HU 3324 Visual Media Analysis
T/Th 11:05-12:20
Walker 134
Spring, 2011

Dr. Diane Shoos
Walker 328; 487-3247
Office hrs: T/Th 12:20-12:55,
3:30-4:30, & by appointment
Email: dshoos@mtu.edu

Course Description:
This course is an introduction to critical analysis of selected visual media such as photography, advertising, film, video, websites, and comics. In this course we will examine a range of images with an eye to broad issues that cut across these media such as spectatorship, interpretation, reception, and the representation of gender, race, and class. We will also attend to media-specific issues such as the role of language, time, space, and sound in particular visual media. We will investigate a variety of theoretical and critical perspectives that can contribute to our understanding of visual media. Specific goals of the course are to:

- gain increased fluency with a range of analytic vocabulary and ways of thinking, talking, and writing about visual media
- use a variety of critical and theoretical frameworks to analyze the historical, contextual, rhetorical, and ideological dimensions of visual media
- apply relevant theories and critical perspectives to examples and use examples to confirm, extend, and problematize these perspectives

Required Texts:
Selected articles and handouts provided by the instructor

Requirements for the Course:
- Attendance and Participation (15%)
  You are expected to attend all class meetings, be prepared for class activities, and contribute actively to class discussion. Please note that late arrivals will affect your attendance and participation grade. You may have two (2) absences for any reason during the semester; I recommend that you save these absences in case of illness. Other documented, excused absences will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and require an email explaining the circumstances with supporting documents when applicable (e.g., invitation for on-site job interview, conference itinerary etc.). For each unexcused absence after the first two, your final grade will be lowered by 5%.
  Missing more than 5 class sessions will result in a failing grade in the class. Even when absent, you are responsible for completing and turning in assignments when they are due or by a deadline given by your instructor. You may contact another student about in-class work missed when you are absent or come to see me during my office
hours. A grade of zero will be assigned for any missing assignments.

- **Visual examples (10%)** brought to class and prepared as assigned. Most often this will involve preparing oral comments to share in class: for example, each student will choose a date to bring in an example from a comic that illustrates a particular concept from McCloud’s *Understanding Comics* (Jan. 18-27)

- **Comics/Webcomics presentation (10%)** (5-8 minutes, Feb. 3 or Feb. 8) For this presentation you will choose an example of a single or multiple panel comic and analyze and present it in terms of key concepts or theoretical points introduced in *Understanding Comics*.

- **Presentation (15%)** (10 minutes, March 1, 3, 17, 19) on significant terms/concepts in one of the chapters of Sturken and Cartwright. For this presentation you will summarize a term or concept from a particular chapter and illustrate it by providing and analyzing 1-2 visual examples.

- **Take-home exam (20%)** (4-5 pages double-spaced, due March 31). For this exam I will ask you to analyze one of two images that I provide by drawing on specific critical concepts from Sturken and Cartwright, class presentations, and discussions.

- **Group Final Visual Argument: 10 minute class presentation (10%)** (April 14, 19, 21st) and 3-4 page project papers (20%) (April 25). Working with 2-3 other students you will create an image that responds to, comments on, or appropriates an image you find in print or online. You will give a group presentation of your image and write an individual paper that discusses how these two images are related, what visual techniques they employ, and what effects you intend to produce.

**Course Policies**

Electronic devices such as laptops, cell phones, Blackberries, iPads, PDAs, etc. must be turned off in the classroom unless they are being used as part of a class presentation.

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated on the course schedule. Late papers and assignments are generally NOT accepted; however, personal emergencies will be taken into consideration as long as you discuss your situation with me in person, by phone, or via email. Assignments will not be accepted by email unless specified by the instructor.
MTU Policies

Academic Integrity
Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses. MTU's Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as "knowingly copying another's work or ideas and calling them one's own or not giving proper credit or citation." The policy covers copying sections or entire papers from printed or electronic sources as well as handing in papers written by students for other classes or purchasing academic papers. The penalties for plagiarism and other forms of cheating range from a warning to a failing grade to expulsion from the University. Students who have any questions about the issues should consult their instructor or a coach in the Humanities Multiliteracies Center (Walker 107).

 Discrimination
MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Dean of Students, 487-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head, or the Affirmative Action Office at 487-3310.

Evaluation Scale:

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N.B: This syllabus is subject to change at any time for pedagogical and/or unexpected circumstances. You will be notified of such changes if they take place, either during class or via the class email list.
HU 3324 Schedule:  Spring 2011

Jan. 11  Class introduction and discussion of images
13  **Visual Introduction;** McCloud, Introduction and Chapt. 1

18  McCloud, Chapt. 2: Vocabulary
20  McCloud, Chapt. 3: Gutter; Chapt. 4: Time

25  McCloud, Chapt. 5: Line
27  McCloud, Chapt. 6: Word & Image

Feb. 3  McCloud, Chapters 7 & 9; In-class screening
3  **Comics/Webcomics presentations**

8  **Comics/Webcomics presentations**
10  **Winter Carnival break**

15  Sturken & Cartwright, Ch. 1, “Images, Power, Politics”
17  Screening: Stuart Hall: Representation and the Media

22  Sturken & Cartwright, Ch. 2, “Viewers Make Meaning”
24  In-class screening

March 1  Key concept presentations, Ch. 2
3  Key concept presentations Ch. 3

**March 5-13  Spring Break**

15  Sturken & Cartwright, Ch. 5, “Visual Technologies, Image Reproduction, and the Copy”
17  Key concept presentations Ch. 5

22  Sturken & Cartwright, Ch. 7, “Advertising, Consumer Cultures, and Desire”
24  Key concept presentations Ch. 7

29  Sturken & Cartwright, Ch. 8, “Postmodernity, Indie Media, and Popular Culture”
31  **Take-home essay due; In-class screening or visit**

April 5  Sturken and Cartwright, Ch. 9, “Scientific Looking, Looking at Science”
7  In-class screening or visit

12  Meetings for group presentations
14  **Group Visual Argument presentations**

19  **Group Visual Argument presentations**
21  **Group Visual Argument presentations; class evaluations**

April 25 4:30 P.M.  Individual Visual Argument papers due