Practices of looking
Introduction to Visual Anthropology

Instructor: Craig Campbell
Class meets: MW 2:30PM-4:00PM
Class location: SAC 4.118
Office location: SAC 4.122
Office Hours: Thursdays 2-3pm
Email: craig.campbell@utexas.edu

“Seeing not only makes us alive to the appearance of things but to being itself.”
~David MacDougall

This class will introduce you to the history of Visual Anthropology which has a bifurcated set of fascinations: the study of visual culture and the use of visual images in the production of anthropological knowledge. In this class, you will develop sensibilities and skills for the examination of vision as a cultural practice. The methodological and analytical tools associated with Visual Anthropology will help you understand broadly how the visual has been constituted as a category and specifically how it relates to the study of culture and society in anthropology.

This course will explore the history of the visual in anthropology as seen in the production of photographs, films, and videos. We will explore themes of media, mediation, everyday life, “the gaze,” documentary forms, materiality, technology, realism and representation, as well as ethics. This course will introduce participants to critical approaches and analytic methods that broaden their toolkit for describing the world and the ways in which it is culturally and historically mediated. This course is ideally taken prior to “The Photographic Image: Visual Anthropology II.”

Required readings

Available for purchase at the University Co-op.


Available for download from Canvas.

Articles, book chapters, and other required readings will be shared on the Canvas platform.
Grading scheme

30% - Participation. I will do roll-call each class. You are expected to attend all classes, though I will allow for two unexcused absences (except on a day when we have a test). You are expected to have read the articles and taken notes. I will be calling on individuals in class to respond to specific questions regarding the readings. Both attendance and evidence of preparation contribute to your participation grade.

20% - Representation project. In this project you will be required to explore the ways in which a cultural or social group has been visually represented. You will need to hand in 1500 typed essay illustrated with images. Due: Friday, October 13. Upload paper to Canvas as a PDF only.

20% - Visual Anthropology article analysis. Provide a summary and critique of an article from a Visual Anthropology journal (Visual Anthropology Review or Visual Anthropology). Due: Friday, November 10. Upload paper to Canvas as a PDF only.

10% - Test on the book Echo of Things. This is an in-class essay. You will be asked to answer several long questions in class. Open-book. Wednesday, December 6.

20% Assignment: Photo-essay analysis. Read Sutherland’s article “The Photo-Essay.” Find a photo-essay that is done by a non-anthropologist. Comment on why and how it is not anthropological. Discuss how you would make it better. Talk about what you like and don’t like. Discuss ethics. Due: Monday, December 11. Upload paper to Canvas as a PDF only.
Additional Resources.

Print and digital journals:

- Visual Anthropology - http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/qvan20
- Visual Ethnography - http://www.vejournal.org

Websites:

- www.visualanthropology.net
- http://societyforvisualanthropology.org

Streaming Video services:

- Kanopy [https://utexas.kanopystreaming.com]
- Alexander Street Press [https://alexanderstreet.com]

Course Policies and Information for Students

Inclusive learning environment statement

The best learning environment—whether in the classroom, studio, laboratory, or fieldwork site—is one in which all members feel respected while being productively challenged. I recognize cultural antagonisms towards (and challenges faced by) people of color, women, LGBTQ identified folk, linguistic minorities and others. My goal is to help you feel safe to express your ideas, criticisms, and questions. I am dedicated to fostering an inclusive atmosphere, in which all participants can contribute, explore, and challenge their own ideas as well as those of others. Every participant has an active responsibility to foster a climate of intellectual stimulation, openness, and respect for diverse perspectives, questions, personal backgrounds, abilities, and experiences. I recognize my responsibility for maintaining this climate.

Attendance policy

Regular attendance is required. You will be permitted two unexcused absences before unexcused classes incur a penalty towards your final participation grade. You are not allowed to miss tests without prior notice.

Notice regarding academic integrity
• Honor Code or statement of ethics.
  o University of Texas Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

• Web site for more information: http://uwc.utexas.edu/academic-integrity

Religious Holy Days

• By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

• If you are worried about someone who is acting strangely, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal

Resources for Learning & Life at UT Austin

The University of Texas has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning.

• University Writing Center: http://uwc.utexas.edu/
• Counseling & Mental Health Center: http://cmhc.utexas.edu/
• Student Emergency Services: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/