

UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM PROPOSAL COVER SHEET

UTC RECORDS

Title of Proposal – Must begin with Department Abbreviation:

425 ENGL ~~4x~~ Visual Rhetoric (new course) NOV 14 2008

Check One: Full Proposal or Information Item

REGISTRATION

Effective Date for Curricular Offering:

FROM: Joe Wilferth, English, Holt Hall 203, 425-4621, Joe-Wilferth@utc.edu (proposal originator: include spokesperson's name, department, office number, telephone, e-mail)

Does this require new resources from the originating department or other department? no Please attach explanation if yes.

Faculty of the originating department approved this proposal on November 4th (date), by a vote of 22 aye votes; 0 nay votes; 0 abstentions: 8 eligible voting members absent

The following have examined this proposal:

Dept Head/Director: Verbie Prevost (printed name) Verbie Prevost signature approve neutral disapprove*

College Curriculum Committee Date: Vote: Signature of Chair:

Spokespersons for Affected Departments:

Joseph M. Schultz ENGL Joe Wilferth (name, department, date) signature approve neutral disapprove*

RICHARD JACKSON 11-17-08 (name, department, date) signature approve neutral disapprove*

(name, department, date) signature approve neutral disapprove*

(name, department, date) signature approve neutral disapprove*

Dean/Director: H. Burkham H. Burkham signature approve neutral disapprove*

University Registrar: Linda Orth (printed name) Linda Orth signature approve neutral disapprove*

Provost: Phil Oldham (printed name) signature approve neutral disapprove*

*Those who disapprove may attach an explanation

Table with columns: ACTIONS on this proposal, Curriculum Committee, Faculty Senate. Rows include Date the proposal was considered, Vote of the body, Accepted as information item, Approved as submitted, Approved with amendments, Signature of Chair.

Course Proposal—ENGL 4xx (Visual Rhetoric)

Catalogue Description

English ~~4xx~~—Visual Rhetoric (3 hours)

425

This course explores the persuasive potential of images—icons, photographs, and video—in the construction of narrative and argument. Specifically, students in this course will analyze and interpret the symbolic significance of images, and they will produce rhetorical texts/artifacts that are primarily image-based. Pre-/Co-requisite ENGL 202.

Rationale

The English Department has a major in literature and a concentration in rhetoric/composition. An upper-level course such as this caters to the needs of students in both tracks as it highlights the visual nature of texts today. From the graphic novel to the photo essay (such as those found in TIME magazine) and from visual poetry to digital/screen-based composition, our students now study a variety of texts as they hone their critical thinking, interpretive, and analytical skills. Put simply, they are required to be literate in the traditional sense—in that they must be proficient in print-based media—and they are likewise expected to be literate in digital media. They are expected to be capable readers and *writers* who are proficient with the technologies that mediate communication practices of our time. This course, which was taught in Spring 2008 as a “provisional” course, highlights both reading and writing practices required of texts that are themselves uniquely visual. Working toward a new and evolving digital literacy, this course emphasizes both the *theory* and *practice* involved in the production of visual texts.

Effects on English Department Programs

This course will likely be taught every third or fourth term. The English Department will be required to commit one faculty member for 3 credit hours of teaching. We currently have three faculty members who are capable of teaching the course and its content. That is, it is not so specialized that it hinges on one faculty member’s specialization.

Effects on Other Programs and Resources

This course will complement, but not compete with, courses in Art and Communication. While it will emphasize design, its main focus will be on rhetoric and the key features of rhetorical texts—namely audience, purpose, context and form/genre. The course will be taught in the Department’s dedicated computer classroom on computers that already have the requisite software.

Syllabus

COURSE: ENGL 3xx/4xx
TITLE: Visual Rhetoric
CREDIT: 3 hours
FACULTY: Joe Wilferth; 425-4621, Joe-Wilferth@utc.edu, Office Hours (MW 2-4:30)
PRE- CO- REQUISITES: ENGL 202

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course explores the persuasive potential of images—icons, photographs, and video—in the construction of narrative and argument. Specifically, students in this course will analyze and interpret the symbolic significance of images, and they will produce rhetorical texts/artifacts that are primarily image-based.

[Additional description for the syllabus; not to be included in the catalog description] By now, you are familiar with the term *rhetoric* – its casual (if not entirely pejorative) usage as well as the term’s use in academia to point to a field of study that has historically focused on the role of *language* in society. This course, you will find, is somewhat unique in English studies as it borrows from other disciplines and seemingly diverse theoretical foundations to explore the use of and the role of *images* in our culture, specifically the role of images in supporting narrative and argumentation. That said, our course begins with the assumption that rhetoric works according to multiple symbols systems – including spoken and written language, of course – and those symbol systems include images, icons, photographs, video, and more. Whereas Roland Barthes so emphatically asked, “Why not wipe out the difference

between literature [that which we so value in English studies] and painting in order to affirm more powerfully the plurality of *texts*?” we continue his work to acknowledge, analyze, and produce *texts* that, like works of literature, employ metaphor, employ hyperbole, move viewers to action, to anger, to empathy, and more. We are here to study *visual* rhetoric.

Visual texts should be considered among the “available means of persuasion” that Aristotle described in his treatise on rhetoric, but we must acknowledge that visual rhetoric neither displaces nor functions in isolation from other modes of communication, *e.g.*, written captions, campaign slogans, *etc.* By studying visual rhetoric in the context of contemporary, popular culture – study that takes us across new technologies of mediation and production – we will discover how frameworks used to explore spoken and written communication are sufficient for some discussions but insufficient for others when studying visual rhetoric.

We begin our course by exploring definitions of visual rhetoric and the argumentative or persuasive potential of images. In doing so, we shall become over the course of the term familiar with the most current scholarship on the subject, scholarship that is often written from multi-disciplinary perspectives and experiences. Some questions we shall consider by the end of the term: Can images argue? Do images function rhetorically? How do various technologies impact the rhetorical potential of images? What are the relationships among visual, spoken, written, and digital rhetorics? What does it mean to *read* in a modern western culture? What does it mean to *write* in a modern western culture? What influences do screen-based technologies and multimodality have on visual rhetoric? And how do we participate in the discourse of a global village? The course does not require any previous experience or expertise with digital technologies, though a willingness to explore and experiment with readily available reading/writing technologies is expected.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Students will expand their reading and writing practices beyond the traditional print paradigm. That is, they will become more literate using digital/electronic texts, and they will become more proficient in using the technologies that mediate those digital/electronic texts.
- Students will learn teamwork and collaborative authorship skills.
- Students will understand and practice the scrupulous attention to detail necessary in a story and retrieving digital texts.
- Students will refine techniques for adapting their writing to the demands of both private and public audiences.
- Students will develop techniques for making effective presentations to individuals and groups.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Regular attendance is required. Sporadic attendance suggests that you do not take seriously your education or your learning in this class. Absences incurred through UTC-sponsored events are excused if students follow the correct procedures. See page 11 of the *Student Handbook*.

MAKE-UP POLICY: All of your work is to be turned in on time. If, due to emergency or illness, you are unable to turn in your work on time, please inform me as soon as possible. I would prefer that you contact me 24 hours prior to when class work is due so that we may make necessary arrangements.

EVALUATION: Grades are calculated according to the traditional scale: 90%-100% = A; 80%-89% = B; 70%-79% = C; 60%-69% = D; below 59% = F.

Course assignments include the following (with guidelines).

Visual Analysis 10%

Select an image from contemporary popular culture and write a short (3-4 pages) analysis that explicates a plausible or intended meaning. In doing so, make clear the critical lens, *i.e.*, the method of criticism, you use to analyze the image—*e.g.*, feminist criticism, ideological criticism, *etc.* Whereas not all analyses are equally enlightening or convincing, you should choose carefully both your image and your method of analysis. As you begin your analysis, you may find it useful to include background or contextual information for the image and/or for the method of analysis. You will be assessed based your ability to describe the text you are analyzing, based on your ability to

analyze and interpret the rhetorical components of the text, and based on your assessment of rhetorical impact of the text.

Logo/Icon Design 5%

Using your initials (e.g., JMW) and an icon that represents your personality or a hobby (e.g., a musical note, an animal, a boat, a Chinese character), design your own logo. The logo may be in color or in black-and-white; it should be of good quality in terms of resolution; and it must, in the end, be transparent in the “dead space” (determined by file format). Image size: no larger than 3” x 3”. File type/format: .jpg, .gif, and .tif. (You will actually produce *three* versions of the same icon.) File size: respectable for format. You will be assessed based on file size, design, and quality/resolution of the logo.

Photo Essay 15%

Develop a photo essay from original digital photographs (or from original images digitized by scanner) combined with original written and/or audio communication. You may use outside sources in addition to your own texts just as you would in a traditional essay; provide appropriate documentation as necessary. Your photo essay should combine elements of exposition and elements of persuasion that are designed to engage an intelligent reader/viewer who is interested in the topic of your photo essay. That said, consideration of audience is key to your success in this assignment. Completed photo essays should include a minimum of 10 photographs. You are welcome to use original or existing (i.e., “found”) digital video, but it is not required for the project. (We will use in class *Photostory 3* as we storyboard and draft our photo essays, but you are welcome to use any program you like to generate your final copy.) You will be assessed based on the narrative you create using these images. The narrative must demonstrate plot development, character development, and time.

John Berger’s *Ways of Seeing*

Example: “A Photo Essay on the Great Depression”

<http://www.english.uiuc.edu/maps/depression/photoessay.htm>

Example: “TIME Magazine’s Photo Essays” <http://www.time.com/time/photoessays>

Short Silent Movie or Music Video Montage/Mash-Up 20%

This project, regardless of the option you select, will include storyboarding and video editing. For those who choose to do the music video montage, sound editing – with cautious use of copyrighted materials – will be required. These projects should range between 3 and 5 minutes in length. More guidelines, along with criteria for assessment, to be provided in class.

Public Service Announcement (PSA) 25%

Write a public service announcement (PSA) that is expository (i.e., informative and explanatory) and persuasive in nature. This project will include storyboarding, video editing, and sound editing. Your PSA must ultimately be posted on YouTube and/or made available through your electronic portfolio (the final project for the class). More guidelines, along with criteria for assessment, to be provided in class.

Keep America Beautiful

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3QKvEy0Aik>

I learned it by watching you...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-Elr5K2Vuo>

David Lynch’s “Clean up NY” PSA

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZSWv90msTUc>

UNICEF USA “Child Survival” PSA

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwDy-mEJ3mU>

ONE.org PSAs

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=md0UHOUN6iE>

Final Project 25%

Option A: You may write a 10-12 page *essay* (expository or argumentative/persuasive) on a subject related to our course theme. The subject and the essay itself should be written for an audience of peers. You may, in fact, wish to collaborate with peers to develop a cohesive panel presentation for a regional or national conference. Papers will be

assessed based on the focus/scope of the topic, based on the organization of the writing, based on the development of ideas, and based on mechanical/grammatical accuracy.

Option B: Develop a web-based or *electronic portfolio* that contains your work from this term. What exactly are electronic portfolios? Like all true portfolios, they contain several distinctive features. That is, they typically reflect a *collection* of work, a *selection* of work culled from an archival collection, a *diversity* of works, some *reflection* on the development process/development of the portfolio itself, as well as an *evaluative* section that aims to demonstrate what is valued by the portfolio's author. The portfolios will ultimately be presented to the class in our last days of the term. This presentation is to be considered somewhat formal; you should be organized and efficient with our time. More guidelines, along with additional criteria for assessment, to be provided in class.

TEXTBOOKS: Required text(s) and recommended material.

Required

- Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin, 1977.
- Hill, Charles A. & Marguerite Helmers. *Defining Visual Rhetorics*. Mahwah, NJ : LEA, 2004.
- Handa, Carolyn. Ed. *Visual Rhetoric in a Digital World: A Critical Sourcebook*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins P, 2004.

Select handouts from...

- Kress, Gunther & Theo van Leeuwen. *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Mitchell, W.J.T. *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994.

Recommended Open Source (or otherwise free) Resources: [GIMP](#) (for photo editing), [Photo Story 3](#) (free for Windows), [Audacity](#) (for sound editing), [NVU](#) (for web design), [Dreamweaver CS3](#) (for web design - free trial)

ADA STATEMENT: If you are a student with a disability (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, etc.) and think that you might need special assistance or a special accommodation in this class or any other class, call the Office for Students with Disabilities/College Access Program at 425-4006 or come by the office – 110 Frist Hall.

Pledge to students with disabilities: I pledge to work with you to seek departmental and University resources that will ensure access and accommodation in this class.

COUNSELING AND CAREER PLANNING: If you find that personal problems, career indecision, study and time management difficulties, etc. are adversely impacting your successful progress at UTC, please contact the Counseling and Career Planning Center at 425-4438.

WRITING CENTER: The Writing Center at UTC is a free service offered to all members of the University community. The Center is staffed by peer tutors, graduate students, and English instructors, and offers various services to writers, including tutorials, workshops, and access to resources. Please visit the Writing Center in Holt 119.

UTC EMAIL: To enhance student services, the University will use your UTC email address (firstname-lastname@utc.edu) for communications. (See <http://onenet.utc.edu> for your exact address.) Please check your UTC email on a regular basis. If you have problems with accessing your email account, contact the Help Desk at 423/425-2676.

COURSE SCHEDULE: Appropriate readings accompany these weekly assignments.

- Week One: Introduction to the Course (PowerPoint presentation of visual culture)
Starting with the Familiar: Introduction of Visual Analysis Paper
- Week Two: Visual Analysis Due; Introduce Logo/Icon Assignment
- Week Three: Cropping Exercise, Storing Files (of appropriate formats), and Resolution
- Week Four: Logo/Icon Assignments Due
- Week Five: The Photo Essay: Considering Design, Layout, Context and Narrative
- Week Six: Present Photo Essays
- Week Seven: Bridging from the Print Paradigm to the Digital Paradigm
Introduce the Short Silent Movie and the Music Video Montage/Mash-Up
- Week Eight: Introduce final project options (the extended paper and the electronic portfolio)
Continue work on Short Silent Movie or the Music Video Montage/Mash-Up
- Week Nine: The Public Service Announcement (integrating sound)
- Week Ten: The Public Service Announcement: Considering Audience and Form
- Week Eleven: Workshop the last two major projects; refining our work
- Week Twelve: Workshop the last two major projects; refining our work and bridge to the
final project; web design and navigation
- Week Thirteen: Researching and/or creating your electronic portfolio
- Week Fourteen: Researching and/or creating your electronic portfolio
- Week Fifteen: Present final papers or electronic portfolios