

Critical Eye

The Persuasive Image



Faculty of Arts and Human
Sciences

2008

Become what you want to be

UNIT GUIDE

Unit Title:	The Critical Eye
Level:	2
Semester:	2
Reference Number:	AME 2 TCE
Credit Value:	15
Parent Faculty:	Humanities and Social Science
Parent Course:	Undergraduate Media Scheme
Subject Area:	Arts and Media
Student Study Hours:	150
Class Contact Hours:	36
Private Study Hours:	114
Assessment Method:	Practical Project (75%) Production Analysis (25%)
Pass Mark:	Each element of assessment must gain a minimum mark of 35 percent. A minimum of 40 percent overall is required to pass the unit.
Prerequisites:	
Teaching Staff:	Paul Richards E-mail: richarp3@sbu.ac.uk Chris Packham (Demonstrator) Room: K-112 Tel: 6777

Introduction to the Unit

Within this unit you will discuss issues surrounding images that persuade people to think in a certain way. We are flooded with thousands of images daily on billboards, in newspapers and magazines on the internet and even on mobile phones or coffee cups. This unit will look at different ways to read images. You will look at the way in which some artists and photographers have produced images to convey a message, whether it be a message of truth or of propaganda, a product advertisement or a political slogan. We will consider some of the technical aspects of producing persuasive imagery including the use of professional camera equipment and a photography studio. You will also learn techniques to alter images to improve their quality or to change their truthfulness. The practical aim of this unit is to produce a series of professional quality images that can be used to persuade others of a message of your choice, these images will demonstrate your understanding of a complex visual language based on focussed discussions and research.

Aims of the unit

The primary aims of the unit are:

- Develop your ability to use Adobe Photoshop
- Establish planning and organisation skills in carrying out practical assignments
- Develop your practical skills in the use of a range of cameras
- Develop your conceptual grasp of the relationship between image and message.
- Develop understanding of contemporary and historical art and photography

Learning outcomes of the unit

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Plan and carry out a research into a historical technique or photographic style.
- Plan and organise and carry out a practical assignment that involves studio lights
- Show increased competency in the use of a range of cameras, studio lights printers and colour correction software.
- Produce a set of images that show control composition and text.
- Produce images based upon independent research that reflects a creative and experimental solution to the brief.

Transferable skills

During this unit you have the opportunity to develop:

- Practical computer-based skills
- Observational and analytical skills
- Organisational and management skills
- Research skills
- Oral and written communication skills

Teaching and learning pattern

The unit is taught over 12 weeks and is based around a weekly three-hour taught session, which will include seminars, creative workshops, and tutorials.

Indicative content

The unit will introduce you to the theory and practise of the photographic image, using 35mm SLR cameras; studio lights and digital capture devices. It will provide the framework for constructive criticism of production work and establish the dialogue about the construction of images. In Particular it will focus the relationship between the light quality and the construction of photographic narratives. The unit will include visits to museums and galleries.

The unit will broadly cover the following:

- Project development and management
- Familiarity with light meters, lights and colour correction tools.
- The use of theory

Seminars will cover the following topics:

- Light, shadows and reflection
- Constructing images, tone and contrast

Practical workshops will cover:

- Using Studio lights and digital cameras
- Beginners Photoshop
- CD ROM authoring
- Digital Printing

Assessment method

1. Practical Production (75%)

You must present a series of 4 Photographic images. The images must be submitted as 4 individual A4 prints which are each labelled on the back with an image title and student name/number. Images must be submitted in a folder or envelope, which will protect them.

2. A 2000 word Project Analysis (25%)

You are required to submit a 2000-word analysis which will reflect on your practical project.

The deadline for your Practical Production and Production Analysis is Wednesday the 14th of May 2008. TWO copies of your written work should be submitted to the Faculty Office, along with your production work, should also be submitted to the Faculty Office (B266) by 4pm You should keep an additional copy of both your written and production work.

Weekly teaching and learning

Week 1

Title: Introduction to the unit.

We will begin by getting to know each other and the aims of the unit. You will be introduced to the main concepts of the unit, the learning outcomes, the assignments and the timetable. As an introduction to the subject we will explore the idea of the photographic index and will look at several examples of photographic works that invite multitude of readings.

We will watch the an episode of John Berger Ways of Seeing

Task for next week: you must collect together at least 3 advertising images and be prepared to discuss the style of imagery and the message that the advert creates.

Week 2

Introduction to Digital SLR cameras and the studio

It is essential that you attend this session. Not doing so will render you unable to use the university SLR equipment needed for the rest of the course.

This week we will look at the digital cameras available for use in the Media Arts department. We will specifically look at how to work with digital SLR cameras, thinking about aperture, shutter speed and focus and how these can be modified to change the meaning of an image.

Task for next week: working in pairs you must use an SLR to produce 2 sets of 3 images, you will need to borrow a camera and a tripod:

a) 3 images which explore shutter speed and its relationship to motion.

Exploring how the speed of a photograph being taken can alter the way in which an image looks. Explore this in different lighting conditions, what happens if you photograph a fast moving road of traffic at night (using a tripod or a camera support)

b) 3 images exploring the camera's depth of field, by taking images of objects.

Exploring how focus can be modified by changing the aperture setting. Try to experiment to produce the most interesting images.

The more experimentation you do the more you will understand the way in which cameras function.

All the work should be saved as JPEG's on the server in the homework folder in a file with your name.

Week 3

Gallery visit

We will visit two galleries this morning: Alison Jacques and The Photographers Gallery. Meet promptly at the Keyworth Building at 10 am

Alison Jacques Gallery

4 Clifford Street
London W1X 1RB

The Photographers' Gallery

5 & 8 Great Newport Street]
London WC2H 7HY

Task for next week: to make detailed notes on the exhibitions that you will see, thinking about the technical as well as theoretical aspects of the work. How did you respond to the work? If you liked it, note why you did. If the works made you feel uncomfortable, say so.

You will need these notes for the discussion on the exhibitions next session

Week 4

Title: The “New York School”: Kruger, Arbus & Rosler

We will look at several artists who comprise the “New York School”, paying particular attention to the way these artists use images to tell stories and persuade us to think in a particular way.

Task for next week: Choose an image by Barbara Kruger, Dianne Arbus or Martha Rosler and recreate it in your own style. You do not need to use the digital SLRs for this project but the quality of photography is important. Think about what is important in the chosen image and what can be replaced. You could ask friends or family to pose for the image.

Simple effects such as such as black and white or text can be added to look like the original. However, the most important thing is to recreate the look of the image as you interpret it.

Week 5

European Adventures – Surrealism and Realism

This week we will look at the film *Un Chien Andalou* by Salvador Dali and Luis Bunuel. We will discuss the impact of Surrealist imagery on image making and contemporary culture. We will look at a wide range of photography and Artwork from this period.

Task for next week: Based on discussions of surrealism and how its principles have bled into every day culture, identify an advertising image, which uses surrealism as a grammatical foundation, and recreate the image. You may well need to use Photoshop to add text to an image.

Week 6

Study Week

This week is set aside for you to fulfil your own specific research into persuasive images that you would like to produce. You must collect together information on

artists work and examples of images that can be scanned and included in your project analysis.

Week 7

Soviet School

This week we will look at the movie *Man with a Movie Camera* by Dziga Vertov. In the second part of the session we will discuss Formalist and constructivist approaches photography, collage and posters.

Task for next session: Create 2 images using photo collage of found images that you have scanned from magazines including text which could be persuasive for a particular statement, not simply to sell something. This could be political, historical, or completely nonsensical. It is important that you choose the correct images in combination to make a statement. The two images will support each other as a mini series.

Easter Break

During the Easter Break you must prepare to go into production for the final set of images that you will make. This can be an extension of some of the images worked on or something completely new. Bear in mind that in Week 8 we will be using the studio and you have the opportunity to produce portrait photography that you may want to use in your final work.

Look for examples of photos that you would like to reproduce or imitate, thinking about the style and the way the image is lit and the props you may need.

Week 8

Studio shoot

This week we will work in the studio as a group. You will produce portraits of each other, which may form a crucial part of your final image. Chris will show you how to produce simple lighting effects which are similar to professional lighting setups.

It is essential that you come prepared for this week bringing ideas for a shoot that can be achieved with the people in the group. This may include costume, makeup, clothes, props etc. You must be ready to start working at 10 am as this lesson will be very busy.

Week 9

Photo editing and retouching

This week we will look very closely at how photos can be retouched and edited in Photoshop, including using professional techniques to 'airbrush' portrait photography as well as other techniques to 'doctor' digital images. We will discuss the position of digital photography in the construction or reconstruction of truth. Can a digital photo be used as truthful evidence for news reporting or in court?

Week 10

Production Week and Tutorials

This week is set aside for the technical construction of the project. The course Lecturer and technical support team will be available for help.

Week 11

Presentation of work

This session will involve showing your project to the rest of the group and participating in discussion about its strengths and weaknesses. There is still time at this point to make changes.

We will also look at printing methods available for completing your project

Week 12

Title: Critical evaluation

Final production and finishing of Project.

Assessment method & requirements

You will be assessed using the following methods:

Practical Production (75%)

You must present a series of 4 Photographic images.

Based upon what you have learnt from about the production and the consumption of images you must produce a series of 4 persuasive images which illustrate any point that you wish to make. The point can be as clear or as subtle as you like, it can be based on selling a product or a service, or could be politically motivating, or it could be your view on the world. The images may be based upon work made in previous exercises and what has been discussed or could be a separate series of images but it must adhere to the notion of persuasive images. You will be marked on the way in which you have analysed the styles of image making and the messages that they present. This research will be clear through the production of your work, which must be of the highest possible quality. The images can be produced by using photomontage of found images. The images must communicate a message which can be aided with the addition of text, it is important therefore to work hard at understanding the technical processes involved in the production of photos and digital postproduction.

The images must be submitted as 4 individual A4 prints which are each labelled on the back with an image title and student name/number. Images must be submitted in a folder or envelope, which will protect them.

Project Analysis (25%)

You are required to submit a 2000-word analysis which will reflect on your practical project. The project analysis is in essence a SWAT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, treats) analysis of your project. You should describe your aims at doing this project, discuss the choices you made while taking the images and explain the editing process. It is important to bear in mind the relationship between the material aspects of the project and the meaning which is created through the use of the technical means.

The deadline for your Production Work and Production Analysis is Wednesday the 14th of May 2008. TWO copies of your written work should be submitted to the Faculty Office. Your images should also be submitted to the Faculty Office (B266) by 4pm You should keep an additional copy of both your written and production work.

Core Reading

Sontag Susan, *On Photography*

Breton, Andre, *Nadja*, Penguin,

Mayer Pedro *Truths and fictions*

Wood J. (ed) (1998) *The Virtual Embodied*, Routledge, London NY

Burgin. V. (1996) *Some Cites*. London. Reaktion

Child, J & Galer, M (1999) *Photographic lighting*. London. Focal Press

Crary, J. (1999) *Techniques of the observer*. Cambridge. Mass. MIT

Crawford, W. (1979) *The Keepers of Light*. Morgan & Morgan. Dobs Ferry, New York

Langford, M. (1996) *Story of Photography*. Focal Press

Background Reading

Borges, J, *Labrinths*, Penguin

Clarke, G. (1997) *The Photograph*. Oxford University press

Mora, G. (1997) *Photo Speak*. Abbeville Press

Stoichita, V. I. (1997) *A short History of the Shadow*. Reaktion Books

Wright, T. (1999) *The Photography Handbook*. Routledge