Communication 1300 – Visual Communication
Summer 2015 Syllabus

Instructor: Norman Porticella

Description: Introduction to visual communication theory. Examines how visuals influence our attention, perspectives, and understanding. Uses examples of visuals drawn from advertising, TV news, documentaries, entertainment movies, print, and interactive media to develop a theoretical framework for becoming more visually aware and for thinking more critically about how visuals influence us.

Additional Readings: Provided online through Blackboard

OVERVIEW: By the end of the semester you will have an in-depth understanding of how visuals influence perceptions and behaviors and an understanding of the importance of theory in the construction of effective visual messages.

The readings, lectures and sections are all important in contributing to your understanding. Lectures are an opportunity for me to add and amplify ideas from the readings, and an opportunity for me to emphasize the important ideas in the readings. I do not try to cover everything. Most of the readings are clear, and you should be able to identify the important points on your own.

Attending class is important. In most lectures I will show many different visuals to illustrate specific points, theories and ideas, and these visuals may or may not be available on Blackboard. Some lecture notes are put on this website, but because of either copyright or the size of the files it is not possible to put them all on the web (some are movies).

COURSE TOPICS
Aspects of Visual Literacy: How are visuals different from text?
The Construction of Visuals: Balance, Stress, Leveling, Grouping, and other analytical tools
How We Recognize Images: How two-dimensional images reproduce real-world perceptions of scale & depth
Theories to help us understand images: Symbolism, Iconicity, Indexicality, and Syntactic Indeterminacy
Techniques for Attracting Attention
Images and Audience Goals, Attention, and Emotion
Visuals and Culture
Images as Evidence: The True Meaning of Pictures
Documentary Film: Why are they called a "complex mediation of reality" rather than a reflection of reality?
Photo Alteration and Visual Deception
Moving Images: Point of View Editing; Editing as an indicator of thoughts and emotions; How does the juxtaposition of images create new meaning? Editing and Viewer Involvement
Visual Ethics

ASSIGNMENTS
Most of the assignments are 2-4 page essays where you will analyze, compare, and judge images applying course concepts. There are also regular quizzes and a final exam.