VSTUD 555: Visualizing Gender

3 Credits

This course analyzes how gender identities relate to the creation, use, and analysis of visual artifacts and bodily practices. Visual texts condition and are conditioned by intersectional embodiments of gender. In an attempt to understand and critically evaluate the role visual culture plays in our gendered lives as a dominant conduit of knowledge and identity production, this seminar examines visual processes and objects as they are informed and shaped by a nexus of gender, race, sexuality, class, nationality, and other forms of identity. The visualization of gendered forms of identity involves codes that produce bodies as signifiers of chaos, order, beauty, disease, nature, culture, evil, and virtue, including actions bisected according to binaries of masculinity and femininity. The seminar employs analytical approaches to these dynamics, including feminist, queer, and critical race theories of the visual as ways of interrogating a range of visual artifacts and bodily practices. After surveying key foundational texts, the course predominantly engages contemporary works and practices along complex gender matrices, including new directions in visual culture from the 1990s onward.

VSTUD 556: Reading Film

3 Credits/Maximum of 12

A practical and historical approach to film theory and analysis. This seminar develops critical visual literacy by examining a range of practices in cinema study, with emphases on the relation of film to literature and the analysis of film meaning. The course asks how to read a film, and considers the multiple ways that films combine framing, movement, editing, narrative, character, and genre toward the production of culture, ideology, identity, desire, poetic imagery, and community. Students will explore a wide range of critical methods, and will view one to two films per week. Readings will range from novels to classic film theory, cultural studies, belles-lettres, film criticism, radical poetics, apparatus theory, media theory, and contemporary philosophy.

Cross-listed with: COMM 556, ENGL 556

VSTUD 557: Authors and Artists

3 Credits

This course explores formal and historical links between literature and art in modernist movements. "Ut pictura poesis" (like painting [is] poetry). This statement, originally articulated by the ancient Roman poet Horace, has been quoted and debated ever since. Links between art and literature have exerted a formative influence on the development of modern fiction and poetry as authors and artists in various avant-garde groupings collaborated and competed to generate modes of artistic expression appropriate to modernity. This course examines those interactions. Course objectives are to bring together for comparative examination: - formal or generic relationships between texts and images at particular historical moments. - issues of creative collaboration and cross-pollination between writers and artists, which have been crucially important in the history of literature and poetry. - conceptions of creativity as these have been expressed by writers using the figure of the artist. This course allows students to explore the ways knowledge of literature and skills in critical reading can be rewardingly brought to bear on the visual arts, and to consider how visual art can illuminate the workings of literature both for individual readers and in the classroom.

Cross-listed with: ENGL 557
VSTUD 580: Comics and Graphic Novels

3 Credits

A survey of comics and graphic novels, primarily in English. This seminar provides a survey of the comics medium and an introduction to the academic field of Comics Studies. Students acquire facility in the structural and formal analysis of comics and sequential narrative, as well as knowledge of significant critical theories and methodologies within the field of Comics Studies. Assigned primary texts may be targeted to a particular genre, mode, historical period, or creator(s). While the course has a general focus on North America, students may also read texts from European, Japanese, and/or South American traditions (all of which will be taught in translation), not to exceed 25% of the course. Discussion of assigned texts will be situated within relevant scholarship and criticism (current and historical).

VSTUD 597: Special Topics

1-9 Credits/Maximum of 9

Formal courses given infrequently to explore, in depth, a comparatively narrow subject.

VSTUD 897: Special Topics

1-9 Credits/Maximum of 9

Formal courses given infrequently to explore, in depth, a comparatively narrow subject.