

Visual Communication and Digital Culture, 2022 Autumn, Henrik and Ates

Program - overview of the course days and readings.
Portfolio requirements - see end of this program.

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Where: note that usually we meet in 40.2.25 – but there might be exceptions – see below.

When: On Thursdays – but no class in week 42. The hours announced on study.ruc.dk follow the general time slots at RUC, thus our allotted time is always from 12:15 – 16:00. Some occasional adaption might occur, including time for group work on campus or – if needs be – an online meeting.

Course day 1) Thursday, September 8, in room 40.2.25 (12:15 – 16:00).

Teachers: Ates and Henrik.

Introduction to the main ideas and theories of the course, the course program and literature. Explanation of the portfolio exam.

Exercise in class: we will read in class and discuss 1 or 2 portfolio examples (from a previous semester). The examples will be on Moodle too (if you want more time to study the examples closely, you can start reading them before the class).

Ates presents overview of themes, theoretical and methodological perspectives to digital culture.

Henrik presents some first general theory/method: How to Analyze and Interpret Visual Communication and Media.

More readings/recommended:

- Jensen, K. B., & Helles, R. (2017). *Speaking into the system: Social media and many-to-one communication*. *European Journal of Communication*, 32(1), 16-25 (on Moodle, see under Ates' readings)

Course day 2) Thursday, September 15, in room 40.1.39 (12:15 – 16:00). Teacher: Henrik

Visual Politics: Politicians appearing in the media. Political speeches and debates on film, TV, video/social media. The unnoticed, but pervasive and persuasive work of the camera and the media montage: how we come to see the politicians and politics today.

Exercise in class: Analysis of one or two video examples. Note and present your main points – thus sketching a portfolio chapter (to be completed/perfected later).

Readings: *The Rhetorical Power of the Camera*, Henrik Juel (2018)

<http://www.henrikjuel.dk/Essays/RhetoricalPowerCamera.pdf>

(Recommended – though nearly 20 years old) Joshua Meyrowitz: *Displaying the Body Politic, Televisual Exposures and Concealments (on Moodle)*

Course day 3) Thursday, September 22, in room 40.2.25 (12:15 – 16:00).

Teacher: Ates.

Visual Methodologies and Digital Culture

Readings:

- Rose, G. (2016). Visual methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual materials. Sage. (Chapter 1: Researching with Visual Materials)
- Manovich, L. (2017). Instagram and Contemporary Image, Online. (Read Preface + Introduction: Introduction: Instagram Platform as a Medium pp. 4- 23) (The full book can be downloaded un CC license here: <http://manovich.net/index.php/projects/instagram-and-contemporary-image>)

For Portfolio (prepare before class): Look up for the word “hygge” on Instagram and generate 4-5 empirical categories based on which these social media posts may be analysed. In other words: If you were to answer the question “*What does hygge mean to Instagram users?*”, what would your top five answers be? There is not a minimum number of images to browse for your analysis, but ideally you should stop when you stop producing new and original categories. We will use these images in class to generate new research directions.

Course day 4) Thursday, September 29, in room 40.3.25: (12:15 – 16:00).

Teacher: Henrik

Visual News: The development and concept of “News” and news value/criteria. New trends in “news” in the digital era, including War-time news.

Exercise in class: We describe, analyze, and interpret some news photos – classic ones from recent history; and search for new, impressive news photos or news videos of this year. We then present and discuss in class (this is also meant to be a sketch for a portfolio chapter). To prepare for class/portfolio: you are encouraged to present two recent wartime photos or videos (representing both sides of a conflict, preferably).

Readings/Video before class: Watch the video (35 min.)with Kathleen Hall Jamieson: *Cyberwar: Coping with the Challenges Posed by Trolls and Hackers*, 2020:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S92RZ_enbG8

Readings: Boll, Julia: *The Unlisted Character: On the Representation of War and Conflict on the Contemporary Stage (especially page 11-20)* (also on Moodle).

(Recommended: RAND, full paper: *News in a Digital Age - Countering Truth Decay* (on Moodle))

Course day 5) Thursday, October 6, in room 40.2.25 (12:15 – 16:00).

Teacher: Ates

Social Ecosystems of Visual Media

Readings:

- Green J. and Jenkins, H. (2011). Spreadable media: How audiences create value and meaning in a networked economy, in *The Handbook of Media Audiences*.
- Miltner, K. M. (2018). Internet memes. *The SAGE handbook of social media*, 55, 412-428.

Recommended Readings:

- de Saint Laurent, C., Glăveanu, V. P., & Literat, I. (2021). Internet memes as partial stories: Identifying political narratives in coronavirus memes. *Social Media+ Society*
- Shifman, L. (2012). An anatomy of a YouTube meme. *New media & society*, 14(2), 187-203

For Portfolio (prepare before class): Choose an online conspiracy theory or channel (fx. page, group or community) and observe the use of memes as tools of visual communication. Try finding 3-5 interesting examples to their different uses to demonstrate how memes support the overall conspiracy phenomenon. In what capacity do these memes enable authentic new meaning potentials for conspiracy theorists on social media? (*You can use https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_conspiracy_theories for inspiration)

Course day 6) Thursday, October 13, in room 40.2.25 (12:15 – 16:00).

Teacher: Ates

Visual Media and Digital Creativity

Readings:

- Deuze, M. (2006). Participation, Remediation, Bricolage: Considering Principal Components of a Digital Culture, in *The Information Society*, Vol. 22, 2006
- Van Dijck, J. (2013). YouTube: The Intimate Connection between Television and Video Sharing, in *Culture of Connectivity: A Critical History of Social Media*.

Recommended readings:

- Manovich, L. (2008). "Art After Web 2.0.", in *The Art of Participation: 1950 to Now*, (eds.) Frieling, G., Groys, B., Atkins, R. and Manovich, L. (on Moodle).
- Burgess, J. (2009). How YouTube Matters, in *YouTube: Online Video and Participatory Culture*, (eds.) Burgess, J. and Green, J., 2009. (on Moodle)

For Portfolio: (prepare before class): Find an authentic YouTube channel/personality (a so-called *influencer*) with more than 1 million followers and describe the reasons for their "influence". What makes them successful on this communication platform? Does this channel show any of the characteristics mentioned in Mark Deuze's article? Try focusing on not only the quality of their audio-visual presentation, but also their interaction and engagement with their audience. In class, we will see if we can come up with meaningful problem formulations about this phenomenon by using YouTube as our research field. What can YouTubers tell us about the key characteristics of our digital culture? Does YouTube point to a radical shift from traditional (mass) media or does it only reinforce the existing power relations between producers and audiences?

Course day 7) Thursday, October 27, in room 40.2.25 (12:15 – 16:00).

Teacher: Henrik

Visual Nature: About environment, climate change, ecology, wild-life and animal ethics and ideology on film/tv/social media.

Exercises in class: We watch and analyze some short videos (perhaps with Wild Life/environmental activism/climate documentary), discuss the visual communication involved and are thus preparing for a section in your individual portfolio.

Readings/Video: *Seeing Culture in Watching Nature on the Screen* Henrik Juel (2006) <http://www.henrikjuel.dk/Essays/WatchingNature.pdf>

Readings: Lynda Walsh: *The visual rhetoric of climate change, 2015* (on Moodle).

Recommended Readings: Lynda Walsh: *Understanding the rhetoric of climate science debates, 2016* (on Moodle)

Course day 8) Thursday, November 3, in room 40.2.25 (12:15 – 16:00). Teacher: Ates
Audiences, Fans and Participatory Culture

Readings:

- Jenkins, H. (2006). Interactive Audiences? The “Collective Intelligence” of Media Fans, in *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture*, NYU Press
- Hills, M. (2015). The expertise of digital fandom as community of practice: Exploring the narrative universe of Doctor Who, *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies*, Vol. 21(3) 360–374

Recommended Readings:

- Deuze, M. (2007). Convergence culture in the creative industries. *International journal of cultural studies*, 10(2), 243-263.
- Klastrop, L., & Tosca, S. (2014). Game of Thrones: Transmedial Worlds, Fandom, and Social Gaming. In M-L. Ryan, & J-N. Thon (Eds.), *Storyworlds across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology* (Chapter 13, pp. 295-314). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

For Portfolio (prepare before class): Choose a visual fandom phenomenon and observe the extent to which its fan communities spread on the internet (fx. tv shows, films or entertainment, gaming or e-sports, politics, music etc). Which social media platforms bring their fans together? What do the fans do/create/share on these platforms? Are they provided by the official producers (top-down) or by grassroots efforts of the fans (bottom-up)? How do the fans’ communications differ from one platform to another? Please document your findings so you can expand your theoretical arguments in your final portfolio.

Course day 9) Thursday, November 10, in room 40.2.25 (12:15 – 16:00).

Teacher: Henrik

Visual Identity: Visual Personality, Visual Society, Visual Tribes, Visual Crisis, Pandemic and Culture. Entertainment, sport, cultural events and fashion. The quest for identity and belonging. Royalty and idols. Online dating, online work, online teaching, online life and visions. The visualization and disguise of social relations, power and hegemony, historically and in the digital age.

Exercises in class: We watch and analyze some recent videos or visual postings – with an eye to the concepts of identity within digital culture. Participants are welcome to suggest material.

Readings: *Communicative Functions – a phenomenological approach to the analysis of media content* (2013) Henrik Juel,

<http://www.henrikjuel.dk/Essays/CommunicativeFunctions.pdf>

Recommended: *The Presentation of Self in the Age of Social Media: Distinguishing Performances and Exhibitions Online*, 2010, Bernie Hogan (on Moodle).

Also recommended: *Erving Goffman and “The New Normal”: Havoc and Containment in the Pandemic Era*, by B.H. Hancock and R. Garner:

<https://europepmc.org/article/med/34334793#free-full-text> (and on Moodle)

Course day 10) Thursday, November 17, in room 40.2.25 (12:15 – 16:00).

Teacher: Ates

New Modalities, Senses and Relationships: The Future of Visual Media?

Readings:

- Ryan, M.L. (2007). Narrative and Digitality: Learning to Think with the Medium, in A Companion to Narrative Theory, eds. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz, Blackwell Publishing Ltd. (on Moodle)
- Scolari, C.A. (2009). Mapping conversations about new media: the theoretical field of digital communication, *New Media & Society*, 11:943.

Recommended Readings:

- Madary M. & Metzinger T.K. (2016). Real Virtuality: A Code of Ethical Conduct. Recommendations for Good Scientific Practice and the Consumers of VR-Technology, *Frontiers in Robotics and AI*, Vol.3
- Kalkofen, D., Sandor, C., White, S., & Schmalstieg, D. (2011). Visualization techniques for augmented reality. In *Handbook of Augmented Reality* (pp. 65-98). Springer New York. (on Moodle)

For Portfolio (prepare before class): Find one case of technological phenomena which leads you to envision the future of visual communication and digital culture. This example could be in the form of a scientific discovery or innovation, a communication product, a surveillance or privacy technology, a new system for digital democracy or political protest, an interactive gaming platform, new forms of visual storytelling or news broadcasting, an artistic production etc. You should describe why and how this case leads you to think about a specific type of media development for the next 10+ years, and what kind of a future does it imply for the mediated society. What kinds of ethical, social, cultural, economic or political problems may arise as a result of this vision?

Course day 11) Thursday, November 24, in room 40.2.25 (12:15 – 16:00).

Teacher: Henrik

Visual Persuasion: Nodding, Visual Rhetoric, Arguments, and Ideology.

Exercise in class: *we research and discuss the 7-38-55%-story (Mehrabian); we analyze examples of "Visual Arguments"*

Resumé of how to Analyze Visual Communication and how to write about it in an academic fashion (for your portfolios and elsewhere).

Readings (study slideshow, Henrik Juel):

<http://www.henrikjuel.dk/Essays/AboutArgumentation.pdf>

Readings: Grancea, Ioana: *Types of Visual Arguments*, (2017) (also on Moodle)

Recommended: prezi by Henrik Juel: <https://prezi.com/pcqwm1zaedq/arguments/>

Recommended: Mehrabian, Albert: *Nonverbal Communication*, (extract) *How can there be Consensus in Implicit Communication?* (On Moodle)

Course day 12) Thursday, December 1, in room 40.3.25 (12:15 – 16:00).

Teachers: Ates and Henrik

Resumé of the course and more guidance about how to write/assemble the individual portfolios. Presentation by students of draft portfolios – feedback and suggestions from all. Evaluation of the course.

Portfolio upload to Digital Exam before January 3, 2023, 10:00.

Re-exam deadline February 13, 2023, 10:00.

Portfolio requirements:

Form of the examination:

Individual portfolio consisting of written documents and other types of products.

The portfolio consists of 5-8 products, which are prepared in whole or in part during the course. The products can e.g. be analytical exercises, notes for presentations, feedback, reflections, written assignments, wiki contributions, social media and visual productions. The portfolio should demonstrate the individual's competences to analyze different examples of visual communication and digital culture and to generate theoretical and/or methodological reflections about the course themes and relevant literature. The portfolio should also include a concluding section where the various products are related to each other in a larger perspective outlining the student's assessment of visual communication and digital culture as an academic field.

We recommend that the portfolio's written products have a total range of 24.000 - 36.000 characters including spaces (11 - 16 normal pages) (official limits: 24000 – 48.000).

The scope requirements include any front page, table of contents, bibliography, figures and other illustrations, but excluding any attachments.

The portfolio is handed in together (uploaded on exam.ruc.dk). Possible, continuous part delivery to the course teachers for feedback does not replace the total delivery.

The delivery date is published on study.ruc.dk (November 26th, at 10:00)

An overall assessment of the portfolio is made by consideration of several criteria, including:

1. **Content** (variety, aptness, completeness and relevance of the portfolio products)
2. **Structure** (organization of sections, titles, introduction, main points, and conclusion)
3. **Theoretical and/or Methodological Rigor** (use of relevant analytical concepts, methods, theory, and literature)
4. **Critical Reflection** (self-assessment and conclusions about the learning outcomes)

The assignment must document that the student has a secure command of the English written language, including grammar and linguistic correctness.

Assessment: Pass/fail

You will receive a short written feed-back along with the assessment – within a month from hand-in.