

HSS Elective Visual Thinking

FALL, 2025

INSTRUCTOR: Zhao Shuai

OFFICE: Sichuan University, Shuangliu Airport, Chengdu, Sichuan
Art college building

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OFFICE HOURS: Monday and Thursday, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

LECTURES:

RECITATION: Social Design and Cross-disciplinary Thinking

TEXTBOOK: 《视觉思维》，[美] 鲁道夫·阿恩海姆，四川人民出版社，2019年

TEACHING ASSISTANT: Wang Meng HUI

PREREQUISITE: This course is a foundational general education module. It maintains an emphasis on art and design, and is suitable for those wishing to explore design methodologies.

DESCRIPTION:

1. In different disciplines and professional differences, we search for the common required underlying logical knowledge base and reorganise it to form a general knowledge structure module, which establishes a systematic logical linkage for the knowledge of design and various professions.

2. The course module explores the intrinsic correlation between traditional Chinese visual culture and formal language and modern international design formal language, and probes the basic laws of change and invariance under the visual language of cultural differences and the ever-changing media development environment, so as to understand the similarity of the underlying logic under the surface of the visual formal language of the different phases of the visual formal language produced by human beings in the context of their respective cultures, and the basic formal laws.

3. Special emphasis on the visual observation and presentation process itself is a thinking activity, is in the seemingly full of sensibility in the creative process to discover the role of rational thinking in the period, and through the practice of exploration, the establishment of a systematic visual thinking logic foundation.

4. Break down the basic knowledge barriers between various specialisations, and build a general, broad visual culture knowledge structure and the basic ability to master the language of form.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Study research methodologies and conceptual approaches within art history and design history.
2. Acquire foundational skills in visual disciplines such as photography, design, sculpture, and painting.
3. Develop theoretical knowledge of media communication and popular culture.

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THIS COURSE:

- 1) Study research methodologies and conceptual approaches within art history and design history.
- 2) Acquire foundational skills in visual disciplines such as photography, design, sculpture, and painting.
- 3) Develop theoretical knowledge of media communication and popular culture.

GRADE DETERMINATION:

Regular assessment: 40%

Mid-term assessment: 30%

Final assessment: 30%

EXAMS:

Course Assessment: Art Design and Practice

QUIZZES:

In-class assessment

GRADE REBUTTAL:

Course make-up and deferred examinations

HOMEWORK:

Coursework will be issued in phases, with a primary focus on art and design practice.

ATTENDANCE:

Regular assessment: 40%

MAKE-UP POLICY:

Complete the final assignment by the stipulated deadline.

MATERIAL COVERED: The sequence of the sections covered in this class is:

Week	Contents	Descriptions
3 (09/12)	1.1 – 1.3	Demystification: Restoration from Mural to Photography
4 (09/19)	1.4 – 1.5	The Gaze: The Single Portrait—Elizabeth
5 (09/26)	1.6 – 2.1	The Original Setting: Group Portraits—The Family Portrait
6 (10/03)	2.2 – 2.3	Culture: Food and Gastronomy
7 (10/10)	2.4 – 2.5	Kinetic Energy: The Exploration of Movement
8 (10/17)	2.6 – 2.7	Warning and Future: Virtual Reality Exam 1 on 10/14 1:30 – 3:00pm
9 (10/24)	2.8 – 3.1	Shaping: Iconic Images in History
10 (10/31)	3.2 – 3.3	Inspiration: The Spiritual Quality of an Era
11 (11/07)	3.4 – 3.5	Boundaries: The Documentary Experience of News Photography
12 (11/14)	3.6 – 3.7	Awakening the Senses: The Experience of Synesthesia
12 (11/14)	3.6 – 3.7	Reshaping Symbols: The Power of Brands Exam2 on 11/18 1:30 – 3:00pm
13 (11/21)	4.1 – 4.2	Reading Intent: The Aesthetic Imagination of Images
14 (11/28)	4.3 – 4.4	The Power of Images: Symbolism and Historical Dimensions
15 (12/05)	4.5, 5.1	Metaphor: The Allure of Gestalt
16 (12/12)	5.2 – 5.3	Microcosm: The Era of Micro-Focused Images
17 (12/19)	5.4 – 5.5	Image Creativity: Visual Interpretation in the Age of Intelligence Final Exam Week