University of Gdańsk

Subject card

Subject name and code	Theory of Contemporary Visual Culture, PG_00201467		
Field of study	History of Art		
Date of commencement of studies	October 2026	Academic year of realisation of subject	2026/2027
Education level	Master's studies	Subject group	Obligatory subject group in the field of study Subject group related to scientific research in the field of study
Mode of study	full-time studies	Mode of delivery	at the university
Year of study	1	Language of instruction	Polish
Semester of study	1	ECTS credits	2.0
Learning profile	academic	Assessment form	credit
Conducting unit	Division of Modern Art -> Institute of Art History -> Faculty of History -> Rector		
Name and surname of lecturer (lecturers)	Subject supervisor	dr Hubert Bilewicz	
	Teachers	dr Hubert Bilewicz	

Lesson types

Lesson type	Lecture	Tutorial	Laboratory	Project	Seminar	SUM
Number of study hours	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20

E-learning hours included: 0.0

Learning activity and number of study hours

Learning activity	Participation in didactic classes included in study plan	Participation in consultation hours	Self-study	SUM
Number of study hours	20	5.0	25.0	50

Subject objectives

The general goal is to familiarize the student with the theoretical aspects of contemporary visual culture; while the specific goals are to provoke reflection on the contemporary iconosphere, sharpen the sense of its critical analysis, revise the procedures of its interpretation and deconstruct hegemonic visual discourses. The art historian's traditional competence as a professional observer will be enriched with alternative optics and non-canonical ways of seeing, while his eyes will be opened wide to the "other" areas of visuality.

Learning outcomes

Course outcome	Subject outcome	Method of verification
[HISTSZMU2_U07] Defines, explains and uses correctly in speech and writing terms specific to the art sciences in working on selected topics	is able to use appropriate art-historical terminology correctly in relation to contemporary visual culture	[SU1] oral statement/conversation/ discussion [SU2] presentation/project/paper/ report
[HISTSZMU2_W04] Is familiar with the main developments and major new developments in art history	understands the main trends in contemporary art	[SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion [SW2] presentation/project/paper/ report
[HISTSZMU2_W03] Knows and understands the interrelationship of art history with other humanities and social sciences, making it possible to integrate perspectives appropriate to several scientific disciplines	understands the interconnections between contemporary art, visual culture and the humanities	[SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion [SW2] presentation/project/paper/ report
[HISTSZMU2_W06] Knows and understands the research methods and tools of the art historian’s trade; they have an in-depth understanding of the methods used to analyse, interpret, evaluate and critically examine works of art and artistic periods	K_W06 Knows and understands the research methods and tools of the art historian's workshop, especially advanced methods of analyzing, interpreting, valuing and problematizing works of contemporary art.	[SW4] test/exam - oral or written [SW1] oral statement/ conversation/discussion

Subject contents

The class deals with a broad reflection on current visual culture. The transdisciplinary (or even postdisciplinary?) problem field is defined by: philosophy, history of ideas, cultural anthropology, history of art, architecture and design, sociology and psychology of art, history of customs and contemporary material culture, as well as film and media studies. Sample topics: High culture / low culture; elite culture / popular culture; Free culture; Author / creator; original / repetition; Cultural remix and recycling; Urban art guerrillas; Art (on) the street; Art and censorship; Contemporary Art World and pop culture; Reception of contemporary art: Stereotypes / Prejudices; Right / Left / Art; The Performative Turn; City - Performatics - Art; Art and Political Activism; Between Art Scandal, Blasphemy and Profanity; Feminist Perspective in Art; Bio art and Posthumanism; Animal studies, the study of things and art; Visual Culture and Art History.

Prerequisites and co-requisites

General knowledge of modern art history and contemporary culture

Assessment methods and criteria

Subject passing criteria	Passing threshold	Percentage of the final grade
Coursework	51.0%	90.0%
Attendance	75.0%	10.0%

Recommended reading

Basic literature

Baldwin Elaine, Longhurst Brian, McCracken Scott, Ogborn Miles, Smith Greg, Wstęp do kulturoznawstwa, Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2007;

Antropologia kultury wizualnej. Zagadnienia i wybór tekstów, oprac. Iwona Kurz, Paulina Kwiatkowska, Łukasz Zaremba, Wyd. UW, Warszawa 2012;

Barker Chris, Studia kulturowe. Teoria i praktyka, Wyd. UJ, Kraków 2005;

Strinati Dominic, Wprowadzenie do kultury popularnej, Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 1998;

Burke Peter, Naoczność. Materiały wizualne jako świadectwa historyczne, Wyd. UJ, Kraków 2012;

Kultura wizualna w Polsce, t. 1 Fragmenty; t. 2 Spojrzenia, red. Iwona Kurz, Paulina Kwiatkowska, Magda Szcześniak, Łukasz Zaremba, Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, Instytut Kultury Polskiej UW, Warszawa 2017;

Mirzoeff Nicholas, Jak zobaczyć świat, Wyd. Karakter, Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie, Kraków Warszawa 2016.

	Supplementary literature	Baldwin Elaine, Longhurst Brian, McCracken Scott, Ogborn Miles, Smith Greg, Wstęp do kulturoznawstwa, Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 2007; Antropologia kultury wizualnej. Zagadnienia i wybór tekstów, oprac. Iwona Kurz, Paulina Kwiatkowska, Łukasz Zaremba, Wyd. UW, Warszawa 2012; Barker Chris, Studia kulturowe. Teoria i praktyka, Wyd. UJ, Kraków 2005; Strinati Dominic, Wprowadzenie do kultury popularnej, Zysk i S-ka, Poznań 1998; Burke Peter, Naoczność. Materiały wizualne jako świadectwa historyczne, Wyd. UJ, Kraków 2012; Kultura wizualna w Polsce, t. 1 Fragmenty; t. 2 Spojrzenia, red. Iwona Kurz, Paulina Kwiatkowska, Magda Szcześniak, Łukasz Zaremba, Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, Instytut Kultury Polskiej UW, Warszawa 2017; Mirzoeff Nicholas, Jak zobaczyć świat, Wyd. Karakter, Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie, Kraków Warszawa 2016.
	eResources addresses	
Example issues/ example questions/ tasks being completed	Cultural anthropology vs. art history High culture vs. popular culture Art and censorship	
Work placement	Not applicable	

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