Course Title: Visual Culture

Area of Interest: Global Issues, Humanities & Creative Industries

Time: 3 hours per day and 5 days per week

Course Description:
This course is an introduction to the key issues of the field of visual culture, looking at the social role of images and visuality (the structures and power relations of looking, being seen and unseen, and vision in society). It introduces students to some of the foundational aspects of visual culture theory and concepts, in contemporary culture, with particular attention to the local and national context in relation to the global. This course will introduce some of central themes of visual culture, looking at the history of modern forms of visuality and the history of visual technologies, concepts of spectacle and scale, museums and image collections, image icons, taboo images, and the relationship of images to memory. We will examine how images circulate through digital media, remakes, and viral networks, and the cross-fertilisation of images between various social arenas, such as art, advertising, popular culture, comic books, news, science, entertainment media, video games, theme parks, architecture, and design. We will also examine the visual culture of China, Taiwan and Hong Kong in our discussion and assignments, in order to better “read” the visual images and visuality we live among and within.

Learning Outcomes:
1. To explain viewers creating cultural meanings
2. To identify how images circulate through different social arenas.
3. To analyze how visuality and the gaze function in power relations
4. To evaluate the role of style, irony, recoding and pastiche in image-making.

Study Load: 15 contact hours

Assessments:
Class Participation (20%)
Coursework (80%): Written Assignments + Group Project

Lesson Schedule:
Topic 1: Understanding visual culture: nature and manifestations (0.5 Lesson)
Topic 2: Viewers make meaning (1 Lesson)
Topic 3: Perspective and Perception (0.5 Lesson)
Topic 4: Visual technologies (1 Lesson)
Topic 5: Public art (0.5 Lesson)
Topic 6: Visual culture and resistance (1 Lesson)
Topic 7: Digital media, digital identity and global images (0.5 Lesson)