1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to “visual language.” All cultures communicate through gestures, clothing, appearance, actions, symbols, and artworks. Because these modes of information powerfully persist throughout human experience, you will come to understand visual cues which are incorporated into broader customs and styles. In our world today, art and design increases in significance since much information is generated, replicated, and taught through images. As you learn about artistic techniques and values, you will come to see how the visual plays a large role in your daily life. By practicing analytic and communication skills, it is hoped that you will become more self-aware, perceptive thinkers.

2. OUR AGREEMENT:

You, the student, will attend lectures, read the assignments, and do your own work on the quizzes, papers, and exams to earn points. I, the instructor, promise to deliver and organize lectures to help you learn. Quizzes and tests are designed to assess your understanding of readings and lectures. Essays are assigned in order for you practice communicating about art. Attendance will be taken in class, and your participation grade is based on discussions. Your intellectual growth will be proportional to the effort you put into the course.

3. REQUIRED TEXTBOOK


4. COURSE GOALS AND EXPECTATIONS

1. To learn fundamental terms used in communication about art.
2. To learn how to “read an image” and determine its key features, e.g. purpose, date, geographical origin, materials, etc.
3. To develop critical thinking and oral skills when dealing with visual art.

5. CLASS STRUCTURE

The class format will include lectures, in-class exercises, videos and group discussions. While lectures are designed to follow the textbook, they will also expand upon it. Videos and discussions have been integrated into the class to help us explore in greater depth some of the issues mentioned in your assigned readings.

6. GRADES

A. There are 500 course points, earned according to this breakdown:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment 1</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Jan 26</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing Assignment 2</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>Mar 21</td>
<td>60 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>All lectures</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>All lectures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz 1</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz 2</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>Feb 14</td>
<td>40 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz 3</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Apr 11</td>
<td>50 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam I</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>110 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>170 points</td>
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B. Grading on each examination / Course Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92% and above</td>
<td>460</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-91%</td>
<td>450-459</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89%</td>
<td>440-449</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82-87%</td>
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<td>80-81%</td>
<td>400-409</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79%</td>
<td>390-399</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>72-77%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>68-69%</td>
<td>340-349</td>
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<td>310-339</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-61%</td>
<td>300-309</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 60%</td>
<td>Below 300</td>
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7. BLACKBOARD
Course material, such as lecture handouts and assignments, will be posted on Blackboard when possible. However, the instructor cannot guarantee that the materials, including images, on Blackboard will be updated on a weekly basis—therefore students should rely on their class attendance, notes, and textbooks. Study guides (Review Sheets) for the exams will be posted on Blackboard about one week before each exam.

Make-up examinations and quizzes are NOT GIVEN, unless the student provides a valid detailed written medical excuse signed by an M.D. with the phone number listed. Attending a family function such as a birthday party, wedding, or anniversary or going abroad is an invalid excuse for missing an examination. The student with a valid medical excuse is required to notify the instructor within 24 hours after the regularly scheduled examination (by email). Under NO circumstances can students reschedule midterms or final examinations—these dates are set by the University and cannot be altered. No classwork can be accepted after the last day of class; no adjustment of grades can be made after the Final Exam, since it literally marks the final act of the course. Note: Approximately 25% of the Final Exam will concern material covered prior to the Second Midterm Exam.

8. HANDOUTS
To have a more ecologically-friendly class, and save a few trees, I will only have 20 handouts for each class. If you lose your handouts, you can print them from Blackboard.

9. RESTRICTIONS
The use of Laptops, Cell-Phones, and Foreign Dictionaries are strictly prohibited in lecture and can be confiscated by the instructor; their use during lectures will result in deduction of your participation grade. Classroom disruptions such as talking without being called on by the instructor, standing up, texting, etc. will result in points deducted from your final grade. Looking at other students’ exams or any talking during quizzes/exams will result in automatic failure for that day or the entire course (See Section 3, pg. 142-143 of your Student Handbook). There are no extra credit assignments.

10. ASSESSMENT
There will be three examinations in this class. They are each worth about 22% of your grade. Questions for exams will come from class lectures and discussions, your textbook, videos, and class assignments; format will include objective questions and longer essay questions. The instructor reserves the right to assign a paper in lieu of a make-up exam. Occasionally, pop quizzes may be given. Please check your schedule in order to avoid time conflicts with other exams, personal obligations, and travel plans. Finally, infractions of the University code of ethics will be taken seriously; students are encouraged to consult their handbooks for the policies concerning academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism.

You are expected to participate in discussion, complete in-class reading and the writing assignment, as well as apply material learned in section on exams. Attendance will be taken every week at discussion sections. Students can miss one class without penalty. Additional absences will adversely affect your final grade, since my lectures provide
ideas and concepts not discussed in the textbook. Attendance and participation will be used to determine your final grade for this part of the course.

11. WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1: Background Experience: Write a one page essay answering these questions: Why did you take this course? Have you been to an art museum? How long ago? Where at? What is your favorite work of art and why? [Be sure to describe all the aspects of the work, such as material, color, size, shape, subject matter, date, location, purpose, artist/architect (if known). Attach an image or drawing if possible. Explain why you chose this work and why it is meaningful to you. When did you first see it? Why should other people value the work?] Format: All papers must be typed, single-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. Grammar and Spelling: There is an automatic 10 point deduction for grammatical or spelling errors over 10; 20 points for 20 errors or more. Length: Answers must fill four-fifths of the page. Points: 10. Due: January 26.

Assignment 2 (see attachment at the end of this syllabus): You will write a short paper regarding a painting in one of Houston's museums or art galleries. This project will give you the opportunity to apply your skills of observation and explore themes that we cover in class and discussion sections. It will be worth 10 percent of your grade for the course. A LATE PROJECT WILL BE DOWNGRADED A HALF LETTER GRADE FOR EACH DAY IT IS LATE. For example, if your paper would have received a “B” and it is two days late, you will receive a “D” for the assignment. Due: March 21.

SCHEDULE

(*All readings must be completed prior to the day it is assigned.)

WEEK 1 | An Unspoken Language (Introduction)
Thu. Jan. 19: Lecture: Welcome & Introduction to Course
Thu. Jan. 21: 1. Who is an Artist? What is Art? What is “Creativity”? READ: Getlein chapter 1 (pgs. 3-12)

WEEK 2 | Art, Artifacts, & Artificial Intelligence?

WEEK 3 | Function, Form, & Space

WEEK 4 | Elements of Design
Thu. Feb. 9: 7. World of Design. READ: Getlein, chapter 4 (pgs. 77-96)

WEEK 5 | Principles of Design
Thu. Feb. 16: ******************************** No class ******************************** (work on term paper)

WEEK 6 | Design
Tue. Feb. 21: ******************************** No class ******************************** (review for Midterm Exam)
WEEK 7 | Smearing Pigments

Tue. Feb. 28:  9b. The Design Matrix II. Review for Exam I.

Thu. Mar. 2:  🎓 MIDTERM EXAM I

WEEK 8 | Prints and Press

Tue. Mar. 7:  10. Drawing. READ: Getlein, chapters 6 and 7 (pgs. 141-157).

WEEK 9 | SPRING BREAK
Tue. Mar. 14:  no class  ********************* SPRING BREAK ********************
Thu. Mar. 16:  no class  ********************* SPRING BREAK ********************

WEEK 10 | Photography

Tue. Mar. 21:  12. Painting II.

WEEK 11 | Film

WEEK 12 | Multi-Dimensional Art

Thu. Apr. 6:  18. Graphic Design II.

WEEK 13 | Living inside Art

Thu. Apr. 13:  No Class. 😊 Easter Holiday!

WEEK 14 | Green Architecture
Tue. Apr. 18:  20. Sculpture II.

WEEK 15 | Future Visions of the Past
Tue. Apr. 25:  22. Architecture II. READ: Getlein, chapters 17 & 21 (pgs. 308-319)

WEEK 16
Thu. May 4:  25. Final Lecture: Overview and Themes. Review for FINAL!

WEEK 17 | 🎓 FINAL EXAM

Tuesday. May 11.  3:00 - 5:30 PM
Introduction to Visual Arts
ARTH 1350
Writing Assignment 2

Write a 5-page paper on one building or art object in Houston. When you decide on the artwork, let me know. Only hardcopies will be accepted!

Your paper must have four specific parts:

Objective:

1. **Formal Analysis.** Discussing size, function, composition, color, texture, program, form, shape, etc. For architecture, include a discussion on its purpose and geographical context. For art objects, include a discussion regarding its purpose (i.e. is the image chiefly decorative, illustrative, narrative, iconic, or some other scheme?). You should compare the building/artwork with AT LEAST one other building/artwork that is a relevant comparison (you can use the images in your textbook for this). You can also use the online resource: ARTstor (under the Doherty Library Database page).

2. **Historical Context.** Place the object/building in the time period when was made. You can refer to the reign of the respective politicians and religious leaders, major events of that period. What makes this artwork significant and a representative of that culture?

3. **Images.** Provide a photograph or scan, with captions, of the building/artwork you are talking about and other artworks you are comparing it to.

Subjective:

4. **Interpretation.** Explain the significance of this artwork. Why do you think the museum chose this piece to purchase and display? Why did you choose it? What message does it communicate to you?

Format:

Paper must be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins. **Grammar and Spelling:** There is an automatic 5 point deduction for grammatical or spelling errors over 10; 10 points for 20 errors or more. Provide all your references as footnotes, using Chicago-Style formatting. Illustrations should be provided regarding artworks you mention, unless they are common knowledge or incidental (i.e Eifel Tower). **Staple the Grading Rubric** to your submitted paper. **Length:** 5 (minimum) to 6 (max) pages (this count does not include illustrations). * Attach this sheet to your paper. * **Points:** 60.

Due: Tuesday, March 21.

LATE PAPERS WILL BE MARKED DOWN ONE GRADE FOR EVERY DAY THAT THEY ARE LATE (i.e. from an A to B, from C- TO D-, etc.).

Museums near the University of St. Thomas to get you started:

- Menil Collection
- Byzantine Fresco Museum (Menil Collection)
- Houston Museum of Fine Art
- Contemporary Arts Museum of Houston
# Introduction to Visual Arts

**ARTH 1350**

**Writing Assignment, Grading Rubric**

*******Staple this to your submitted paper*******

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## Professor’s Comments:

- Followed directions (2)
- Illustrations (2)
- Preparation (4)
- Shows learning and apprehension (4)

**[50 available points]** Total