

**CORE 101—Symbols and Conceptual Systems
Spring 2019**

Instructor

Professor Vanessa R. Schwartz
Department of Art History and History
Director, Visual Studies Research Institute

Office: THH 336, vschwart@usc.edu
Office Hours: Tuesday 12:30-2 and by appointment

Lecture: TTH 11-12:30 VKC 101

Discussion F 8 – 8:50 VKC 158

Discussion F 9 – 9:50 VKC 158

Discussion Leader:

Isabel Frampton Wade, Art History and Visual Studies
Office Hours: Thursday, 8:50 – 10:50 am THH 355

ICONS

Marilyn Monroe, the Eiffel Tower, John Wayne, Mickey Mouse. Few would dispute the notion that the mass visual media have transformed these people, places and things into “icons.” Although these phenomena exist apart from their representation, their cultural significance and importance is attached to their status as pictorial representations that are widely disseminated. The term “icon” initially invoked an object worthy of religious devotion; that original meaning now denotes an uncritical and popular devotion. This course poses the question “What becomes a legend most?” That question, made famous by the Blackglama fur ads, conflated “becoming” in the sense of being visually pleasing with “becoming” a legend, a modern process fueled by image-making. We will examine basic ways of thinking about visual symbols by learning about semiotics, symbolic and cultural anthropology, and what art historians have called iconology. This course will trace the interplay between specific icons and the visual culture that made them iconic. Particular emphasis will be placed on technologies of representation such as photography and film and the vital role they have played in the culture of modern icons. This class will also test the theories with a mandatory field trip to Disneyland on Sunday, April 7. If you cannot attend this, please drop the class.

Course Requirements:

All scheduled classes are mandatory and will begin on time. Please do not arrive after class begins. Class time will either consist of lecture (which will include slideshow and student participation) or lecture-discussion based on the week’s readings. More than four missed classes will result in failure. No late papers will be accepted. New and optional but highly recommended no computer in class policy to be discussed: from The Wall Street Journal: April 4, 2016.

Class Field-Trip to Disneyland (mandatory all-day Sunday, April 7). \$40 contribution toward ticket. See TO Office.

Readings:

Reading in this course is extensive and all listed readings are required. It is essential that you keep up with the readings on a weekly basis in order to follow the lectures and participate in discussion. Readings marked with an * are available on the class Blackboard.

Book List:

- Apgar, Garry. Mickey Mouse: Emblem of the American Spirit. San Francisco: Weldon Owen, 2015.
- Berger, John. Ways of Seeing. London: Penguin Books, 1972.
- Danto, Arthur. Andy Warhol. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.
- Hench, John. Designing Disney: Imagineering and the Art of the Show. New York: Disney Editions, 2009.
- Hill, Jason E. and Vanessa R. Schwartz, eds. Getting the Picture: The Visual Culture of the News. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015.
- Kemp, Martin. From Christ to Coke: How Image Becomes Icon, 2011.
- Lukas, Scott. Theme Park. London: Reaktion Books, 2008.
- Rojek, Chris. Celebrity. London: Reaktion Books, 2001.
- Sontag, Susan. On Photography. New York: Picador, 2001 [1973].

Required Articles and Excerpts:

- *Barthes, Roland. "Rhetoric of the Image." In Image-Music-Text, 32-51. Translated by Stephen Heath. New York: Hill and Wang, 1977.
- *Black, Jennifer. "The Mark of Honor: Trademark Law, Goodwill, and the Early Branding Strategies of National Biscuit." In We Are What We Sell: How Advertising Shapes American Life...and Always Has, edited by Danielle Sarver Coombs and Bob Batchelor, 262-277. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2015.
- *Selections from Bredekamp, Horst. Image Acts: A Systematic Approach to Visual Agency. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017.
- *Clark, T.J. "The View From Notre Dame." In The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers, 23-78. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.
- *Exodus from the Old Testament, 31.1–33.1.
- *Hariman, Robert and John Louis Lucaites. "Icons, Iconicity and Social Critique." Sociologica 9, no.1 (2015).
- *History of American Advertising Project
- *Selections from Navasky, Victor. The Art of Controversy: Political Cartoons and Their Enduring Power. New York: Knopf, 2013.
- *Magaudda, Paolo. "Apple's Iconicity: Digital Society, Consumer Culture and the Iconic Power of Technology." Sociologica 9, no. 1 (2015).
- *Marcus, Sharon. "Celebrity, Past and Present." Public Culture 27, no. 1 (2015): 1-5.
- *Marling, Karal Ann. "Disneyland, 1955: Just Take the Santa Ana Freeway to the American Dream." American Art 5, no. 1/2 (1991): 168-207.
- *Morgan, David. "The Violence of Seeing: Idolatry and Iconoclasm" In The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice, 115-146. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.
- *Pamuk, Orhan. "I Like Your Photos Because They Are Beautiful." The New York Times. Nov. 1, 2018.
- *Parks, Gordon. "Freedom's Fearful Foe." Life Magazine (June 16, 1961): 86-95.
- *Schwartz, Vanessa R. "The Belle Epoque that Never Ended: Frenchness and the Can-Can Films of the 1950s." In It's So French!: Hollywood, Paris, and the Making of Cosmopolitan Film Culture, 19-53. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

*Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. "The Street." In Disenchanted Night: The Industrialization of Light in the Nineteenth Century, 79-134. Translated by Angela Davies. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988.

*Solaroli, Marco. "Iconicity: A Category for Social and Cultural Theory." Sociologica 9, no.1 (2015).

*"Urban Icons" Project

Films:

Berger, "Ways of Seeing"

Warhol, "The Complete Picture"

American Experience: "Walt Disney" (2015)

"Disneyland, USA" (telecast of Disneyland Opening)

Extra Credit Events:

Wednesday, January 9

12:30—2:00 pm

DML 240

"Engineering Internationalism: UNESCO's Victory in Nubia"

Lynn Meskill, Stanford University

Wednesday, January 30

12:30—2:00 pm

SOS 250

Early Modern Visual and Material Culture Lecture Series:

"Lodging Dwelling Painting: Place and the Placeless in Early Modern England"

Elizabeth Alice Honig, Professor, History of Art Department, University of California, Berkeley

Friday, February 1, 2019

1:00—9:00 pm

Los Angeles County Museum of Art

"Finding One's Place: Photography and Its Many Dimensions"

A conference in connection with the 3D: Double Vision show at LACMA

Participants include: Jason Weems, Sandy Philipps, Ali Bedhad, Alison Griffiths, Susan Laxton, Jenny Watts, Melissa Renn, Ed Dimendberg, Estelle Sohler, Megan Luke

February 28 (evening), and March 1

Terra Foundation/LACMA/USC event on Outliers and American Vanguard Art show

Lab Events

Wednesday February 20

12:30—2:00pm

DML 240

Wolfgang Schivelbusch

Thursday, February 21

12:30—2:00pm

SOS 250

Paul Roth, Director, Ryerson Image Center: "Gordon Parks, FLAVIO and The Human Interest Story in Magazines."

Writing Assignments and Exams: All written work must be your own and proper use of citations is essential as you write your papers and projects. Plagiarism will NOT be tolerated and the academic integrity code will be strictly enforced. NO LATE PAPERS ARE ACCEPTED.

- 1.) In-class examination. February 14
- 2.) Two-page response to “Urban Icons” project due Monday, February 18, by 5 pm (graded towards participation)
- 3.) Select Icon: By March 28 and post to Blackboard
- 4.) Disneyland Paper: A 5-page paper in response to the Disneyland trip due Tuesday, April 9, by 9 pm
- 5.) Individual Icons Paper due: 5 pages, Monday April 15, by 10 pm
- 6.) Final Icons Take-Home papers due: 10 pages, Tuesday May 7, by 11 am

Grading:

Mid-Term Exam: 20%

Individual Icons Paper: 20%

Disneyland Project: 15%

Final Project: 35%

Participation: 10%

Extra Credit: Attend two extra credit events and you get a 5% grade bonus; attend all events and get a 10% bonus.

These are meant to serve as guidelines for evaluation in this course. Grades are not calculated mathematically, but are determined through a process of evaluation. All grading is done on an A-F basis.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings:

Week One: Introducing Symbol Systems

January 8: Why study icons? What becomes a legend most?

January 10: What is Culture? Symbols

Reading:

- Kemp, From Christ to Coke, pp. 1-10 and 141-165, 339-353.

Section: January 11: Discuss Kemp

Week Two: Looking, Seeing and Reading Images as Culture and Texts

January 15: The Anthropology of the Image: Are Images Alive?

January 17: Marxism, Ideology and the Image

Reading:

- *Barthes, “Rhetoric of the Image”
- *Solaroli, “Iconicity: A Category for Social and Cultural Theory”
- *Bredekamp from Image Acts, pp. 1-30 (Introduction)

Section: January 18: Discuss Readings

Week Three: Civilization vs. Mythology

January 22: Kenneth Clark's "Civilisation" (and the new "Civilisations")

January 24: Berger's "Ways of Seeing"

Reading:

- Berger, Ways of Seeing; and watch Ways of Seeing,
online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utEoRdSL1jo>

Section: January 26: Discuss Screening and Readings

Week Four: Religious Symbols in the Western World

January 29: Traditional Icons: Religion and the Debate over symbolism

January 31: Iconoclasm

Reading:

- *Morgan, "The Violence of Seeing" from The Sacred Gaze
- *Exodus on the Golden Calf
- Kemp, From Christ to Coke, pp. 13-43
- *Navasky, selections from The Art of Controversy, "The Cartoon as Image," pp. 15-23; "Plantu and the Danish Muhammads," pp. 181-189
- *Bredenkamp, selections from Image Acts chapter 4: 1c, "Photography," pp. 148-156; 2c, "Varieties of Iconoclasm," pp. 167-175

Section: February 1: Discuss readings

Week Five: Print Culture, Photography, Or How Mechanical Reproduction Changed the World

February 5: Print culture

February 7: Photography

Reading:

- Sontag, On Photography
- *Bredenkamp, selections from chapter 4: 1a, "The Vera Icon," pp. 137-142.

Section: February 8: Discuss Sontag and Bredenkamp

Week Six: Mid-Term

Tuesday, February 12: In-Class Review Session

Thursday, February 14: In-Class Valentine's Mid-Term

No Section Friday

Weeks 7-9: Spaces/Places

Week Seven: Urban Icons

February 19: Introducing Urban Icons

February 21: Monuments and Gateways

- *Navigate and read the “Urban Icons” website
<https://www-cambridge-org.libproxy1.usc.edu/core/journals/urban-history/issue/9184F48E5D33B9C40301AD297D41B234>. *If the above link does not work, you will need to go to USC Libraries website, search “an atlas of the urban icons project,” and log in via your USC library access.*
- By class on Tuesday read the Introduction and “navigate” the site and post a two-page response using the site **by Monday, February 18, at 5pm.**
- For Section: Read on Website: Introduction, Wasserstrom, Dimendberg, Schlor, Ethington on Hollywood Sign, Schwartz on Eiffel Tower.
- *Pamuk, “I Like Your Photos Because They Are Beautiful” NYT November 1, 2018
- *Wolfgang Schivelbusch, “The Street,” in *Disenchanted Night*, pp.79-134

Section: February 22: Discuss readings

2 LAB EVENTS THIS WEEK: Only those with scheduling conflicts can miss these LAB ACTIVITIES

- Wednesday, February 20: Wolfgang Schivelbusch, Author of *Disenchanted Night*
- Thursday, February 21, Paul Roth: “Gordon Parks, photojournalist and Flavio: A Story about Life Magazine and a Little Boy from the Favelas of Rio, 1965”
- THE OSCARS: Sunday February 24: optional participation in the yearly Schwartz Oscar pool: can you beat the professor?

Week Eight: City Representation: From Paris to La-La Land

February 26: The Painting of Modern Life

February 28: The Cinema and the City: City Symphonies

Reading:

- *Clark: from *The Painting of Modern Life*, Ch. 1, “The View From Notre Dame”
- *Schwartz, *It’s So French!* Ch. 1, “The Belle Epoque that Never Ended”
- Watch: *An American in Paris*, *La-La Land* and City Clip Reel

Section: March 1: Discuss readings and screenings

Week Nine: Theming and Cities to Theme Parks

March 5: LA

March 7: Disneyland and Vegas

Reading:

- *Karal Ann Marling, “Disneyland, 1955: Just Take the Santa Ana: Freeway to the American Dream,” American Art
- Lukas, Theme Park

Section: March 9: Discuss readings

SPRING BREAK MARCH 10-17

Weeks 10 and 11: People as Icons

Week Ten: The Press and the Photojournalistic Icon

March 19: Capturing the Moment

March 21: Photojournalism as Icon Machine

Reading:

- From Hill and Schwartz, eds. *Getting the Picture*, Introduction, 1.1, 1.5, 1.10, 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14, 1.15, 1.16, 1.17, 1.20, 1.21, 1.22, 1.23, 1.25, 1.26 and chapters 2.2, 2.4, 2.8, 2.10, 2.11, 2.12, 2.14, 2.18
- *Hariman and Lucaites, “Icons, Iconicity and Social Critique”

Section: March 22: Discuss Readings

Week Eleven: Stars

March 26: The Star System

March 28: The Movie Star

Reading:

- Rojek, Celebrity
- *Marcus, “On Celebrity: Past and Present”
- Screen “Judy Garland: By Myself”

BY THIS WEEK EVERYONE NEEDS TO HAVE PICKED AN ICON

Please submit a one to two paragraph description of your icon to the TA and on Blackboard by March 28.

Section: March 29: Discuss readings and screening

Week Twelve: Celebrity

April 2: The Most Famous Mouse in the World: Star or Thing?

April 4: The Happiest Place on Earth: Dateline Disneyland

Reading:

- Apgar, Mickey Mouse: Emblem of the American Spirit, pp.9-137 and 189-222.
- Watch: “The American Experience: Walt Disney” on Amazon Prime
- Hench, Designing Disney

Section: April 5: Discuss readings and prepare for fieldtrip

SUNDAY APRIL 7: Trip to Disneyland
Transportation Provided, Meet at USC at 6:45 am.

Disneyland meditations, 5 pages, due Tuesday, April 9 by 9pm.

Weeks 13 and 14: The Look of Things

Week Thirteen: Part I, Commerce as Art

April 9: Advertising and Its History

April 11: Branding

Reading:

- *Black, "The Mark of Honor"
- *Magaudda, "Apple's Iconicity"
- Kemp, From Christ to Coke: The Bottle, pp. 253-277
- *History of American Advertising: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/ads/amadv.html>

Section: April 12: Discuss Readings

Week Fourteen: Part II, and Vice Versa, Art as Commerce
*******ICONS PAPERS DUE MONDAY April 15 by 10pm*******

April 16: Warhol: Pop, Popular, Populist?

April 18: NO CLASS: Group Meetings to Prepare Presentations

Reading:

- Danto, Andy Warhol
- Screening "Andy Warhol: The Complete Picture": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnhqRiJ4KH8>
- Apgar, Mickey Mouse, Chapter 8

Section: April 19: Discussion of readings and Warhol film

APPLYING WHAT WE'VE LEARNED: Icons Projects

Week Fifteen:

April 23: Icons Presentations: Groups 1,2, and 3

April 25: Icons Presentations: Groups 3, 4, and 6

Section: April 26: Discussion of Take-Home Final

Final 10 page take-home due: Tuesday, May 7 at 11 am.

Description of the Icons Project

The class will be divided into 4-6 groups of 4-6 people. Groups will represent different kinds of icons that are listed below, first by category and then by icon. Each student will write a 5-page paper on his or her icon which he or she gives to their group and to me and the TA on April 15. By April 18 all students in the group read each other's papers and meet to begin assembling a group PowerPoint that uses the individual papers to consider the "category" of icon with which they are working. The presentation has to be posted the night before the classroom presentation and then we will look at and discuss each presentation for 20 minutes. Each student will then write a 10-page take-home final, based on prompts from me, which integrates what he or she has learned from doing his or her own icon, from being in the group and from comparing their group to the other groups.

Icons Categories

Group 1: *Stars of the Screen*

Group 2: *Political Figures*

Group 3: *Idols and Fictional Icons*

Group 4: *Monuments*

Group 5: *Iconic Photographs*

Group 6: *Ads, Logos, Symbols*

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class.

equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation

and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations.

dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared

emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu

On Laptop Policy:

“Can Handwriting Make You Smarter?” Robert Lee Hotz

Laptops and organizer apps make pen and paper seem antique, but handwriting appears to focus classroom attention and boost learning in a way that typing notes on a keyboard does not, new studies suggest.

Students who took handwritten notes generally outperformed students who typed their notes

via computer, researchers at Princeton University and the University of California at Los Angeles found. Compared with those who type their notes, people who write them out in longhand appear to learn better, retain information longer, and more readily grasp new ideas, according to experiments by other researchers who also compared note-taking techniques.

“The written notes capture my thinking better than typing,” said educational psychologist Kenneth Kiewra at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, who studies differences in how we take notes and organize information.

Ever since ancient scribes first took reed pen to papyrus, taking notes has been a catalyst for the alchemy of learning, by turning what we hear and see into a reliable record for later study and recollection. Indeed, something about writing things down excites the brain, brain imaging studies show. “Note-taking is a pretty dynamic process,” said cognitive psychologist Michael Friedman at Harvard University who studies note-taking systems. “You are transforming what you hear in your mind.”

Researchers have been studying note-taking strategies for almost a century. Not until recently, though, did they focus on differences caused by the tools we use to capture information. Note-taking with a lead pencil, first mass-produced in the 17th Century, just isn’t so different than using a fountain pen, patented in 1827; a ballpoint pen, patented in 1888; or a felt-tipped marker, patented in 1910. Today, however, virtually all college students have portable computers; lectures are the main vehicle for instruction; and the keyboard clatter of note-taking is the soundtrack of higher education. Generally, people who take class notes on a laptop do take more notes and can more easily keep up with the pace of a lecture than people scribbling with a pen or pencil, researchers have found. College students typically type lecture notes at a rate of about 33 words a minute. People trying to write it down manage about 22 words a minute.

The very feature that makes laptop note-taking so appealing—the ability to take notes more quickly—was what undermined learning.

Kenneth Kiewra at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. In the short run, it pays off. Researchers at Washington University in St. Louis in 2012 found that laptop note-takers tested immediately after a class could recall more of a lecture and performed slightly better than their pen-pushing classmates when tested on facts presented in class. They reported their experiments with 80 students in the *Journal of Educational Psychology*.

Any advantage, though, is temporary. After just 24 hours, the computer note takers typically forgot material they’ve transcribed, several studies said. Nor were their copious notes much help in refreshing their memory because they were so superficial.

In contrast, those who took notes by hand could remember the lecture material longer and had a better grip on concepts presented in class, even a week later. The process of taking them down encoded the information more deeply in memory, experts said. Longhand notes also

were better for review because they're more organized. In three experiments during 2014, psychologists Pam A. Mueller at Princeton and Daniel Oppenheimer at UCLA arranged for students to listen to talks on a variety of topics including algorithms and bats, while taking notes either via keyboard or pen and paper. The 67 students were tested immediately afterward and then again a week later, after being given an opportunity to review their notes. Those who wrote out their notes longhand took down fewer words, but appeared to think more intensely about the material as they wrote, and digested what they heard more thoroughly, the researchers reported in *Psychological Science*. "All of that effort helps you learn," said Dr. Oppenheimer.

Laptop users instead took notes by rote, taking down what they heard almost word for word. When tested, "the longhand note takers did significantly better than laptop note-takers despite the fact that laptop note takers had more notes to look at," Dr. Mueller said. "Having all these notes did not help refresh their recollection."

The problem is a typist's tendency to take verbatim notes. "Ironically, the very feature that makes laptop note-taking so appealing—the ability to take notes more quickly—was what undermined learning," said Dr. Kiewra.

In one experiment, Dr. Mueller explicitly warned students using laptops to avoid taking verbatim notes, saying it would hurt their performance later. They couldn't help themselves. "The tendency of people to take verbatim notes on a laptop is really hard to break," she said. "It seemed really ingrained to type and type and type, even when you are told that it is not beneficial to your performance."

These note-taking studies were conducted under laboratory conditions, but their findings likely apply equally wherever we try to collect our thoughts in writing, whether in a classroom, a business meeting or a doctor's office, the experts said. College lecture halls commonly are filled with students typing. At Princeton, about two-thirds of the students take class notes with laptops, while at UCLA less than half do. At the University of North Carolina, about 41% of students in a recent survey said they use laptops to take class notes.

"At Princeton, it was a sea of MacBooks," said Dr. Mueller. "Few students were taking longhand notes."

Any notes are better than none, studies show. While handwritten notes may be more memorable, there is room for improvement. At the University of Nebraska, Dr. Kiewra conducted 16 experiments to gauge the completeness of handwritten notes and found that people usually took down only a third or so of the information presented. Moreover, in their haste to keep up with the spoken word, people omitted important qualifiers, failed to record context, and skipped key details. Because it requires such concentration, the process of taking notes itself can be distracting. Dr. Kiewra recalled that when he was still a student, one of his professors banned note-taking in class because he wanted students to pay full attention to the lesson. The teacher instead supplied prepared notes for the entire class.

Nonetheless, Dr. Kiewra recalled that he continued taking his own notes, cradling his head in his arms to shield his notebook as he wrote. One day, however, the professor caught him in the act.

“Mr. Kiewra, are you taking notes in my classroom?” he demanded. The flustered student dissembled. “I’m only writing a letter to a friend back home.”

“Oh thank goodness,” the professor said. “I thought you were taking notes.”

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/can-handwriting-make-you-smarter-1459784659>