



Visual Studies Graduate Certificate Course Guide: Fall 2025

Required Courses:

VISS 501: Introduction to Visual Studies: Methods and Debates

Vanessa Schwartz THH 308 Wednesday 2-4:50pm

Over the last two decades, Visual Studies has gained wide currency as a field of research and teaching in universities both in the United States and abroad. Scholars from disciplines as diverse as art history, American studies, literature, anthropology, film and media studies, psychology, history, and gender studies have focused attention on both the cultural specificity of vision and on the ever-widening array of images and objects available for viewing.

This course will provide a critical introduction to the history, methods, and central debates within the field. How have scholars and critics taken up — or in some cases dismissed — the study of visual culture and to what ends? What are the limits and possibilities of the interdisciplinary models on offer? We will explore these questions through a sustained engagement with selected texts that are rich in methodological orientation and that address such subjects as definitions of the image, the experience of seeing, the science of vision, constructions of visibility, and the experience and creation of visual objects.

This course is one of two required courses as part of the USC's Visual Studies Graduate Certificate (VSGC).

Pre-approved Seminars:

CSLC 501: Introduction to Comparative Media Studies

Jennifer Wild THH 207 Monday 2-4:50pm

Ways of thinking about the differences and relations among different cultural media: literature, film, video, manga/comics, new media, and so forth.

CTCS 564: Seminar in Film and Television Genres: Film Genre in the Age of the Global Shuffle

Henry Jenkins SCA 316 Tuesday 2-5:50pm

Advanced study of a selected genre of film and/or television and its relationship to history, society, and culture, as well as to genre theory.

CTCS 678: Seminar in Film Theory and Medium Specificity: The Politics of Everyday Life

Jennifer Wild SCA 216 Thursday 2-5:50pm

Explores the way film has been theorized in relationship to traditional media that preceded it and electronic media that followed.

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EALC 509: Transnational Korean Cinema

Youngmin Choe WPH 400 Thursday 2-4:50pm
Korean cinema since the early 20th century, focusing on transnational production, circulation and consumption.

EALC 535: Proseminar in Chinese Visual Culture

Jenny Chio SOS B51 Wednesday 2-4:50pm
Chinese visual culture through the complex interface of art and thought. Examines architectural layout, pictorial representation, decorative motif as part of cultural production that intertwines with intellectual trends.

ENGL 502: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory

Jonathan Leal THH 105 Tuesday 5-7:50pm
The assumptions and practices of major post-modern theorists and theoretical schools.

Seminars that may be approved for substitution:**AHIS 503: Categories and Collections**

Daniela Bleichmar THH 308 Tuesday 2:30-5:20pm
How collections are organized by category -- e.g., period, culture, materials, or mode of production. Examines collecting protocols, historiography and modes of collecting and viewing associated with that category.

ANTH 575: Seminar in Ethnographic Film

Nancy Lutkehaus OFFICE Monday 2-4:50pm
Survey of ethnographic film using both the dimensions of natural history descriptions and process, contrasted with naturalism and structuralism as tools of controlled comparison and analysis.