

Histories of Visual and Material Culture

VC1-5

MODULE DESCRIPTOR

ECTS credits¹	10	Programme	BA (Hons) Visual Culture
NQF level	8	School	School of Visual Culture
Stage	1	Module Co-ordinator	Paul Caffrey
Trimester	2	Module Team	Paul Caffrey
Contact	Neasa Travers, Secretary School of Visual Culture: visualculture@staff.ncad.ie		
Responsibility	NCAD Academic Council / School of Visual Culture		

Introduction

The aims of this module are:

- To take you on a journey which will have begun in the first trimester, in the module entitled Histories of Art and Design 1. This module will provide you with the equipment necessary to explore, explain, discuss and put into words what you believe to be important about visual culture.
- To introduce you to the discipline of Visual Culture through the examination of a broad range of different types of writing about art and design, key texts, examples of visual and material culture and definitions of the discipline.
- To prepare you for the Histories of Art and Design 2 module in second year. That module focuses on the development and definition of historical styles in a range of key works of art, architecture and design.
- What is so exciting about this module is that it helps to provide you with an understanding of what it means to discuss visual and material culture. Questions of whether it is (un)important, valuable/valueless, and how the use of terms of praise or blame have influenced each one of us in our thinking and how we ourselves communicate with others about what is important to us.
- To provide you with the skills and strategies needed to look at visual culture and appreciate what happens when we connect with it, as observers or creators. The module explores how we communicate our excitement and interest and curiosity about visual culture in such a way as to deepen our understanding of what visual culture means not only to us, but the society in which we live.
- At the end of the module you will be confident in the use of key texts, be able to research and analyse the literature of visual culture and be able to make connections between the history and theory of visual culture and key examples of visual culture.

What will I learn?

On successful completion of this module students will be able to:

1. RESEARCH: Apply key definitions and practices of visual culture.

2. ANALYSIS: Develop skills and strategies of visual analysis.
3. COMMUNICATION: Compare and contrast skills and strategies of visual analysis with comparable forms of historical and cultural analysis.

Module content

This module is a seminar-based course. The module builds on the introduction to the histories of art and design module (VC1-4) in trimester one. The module involves the reading of an extract from a key text each week. Every week a student (or a number of students depending on the size of the group) lead the seminar with an analysis of the text. Students are expected to make reference to other contextual reading and to examples of visual and material culture. All students in the group are expected to read the text in advance, make reference to other texts they have read and to contribute to the discussion in the seminar. At the end of each seminar a synthesis of the text and what has been discussed is outlined to the group.

Indicative content. Extracts from some the following key texts will make up the readings:

Dana Arnold, *Art History a Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2004).
 Roland Barthes (translated by Annette Lavers) *Mythologies* (London, 1972).
 Walter Benjamin *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Text available at:
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm>
 John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London, 1972).
 Kenneth Clark, *Civilization* (London, 1969).
 Germaine Greer, *The Obstacle Race* (London, 1979)
 Dick Hebdige *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London, 1979)
 Horkheimer and Adorno *The Culture Industry*. Text available at:
<http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/benjamin.htm>
 Nicholas Mirzoeff *How to See the World* (London, 2015).
 WJT Mitchell, *What do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images*, (Chicago, 2005).
 Partha Mitter 'Questions of Style' *Artforum*, September 2010 pp 261-262.
 Erwin Panofsky 'The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline' in Fernie (ed.) *Art History and Its Methods* (London, 1995).
 Meyer Shapiro (1953) 'Style' in Preziosi, Donald (ed.) *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (Oxford, 1998).
 Julian Stallabrass *Contemporary Art A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2004).

How will I learn?

The key texts are circulated at the beginning of the trimester which allows for plenty of time to read the texts in advance of the seminars. You will be expected to read all of the texts and make a synthesis of the text. You will be expected to relate the text to chosen examples of visual and material culture. It is particularly desirable that you make reference to other comparable texts.

Credits

Learning tool	Hours
Lectures	0
Seminars	24
Specified Learning Activities	48
Autonomous Student Learning	128
Total Workload	200

What learning supports are provided?

Set readings will be supplied, as well as guidance about the techniques of close reading and image analysis. The lecture and seminar series is supported by the use of a dedicated google classroom for each seminar group featuring bibliographic references, etc.

Am I eligible to take this module?

Module Requisites and Incompatibles

Pre-requisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Incompatibles	None
Prior learning	Where a student can demonstrate that they have achieved at least 80% of the learning outcomes of this module, by academic certified achievement, or through quantifiable and documented experience, they can apply to the School for that prior learning to be recognised. Applications must be received prior to the commencement of delivery of the module.
Recommended	VC1-1

How will I be assessed?

Assessment tool	% of final grade	Timing
Presentation & slide notes	100%	Week 12
Total	100%	

Feedback, results and grading

The module is assessed on a student reflection which takes place at the end of the trimester. This gives you the opportunity to demonstrate an ability to research the texts and examples of visual and material culture. You will be expected to analyse two chosen texts and the accompanying images. This will be communicated in a presentation which will be made to the group. In this presentation you should make reference to some related images of visual and material culture, and produce slide notes. This presentation takes place at the end of the course. In the presentation you are requested to reread the text you presented earlier in the trimester. Make cross-references to other texts you read during the module. You are particularly requested to demonstrate how the texts have enhanced your understanding of the history and theory of visual and material culture. The presentation should make specific reference to examples of visual and material culture that backs up your analysis. You will be expected to structure your presentation around key points and images.

If you are unable to make a presentation you will be required to submit a 2,000 word essay (with images). First write a synthesis of two of the chosen texts. Analyse the key points raised while comparing and contrasting two of the texts studied making reference to examples of visual and material culture.

Assessment will be made using NCAD's Grade Assessment Criteria (see the Visual Culture handbook). Written feedback will be given within 20 working days of the submission.

What happens if I fail?

Resit Opportunities

Opportunities will be provided during or at the end of Trimester 2 to students who do not complete all assessments in Trimester 1, but students will not be able to progress to the next stage of the programme until they have successfully completed all Year 2 modules, equivalent to 60 credits.

When and where is this module offered?

Venue TBC / Week 1-12, Trimester 2

How will I have the chance to evaluate the module?

It is important to NCAD that students inform the development of teaching and learning at NCAD. We encourage all students to communicate their concerns and their observations about their study to members of staff so that any changes can be made in a timely manner.

About two-thirds of the way through the trimester, a student forum will be convened to gather students' comments about their study and the delivery of the programme. In addition, at the end of Trimester 2, students have the opportunity to complete an online evaluation of their study and experience at NCAD. These evaluation events are important to current and future students, to ensure we can enhance the delivery of programmes at NCAD.

In addition, you are invited to discuss your experience on the module with your lecturers at any point during the year. You can also relay your comments to the class student representative who will communicate your comments to the staff.

For further details on the content of your module and teaching arrangements,
consult your Programme or Module Handbook