever discovered ugliness through photographs. But many, through photographs, have discovered beauty. Except for those situations in which the camera is used to document, or to mark social rites, what moves people to take photographs is finding something beautiful. The name under which Fox Talbot patented the photograph in 1841 was the calotype: from *kalos*, beautiful. Nobody exclaims, 'Isn't that ugly! I must take a photograph of it.' Even if someone did say that, all it would mean is: 'I find that ugly thing . . . beautiful.'

It is common for those who have glimpsed something beautiful to express regret at not having been able to photograph it. So successful has been the camera's role in beautifying the world that photographs, rather than the world, have become the standard for the beautiful.

The history of photography could be recapitulated as the struggle between two different imperatives: beautification, which comes from the fine arts, and truth-telling, which is measured not only by a notion of value-free truth, a legacy from the sciences, but by a moralized ideal of truth-telling, adapted from 19th century literary models and from the (then) new profession of independent journalism.

Photography opened up a new model of freelance activity—allowing each person to display a certain unique, avid sensibility. Photographers departed on their cultural and class and scientific safaris, searching for striking images. They would entrap the world, whatever the cost in patience and discomfort, by this active, acquisitive, evaluating, gratuitous modality of vision. Lange, Frank, Weegee, Cartier-Bresson, Brassai.

The ethos of photography—that of schooling us in 'intensive seeing'—seems closer to that of modernist poetry than that of painting. As

painting has become more and more conceptual, poetry (since Apollinaire, Eliot, Pound, and William Carlos Williams) has more and more defined itself as concerned with the visual. ('No truth but in things,' as Williams declared.) Poetry's commitment to concreteness and to the autonomy of the poem's language parallels photography's commitment to pure seeing. Both imply discontinuity, disarticulated forms and compensatory unity: wrenching things from their context (to see them in a fresh way), bringing things together elliptically.

One of the perennial successes of photography has been its strategy of turning living beings into things, things into living beings. Poetry often turns this same trick.

Seamus Heaney, Pulitzer-winning Irish poet, and my favorite:

Digging

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests; snug as a gun.

Under my window, a clean rasping sound
When the spade sinks into gravelly ground:
My father, digging. I look down

Till his straining rump among the flowerbeds
Bends low, comes up twenty years away
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
Where he was digging.

The coarse boot nestled on the lug, the shaft
Against the inside knee was levered firmly.
He rooted out tall tops, buried the bright edge deep
To scatter new potatoes that we picked,
Loving their cool hardness in our hands.

By God, the old man could handle a spade.
Just like his old man.

My grandfather cut more turf in a day
Than any other man on Toner's bog.
Once I carried him milk in a bottle
Corked sloppily with paper. He straightened up
To drink it, then fell to right away
Nicking and slicing neatly, heaving sods
Over his shoulder, going down and down
For the good turf. Digging.

The cold smell of potato mould, the squelch and slap
Of soggy peat, the curt cuts of an edge
Through living roots awaken in my head.
But I've no spade to follow men like them.

Between my finger and my thumb
The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

Seamus Heaney, "Digging" from *Death of a Naturalist*. Copyright 1966 by Seamus Heaney. Used by permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux

Insofar as photography does peel away the dry wrappers of habitual seeing, it creates another habit of seeing: both the intense and cool, solicitous and detached; charmed by the insignificant detail, addicted to incongruity. But photographic seeing has to be constantly renewed with new shocks, whether of subject matter or technique, so as to produce the impression of violating ordinary vision.

Bringing the exotic near, rendering the familiar and homely exotic, photographs make the entire world available as an object of appraisal.

By disclosing the thingness of human beings, the humanness of things, photography transforms reality into a tautology. . . But photographs do not explain; they can always only acknowledge.

For a medium so often considered to be merely realistic, one would think photographers would not have to go on as they do, exhorting each other to stick to realism. But the exhortations continue—another instance of the need photographers have for making something mysterious and urgent of the process by which they appropriate the world.

How important is the individual photographer? The more important, the less important the "reality" being depicted, right? The less important, the less photography is an art, an expression of individuality, subjectivity. The paradox of the universality and the subjectivity, the reality and the depiction of that reality, individuality and something that transcends.

One criterion of evaluation which painting and photography do share is innovativeness; both paintings and photographs are often valued because they impose new formal schemes or changes in the visual language.

One can't possess reality, one can possess (and be possessed by) images—as, according to Proust, one can't possess the present but one can possess the past.

Picture-taking must be the sole activity resulting in accredited works of art in which a single movement, the touch of a finger, produces a complete work.

Proust somewhat misconstrues what photographs are: not so much an instrument of memory as an invention of it or a replacement. The example of Carlton Fisk and his game-winning home run in Game 6 of the 1975 World Series. My memories of my first year and a half in Frankfurt, Germany.

A capitalist society requires a culture based on images. It needs to furnish vast amounts of entertainment in order to stimulate buying and anesthetize the injuries of class, race and sex. . . Cameras define reality in the two ways essential to the workings of an advanced industrial society: as a spectacle (for the masses) and as an object of surveillance (for rulers). The production of images also furnishes a ruling ideology. Social change is replaced by a change in images. The freedom to consume a plurality of images and goods is equated with freedom itself. The narrowing of free political choice to free economic consumption requires the unlimited production and consumption of images.

The Migrant Woman

Given all that we have learned so far, how do we "read" this photo, as a text? What is its mythic truth?

Could a painting of Florence Thompson have the same effect as Lange's photograph? Why or why not?

It is an **iconic** image from the Great Depression. Why? What is it that transcends, that resonates?

Introducing the six perspectives, let's think about what kinds of emotions and thoughts it evokes? What is your gut and/or immediate reaction to this photo? How does it make you feel? What do you think it means?

>>Despair, hopelessness, struggle, poverty, strength, perseverance

This is the **personal perspective**. Our gut reactions. How it makes us feel. What it makes us think about. The questions it raises. Do you like it?

Next, the Historical Perspective

Her name was Florence Thompson; she was photographed by Dorothea Lange as part of the Farm Security Administration effort to document the terrible living conditions of rural America in the 1930s and 1940s. Today this FSA work would be called spin or propaganda, part of a government effort to win legislation for social programs and labor programs. Newspapers and magazines ran a lot of their work, and today a quarter million of their images are in the Library of Congress.

Lange worked along with such notable photographers as Walker Evans, Russell Lee, and Gordon Parks. Lange was about 34 at the time this was taken, an accomplished photographer already, but this photo really catapulted her to the forefront of photography and publicity.

The stock market crashed in 1929, sending farm values and prices into the toilet. The poor now were forced to live hand-to-mouth, and to move wherever the work moved. This particular photo was taken in central California in March 1936. She was driving by a worker's camp in Nipomo, Calif., in the rain, tired. She drove past the camp, had second thoughts, turned around and this photograph (and many others) is a result of that decision.

In 1998, a signed print of this photo sold at Sotheby's for nearly a quarter million dollars.

Lange used the documentary style of photography very much current in the 1930s, but realize that objectivity was not a journalistic or photojournalistic value at the time, a period known for the "Mythmakers," like Grantland Rice.

And important here is the history of photography. Lange took this with a handheld camera, which was a recent development. Portable, so she could be on the move. Snapshots were possible, a development from the turn-of-the-century. B/W is all that was possible at the time. This is important to note.

Technical perspective

How does photography work? What are this medium's capacities and limitations? We've talked about this before. What kind of freight can photography carry? As we noted, this photo was taken with a semi-portable black-and-white camera using a normal lens and a medium-size aperture. No flash. About six feet away.

Could it have been altered? SHOW Mary Todd Lincoln and Abe's ghost. Yes, but unlikely. It was posed, however, if only slightly. Arranged. Does this change its meaning?

Other technical aspects?

Critical perspective

Do you recognize the reference in this photo to Madonna & Child?
Not a single painting, but almost a currency during the Renaissance. Everyone painted a Madonna & Child. Planet of the Apes. Benetton. (All included in "semiotics_images.doc")

We connect, even if only in our sub-consciousness, with these Madonna paintings. So, for this image to resonate, we have to know something of the Great Depression, and we have to have had some exposure to Madonna paintings. Was Lange aware of this archetype? Probably, at some level. And it helps explain the image's iconic status.

And in this perspective, all of the power tools we've been using are fair game. Negotiating with the image and image maker. Seeing critically.

Cultural perspective

As best we can, step out of American culture and look back at it. Japanese perspective? Internment camps? Post-WWII Japan? A radical Islam perspective? 'That's not your past, America; that's your future!" An Indian perspective. Slum Dog Millionaire? 'Hey, she's got it pretty good!'

Ethical perspective: The ethics of seeing

What do you think Lange's ethical responsibilities were here and how do you think she handled them, fulfilled them, failed to carry them out?

NOT what is or was legal. Different conversation. What was Lange's moral responsibility vis-à-vis Florence Thompson, her employer, her audience? How much of this depends on the degree of collaboration between Lange and Thompson?

Ethical issues of photography are typically in the areas of:

- Showing victims of violence or tragedy or catastrophe (further victimizing)
- Violating a person's right to privacy (intrusion)
- Manipulating or altering the image, or the reality of the content of the image (posing, arranging, positioning >> fiction)

Can you think of others?

The Six Perspectives Method offers several critical theoretical models of ethics to apply. What are they?

- The Golden Rule
- Hedonism
- The Golden Mean
- Categorical Imperative
- Utilitarianism

- Veil of Ignorance

Let's look at the issue of whether it is ethical to show images of the war dead. Few have been seen during this war, at least in the United States. Right? Why? Wrong? Why?

- sanitizing the violence
- should report what the government is doing in our names, and their results
- "the fact that people get killed in war is precisely what people need to be reminded of" – Ted Koppel
- self-censorship; government censorship
- what's the compelling reason NOT to?
- first soldier to face a court martial in Iraq war was the photographer of Abu Ghraib; Pentagon subsequently banned digital cameras and cell phone cameras from the field.

How about images from 9/11? The falling man?

How about the woman fleeing from a hostage situation with only a dish towel to protect her?

CINEMA

We use Chris Marker's film using (mostly) still photography to bridge to the medium of cinema, film, movies, and moving images.

La Jetée (1962)

"The cinema is an invention without a future." – Louis Lumiere

> "Because I know that time is always time
> And place is always and only place
> And what is actual is actual only for one time
> And only for one place."
> -- T.S. Eliot, "Ash Wednesday" (1930)

Chris. Marker"

Christian Francois Bouche-Villeneuve

transmedia approach
the "essay film

died in July 2012 at the age of 91

La Jetee is "one of cinema's most elegant and remarkable meditations on its own nature as a medium," despite or because of the fact that it is almost entirely composed of still photographs.

The main character has no name, and neither does the woman, who might be real, who might not be. Think about this and whether it even matters.

How is music used?
Sound in general?
How different would the 'listening' be if the film were a motion picture instead of a series of still images?

Contemplate how the film is narrated, and notice that the subject, the narrator is discovering what we are discovering with him when he discovers it.

This single-voice narration is intimate, and it uses the grammar and structure and cadence of poetry.

“The editing is done from ear to eye,” wrote Andre Bazin, a critic. “The mind must *leap* to the image.”

Note the whispers of German providing a sort of subconscience of the subconscious – guilt from the war, when the French aided and abetted German genocide of Jews?

Absolute key: “Memory not as something we *have*. Memory as something we *are*.” – Chris Marker

The cinema as a sort of time machine, and as a type of memory.

Think about the functions of memory.

The woman’s face in a photograph >> this is memory.

The question is, whose memory? Has the main character ever even seen this woman? Known her? Or dreamt her?

He ‘remembers’ his future. Why does he need an image, a photograph, to survive this “remembering”? (“The future cannot deny the past,” this narrator says.)

Note how the film plays with notions of linear time, past/present/future, as most films do in some way.

What does the use of still photography say about the essence of cinema’s appeal?

What does the nature of this particular film say about the essence of photography’s rhetorical capabilities and limitations?

Think of the last Marvel movie you saw, or any major motion picture.Why were these scenes so powerful? Why is film in some ways THE most powerful of media, at least emotionally (PATHOS)?

“It was as if my life was a movie.”
“It seemed like it was happening in a movie.”

Why do some our lives’ most dramatic moments seem like they happened as part of a film? What is it about the power of cinema that the simulated seems or is described as more real than the real?

Big sound, big pictures, big room, big screen >> big, big, big. Immersive. Vivid. Shared. An experience. The aspect ratio -- wide. And it’s all NOW!

The medium is the message, or at least the medium is an intrinsic, inseparable part of the message. And the part of the message that is cinema is an immersive, hyper-real experience RIGHT NOW that is often shared (in movie theaters and living rooms).

A medium – any medium – is not a neutral technology. Information is not channeled unmodified. It is mediated, changed. Even the medium of your voice, through conventions, dialect or accent, pitch, tone, inflection, encodes messages with meaning not explicit or inherent in the message.

What meanings are encoded within films? How does the medium impact, limit, determine the message?

Because in film it is always NOW, there is no past tense, or future tense, or there doesn't have to be. Even when time is going backwards, like Run, Lola, Run or Memento, because it is all NOW!

So, all films play with notions of time in some way. La Jetée is a prime example for us.

Watching is often, usually social. You watch with someone, or you watch knowing you are part of a larger viewing audience. It is a social activity versus a solitary pursuit or retreat. What difference does this social fact make? How is the social nature of this activity part of the message of the activity?

Ridley Scott, for example: "Movies are visual novels" (P. 306) Storytelling. Important cultural artifacts, shared culture, shared stories. Most films have a narrative, a narrative act, typically told in three acts.

I. Scene-setting, character establishment
II. Conflict
III. Conflict resolution

hypodermic needle, silver bullet theory of mass media with the advent of film, propaganda, Triumph of the Will, War of the Worlds.

Triumph of the Will: What is the rhetoric here? The visual rhetoric? Military might is right. What is this rhetoric? Hero shots. Big pans, big views of crowds, exercises, equipment, uniformed men, guns and tanks. Solidarity. Uniformity. Adoration of the people.

Metropolis is also mentioned in your text, for technical effects, or for the first instance of "lying," pointing to film's controversial and powerful new rhetoric visually. Which takes us to Man of Aran, the first documentary. Documentary is supposed to be true, right? As with photography, it might be a truth, some truth, but it's also fiction. Myth. Man of Aran was arranged, "acted" in important respects. It does not depict life as it is lived on Aran island.

But can't fiction tell truth? Can't fiction tell truths non-fiction cannot?

Borrowing rhetorics: Scary Movie for example borrows the rhetoric of slasher movies and the Foucault power structures in them, but for comedic effect. Submissive women. Objectification of women (and so a sister genre to pornography). Evil. Jordan Peele borrows from several genres to make essentially mashups.

Use of metaphor: Pleasantville and its use of color to represent WHAT? (Life, choice, risk, sin)

Pleasantville's use of TV – small, teeny. Characters. In your living room! "Krispy treat?" Also to sell. Always a pitch. Color as part of the grammar of cinema, as opposed to the b/w of TV of the time. Vividness, contrast, as metaphor for self-actualization, knowledge, sexuality. All contrast.

B/W AND color >> this is a central storytelling device

Schindler's List: use of red as metaphor

Truman Show and metaphor for the First Amendment and the dignity of choice v. control, predictability, safety, homogeneity. Similar to Pleasantville in some respects. Basic human freedoms = dignity of being human, choosing, even choosing badly. Fahrenheith 411.

Big metaphor (Avatar) and small metaphor (Informant! and Damon's hair as metaphor – a crown. To baldness).

ETHICS

4 main issues or areas of ethics for cinema:

- Stereotypes
- Sexual content, #metoo
- Violence >> think global, across culture and language, action translates, violence translates, no need for nuance; result: the rest

of the world truly believes we all have guns and carry them around
- Smoking/drugs/drinking >> Vice. Glamorizing sin, vice.

I'll add a fifth:
- Copycat crimes >> Trainspotting. War of the Worlds.

Movies as brands, as multimedia, multimodal, multi-product experiences. Pirates of the Caribbean >> a ride first >> movie sequels >> products, cartoons, TV series, action figures. Action films and their translate-ability to other countries, cultures

In 2007: 600 feature films produced, or about 1,200 hours of moving images. As a percentage of total images produced that year? A rounding error. Yet cinema has and reflects great cultural meaning. Why? Why such an influence incommensurate with its size? Compare the size of the film industry with that of videogames? With YouTube? Pornography.

September 2008: 10 billion YouTube video views. The most popular of these videos seen by more than those who saw the top-grossing films.

The Rear Window

News photographer L.B. Jeffries (Jeff) confined to his Greenwich Village apartment with a broken leg. He observes his neighbor. Observation. Photographer. The entire movie is POV editing, which is our focus today.

Hitchcock built the entire set, the apartment building about 2/3ds size, for control of lighting, shots, everything.

An immobilized man looking out and into other lives? Why?
Is he in control? Why not? What does he see? How does he react?

Note when and why the POV changes throughout the movie. Note when Thorvald looks at Jeff! Jeff, our dominant POV, becomes the object of POV, the hunted, the watched.

What (or who) is objectified by the gaze of the lens (Jimmy Stewart)? Is it a male gaze? A female gaze? An institutional gaze (Foucault)? Sympathetic gaze? Longing gaze? Clinical gaze?

Voyeurism? YES And our involvement or participation? Co-voyeurs. Co-conspirators. We're totally with him (and her). Who has the power? How?

How does Hitchcock play tricks with our memory? We think we have seen something that in fact we have not been shown. How does he do this? Suggestion.

What does Jeff actually see that is incriminating? NOTHING.

Four consecutive days are portrayed, in sharp contrast to La Jetee. Uncomplicated style. Minimal effects. Nearly all of it takes place in one room, as was Hitchcock's style. A very confined space.

Did you sense a sort of line the camera would not cross? A sort of magnetic field? We never see the city. We never see his bedroom or his bathroom.

Look for repetition, like a chorus in a song, and alternation for emphasis. In visual rhetoric, this is similar to italicizing something.

Why does Hitchcock so strongly ally with POV? So we will identify with Jeff. To make it easy (or easier) to tell the story. We see what he sees when he sees it. How does Hitchcock get us to sympathize with Jeff? Remember how he cuts from the silent scene of Lisa in Thorvald's apartment to Jeff's reactionos – his immobility as a sort of cruel torture? He neglected Lisa! He's being punished! He put her in harm's way, so now he's paying for it. We don't sympathize with her. Why not?

Day 1	63 POV shots 59 are Jeff's 4 are dual, shared with Lisa
Day 2	16 POV shots 9 Jeff 1 Lisa 6 duel
Day 3	50 POV shots 23 Jeff 6 Doyle 21 dual, including one to set up Thorvald's POV switch
Day 4	75 total

	31 Jeff 7 Stella 4 Thorvald 1 Lisa 32 dual or triple

The climactic POV switch occurs how? Flashbulbs. Chaos. Revolution. Jeff's POV is slowly being taken over, and it's done completely with visuals. He is losing visual control. He is losing real control.

Metaphor

What is Rear Window a metaphor for? Director-actor? Jeff the director directing his lead actress, Lisa? He fails miserably. Hitchcock succeeds. He is directing us, the audience.

We could also apply any number of visual theories. We could look at particular Gazes, to return to this concept:

- The camera's gaze
- The spectator's gaze
- The character's gaze
- Gender and gender power

In RW, we have a very masculine gaze. His position. We see his face more than any other. The POV list. Why?

He is a victim three times >> accident, confinement, Lisa. We are ALWAYS in his living room. Everyone else visits him. Imagine Jeff & Lisa married, living together. How would this change the film?

So, in terms of visual rhetoric: Repetition through POV shots and Emphasis with alternation in cuts and changes. Really simple, and really effective.

Truman Show

1998, so it pre-dates much of reality TV, the dot-com boom even. The film is also quite early in the product placement development cycle.

Truman has no idea he is living inside a television studio, surrounded by actors. Nor does he know that some 5,000 cameras placed around the city record his life for the TV audience, 24 hours a day. Remember Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon?

Cristophe -- (Christ, God)
Truman – a virgin birth, no earth parents

Visual rhetoric: Hyper-reality

Everything is too colorful. Too vivid. Too much light. NOT real. Synthetic. Man-made. How the clouds move – on a loop – suggest this hyper-reality.

I selected the movie because it is a postmodernist perspective on the rhetoric of film and on the nature and motivation of big media.

- Example 1: "That's our hero shot," camera looking UP at Truman piloting the boat.
- Example 2: Cristophe – "We accept the reality we are presented." Cinema. Suspension of belief.
- Example 3: Cristophe, the director – "I am the Creator." (A nod to Rear Window)

The camera is a peephole most of the movie. This signifies the gaze, but it reminds us that it is artificial. That this is a movie (or a TV show within a movie). That the scope of vision can only be very limited and very intentional, deliberate, manipulative. We ware watching actors playing actors playing real people.

Product placement

This movie was a leader or forerunner in terms of how sophisticated product placement could be. The most obvious placements are fictitious, part of the narrative (cocoa, homes, mowers, a dicer). Advertisements are not-so-seamlessly woven into dialogue and scenes, turning Truman's life into a continuous commercial, as well as a form of entertainment.

When Truman drinks his favorite beverage, he is actually doing a strange kind of celebrity endorsement. The actors who surround him know it is all a commercial, of course, and in the middle of conversations with him they will begin to describe the wonders of a product. Truman thinks they are just being enthusiastic. He has no idea they are talking to a TV audience.

This serves to make the real placements more like they are really a part of the story, the narrative, genuine. FORD, for example. Truman is the

first child to be adopted by a corporation, a wild notion that diminishes the shilling the movie is actually doing. This interweaving of narrative and commercialization also serves as a sort of metaphor for our own culture, and its commercial excesses. Truman's fake landscape is our own media landscape, in which news, politics, advertising and public affairs are increasingly made up of theatrical illusions. Like our media landscape, it is convincing in its realism, with lifelike simulations and story lines.

Truman's fear of leaving this invented world, once he realizes it is a fraud, is similarly like our own reluctance to break our symbiotic relationship with media. His growing suspicion that what he is seeing is staged for his benefit is our own suspicions as the media-fabricated illusions around us begin to break down. And the producer-director of this stage-set world, who blocks Truman's effort to escape, is the giant media companies, news organizations, and media-politicians that have a stake in keeping us surrounded by falsehood, and are prepared to lure us with rewards as they block efforts at reforming the system.

What gives this metaphor life is the way the movie depicts two attitudes we routinely take toward media. In one, we are absorbed by it; we accept its rendition of reality because it occupies our view. In the second attitude, we distance ourselves from media. We examine its meaning and try to understand the intentions of its authors. This second attitude is what makes criticism -- and freedom -- possible.

POV: The real girlfriend. She is the critic who invites us to see through media illusions. She tells or reveals to Truman that he is on television, then is silenced, removed from the set. The movie wants to play the role of just such a critic for us. It tells us to look around and break the spell that keeps us believing in the media-fabricated illusions of popular culture. But the film also IS that very same media. Like Truman, we are manipulated and entertained by its lifelike simulations and story line. We identify with Truman and psychologically become a part of his world. The POV for us is usually that of the audience watching The Truman Show, engrossed in his welfare. So the movie uses the manipulations of media in order to manipulate us into seeing through the manipulations of media. That's postmodernism.

The movie aims many of its most pointed barbs at us, the audience. After all, as we watch the characters hanging on Truman's every expression so they can feel something, that is us we see depicted on the screen. We are the one's who make this system possible, the movie tells us. The willingness of the audience to exploit Truman so it can enjoy his life as entertainment is our own willingness to exploit an endless parade

of human victims of news and reality programming because they have the misfortune to be part of some "newsworthy" event. And both the audience and Truman portray our willingness to experience an easier and more exciting substitute for life, which is what fuels the media machine. Truman Show watchers are living vicariously through Truman, amusement over all else, including food, work, hygiene, sleep, F2F relationships. So it's more a commentary on entertainment and mediation replacing the real, replacing lived life.

We're the villains and victims and hero of The Truman Show. And, ultimately, the only illusions we have to escape are the ones we create ourselves.

"Was nothing real?"
"You were real."

But he isn't. In fact, who is he? Truman: "You never had a camera in my head!" But in effect, Cristophe really did. We saw EXACTLY what he was thinking. "I know you better than you know yourself." Algorithms. Preferences. Past behavior. Consumer research can make predictions about us that are in the 95% accuracy range. Are we being de-humanized? Is media contributing to this by offering the virtual as the real, the real as the virtual, anything to keep us in their orb, as viewers, for advertising?

Memory not as something we have, but as something we are. What is Truman's memory? What are his memories? Synthetic, man-made, scripted. Fake. Inauthentic. Baudrillard's simulacra.

Think about the TV interview of Cristophe. Harry Shearer (voice of several Simpsons characters, btw). A pandering interview. Puffery. He treats a Cristophe as diety, celebrity. And Truman Show watchers are invited to buy from the Truman catalog. Operators are standing by. Media = Advertising.

Why is everyone so happy when he breaks free? Because the character is free, is human, can choose? Or because finally they are free? They can get back to life? (Of course, some will inevitably choose more simulation, mere amusement. The two security guards: "What else is on?"

TV

"The one function that TV news performs well is that when there is no news, we give it to you with the same emphasis as if there were."
--David Brinkley, long-time ABC News anchor (and UNC grad)

- The boob tube
- Idiot box
- Bubblegum
- Eye candy
- The 'small screen'
- Schadenfreude (German for "harm's joy," or taking pleasure in another's misfortune) >> "Reality" TV, or TV that isn't real at all. How real can anything be on TV?

Tele*vision* is visual; it cannot teach. It can make us aware of something, and it can help us pass the time. It can and must entertain. It trivializes. And it is always NOW!

Applying the HISTORICAL perspective, let's look at the *TV Guide* from July 1976. Note how few choices there were. TV was invented in the 1920s. Let's read a few plot narratives and draw some conclusions about the purpose and rhetoric of TV. To communicate in or with the 'rhetoric of TV' is to do what, exactly?

The rhetoric of TV:

- To entertain and amuse
- To use characters (lots of closeups, stereotypes, set pieces)
- To serialize (Lost, American Idol, 24)
- To ask nothing of the audience
- To use images, moving images
- To stage, craft, script and sequence >> to 'program'
- To trivialize, make smaller, miniaturize
- For communion >> "LIVE!" >> Sports (SuperBowl), moon landing, 9/11, Princess Di's funeral, Prince William's wedding to Kate. Think of the scene in Apollo 13 when they're gathered around the TV. Obama's inauguration, the last episode of Friends (or whatever)

Each and every medium borrows from, is in some ways a product of those media that preceded it. You tell me how TV's rhetorical possibilities and limitations are influenced in part by:

Comic books: Series, episodes, characters more than story
Theater: Stage sets, variety from vaudeville

Radio: Sponsorships, variety shows, personalities, crime dramas, reinforcing character-driven TV programming, including even reality programming
Movies: Editing, moving images, visuality, multiple cameras

Example: The Chinese Restaurant scene from Seinfeld, episode 11, season 2, now considered a classic. Take notes: What do we see in this prototypical TV artifact of other media, of the rhetoric of TV?

1. Staged set piece
2. Characters not story. What *is* the story? Waiting for a table. Can't make a call. Getting really hungry.
3. No story. Absurdist, really, reflecting the 1990s. Personalities. People we feel we know. (Cheers, Friends, ER.) We invite them into our homes. They are our friends (page 322 of our text).
4. Small. Miniatures. Trivial. A show about nothing

So each mode of communicating, each medium, involves a tradeoff, several tradeoffs. Each gives, each takes away. One is not necessarily better on the whole, just different. Each is limited, in other words. And every appearance is what? A disappearance.

Big changes are afoot, of course. Smaller, portable, Internet- and telecom-enabled screens. Ubiquitous screens. Yesterday at Chili's – the "kiosk."

So much video content, but of all different lengths, varieties – snippets and fragments. Less appointment TV, less social viewing, less full-length program watching. And less emphasis on the particular form – motion picture, videogame, cable TV or broadcast TV, YouTube video, etc. Convergent, digital storytelling, and brands and franchises.

Broadcast TV audiences in 2014 are one-third that of the late 1970s, or before cable TV.

Also trending however are innovative, bold, big idea TV shows that have pushed the boundaries of storytelling by mixing high and low culture and demonstrating that the small screen can be a medium for writer sand directors to create complex, challenging narratives with lots of moral shades of gray. The acting is first-rate, the dialogue smart, the cinematography polished, and you can watch this stuff wherever, whenever you want.

- Breaking Bad
- The Walking Dead

- Game of Thrones
- The Sopranos
- The Wire
- Six Feet Under
- Mad Men
- True Blood
- Friday Night Lights
- My Life on Mars
- True Detective
- House of Cards

You can watch a single episode or binge watch a season. All at home or on the go.

This compares with cinema's business model:

- Overpriced concessions
- Rude strangers texting and talking in a dark room
- First weekend grosses determining a film's fate
- Cultivating devoted audiences with a franchise or brand
- Distributing worldwide films that can be appreciated across cultures

In what one critic has called "the golden age of scripted TV drama," these TV shows have transformed the TV landscape and allowed TV to step out of the shadow of cinema, as the multiplicity of A-list movie stars now on TV shows. The film industry, conversely, is shrinking. Think about it: the last five episodes of Breaking Bad, the first season of Orange is the New Black or even the release of Grand Theft Auto V the videogame all loom larger in terms of impact on popular culture than Wolverine, GI Joe or really any other motion picture released last summer.

These TV shows have used the time and space and intimacy of TV to pioneer new ways of telling stories, while at the same time explicating philosophical visions that explain these works.

The Sopranos, for example, is a deeply cynical about human nature. The Wire, on the other hand, believes that any innate goodness within people eventually gets ground down by the institutions they serve. Breaking Bad is an existential journey into one man's self-made hell.

Shifts in the TV business and changes in the ways in which people watch TV have paved the way for these groundbreaking new shows, including the fragmenting of TV audiences. Was I Love Lucy that good?

No, it was on. And it had only two competitors. Now channels and streams from so many sources. PPV. Original programming on Netflix and Amazon. Individuals on YouTube creating in essence their own networks (channels). All this shows you can do niche programming and make money.

Lucas Cruikshank, a.k.a. Fred from Nebraska on YouTube: He set up his own channel and went viral with a riff from a hotel room. 2.3 million views. Compare that metric with any TV program you wish. Huge. Nickleodeon was paying attention, made Fred: The Movie, then Fred: the TV Show.

There are one-half billion YouTube channels. And there are screens EVERYWHERE. As of late 2013, 40% of YouTube vids are streamed onto smartphones.

Cinema has responded by trying to go bigger: Action heroes in big blow-em-ups that translate easily to other cultures and languages. Brands. Franchises. Big, big, big, in scale and size. Gravity in 3D. An experience. Imax. Immersive. Seemingly transformative. The arrival of TV in the 1940s sparked the development of wide-screen formats like CinemaScope, Dolby SurroundSound, 3D. The strategy is to provide an experience you can't replicate at home, which fuels an arms race.

"The form in which ideas are expressed affects what those ideas will be." Postman

And these forms are converging into a protean, complex digital, multiplatform visual storytelling. Videogames, feature films, web vids, sitcoms, cable dramas, Disney rides all converging and collapsing previously or historically important distinctions.

To pick up on the Postman quote:

Forms of discourse regulate, even dictate what kind of content can issue forth from them, the rhetoric's that are possible with the forms. Example >> church bells, one of the very first mass media. What can they say? What can they not say? Smoke signals. Can they philosophize? No. Can they ask questions about the nature of existence? No. Neither can television. We cannot use smoke to do philosophy. We can't use TV to do this either.

A more recent example for us, political campaigns. Obama v. McCain. Think back to 18th and 19th century campaigns. How did presidential candidates run then? How did voters know of and about the

candidates? Words. Lots of them. Written words. Spoken words in person. The first 15 presidents could walk down the street unnoticed. Advertising – all ads, not just political ones – were comprised mostly of words, assuming a rational, serious consumer interested in information. TV advertising? How many facts are you provided with? How many images? On what are you basing your purchase (or non-purchase) decision?

What happens when a culture that once was word-centered becomes one that is image-centered?

We could look at to dystopic futures, one from Orwell and one from Huxley. Read from Postman, p. 1 >> Read through, no discussion.

Amusing Ourselves to Death, Neil Postman (NY: Penguin,1986)

George Orwell's *1984*
Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*

Orwell warned that we will be overcome by an externally imposed oppression.

For Huxley, no Big Brother is required to deprive people of their autonomy, maturity and history. As he saw it, people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think.

Orwell feared those who would ban books. Huxley feared the day when there would be no reason to ban books because there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism.

Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would drown in a sea of irrelevance.

Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies (Huxley's language).

In Orwell's future, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In Huxley's, it is by inflicting pleasure. Orwell feared that what we hate would ruin us. Huxley feared that what we love will ruin us.

As Huxley puts it in his revised edition (in Memorial Library): the civil libertarians and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny "failed to take into account man's almost infinite appetite for distractions."

111: Huxley "believed that it is far more likely that the Western democracies will dance and dream themselves into oblivion than march into it, single file and manacled . . . Big Brother turns out to be Howdy Doody."

"Americans are the best entertained and quite likely the least well-informed people in the Western world. 70 percent of our citizens do not know who is the Secretary of State or the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court."

So, we don't know our leaders, our world leaders. We don't know where Darfur is. We don't know why our banking system collapsed, or what to do about it. Why not? Why hasn't TV told us?

Go to exercise that compares TV news to entertainment, and The Daily Show to news.

The difference between plot and story

Story is the emotional journey the character is on. Plot is the series of events that happen to the character -- what happens. To demonstrate the difference: Raiders of the Lost Ark v. Close Encounters of the Third Kind. In the first movie, a lot of stuff happens. The rock almost hits his head. The Nazis show up and threaten the world. And so on. But Indiana Jones is basically the same guy at the end as he is at the beginning. There is no emotional journey. The movie is all plot. In Close Encounters, nothing much happens. A space ship arrives, dude sees it and spends the rest of the movie trying to find it. But the character changes emotionally almost scene to scene to scene. The Richard Dreyfuss character (Roy) is on an emotional journey. Both films are Spielberg movies, so they serve well marking this difference between plot and story. Writers sometimes struggle, and often it's because they are confusing the two, plot and story. Reality TV is really just going on the emotional journey of the different characters. We get hooked via something that triggers an emotion. There is no plot. Nothing really happens.

Larry Wilmore, writer on *The Daily Show, The Bernie Mac Show, The Office,* etc.

Stereotyping

Can you think of some common stereotypes in media today?
In film? On television?

Can you think of a time when you were stereotyped? When you were the 'other' on the outside looking in, or made to feel that way?

We see people in "out" groups as less variable and more homogenous than our own group. "They all look the same to me." We are willing to make inferences about these "out" groups with little knowledge of them. Based on meeting one person in such a group, we are willing to make generalizations about an entire group, which leads to stereotyping. There are 17,000 distinct cultural groups in the world that never get media attention even in their own societies.

We view people in "out" groups as less complex. For example, young people view old people along fewer dimensions than they do other young people. These categorizations then influence our behavior. Stories of hard-working, decent members of various cultural groups are ignored. Less than 1% of stories on netework news feature Latinos/Latinas. Why is that?

Walter Lippman first used the word stereotype, as a social scientific concept, from his book, *The World Outside and the Pictures in Our Heads*.

He wrote that we don't respond to reality but to mental pictures of reality, pictures in our heads he called fictions. We create these mental pictures, stereotypes, to simplify perception and thinking processes. To get through the day. We create and use these stereotypes without being aware of their existence, that they are in our heads.

"We are told about the world before we see it," he wrote. "We imagine most things before we experience them. And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception."

Stereotypes. Mental pictures. Mental templates. Scripts that represent our knowledge and experience, and we create them to get through the day, as a coping mechanism.

As image makers, we are concerned about stereotype in visual communication, both in terms of persuasive efficiency and in terms of ethics.

Stereotyping most often in advertising, which has to take shortcuts. So advertising trades in abstract archetypes. We don't know their names – we don't care. They are symbols, characters, abstractions. They are iconic, to use Peirce.

Now as we've seen in several different ways, good satire, good parody puts into broad relief our underlying assumptions, and it gives us a safe context in which to look at and discuss difficult issues.

To help us discuss stereotype, let's watch Dave Chappelle's "The Race Draft." In it he looks at racial stereotyping, but notice how race is conflated with ethnicity and nationality, even religion and gender (Latino/a).

Jot down as many of the racial stereotypes that you see as you can, for example, white male as articulate, pushy, easily offended, businesslike, officious, uptight, a swindler.

Chappelle does us a favor, a service in revealing these stereotypes and the difficulty of people who don't neatly fall into a category, into a stereotype, like Tiger Woods, who though picked by blacks and lamented by "Asians," (his mother is Thai) he is in reality portrayed as white. ("For shizzle.") Chappelle pokes fun at these stereotypes by ballooning them to ridiculous proportions.

So think:

- Why is the sketch funny?
- Why do these types ring true?
- How are race, ethnicity, nationality treated?
- The sketch shows that race is a social construct. Tiger is Thai (a nationality), no, wait a minute, he's black (a race), no, maybe he's white, no . . . OJ is white, until he's on trial for murder, then he becomes black, spawning the Race Card, which puts a spotlight on the LAPD's whiteness. OJ wins.

  Colin Powell is white – how? Why? (They misspelled Condoleezza Rice, btw.) Lenny Kravitz half black, half Jew? What? Chappelle's humor is in how socially constructed and, therefore, fluid race actually is, or should be considered. "Asian"?? "Latinos," spoken by a Latina? And what does Latino mean? It's really not much more than language group.

  SHOW NY Times article on the difficulties of racial and ethnic

categorizations.

- What happens when it isn't satire, when it's not humor? What are the ethics of portraying race, ethnicity, nationality, gender? What are the dangers of these stereotypes as portrayed in mainstream media? And what we're discussing here are the ethics of visual message production.

  What ethics should you as advertisers, PR practitioners, marketers, many other roles, be subscribing to in selecting, crafting, disseminating these images?

Many of these stereotypical portrayals reinforce the notion of a "dominant culture", to borrow from your textbooks, or a dominance that marginalizes or silences other cultures.

Compare coverage of Jackie Robinson's first day in a Brooklyn Dodger uniform in April 1947 in the white mainstream press with that in the black press, for example.

In stereotypes, in other words, there are sins of omission and sins of commission.

Let's look first at commission: The Washington Redskins

Other major forms of stereotyping? The objectification of women

1. functional ranking — the tendency to depict men in executive roles and as more functional when collaborating with women,

2. relative size — the tendency to depict men as taller and larger than women, except when women are clearly superior in social status,

3. ritualization of subordination — an overabundance of images of women lying on floors and beds or as objects of men's mock assaults,

4. the feminine touch — the tendency to show women cradling and caressing the surface of objects with their fingers, and

5. family — fathers depicted as physically distant from their families or as relating primarily to sons, and mothers depicted as relating primarily to daughters.

So think of other common stereotypes?

- How are gay people stereotyped?
- Southerners? Talladega Nights, Dukes of Hazzard
- Mafia/Italians? Godfather, The Big Night
- High school females? Mean Girls
- Muslims (terrorists, the 'enemy' in thrillers, especially after 9/11: Iron Man, Zohan)
- Democrats or Republicans

To summarize, some basic truths about stereotyping:

1. All of us create, hold and use them. No one is free from stereotyping others. It is as much a part of us as touching or tasting. So they aren't necessarily bad, at least not entirely bad.
2. Stereotypes help us make sense of the world. They are shortcuts for our brains. Without stereotypes, we would have to examine each and every individual piece of information encountered and then evaluate it and place it into a sense-making category. Stereotypes save time and preserve sanity, giving us quick ways to categorize. They give us handy if imperfect ways to categorize people and, therefore, the basis to predict behavior of people in the absence of any information about those individuals other than membership in some group. And they are largely subconscious, working without our knowing it, without conscious control.
3. Stereotypes aren't necessarily negative. "Southerners are so nice." "Blondes have more fun." "Italians understand love!"
4. Stereotypes often hold an element of truth.
5. Stereotypes have consequences.

What's college for?

In connection with developing empathic capacity, the ability as professional communicators to think of and for our audience(s), and perhaps even the willingness to evaluate ourselves as moral agents, I asked us to consider what college is for, or what we look to our college experiences to produce or enable.

College forces a student to expand her perspectives and hopefully teaches her how to empathize with others.

Finding out how other people view life differently makes us more well-rounded people.

Learn multiple points of view.

Every day you have the choice of what you want to keep and what you want to throw away.

If you asked me what college for, my answer would vary, even day by day by day, but most days I'd likely say something like, "College should enable you to live more freely, more fully, more responsibly and more alertly." I might talk about the invitation college extends to students who wish to think with more rigor. I've often said that our greatest asset with respect to learning is our ignorance. I'm learning every day what I don't know. When I know what I don't know, only then can I do something about it, which is to attack that ignorance with a vengeance.

But college is also un-learning. We bring with us myths, pieties, values, sacred cows and even sacred words, assumptions and entire narratives. We soak in a chemical bath of conventional attitudes, submerged in a sea of propaganda, spin and persuasive messages. Even outright lies. Society so often seems and behaves like a conspiracy to keep itself from the truth.

I don't think "finding" one's self is all that helpful. The self is not something we have, but rather something we are or, even more accurately, what we ever are becoming. I think the self is much more decided, pursued, made — a crucible of creation — than it is anything one could "find." The great romantic John Keats wrote, "Do you not see how necessary a World of Pains and troubles is, to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul?" We forge in a furnace the beginnings of a soul, not to mention a head, a heart and some hands.

Thankfully, no one (yet) used the word “success,” which I think is such a seduction. Success the world can offer, and it can take away, or simply re-define. Ideals, conviction, the capacity to bring moral agency to bear on problems that matter — these things the world cannot manipulate, and college cannot create. But college can afford a young person the safe space and freedom in which to forge them. “An education is a self-inflicted wound,” writer Lewis Lapham has said.

To discover the moral significance of desire.

To invent a life that matters, not merely to “find your passion” or “follow your dreams,” as way too many commencement speakers like to mindlessly repeat. Invent a good life that matters to many.

This, I believe, is what college is for.