



## Master Course Syllabus

For additional course information, including prerequisites, corequisites, and course fees, please refer to the Catalog: <https://catalog.uvu.edu/>

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**Semester:** Spring

**Year:** 2025

**Course Prefix:** ENGL

**Course and Section #:** 3060 001

**Course Title:** Visual Rhetoric

**Credits:** 3

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### *Course Description*

This course investigates the growing academic and cultural interest in the rhetorical nature of visual texts. We will practice critical thinking about the consumption and production of images and multimodal texts and explore visual grammars and other theories of visual rhetoric as articulated by contemporary image, language, and rhetoric scholars. As a corollary goal, the course encourages the development of theoretical and practical knowledge through reading, discussion, and analysis as well as through student production of visual texts and written work. In other words, in addition to critique of images across the spectrum, there will be lots of opportunities for students to create their own visual artifacts and designs.

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### *Course Attributes*

This course has the following attributes:

- General Education Requirements
- Global/Intercultural Graduation Requirements
- Writing Enriched Graduation Requirements
- Discipline Core Requirements in Program
- Elective Core Requirements in Program
- Open Elective

Other: *Click here to enter text.*

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### *Instructor Information*

**Instructor Name:** Dr. Nathan Gale

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### *Student Learning Outcomes*

Upon successful completion, students should be able to . . .

1. Analyze the nature of images and multimodal texts (i.e., films, web-texts, texts with video and audio and other components) in terms of their rhetorical nature.
  2. Analyze images and multimodal texts as critical readers.
  3. Produce rhetorically effective visual and multimodal texts for specific purposes in particular contexts (i.e., academic, civic, personal, professional).
  4. Explain relationships between production processes, rhetorical purposes, and ethics.
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## ***Course Materials and Texts***

Access to a computer and course Canvas page

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## ***Course Requirements***

### **Course Assignments, Assessments, and Grading Policy**

- Attendance and Participation: students attend and participate in class (5% of overall grade).
- Discussion Posts: Bi-weekly Canvas assignments asking students to find and analyze visual arguments in a variety of genres and mediums (20% of overall grade).
- Annotated Image Assignments (5 Total): 3-4 page paper that asks students to perform an in-depth analysis of an image of their choice, linking their arguments to course readings (50% of overall grade).
- Mapping and Visual Argument: A creative assignment that asks students to draw/build/compose a map of a place that hasn't been mapped before and then to write a 2-3 page reflection/description of their map along with a 5-7 minute presentation of their map (25% of overall grade).

A=100%-94%, A-=93.9%-90%, B+=89.9%-86%, B=85.9%-83%, B-=82.9%-80%, C+=79.9%-76% C=75.9%-73%, C-=72.9%-70% D+=69.9%-66% D=65.9%-63% D-=62.9%-60% E= 59% and below

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### **Required or Recommended Reading Assignments**

- *Picturing Texts* – Introduction and Chapter 1
- Cobley and Jansz – Introducing Semiotics
- Chandler – Rhetorical Tropes
- Barthes – Rhetoric of the Image
- Foss – A Rhetorical Schema for the Evaluation of Visual Imagery
- Peterson – The Rhetorical Criticism of Visual Elements
- Eshes – Rhetorical Handbook
- Huntington – Pepper Spray Cop and the American Dream
- Barthes – Camera Lucida: Part One
- Bourdieu – The Social Definition of Photography
- Mitchell – What do Pictures Really Want?
- McCloud – Understanding Comics: Chapters 3 and 4
- McCloud – Understanding Comics: Chapter 5
- Spiegelman – MAUS Part 1: Chapters 1-3
- Gries – Still Life with Rhetoric
- Brennan – Dungeons and Dragons and Damsels in Distress
- Buckland - Visual Rhetoric in Michel Gondry's Music Videos
- Non-Designers – Proximity
- Non-Designers – Alignment
- Non-Designers – Type
- Non-Designers – Contrast
- Schneller - Design Rhetoric
- Benjamin – The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

- Rosenquist – Visual Form, Ethics, and a Typology of Purpose
- *Picturing Texts* – Representing Others
- Sarkeesian – Damsels in Distress Parts 1, 2, and 3
- Muhlhauser and Bradbury - “How Gender Works: Producing the J.Crew Catalog”
- Schambureck and Parkinson – Design for Sight
- Massey – The Rhetoric of the Real
- Grady – Advertising Images as Social Indicators
- Ballantyne – Architecture: A Short Introduction – Chapter 1: Buildings Have Meaning
- Hopkins and Owen – Architectural Styles – “Modernism”
- Smith – The Rhetoric of Campus Architecture
- Gasperic and Komac – Remapping Fictional Worlds
- Ekman – Entering a Fantasy World Through its Map
- Brett and Laddusaw – Touring Fantasyland
- Harmon – You Are Here

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### **General Description of the Subject Matter of Each Lecture or Discussion**

Most classes are discussion-based which take the above readings as their starting point. Since each discussion is different because of student engagement and experiences, there are no specific descriptions or subjects that can be provided beyond listing the titles of the readings again:

- *Picturing Texts* – Introduction and Chapter 1 – introduces visual rhetoric
- Cobley and Jansz – Introducing Semiotics – introduces semiotics
- Chandler – Rhetorical Tropes – discusses rhetorical tropes
- Barthes – Rhetoric of the Image – theorizes about the rhetoric of images
- Foss – A Rhetorical Schema for the Evaluation of Visual Imagery – provides a clear schema for how to rhetorically analyze images
- Peterson – The Rhetorical Criticism of Visual Elements – provides an alternative view from Foss on how to rhetorically analyze images
- Eheses – Rhetorical Handbook – provides additional terminology for the rhetorical analysis of images
- Huntington – Pepper Spray Cop and the American Dream – analyzes the viral image of a police officer pepper-spraying student protestors
- Barthes – Camera Lucida: Part One – additional theoretical approach to photographs
- Bourdieu – The Social Definition of Photography – looks at family photography from a social point of view
- Mitchell – What do Pictures Really Want? – questions what pictures want from their viewers while providing an additional framework for analysis
- McCloud – Understanding Comics: Chapters 3 and 4 – works through some theories on how comics work and how we read them
- McCloud – Understanding Comics: Chapter 5 – provides additional terminology for reading and analyzing comics
- Spiegelman – MAUS Part 1: Chapters 1-3 – provides an in-class example of how comics work as visual arguments
- Gries – Still Life with Rhetoric – looks at a posthuman approach to how images circulate and persuade audiences
- Brennan – Dungeons and Dragons and Damsels in Distress – analyzes the covers of Dungeon and Dragons manuals

- Buckland - Visual Rhetoric in Michel Gondry's Music Videos – analyzes the images in a music video by Beck and Michel Gondry
- Non-Designers – Proximity – discusses how proximity works in design
- Non-Designers – Alignment – discusses how alignment works in design
- Non-Designers – Type – discusses how type works in design
- Non-Designers – Contrast – discusses how contrast works in design
- Schneller - Design Rhetoric – overall view of design rhetoric and how it influences images
- Benjamin – The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction – provides a different theoretical approach to image circulation and how they influence audiences
- Rosenquist – Visual Form, Ethics, and a Typology of Purpose – attempts to understand the ethics of images
- *Picturing Texts* – Representing Others – looks at how human bodies are used in images
- Sarkeesian – Damsels in Distress Parts 1, 2, and 3 – analyzes the use of female bodies in video games
- Muhlhauser and Bradbury - “How Gender Works: Producing the J.Crew Catalog” – analyzes how the J.Crew catalog uses gender to sell clothing
- Schambureck and Parkinson – Design for Sight – discusses accessibility in image creation
- Massey – The Rhetoric of the Real – provides yet another theoretical approach to image creation and analysis
- Grady – Advertising Images as Social Indicators – discusses the ethical use of human bodies in images
- Ballantyne – Architecture: A Short Introduction – Chapter 1: Buildings Have Meaning – introduces students to architecture and discussing it as a rhetorically visual medium
- Hopkins and Owen – Architectural Styles – “Modernism” – looks specifically at modernism and architecture
- Smith – The Rhetoric of Campus Architecture – argues that campus architecture can influence student and outside perceptions of a school/university/college
- Gasperic and Komac – Remapping Fictional Worlds – discusses the use of fictional maps in novels
- Ekman – Entering a Fantasy World Through its Map – analyzes several fictional maps
- Brett and Laddusaw – Touring Fantasyland – provides additional analysis of fictional maps along with rhetorical analysis of some
- Harmon – You Are Here – explains the rhetorical persuasion of fictional maps

## ***Required Course Syllabus Statements***

### **Generative AI**

As explained in UVU's Student Rights and Accountabilities page, all students are expected “to maintain absolute integrity and high standards of individual honesty in academic work, and to observe a high standard of conduct for the academic environment.” Under such expectations, the UVU English department views plagiarism as a serious offense that does not align with the university's mission and values. Our expectation is that every student's work will be their own and use outside sources in a manner that consistently gives proper credit to those sources through established academic conventions.

Plagiarism has occurred if you:

- Use the exact wording of another author or source in such a manner that it appears to be your own, regardless of the form in which those words originally appeared (e.g. a book, article, lecture, web site, speech, graphic, or any other form such as an AI text generator)
- Paraphrase (put into your own words) another author's wording in a manner where the language and/or syntax is too similar to the original passage and is not properly cited
- Fail to clearly acknowledge the partial or full authorship of someone else when submitting work
- Fail to cite or quote textual resources properly, despite the instructor's attempts at educational intervention
- Fabricate false information that is not corroborated by the actual research used on a writing project
- Have someone else, paid or otherwise, write your paper or use a paper mill site that contains ready-to-use papers written by other people
- Generate and submit a paper using artificial intelligence, such as ChatGPT

While the above actions can happen with intentionality to deceive, plagiarism can also happen accidentally (due to careless resource use, not using proper citation methods, and not understanding the conventions of our chosen style guide). Though intentional vs accidental is often a judgment call for an instructor, it's important to note that accidental plagiarism is still plagiarism—a serious need to address the incident arises regardless. Though the resulting consequences may vary based on the degree of intentionality, any form of plagiarism will be addressed with equal seriousness.

The UVU English department is also keeping up with artificial intelligence bots such as ChatGPT. Believing the technology is here to stay, and will only grow, we feel it's important to understand both its strengths and limitations. AI is already proving its usefulness in brainstorming writing ideas, simplifying complex topics, and performing rudimentary research. We believe AI is a tool with potential usefulness for writers. However, AI is also fraught with serious issues. It possesses accuracy problems while simultaneously sounding very confident about its incorrectness. It also frequently generates fake citations and quotations. It cannot understand the complexities and contexts of human communication. Finally, the way AI is trained on other texts poses several ethical questions about copyright and intellectual theft of property (along with uncritically inheriting the biases of the texts it's trained on).

To be clear, copying the exact wording of an AI chatbot is considered plagiarism and means that a student will be held accountable for violating academic integrity. Although many citation guides are already presenting ways to properly use and cite AI, we do not currently believe that citing AI in your work is in line with the standards of academic writing that value knowing the exact author(s) or sources that informed your writing.

If you are suspected of plagiarism, the first step will always be a conversation with your instructor (in-person or via Teams). If the infraction is very minor or clearly unintentional, there may be no sanctions at all. However, a lowered grade and/or the chance to revise the paper may also be possible. In more serious cases, the assignment may receive an automatic zero.

The most serious infractions may lead to your instructor filing an incident report with the Student Conduct office. In this scenario, you have the right to appeal the report with the English department chair. Regardless of the chair's decision, the incident report remains a part of your permanent record. If you are unhappy with the chair's ruling, you then have the right to file an appeal with the Dean. The Dean's decision on the matter will be final.

## Using Remote Testing Software

This course does not use remote testing software.

This course uses remote testing software. Remote test-takers may choose their remote testing locations. Please note, however, that the testing software used for this may conduct a brief scan of remote test-takers' immediate surroundings, may require use of a webcam while taking an exam, may require the microphone be on while taking an exam, or may require other practices to confirm academic honesty. Test-takers therefore shall have no expectation of privacy in their test-taking location during, or immediately preceding, remote testing. If a student strongly objects to using test-taking software, the student should contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to determine whether alternative testing arrangements are feasible. Alternatives are not guaranteed.

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## *Required University Syllabus Statements*

### **Accommodations/Students with Disabilities**

Students needing accommodations due to a permanent or temporary disability, pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions may contact UVU [Accessibility Services](#) at [accessibilityservices@uvu.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@uvu.edu) or 801-863-8747.

Accessibility Services is located on the Orem Campus in BA 110.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing students requesting ASL interpreters or transcribers can contact Accessibility Services to set up accommodations. Deaf/Hard of Hearing services can be contacted at [DHHservices@uvu.edu](mailto:DHHservices@uvu.edu)

DHH is located on the Orem Campus in BA 112.

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### **Academic Integrity**

At Utah Valley University, faculty and students operate in an atmosphere of mutual trust. Maintaining an atmosphere of academic integrity allows for free exchange of ideas and enables all members of the community to achieve their highest potential. Our goal is to foster an intellectual atmosphere that produces scholars of integrity and imaginative thought. In all academic work, the ideas and contributions of others must be appropriately acknowledged and UVU students are expected to produce their own original academic work.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of ensuring the honesty and fairness of the intellectual environment at UVU. Students have a responsibility to promote academic integrity at the university by not participating in or facilitating others' participation in any act of academic dishonesty. As members of the academic community, students must become familiar with their [rights and responsibilities](#). In each course, they are responsible for knowing the requirements and restrictions regarding research and writing, assessments, collaborative work, the use of study aids, the appropriateness of assistance, and other issues. Likewise, instructors are responsible to clearly state expectations and model best practices.

Further information on what constitutes academic dishonesty is detailed in [UVU Policy 541: Student Code of Conduct](#).

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### **Equity and Title IX**

Utah Valley University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age (40 and over), disability, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth, or pregnancy-related conditions, citizenship, genetic information, or other basis protected by applicable law, including Title IX and 34 C.F.R. Part 106, in employment, treatment, admission, access to educational programs and activities, or other University benefits or services. Inquiries about nondiscrimination at UVU may be directed to the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights or UVU's Title IX Coordinator at 801-863-7999 – [TitleIX@uvu.edu](mailto:TitleIX@uvu.edu) – 800 W University Pkwy, Orem, 84058, Suite BA 203.

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### **Religious Accommodation**

UVU values and acknowledges the array of worldviews, faiths, and religions represented in our student body, and as such provides supportive accommodations for students. Religious belief or conscience broadly includes religious, non-religious, theistic, or non-theistic moral or ethical beliefs as well as participation in religious holidays, observances, or activities. Accommodations may include scheduling or due-date modifications or make-up assignments for missed class work.

To seek a religious accommodation, a student must provide written notice to the instructor and the Director of Accessibility Services at [accessibilityservices@uvu.edu](mailto:accessibilityservices@uvu.edu). If the accommodation relates to a scheduling conflict, the notice should include the date, time, and brief description of the difficulty posed by the conflict. Such requests should be made as soon as the student is aware of the prospective scheduling conflict.

While religious expression is welcome throughout campus, UVU also has a [specially dedicated space](#) for meditation, prayer, reflection, or other forms of religious expression.