

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Subject Description Form

Please read the notes at the end of the table carefully before completing the form.

Subject Code	ENGL2CN20
Subject Title	The Power of Images: Advertising, Art, and Society
Credit Value	3
Level	2
Pre-requisite / Co-requisite/ Exclusion	
Objectives	<p>Visual images are playing an increasingly important role in all spheres of communication and society. This includes not only various forms of art, such as painting, photography, comics and film, but also advertising, news, textbooks and so on. Despite their key role, visual images are often taken for granted and are under-examined compared with the more abstract semiotic form of language. In this context, the cultivation of students' visual literacy and visual competence should be an important component of general education. This subject aims to help students to develop a systematic understanding of major theoretical approaches and methods about visual image analysis in various forms of communication. It focuses on advertising and art forms such as painting, picture books and film for their prevalent and creative use of visual images as well as their ubiquity in social life. The objectives include three interrelated components, which are based on three assumptions:</p> <p>First, visual images, like language, are complex meaning making systems which cannot be taken for granted. In this regard, the course aims to teach basic theories of image analysis to inculcate students' skills in understanding and analyzing images in two major forms of visual communication, namely, advertising (in print, television and new media) and art (e.g. painting, photography, picture books and film). Students will develop an 'academic' language to appreciate visual images and to understand how they are used to construe human life, knowledge, and social reality in contemporary society and throughout history.</p> <p>Second, visual images are a fundamental resource for achieving various communicative purposes, such as persuasion, recreation, and explanation. Therefore, this subject aims to enable students to understand the power of</p>

	<p>images on the one hand and to help them use images effectively in professional/persuasive communication. Exploration in this regard is also critical in nature as students will be taught explicit theoretical tools to unveil how images in advertisements, films, etc. manipulate our emotions and attitudes.</p> <p>Third, visual images, like language, reflect and constitute social values, culture, and ideology (ideologies and manipulation in visual images are very often more subtle and difficult to detect). Therefore, this subject aims to raise students' critical awareness about issues like gender stereotypes, consumerism, political hegemony, and cultural difference (as well as cultural colonization and hybridization) through visual image analysis in various communicative forms. What is unique about this subject is that such critical awareness is based on the explicit theory-guided analysis of visual images.</p>
<p>Intended Learning Outcomes <i>(Note 1)</i></p>	<p>Upon completion of the subject, students will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. understand fundamental meaning making mechanisms of images in advertising (print/television/new media) and visual art (e.g. painting, photography, picture books and film); b. systematically analyze the communicative strategies and manipulations in various forms of visual communication; c. understand how visual images (in advertising and art) reflect and constitute social values, culture and ideology; d. use images effectively in their future professional/persuasive communication; e. communicate their knowledge and opinions effectively through PowerPoint design, oral presentation and written paper. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Literacy. (a) requires students to 'read' a large number of images and equips them with a 'language' to understand them; (b), (c) and (e) enable students to understand how visual images are designed for various communicative purposes and enhance their skills for using images effectively in communication. 2. Higher order thinking. (a) requires students to see the hidden rules and patterns behind specific instances of image use; (b), (d) and (e) require critical thinking and enhance their critical thinking skills through explicit analysis of visual images in actual communication. 3. Life-long learning. (a), (b) and (c) will equip students with knowledge and analytical skills for their future learning through visual images (i.e. input of knowledge); (d) and (e) will enhance their communicative skills through effective use of images, complementing linguistic and oral skills (i.e. output of knowledge).

<p>Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus</p> <p><i>(Note 2)</i></p>	<p>The course will discuss visual images in advertising and art with reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theories of visual communication and visual semiotics (e.g. visual metaphor, visual grammar, and appraisal) • Theories of advertising, painting, picture books, film, etc. • Social and communication theories such as consumerism, psychology of persuasion, the designing and manipulation of emotion, cultural differences, gender bias and so on. <p>The weekly themes are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to the course, including rationale, scope and requirement + introducing the nature of visual signs 2. The ‘language’ of visual images (I) (‘grammar’ of visual design in advertisements, photography and so on in relation to the representation of reality, communicative purposes, cultural differences and ideology) 3. The ‘language’ of visual images (II) (‘grammar’ of visual design in advertisements, photography and so on in relation to the representation of reality, communicative purposes, cultural differences and ideology) 4. Visual tropes in persuasive and artistic communication (i.e. the visual counterparts of ‘figures of speech’, e.g. in adverts and cartoons) 5. Visual metaphor in persuasive and artistic communication (e.g. adverts and cartoons) 6. The visual representation of human emotion and attitude (in advertising and various art forms, in relation to communicative purposes, cultural difference, social values, etc.) 7. Visual images and persuasion (including social and cultural variations, that is, different techniques of visual persuasion across cultures)

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. The ‘language’ of painting in relation to history and religion (systematic analysis of artistic choices, also, e.g. in medieval and renaissance paintings) 9. Understanding picture books in different cultural traditions (e.g. European and Chinese cultures) 10. Film analysis in relation to different cultural traditions (cinematography and visual narratives, such as Hollywood and Hong Kong) 11. Visual images and social issues (gender stereotypes, sexualization, consumerism, etc.) 12. Visual images and cross-cultural communication (cultural differences, colonization, and hybridization through visual representations) 13. Student presentation 																																														
<p>Teaching/Learning Methodology (Note 3)</p>	<p>The subject will be conducted in interactive lectures and seminars. The assignments will involve student-led seminars, a mid-term paper and a final project. Students are expected to study and evaluate images in a range of images from print, television and new media advertising, as well as various art forms throughout the course. Each assessment activity requires knowledge of visual analysis as well as social and communication theories for critical interpretation.</p>																																														
<p>Assessment Methods in Alignment with Intended Learning Outcomes (Note 4)</p>	<table border="1" data-bbox="537 1094 1471 1621"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">Specific assessment methods/ tasks</th> <th rowspan="2">% weighting</th> <th colspan="6">Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)</th> </tr> <tr> <th>a</th> <th>b</th> <th>c</th> <th>d</th> <th>e</th> <th></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1. Essay</td> <td>40%</td> <td>√</td> <td>√</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>√</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Participation and seminar presentation</td> <td>20%</td> <td>√</td> <td>√</td> <td></td> <td>√</td> <td>√</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Final project</td> <td>40%</td> <td>√</td> <td>√</td> <td>√</td> <td>√</td> <td>√</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>100 %</td> <td colspan="6"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes:</p> <p>(1) The essay evaluates students’ ability to understand relevant theories and concepts to analyze visual images and explain their communicative purposes.</p>	Specific assessment methods/ tasks	% weighting	Intended subject learning outcomes to be assessed (Please tick as appropriate)						a	b	c	d	e		1. Essay	40%	√	√			√		2. Participation and seminar presentation	20%	√	√		√	√		3. Final project	40%	√	√	√	√	√		Total	100 %						
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	<p>(2) Students will give short presentations based on the previous weeks' lecture at seminars. In this way, they can understand the content better and learn how to apply the knowledge in the analysis of advertisements. This also serves as a recap of previous weeks' content.</p> <p>(3) The group project includes a presentation and a written essay based on it. It requires students to analyze a corpus of visual images in advertising or an art form and focus on critical interpretation of social values, ideology, and culture. It is an opportunity to test their visual literacy, critical thinking, and knowledge application.</p>	
Student Study Effort Expected	Class contact:	
	▪ lectures	26 Hrs.
	▪ seminars	13 Hrs.
	Other student study effort:	
	▪ preparation for assignments	28 Hrs.
	▪ reading and private study	52 Hrs.
	Total student study effort	
Reading List and References	<p><u>Essential readings:</u></p> <p>Alperstein, N.M. (2003). <i>Advertising in everyday life</i>. Cresskill, N.J.: Hampton Press.</p> <p>Bordwell, D., and Thompson, K. (2004). <i>Film art: An introduction</i>. New York: The McGraw-Hill Inc.</p> <p>Chan, K. (2016). (ed.). <i>Social issue of advertising</i>. Hong Kong: CityU Press.</p> <p>Forceville, C. (1996). <i>Pictorial metaphors in advertising</i>. London: Routledge.</p> <p>Kress, G. and Van Leeuwen, T. (2006) <i>Reading images: The grammar of visual design</i>. London: Routledge.</p> <p>McCloud, S. (1994). <i>Understanding comics: The invisible art</i>. New York: Harper Perennial</p> <p>Messaris, P. (1997) <i>Visual Persuasion: The Role of Images in Advertising</i>, London: Sage Publications, Inc.</p> <p>O'Toole, M. (2010). <i>The Language of Displayed Art</i>. London: Routledge.</p>	

	<p>Painter, C., Martin, J.R. and Unsworth, L. (2013). <i>Reading visual narratives: Image analysis of children's picture books</i>. London: Equinox.</p> <p><u>Supplementary readings:</u></p> <p>Feng, D. (2012). Modeling appraisal in film: A social semiotic approach. PhD thesis: National University of Singapore.</p> <p>Feng, D. and Wignell, P. (2011) Intertextual voices and engagement in TV advertisements. <i>Visual Communication</i> 10(4): 565–588.</p> <p>Feng, D. & O'Halloran, K. (2013). The visual representation of metaphor: A social semiotic perspective. <i>Review of Cognitive Linguistics</i>, 11(2), 320-335.</p> <p>Hovlan, R. and Wolburg, W, J. (2015). <i>Advertising, Society, and Consumer Culture</i>. London: Routledge.</p> <p>Williamson, J. (2010). <i>Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising</i>, London: Marion Boyars.</p>
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Note 1: Intended Learning Outcomes

Intended learning outcomes should state what students should be able to do or attain upon completion of the subject. Subject outcomes are expected to contribute to the attainment of the overall programme outcomes.

Note 2: Subject Synopsis/ Indicative Syllabus

The syllabus should adequately address the intended learning outcomes. At the same time over-crowding of the syllabus should be avoided.

Note 3: Teaching/Learning Methodology

This section should include a brief description of the teaching and learning methods to be employed to facilitate learning, and a justification of how the methods are aligned with the intended learning outcomes of the subject.

Note 4: Assessment Method

This section should include the assessment method(s) to be used and its relative weighting, and indicate which of the subject intended learning outcomes that each method purports to assess. It should also provide a brief explanation of the appropriateness of the assessment methods in assessing the intended learning outcomes.