# Visual and audiovisual communication

## Prof. Matteo Stefanelli

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

Assuming that the contemporary media experience is pervaded with images, the course aims to offer an overview of the key structural features and the most important transformations that are currently taking place in *visual culture*, with a focus on audiovisuals, editorial images, and digital media.

At the end of the course, students will be able to outline, in general terms, the role of images in the media system, identify the main factors that contributed to determine the rise and the transition of *visual culture* towards the latest industrial models related to nomadic devices, video on demand and social networks, and analyse – from a critical perspective – the interconnection between the linguistic, institutional, and economic dimensions that constitute today’s integrated system of visual communication.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will be divided into two parts, offering an overview of the key historical steps, the theoretical issues, and the organisational settings of visual and audio-visual media systems in the light of the evolution of the relationship between digitalisation, images, and media experience, according to the perspectives offered by institutional history and the different text types, and making use of the knowledge provided by Media studies, Visual studies, and Image studies.

The first part of the course will provide a general outline of visual culture, and present some historical and theoretical concepts. In particular, it will explore the theories about the structural properties of images, and retrace the key historical steps of the modern evolution – the *pictorial turn* – of the different ways in which images can be seen and circulate, from photography and cinema to comics, street art, and social media.

The second part of the course will introduce the different models and fields of contemporary visual communication, both from the point of view of the cognitive theories of viewing and the typical visual phenomena of the digital media environment, such as the diffusion of images through photo and video sharing social networks the representation of the self from the self-portrait to the selfie, the strategies of the look from the cinema to the videogames, the logic of the visualization in the war and surveillance activities.

***READING LIST***

D.Barbieri, *Guardare e leggere. La comunicazione visiva, dalla pittura alla tipografia*, Carocci, Rome, 2011 (Chapters 1, 2, 3: only the sections indicated during the course).

R. Falcinelli, *Figure. Come funzionano le immagini dal Rinascimento a Instagram,* Einaudi, Turin, 2020 (Chapters 1, 2).

N.Mirzoeff, *Come vedere il mondo. Un’introduzione alle immagini: dall’autoritratto al selfie, dalle mappe ai film (e altro ancora)*, Johan & Levi, Monza 2017 (Chapters 1, 2, 4).

During the course, the lecturer will indicate the chapters of the reading list for the oral exam; in addition, students will have to study the teaching material (including the slides of the course) that will be made available in class or online.

*Non-attending students* will have to study the chapters mentioned above in all their parts, instead of studying only the sections or paragraphs indicated in class.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures, held in class. Success stories of market operators. Individual works or collaborations in groups.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

At the end of the course, students will have to take a written exam based on the whole content of the course, according to the instructions provided in the reading list for attending and non-attending students, consisting in three open-ended questions. The final assessment will take into account assignments results – if there are any –, the participation to the group works organised during the year, and the final oral exam. During the oral exam, students will be tested on their ability to find their way among the different historical periods, the main actors, and the key issues discussed during the lectures. The assessment criteria will include the relevance of the answers, the use of an appropriate terminology, the ability to use argumentation to create a structured and coherent discourse, and the capacity to identify conceptual connections and open issues.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students can find further information on the course syllabus, the course in general, and room/timetable changes on the lecturer’s webpage. Furthermore, on the Blackboard page of the course, they can find the teaching material used in class, together with additional documents, information, and instructions to be considered as a useful resource for a better understanding of specific topics and issues presented during the course. Students should have a basic knowledge of the English language.

Preferred requirements: an extensive knowledge of the syntax and the rhetoric of the Italian language, a basic knowledge of media history, and a basic knowledge of the English language.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at <http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG> or on the Faculty notice board.