

**CORE 101—Symbols and Conceptual Systems  
Spring 2023**

**Instructor**

Professor Vanessa R. Schwartz  
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Director, Visual Studies Research Institute

Office: THH 336, [vschwartz@usc.edu](mailto:vschwartz@usc.edu)

Office Hours: Thursday 9:00-10:45 am and by appointment.

**Please sign up for appointments here by Wednesday at 8pm each week:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Wo9aAscEvGevxzMKLqwwAR-jv0QfBKzgRkucJEXbpV4/edit?usp=sharing>

Lecture: T/TH 11-12:20; LVL 16

Discussion F 9 – 9:50 CPA 259

Discussion F 10 – 10:50 CPA 259

Teaching Assistant: Rose Bishop, Art History and Visual Studies

Office Hours: By appointment via Zoom and in 336 THH, F: 11-1

[rosebish@usc.edu](mailto:rosebish@usc.edu)

**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 tests these theories with a mandatory field trip to Disneyland.

**Course Requirements:**

All scheduled classes are mandatory and will begin on time. 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.**

Class Field-Trip to Disneyland: April 22

Costs and details pending

**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 that are articles can be found on the class Blackboard.

**Book List:**

Danto, Arthur. *Andy Warhol*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

Kemp, Martin. *From Christ to Coke: How Image Becomes Icon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Morin, Edgar. *The Stars*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005 [1972].

Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. New York: Picador, 2001 [1973].

**Required Articles and Excerpts:**

- Apgar, Garry. Mickey Mouse: Emblem of the American Spirit. Chapter 8 “‘Pop’ Goes the Mouse,” pp. 223-255. San Francisco: The Walt Disney Foundation Family Press, 2015.
- Barber, Charles. “From Image into Art: Art after Byzantine Iconoclasm.” Gesta, 1995, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 5-10.
- Betancourt, Roland. “Neon Byzantium: Aesthetics without Iconography in Las Vegas,” İstanbul’da bu ne Bizantinizm! / What Byzantinism in İstanbul is this!, eds. Emir Alışık, Gülru Tanman, and Brigitte Pitarakis (Istanbul: Istanbul Research Institute, 2021), 20-55.
- 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.
- Boorstin, Daniel J. The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America. New York: Vintage Books, 1961. Ch. 3: From Traveler to Tourist, pp. 77-117.
- Bredekamp, Horst. Image Acts: A Systematic Approach to Visual Agency. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017 [selections].
- Carr, Annemarie Wyel. “Leo of Chalcedon and the Icons,” in Byzantine East, Latin West. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995, pp. 579-84.
- Dimendberg, Edward. “The kinetic icon: Reyner Banham on Los Angeles as mobile metropolis,” in Urban History, Vol. 33, No. 1, 2006, pp. 106-125.
- Eastmond, Anthony. “Introduction: The Experience of Byzantine Art,” in The Glory of Byzantium and Early Christendom. London: Phaidon, 2013, pp. 7-12.
- Erenberg, Lewis A. “Introduction,” and Chapter 9 “When We Were Kings,” in The Rumble in the Jungle: Muhammad Ali and George Foreman on the Global Stage. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019, pp. 1-8; pp. 219-237.
- Ethington, Philip J., and Vanessa R. Schwartz. “Introduction: an atlas of the urban icons project,” in Urban History, Vol. 33, No. 1, 2006, pp. 5-19.
- Exodus from the Old Testament, 31.1–33.1.
- Harriman, Robert and John Louis Lucaites. “Icons, Iconicity and Social Critique.” Sociologica 9, no.1 (2015): 1-33.
- History of American Advertising Project: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/ads/amadv.html>
- Susie, Linfield. The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence. Chapter 1, “A Little History of Photography Criticism; or, Why Do Photography Critics Hate Photography?” pp. 3-32; Chapter 2 “Photojournalism and Human Rights: The Calamity of the Kodak” pp. 33-64. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012.
- Magaudda, Paolo. “Apple’s Iconicity: Digital Society, Consumer Culture and the Iconic Power of Technology.” Sociologica 9, no. 1 (2015), 1-16.
- Marcus, Sharon. The Drama of Celebrity “Introduction.” Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019: 1-20.
- 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.
- Navasky, Victor. The Art of Controversy: Political Cartoons and Their Enduring Power. New York: Knopf, 2013. pp. 15-23; pp. 181-189.
- Pentcheva, Bissera. “The Performative Icon,” The Art Bulletin, Vol. 88, No. 4, 2006, pp. 631-655.
- Schlör, Joachim. “‘It has to go away, but at the same time it has to be kept,’ : the Berlin Wall and the making of an urban icon,” in Urban History, Vol. 33, No. 1, 2006, pp. 85-105.
- Schwartz, Vanessa R. Jet Age Aesthetic. Chapter 2: “Disneyland and the Art of People-Moving,” pp. 57-98. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020.
- Solaroli, Marco. “Iconicity: A Category for Social and Cultural Theory.” Sociologica 9, no.1 (2015), 1-52.
- Tell, Darcy. Times Square Spectacular: Lighting Up Broadway. Chapter 2 “The Great White Way,” Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2007, pp. 25-59.
- Van DeBurg, William L. “Sports Superstars,” in Black Camelot: African-American Culture Heroes in their Times, 1960-1980. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997, pp. 84-126.
- Wasserstrom, Jeffrey N. “A Big Ben with Chinese Characteristics: The Customs House as Urban Icon in Old and New Shanghai,” in Urban History, Vol. 33, No. 1, 2006, pp. 65-84.

**Films:**

- “PBS American Masters - Judy Garland: By Myself” link on blackboard.
- John Berger,  
“Ways of Seeing” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utEoRdSL1jo>
- Ken Burns, “Round One: The Greatest (1942-1964).” Muhammed Ali. (2021)  
<https://www.kanopy.com/en/usclib/video/11318298>
- “Civilisations” (2018): Episode 1: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x74v0mw>
- Kenneth Clark’s “Civilisation” (1969): Episodes 1:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2lmlDp2WGg&list=PL2JFlsCzvZsyPG\\_EQso-Ehc4-YzFVbR0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b2lmlDp2WGg&list=PL2JFlsCzvZsyPG_EQso-Ehc4-YzFVbR0)  
Episode 6: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVRna64Okq4&list=PL2JFlsCzvZsyPG\\_EQso-Ehc4-YzFVbR0&index=6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CVRna64Okq4&list=PL2JFlsCzvZsyPG_EQso-Ehc4-YzFVbR0&index=6)
- Leslie Iwerks. “The Imagineering Story” (2019) on Disney Plus; we will schedule a Zoom watch party for those without Disney Plus <https://www.disneyplus.com/series/the-imagineering-story/6ryoXv1e1rWW>
- “When We Were Kings” (1996) <https://www.criterionchannel.com/when-we-were-kings> (Free Trial available)

**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. Papers will receive a 25% penalty for each day they are late. Please discuss challenges that arise with Rose in advance, and we can re-schedule a deadline if need be.

- 1) In-class Mid-Term Exam: February 16
- 2) Select Icon: By March 10 and post to Blackboard
- 3) Individual Icons Paper due: 5 pages, April 10, by 5pm.
- 4) Disneyland Reflection Paper: A 3-page paper in response to the Disneyland will be due April 28, by 5pm.
- 5) Take-Home Final Due: May 9, by 11 am.

**Paper Formatting:** The discussion papers and essays must adhere to current MLA or Chicago Manual of Style formatting guidelines. This includes proper document formatting, such as one-inch margins, Times New Roman 12-pt. font, and double-spacing. For details, you may consult:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html)

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/chicago\\_manual\\_17th\\_edition/chicago\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/chicago_manual_17th_edition/chicago_style_introduction.html)

**Grading:**

Mid-Term Exam: 20%

Individual Icons Paper: 20%

Disney Reflection Paper: 10%

Take-Home Final: 35%

Participation: 15%

Extra Credit: Attend three extra credit events and you get a 5% grade 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.

**Blackboard and Slack:**

The syllabus and readings will be made available on the class Blackboard. Students are expected to submit their icon paper, presentation, and take-home final on the “Assignments” portal on Blackboard. The Slack channel will function as a online forum for sharing relevant links, ideas, photos, events, etc. with the class. Slack link:

<https://uscdornsifeclass.slack.com/archives/C04EWH7QPMY>

**Extra Credit Events:****Images Out of Time Seminar (please note that all times are PST)**

**Tuesday, January 31**, 12:30 to 2pm ZOOM

*Simulacral Time: Historical Ethics, Recuperation, and the Byzantine Past*

Roland Betancourt, Professor, Art History, University of California, Irvine

**Thursday, March 23**, 12:30 to 2pm, SOS 250 and ZOOM

*How, and why, does an image become an icon? And why—or does—this matter?*

Susie Linfield, Professor, Journalism, New York University

**Friday, April 21**, 2:30-5pm, SCA 110 and ZOOM

*Jacques Cousteau: Seeing Underwater and the Making of an Icon of Environmentalism*

James Cahill, Director, Cinema Studies Institute and Associate Professor, Cinema Studies & French, University of Toronto

Respondent: Margaret Cohen, Andrew B. Hammond Professor of French Language, Literature, and Civilization and Director, Center for the Study of the Novel, Stanford University

**Zoom Policy + Pandemic Privacy**

Some sessions of this course will meet synchronously via Zoom (links on the course Blackboard page) on the dates indicated in the schedule below. You are required to turn your camera on during these sessions. In case you are not able to use your video at any point, please add a profile photo to your Zoom account.

Please do not share course materials with anyone outside the course. This includes screenshots, audio, video, links, Zoom information, recordings of classes or office hours, and other such content.

Because we are “live” some of the class schedule may change based on real-world and class developments.

**Culture of Discussion and Debate:**

**First, why we are here:** “The wisdom of the dead and the energy of the living merge to become a tradition that informs the present and shapes the future.

There are few places, very few places left, other than great universities, where ... both the wisdom of the dead coupled with the doubt of the living are vigorously encouraged, welcomed, become the very stuff of education, the pulse of teaching, the engine of research, the consequence of learning. No faculty member worth the profession has ever taken for granted as fixed truth or fiat all he or she has learned. The nature of our profession is to doubt, to expand, to enhance, to review, to interrogate. But no faculty member is able to question in a vacuum or is fired to innovate, to create because she or he is interested in erasing the inheritance, the authority of her discipline.

No student is expected to be content with the acquisition of data, of information. It is demanded of her to move beyond the stasis of what is known to what is knowable; toward more and other knowledge, knowledge that might one day contribute to the wisdom of the past.

Tradition is not there to bedevil us. It is there for us. It is not there to arrest us; it is there to arouse us. That is the continuum; that is the reconcilability of tradition and the future.”

**Toni Morrison, 250th Convocation, Princeton University, 1996**

**Guidelines and assumptions about classroom conduct:** (adapted from the FIRE website):

As college students, you are here to learn not just facts, but how to think critically think and reason. In many of the classrooms you'll enter, your preconceived notions, and sometimes deeply held beliefs, will be challenged. I ask you to embrace the opportunity to hone your own ideas and strengthen your opinions both outside and inside the

classroom.

Maintaining academic freedom is a core value of our university. For teaching and learning to flourish, professors must be free from institutional censorship and intimidation, and must run class as they see fit in order to facilitate learning and discussion. Similar to how First Amendment protections allow us to question orthodoxy and test controversial ideas, academic freedom allows professors and students to participate in open disagreement, to question assumptions, to articulate exploratory ideas without fear of retribution. Think of the classroom as a lab where you can test things and then change direction if you choose. You are invited to question your professor and each other. Yet the professor maintains the right to determine the content of class lessons and the flow of classroom discussion. Curiosity and a healthy amount of skepticism are key components of learning. Mutual respect and assuming the best intentions of everyone who participates is assumed. At the same, we also understand that your professors are leaders of the classroom environment. Classrooms are not the same as civic public spaces. They are spaces where discussion is curated by your professor based on expertise and years of hard work that have put them in the position to teach at this esteemed university.

### **Schedule of Lectures and Readings:**

#### **Week One: Introducing Symbol Systems**

January 10: Why study icons? What becomes a legend most?

January 12: What is Culture? Symbols

##### **Reading:**

- Kemp, From Christ to Coke, pp. 1-10 and 141-165, 339-353.
- Harriman, Robert and John Louis Lucaites. "Icons, Iconicity and Social Critique." Sociologica 9, no.1 (2015): 1-33.

Section: January 13: Discuss Readings

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

January 17: The Anthropology of the Image: Are Images Alive?

January 19: Marxism, Ideology and the Image

##### **Reading:**

- Bredekamp from Image Acts, pp. 1-30 (Introduction)
- Solaroli, Marco. "Iconicity: A Category for Social and Cultural Theory." Sociologica 9, no.1 (2015), 1-52.

Section: January 20: Discuss Readings

#### **Week Three: Civilization vs. Mythology**

January 24: What is "Civilization?"

January 26: What are Berger's "Ways of Seeing"

Screening for Tuesday Lecture:

- Kenneth Clark's "Civilisation" episodes 1 and 6: (1969) and the new "Civilisations" episode 1 (2018)

For Section on Friday: Watch John Berger "Ways of Seeing," all 4 episodes which are each a half an hour online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utEoRdSL1jo>

Section: January 27: Discuss Screenings

#### **Week Four: Belief and Animating Objects**

January 31: **Synchronous Zoom Session:** Traditional Icons: Religion and the Debate over symbolism

Special Guest: Prof. Roland Betancourt, UC Irvine

Reading:

- Barber. "From Image into Art: Art after Byzantine Iconoclasm." Gesta, 1995, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 5-10.
- Carr. "Leo of Chalcedon and the Icons," in Byzantine East, Latin West. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995, pp. 579-84.
- Eastmond. "Introduction: The Experience of Byzantine Art," in The Glory of Byzantium and Early Christendom. London: Phaidon, 2013, pp. 7-12.
- Pentcheva. "The Performative Icon," The Art Bulletin, Vol. 88, No. 4, 2006, pp. 631-655.

February 2: The Anthropology of Icons

Special Guest: Prof. Nancy Lutkehaus, USC Anthropology

Reading:

- Morgan, "The Violence of Seeing: Idolatry and Iconoclasm" In The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice, pp. 115-146.
- The Golden Calf: Exodus from the Old Testament, 31.1–33.1.
- Kemp, From Christ to Coke, pp. 13-43; "Christ: The True Icon"
- Navasky, selections from The Art of Controversy, "The Cartoon as Image," pp. 15-23; "Plantu and the Danish Muhammads," pp. 181-189
- Bredekamp, selections from Image Acts chapter 4: 1c, "Photography," pp. 148-156; 2c, "Varieties of Iconoclasm," pp. 167-175

Section: February 3: Discuss readings

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

February 7: **Synchronous Zoom Lecture:** Print Culture

February 9: Photography: Guest Lecture Rose Bishop

Reading:

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

Section: February 10: Discuss Sontag and Bredekamp

**\*Week Six: Mid-Term\***

Tuesday, February 14 : First Group Meetings to pick icons

Thursday, February 16: Mid-Term Exam

No Section Friday

**Weeks 7-9: Spaces/Places**

**Week Seven: Urban Icons**

Feb. 21: Urban Icons

Feb. 23: Monuments and Gateways

Reading:

- Selection from "Urban Icons" Special Issue of Urban History. For further interest, look at the issue: <https://www-cambridge-org.libproxy1.usc.edu/core/journals/urban-history/issue/9184F48E5D33B9C40301AD297D41B234>.

Section: Feb. 24: Discuss readings

### **Week Eight: Tourism and the City**

Feb. 28: The Rise of Tourism

March 2: Electric City

#### Reading:

- Boorstin, The Image, Ch. 3: From Traveler to Tourist, pp. 77-117. Find here: <https://ratical.org/PandemicParallaxView/TheImagePseudoEventsInAmerica1961.pdf>
- Tell, Times Square Spectacular, Ch. 2: "The Great White Way," pp.25-59.

Section: March 3. Discuss the Readings

### **Week Nine: Theming: From Cities to Theme Parks**

March 7: LA and Vegas

March 9: Disneyland

#### Reading:

- Betancourt. "Neon Byzantium: Aesthetics without Iconography in Las Vegas," İstanbul'da bu ne Bizantinizm! / What Byzantinism in İstanbul is this!, eds. Emir Alışık, Gülrü Tanman, and Brigitte Pitarakis (İstanbul: İstanbul Research Institute, 2021), 20-55.
- Schwartz, Vanessa R. Jet Age Aesthetic. Ch. 2: "Disneyland and the Art of People-Moving," New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020. pp. 57-98.
- Marling, Karal Ann. "Disneyland, 1955: Just Take the Santa Ana: Freeway to the American Dream," American Art, No. 1/2 (1991): 168-207.

Section: March 10: Discuss readings

**\*\*\*\*\*BY THIS WEEK EVERYONE NEEDS TO HAVE PICKED AN ICON. Please submit a one to two paragraph description of your icon on Blackboard by March 10.\*\*\*\*\***

### **Spring Break March 12-19**

### **Weeks 10-12: Iconic Events and People as Icons**

#### **Week Ten: The Press and the Photojournalistic Icon**

March 21: The Press Image

March 23: "Making News Icons" Guest: Professor Susie Linfield, NYU

#### Reading:

- Linfield. The Cruel Radiance: Photography and Political Violence. Chapter 1, "A Little History of Photography Criticism; or, Why Do Photography Critics Hate Photography?" pp. 3-32 ; Chapter 2 "Photojournalism and Human Rights: The Calamity of the Kodak" pp. 33-64. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012.
- From Hill and Schwartz, eds. *Getting the Picture*, Introduction, p.1-10, 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.10, 1.11, 1.13, 1.15, 1.20, 1.21, 1.22, 1.23, 1.25, 1.26

Section: March 24: Discuss Readings

### **Week Eleven: Stars**

March 28: The Star System

March 30: The Movie Star as Icon

Reading:

- Marcus, "Introduction to Drama of Celebrity," pp. 1-20.
- Morin. The Stars Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005 [1972].

Screen: "American Masters - Judy Garland: By Myself" link on blackboard

Section: March 31: Discuss readings

**Week Twelve: Celebrity**

- April 4: The Variety Star: Guest: Professor Henry Jenkins
- April 6 : The Athlete as Icon: Muhammed Ali

Readings:

- Van DeBurg. "Sports Superstars." In Black Camelot: African-American Culture Heroes in their Times, 1960-1980 (1997). pp. 84-126.
- Erenberg. "Introduction," and Chapter 9 "When We Were Kings," in The Rumble in the Jungle: Muhammad Ali and George Foreman on the Global Stage.

Screen:

- Variety Show Comp Reel: link to come
- "When We Were Kings" Criterion. Can get a free trial: <https://www.criterionchannel.com/when-we-were-kings>
- Ken Burns documentary ; Kanopy link -- <https://www.kanopy.com/en/usclib/video/11318298>

**\*\*\*\*\*INDIVIDUAL ICON PAPERS DUE MONDAY APRIL 10 BY 5PM\*\*\*\*\***

**Week Thirteen: Art, Advertising and Branding**

April 11: Advertising and Its History

April 13: Warhol: Pop, Popular, Populist?

Reading:

- Black, "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, pp. 262-277.
- Magaudda, "Apple's Iconicity: Digital Society, Consumer Culture and the Iconic Power of Technology." Sociologica 9, no. 1 (2015), pp.1-16.
- History of American Advertising: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/ads/amadv.html>
- Danto, Andy Warhol
- Optional Screening "Andy Warhol: The Complete Picture": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnhqRiJ4KH8>

Section: April 14: Discuss Readings

**Week Fourteen: Putting it All Together**

April 18: Group Meetings to Prepare Presentations

April 20: Dateline Disneyland

Reading:

- Apgar. Mickey Mouse: Emblem of the American Spirit. Chapter 8 " 'Pop' Goes the Mouse," San Francisco: The Walt Disney Foundation Family Press, 2015. pp. 223-255.
- Screen, "The Imagineering Story" (2019) episode 1



Section: April 21: Discussion of readings and trip preparation

Disneyland Trip is Saturday, April 22  
Details to follow, including trip hand-out.

**\*\*\*\*\*DISNEY PAPER DUE by April 28 at 5pm.\*\*\*\*\***

#### **Week Fifteen: Icons Projects Presentations**

**\*\*\*\*\*Groups 1, 2, and 3, upload recorded presentation Blackboard by 5pm on April 23. Groups 4, 5, and 6 upload recorded presentation Blackboard by 5pm on April 25.\*\*\*\*\***

April 25: Icons Presentations: Groups 1, 2 and 3

April 27: Icons Presentations: Groups 4, 5, and 6

No Section Friday.

**\*\*\*\*\*Final 10 page take-home due: Tuesday, May 9 at 11 am.\*\*\*\*\***

#### **Description of the Icons Project**

The class will be divided into 5-6 groups of students. 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 individual icon which he or she gives to their group and to me and the TA on Monday April 10. By April 14 all students in the group read each other's papers and will meet on Tuesday April 18 to begin assembling a group PowerPoint that uses the individual papers to consider the "category" of icon with which you are working. The presentation should be assembled and presented ahead of time as a group ZOOM and has to be posted two days before the class presentations on April 25 and April 27. Students need to come to class having watched the presentations already. We will discuss each presentation for 25 minutes. We will also create a google doc of our discussions that will help students with the take-home final. Each student will 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. They will get the prompts on April 28.

#### **Icons Categories**

In selecting your icon, you must pick one that pre-dates your lifetime.

Group 1: *Stars*

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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://equity.usc.edu)

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation response. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](http://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](http://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/ssc](http://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssc)

*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](http://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](http://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](http://dps.usc.edu)

### **On Laptops for Note-taking: An Article of Interest**

“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.

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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.”

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