



Visual Rhetoric Study Guide COM 300 Exam I

Know this stuff

Terms and their meanings:

Sign and symbol

Literal v. symbolic

Iconic (abstract/universal) v. Individuated (realistic/particular)

High culture, low culture, visual culture

Appropriation

Mediated communication

Vocabulary & grammar of visual rhetorics (by medium)

Comics (and cartoons)

Font and type

Memory (individual and shared or cultural)

Semiotics

Gestalt (continuation, constructivism, common fate)

Cognitive theory

People:

Marshall McLuhan (The medium is the message)

Aldous Huxley (The visual process)

Charles Peirce

Asa Berger

Roland Barthes

Concepts:

Types of visual messages

How the brain works; how we perceive

How the eye works; rods, receptors and light

How and what we remember, and why

Color

Appearances and disappearances

The lies that tell a truth (fiction, painting); the truths that lie (photography)

Light as metaphor

The Gaze

Foregrounding and backgrounding

Know how to apply the following power tools:

Peirce's signs and symbols

Berger's signs and symbols (codes)

Barthes's denotation and connotation

Barthes's sites of meaning (or modalities) <<MAYBE, if we get to it

Strategies:

- Form a study/discussion group.
- Use the textbook for your sheet music and the lecture notes for special emphases, jazz riffs and for content not in the book but that the professor feels is important (if you aren't reading the textbook, you will not surprisingly suffer on the test; conversely, if you rely only on the text and not good class notes, uh-oh).
- Make sure you've clicked the linked resources off the course Web page, to supplement textbook and lecture notes.
- Email or ask **specific** questions (not questions such as, "What's visual culture?"), but not the night before the exam.

Format of the exam: We have but 50 minutes, so expect a blend of fill-in-the-blank, short answer and one or more (really) short essay questions. You might also be asked to look at an image or visual artifact and apply one or more of the power tools.