UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS
B.Sc. DEGREE PROGRAMME IN VISUAL COMMUNICATION
SYLLABUS WITH EFFECT FROM 2023-2024

152C2A

Understanding Visual Communication (Theory)

Course Description:

The course on Visual Communication is designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the essential topics and concepts related to visual communication. With the guidance of an expert in the field, this 31-lesson course is divided into eight units that explore the foundations, theories, and practices of visual communication. Students will learn about the study of visual culture, the fundamentals of visual literacy, visual theories, critical viewing skills, and the grammar of visual design. They will also study theories of visual communication, introduction to visual media, visual language, and the art of visual storytelling. The course is designed to equip students with the skills needed to critically analyze and communicate with visual images, from print and film to public spaces and digital media. Students will learn about the role of visual communication in shaping cultural, social, and political narratives, and explore strategies for creating impactful and ethical visual communication. With a focus on developing a deep understanding of visual communication, this course will provide students with the tools needed to succeed in a range of visual design fields.

Course Objectives:

1. Analyze and evaluate the visual elements and messages of various forms of media, from print and film to digital and public spaces.
2. Develop a critical understanding of the foundations, theories, and practices of visual communication, including visual literacy, visual theories, and the grammar of visual design.
3. Apply the principles of design and visual communication to create impactful and ethical visual communication that aligns with specific goals and objectives.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of visual communication in shaping cultural, social, and political narratives, and critically evaluate the use of visual images in various contexts.
5. Develop and present a final project that showcases their ability to create effective visual communication, including narrative development, visual design, and ethical considerations.

Detailed Syllabus:

Unit 1: Introduction to Visual Culture

Introduction to Visual Media, Understanding Visual Media, The Role of Visual Media in Society, Power of Visual Images

Visual Language, Understanding Visual Language in Visual Media, The Role of Visual Language in Communication

Overview of Framing, Understanding Framing in Visual Communication, The Role of Framing in Visual Communication

Types of Narratives, Understanding Narrative Theory and Its Elements in Visual Communication, Understanding Different Types of Narratives in Visual Media, The Role of Narratives in Visual Communication, Understanding Traditional Narrative Media

Unit 2: Fundamentals of Visual Literacy

Definition and Concepts of Visual Literacy, The importance of Visual Literacy, Visual Elements and Principles, Developing Visual Literacy Skills

Visual Environment – Art, Print, Film, TV and Public Space, Understanding the Visual Environment, The role of Visual Communication in different contexts, Public Art and Social Responsibility

Visual Persuasion and Propaganda, Understanding the power of Visual Persuasion, The use of Visual Propaganda in History, Ethical Issues in Visual Persuasion

Visual Stereotypes, The role of Stereotypes in Visual Communication, The impact of Stereotypes on Society, Strategies for Challenging Visual Stereotypes

Unit 3: Visual Literacy

Basic Visual Concepts and Principles, The Elements and Principles of Visual Design, Applying Basic Visual Concepts and Principles

Physiological Aspect and Perceptual Aesthetics, The Physiology of Visual Perception, The Aesthetics of Perception

Perceptual Theories - Sensation and Perception; Organization and Constancies, Sensation and Perception, Organizing Visual Information, Understanding Constancies in Visual Perception,

Gestalt Theory and Constructivism, The Principles of Gestalt Theory, The Principles of Constructivism, Applying Gestalt Theory and Constructivism in Visual Communication, Sensual Theories – Gestalt and Construct

Cognitive Understanding and Cognitive Theories in Visual Communication, The Role of Cognition in Visual Communication

Unit 4: Theories of Visual Communication

Visual Literacy Eye, Developing the Visual Literacy Eye, Visual Analysis Techniques,T he Gaze, Definition and types of Gaze, The Male Gaze, The Female Gaze

Critically Analyzing Visuals and Designs, Understanding Form, Content, and Context in Visual Communication, Analyzing the Meaning and Message of Visual Communication

Meaning and Message, Understanding the Relationship between Meaning and Message in Visual Communication, Understanding the Role of Context in the Interpretation of Visual Communication

Form, Content, and Context, Understanding the Relationship between Form, Content, and Context in Visual Communication, Applying Form, Content, and Context in Visual Communication

Cultural Theories – Key Frames from the History of Visual Art, Understanding the Historical and Cultural Context of Visual Communication, The Role of Key Frames in Visual Art History

What is Visual Culture?, Key themes and concepts in Visual Culture, Historical evolution of Visual Culture, Cultural differences in Visual Perception, The impact of technology on Visual Cultures

Unit 5: The Grammar of Visual Design

Semiotics - Iconic, Indexical and Symbolic, Understanding Semiotics in Visual Communication, The Role of Iconic, Indexical, and Symbolic Signs in Visual Communication

Colour Theories, The Science of Colour Perception, The Role of Colour in Visual Communication, The Psychological and Emotional Impact of Colour

Principles of Design, The Basic Principles of Design, Applying the Principles of Design in Visual Communication

Relationship of Elements, Understanding the Relationship between Visual Elements in Design, Creating Balance and Harmony in Visual Communication

Visual Persuasion in Communication, Understanding the Role of Persuasion in Visual Communication, Techniques for Persuasive Visual Communication

Course Outcomes:
1. Analyze and evaluate visual elements and messages in different media forms and contexts, demonstrating an advanced understanding of visual communication concepts and principles.
2. Apply the principles of design and visual communication to create effective and ethical visual communication, considering the needs and goals of specific audiences and contexts.
3. Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the role of visual communication in shaping cultural, social, and political narratives, and analyze the use of visual images in different contexts to inform and persuade audiences.
4. Synthesize knowledge and skills related to visual communication, including visual literacy, design principles, and ethical considerations, to develop a final project that effectively communicates a narrative concept.
5. Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of visual communication, considering the social, cultural, and ethical implications of the use of visual images and messages, and apply this knowledge to their own visual communication practices.

Mapping

	PSO 1	PSO 2	PSO 3	PSO 4	PSO 5
CO 1	2	1	3	1	1
CO 2	3	3	3	3	2
CO 3	2	3	2	3	1
CO 4	2	2	3	2	1
CO 5	1	3	2	2	3

Key Textbooks

1. Baldwin, J., & Roberts, L. (2019). Visual Communication: From Theory to Practice. Bloomsbury Publishing.
2. Aiello, G., & Parry, K. (2020). Visual Communication: Understanding Images in Media Culture. SAGE Publications.
3. Lester, P. M. (2010). Visual Communication: Images with Messages. Wadsworth.
4. Smith, K. L., Moriarty, S., Kenney, K., & Barbatsis, G. (2004). Handbook of Visual Communication: Theory, Methods, and Media. Routledge.
5. Aiello, G., & Parry, K. (2019). Visual Communication: Understanding Images in Media Culture. SAGE.
6. Josephson, S., Kelly, J., & Smith, K. (2020). Handbook of Visual Communication: Theory, Methods, and Media. Taylor & Francis.
7. Page, J. T., & Duffy, M. (2021). Visual Communication: Insights and Strategies. John Wiley & Sons.

References

1. Aiello, G., & Parry, K. (2020). Visual Communication: Understanding Images in Media Culture. SAGE Publications.
2. Baldwin, J., & Roberts, L. (2019). Visual Communication: From Theory to Practice. Bloomsbury Publishing.
3. Crow, D. (2017). Visible Signs: An Introduction to Semiotics in the Visual Arts. Bloomsbury Publishing.
4. Davis, M., & Hunt, J. (2017). Visual Communication Design: An Introduction to Design Concepts in Everyday Experience. Bloomsbury Publishing.
5. Edwards, M. (2015). The Visual Communications Book: Using Words, Drawings and Whiteboards to Sell Big Ideas. LID Publishing.

Web Resources

1. Visual Communication Quarterly - https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/hvcq20/current
2. Journal of Visual Literacy - http://www.visualnarratives.org/jvl/index.html
3. Information Design Journal - https://benjamins.com/catalog/idj
4. Journal of Design Communication - https://journals.sagepub.com/home/dcn
5. Communication Design Quarterly - https://sigdoc.acm.org/publications/cdq/
6. The Association for Computer Machinery (ACM) Special Interest Group on Design of Communication (SIGDOC) - https://sigdoc.acm.org/