

CAH2501: ART AND VISUAL CULTURE

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Art and Visual Culture

Subject Code

CAH - Chinese and History

Course Number

2501

Academic Unit

Chinese and History (CAH)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to develop fundamental visual literacy skills that equip students with the key concepts and methods for studying fine art, art history, decorative arts, popular culture, design, and architecture. A spectrum of images from ancient

times to the present, and from a range of cultures are used to familiarize students with visual culture. Techniques of visual and thematic analysis are applied to exemplary works from cultural canons and contemporary life. Key topics include: 1) Visual elements and theory (forms, space, colour, iconology and ideology, etc.); 2) The interaction of medium and meaning (media and evaluating art); 3) Critical thinking about art and visual culture (art in public spaces, gender and identity, art criticism, etc.).

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Understand the concepts and methods for studying art, and relationship between art and visual culture.	25	x		
2	Undertake visual vocabulary – the words needed to describe, analyse, and critically question art and visual culture.	25		x	
3	Analysing forms and functions of art and visual culture through visual elements and theory.	25	x	x	
4	Interpret and contextualise past (historical) and present (contemporary global and local) images and objects.	25	x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	In-class activities	Lectures provide background knowledge and key elements of art and visual culture by showing the images and videos. Students will be engaged in group discussions, classworks and debate.	1, 2, 3, 4	

2	Reading and Essay	Students are required to read books, articles, videos, websites and images. To reinforce students' skills of analysis using further information resources for their own research.	1, 2, 3	
3	Field Study, Study kit, Presentation and discussion.	Students are required to form study groups, to visit and study public artworks, public decorations, sculpture or memorial installed in a public place etc. Students will Observe, take photos, shoot video, interview viewer, and analyse the study object (by applying the knowledge grasp in this course), for completing group oral presentations and study kit.	3, 4	
4	Final Paper	Students must submit a final research paper on a selected topic in relation to course materials at the end of the semester.	1, 2, 3, 4	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Class Participation (10%), Discussion and Attitude (10%) Students must actively participate in in-class activities. In the lectures, teacher-facilitated discussion students are expected to participate actively in order to deepen their knowledge of main concepts of art and visual culture.	1, 2, 3, 4	20	-	No

2	Group Oral Presentation and Study kit Students are required to form study groups to present their investigation/ outcome of the field study. Motivate classmates' discuss on the investigation/ outcome. Each group will submit a multi-media study kit, to record the investigation/ outcome.	1, 2, 3	20	-	Yes
3	Final paper Each student will submit an individual research paper (about 2000 words) on a selected topic in relation to course materials at the end of the semester. This task will assess students' analysis skill on art and visual elements.	1, 2, 3, 4	30	-	No
4	Mid-term Test (15%), Term-end Test (15%) Students will be tested on topics and study material, the usage of visual language, and their understanding of the concepts and methods for studying art.	1, 2	30	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

Class Participation, Discussion and Attitude

Criterion

This task will grade on students' attendance and performance in in-class discussion. Students are expected to comprehend the assigned readings and the content of lectures and classmates' oral presentations. Students should be responsive to the discussion, and express their critical thinking.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of:

- Active pre-class preparation and in-class participation, positive and interactive learning.
- Adequate ability to engage in group tutorials, express ideas, and elaborate on comments based on familiarity with class materials.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Some evidence of:

- Active pre-class preparation and in-class participation, positive and interactive learning.
- Ability to engage in group tutorials, express ideas, and elaborate on comments based on familiarity with class materials.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Limited evidence of:

- Active pre-class preparation and in-class participation, positive and interactive learning.
- Ability to engage in group tutorials, express ideas, and elaborate on comments based on familiarity with class materials.

Marginal (D)

Marginally satisfies the basic requirements of participation in classes and tutorials.

Failure (F)

Fails to meet minimum requirements of participation.

Assessment Task

Group Oral Presentation and Study kit

Criterion

This assessment will grade on students' ability to conduct the field study investigation/ outcome. Students should demonstrate their ability in relating to their discovery derived from the field study to what they have learnt in the course. They also need to show their oral communication skill and team work spirit.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of

- Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter;
- rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition;
- critical analysis, convincing statement and creative comment;
- superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management.
- close collaboration.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Some evidence of

- Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter;
- rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition;
- critical analysis, convincing statement and creative comment;
- superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management.
- close collaboration.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Limited evidence of

- Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter;
- rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition;
- critical analysis, convincing statement and creative comment;
- superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management.- close collaboration.

Marginal (D)

Weak evidence of

- Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter;
- rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition;
- critical analysis, convincing statement and creative comment;
- superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management.
- close collaboration.

Failure (F)

Lack of evidence of

- Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter;
- rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition;
- critical analysis, convincing statement and creative comment;
- superior presentation skills: distinct pronunciation, fluent expression and appropriate diction, exact time-management.
- close collaboration.

Assessment Task

Final paper

Criterion

This assessment will grade on students' ability Analysing forms and functions of art and visual culture through visual elements and theory. The final paper must be original, insightful, convincing, and well-written in academic form. Students should demonstrate the ability to utilize and analyze materials, draw from key concepts and issues discussed in class, and build up arguments in an organized and structured manner.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Strong evidence of

- rich content, ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand ;
- rigorous organization, coherent structure, systematic composition;
- clear and integrated ideas which can keep to the point, clear-cut subject, distinct themes, ability to interpret the opinions effectively;
- sufficient and organized references which can be utilized in accordance with the topic.
- exact and fluent expression, good sense of context, ability to use various writing skills to make the paper convincing with proper diction.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Some evidence of

- rich content, ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand ;
- rigorous organization, coherent structure, systematic composition;
- clear and integrated ideas which can keep to the point, clear-cut subject, distinct themes, ability to interpret the opinions effectively;
- sufficient and organized references which can be utilized in accordance with the topic.
- exact and fluent expression, good sense of context, ability to use various writing skills to make the paper convincing with proper diction.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Limited evidence of

- rich content, ability to integrate various resources into primary and secondary levels based on demand;
- rigorous organization, coherent structure, systematic composition;
- clear and integrated ideas which can keep to the point, clear-cut subject, distinct themes, ability to interpret the opinions effectively;
- sufficient and organized references which can be utilized in accordance with the topic.
- exact and fluent expression, good sense of context, ability to use various writing skills to make the paper convincing with proper diction.

Marginal (D)

- Fragmented content, ability to integrate resources generally based on demand, limited or irrelevant use of resources;
- loose organization;
- ability to express relevant points to the subject matter;
- references are insufficient, ability to provide some reasonable personal comments, but no clear demonstration;
- sentence fluency and diction is acceptable.

Failure (F)

- Vague and devoid of content, weak ability to integrate limited resources ;
- loose organization, without distinct primary and secondary levels;-unsystematic ideas which cannot express the subject matter or relevant themes;
- summary of references, no personal idea and/ or unreasonable comment;
- seriously insufficient/ no reference;-over use of existing quotations and relevant research.

Assessment Task

Mid-term Test and Term-end Test

Criterion

Mid-term Test: The scope of the test will be about visual elements and theory, and other knowledge of art and visual culture.
Term-end Test: The scope of the test will be about the interaction of medium and meaning and art criticism. Student should demonstrate their understanding of the subject matter of lecture topics in this assessment.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

85% to 100% correct answers to all test questions.

Good (B+, B, B-)

70% to 84% correct answers to all test questions.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

55% to 69% correct answers to all test questions.

Marginal (D)

40% to 54% correct answers to all test questions.

Failure (F)

Less than 40% correct answers to all test questions.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Art, visual culture, visual literacy, visual elements, art history, fine art, popular art, visual art, decorative arts, popular culture, design, public art, architecture, decoration, artist, viewer, art world, museum, exhibition, aesthetic, visual

experience, art theory, forms, space, colour, composition, media, iconology, evaluating art, art criticism, functions and styles of art.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Barnard, Malcolm. Art, design and visual culture: an introduction. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1998.
2	Feldman, Edmund Burke. Varieties of visual experience. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1992.
3	Howells, Richard; Negreiros, Joaquim. Visual culture. Cambridge: Polity, 2012.
4	Sayre, Henry M. A world of art. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2007.
5	Zelanski, Paul; Fisher, Mary Pat. The art of seeing. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2011.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Adams, Laurie. The methodologies of art: an introduction. Boulder, CO : Westview Press, a member of the Perseus Books Group, 2010.
2	Berger, John; British Broadcasting Corporation. Ways of seeing. London: British Broadcasting Corporation, Penguin Books, 1972.
3	Davis, Whitney. A general theory of visual culture. Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011.
4	Freedberg, David. The power of images: studies in the history and theory of response. Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1991.
5	Gombrich, E. H., Art and illusion: a study in the psychology of pictorial representation. London: Phaidon, 2002.
6	Williams, Robert. Art theory: An historical introduction. Chichester, U.K.; MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
7	Wallschlaeger, Charles; Basic-Snyder, Cynthia; Morgan, Meredith. Basic visual concepts and principles for artists, architects, and designers. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1992.
8	Williams, Robert. Art theory: an historical introduction. Chichester, U.K.; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.
9	Wu Hung. Reinventing the past: archaism and antiquarianism in Chinese art and visual culture. Chicago, IL: Center for the Art of East Asia, Dept. of Art History, University of Chicago : Art Media Resources, 2010.
10	Wu, Hung. A story of ruins: presence and absence in Chinese art and visual culture. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012.