CULS5412B Visual Research Methods
(2nd Term, 2019-20)

Time: 3:30pm – 6:15 pm, Tue.
Classroom: CKB 122
Lecturer: Dr Li Tiecheng
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Office Hour: Mon, 10am-12pm

Course Description:
This course will introduce visual and sensory research methods to enable innovative research projects, drawing on frameworks in visual anthropology, new media and cultural research.

Students will learn techniques of aesthetic and contextual analysis of documentary, new media installations and performance art. Artistically driven research methods will be introduced along with the current theoretical debates on research methodologies in different disciplines. Students will learn how to conduct a research from conceptualizing a topic, generating interviews, collecting data, analyzing the visual, audio and textual materials collected, to finally presenting their research findings in different forms.

New media techniques have been used for the production and transmission of knowledge in contemporary culture. This course will explore methods in visual research, enabled by new media technologies as well as archive research focusing on images, film, video and sound. Method of image classification and interpretation will be introduced. The ethical and creative uses of photography and video will be studied and practiced and historical examples of classic works in documentary will be presented. Exercises in photo-documentation, and image-text and image-sound combination (photo-essays, soundscape composition etc) will be undertaken as well as basic skills in video composition, videography and editing. The course will enhance students’ capacities in undertaking visually focused research projects in community and professional contexts.
COURSE CONTENT & SCHEDULE

Part I: Visual Materials

Week 1 (7 Jan).
Introduction to the course
Reading:

Week 2 (14 Jan).
How to do Research
Researching with Visual Materials 1.
Reading:
Selected Reading:

Week 3 (21 Jan).
Researching with Visual Materials 2.
Former Students’ Projects
Reading:
Selected Reading:

Week 4 (28 Jan).
Lunar New Year Vacation
Part II: Picture and Video

Week 5 (4 Feb).

Visual Diary and Drawing as Research Methods

Readings for Presentation:


Selected Readings:


**Assignment 1:**

**Submission: Familiar Stranger: 3Photos + Short Report**

*(English: no less than 2 pages, or Chinese: no less than 1000 words)*

Week 6 (11 Feb).

Researching Self and Others: Reflexive methods

Films:

1. Yau Ching, *We are Aline*, (2010)

2. Documentaries of Caochangdi Station (草場地工作站)

Film and Readings for Presentation:

1. Yau Ching, *We are Aline*, (2010)


Week 7 (18 Feb).

Interviewing Methods

Readings for Presentation:


Part III: Other Art Forms

Week 8 (25 Feb).

Field Trip

中環中軸線之旅

26 Feb (web) 11am-12noon @ Lab in KKB

Assignment 2:

Mini Research Submission: Visual Diary + Report
(English: no less than 4 pages, or Chinese: no less than 2000 words)

Week 9 (3 Mar).

Space & Map

Readings for Presentation:

1. 董啟章, 《地圖集:一個想象的城市的考古學》, 台北: 聯經出版事業股份有限公司 (2011)

Week 10 (10 Mar).

Research with Performance Art


Readings for Presentation:

Week 11 (17 Mar)
Guest Lecture
Guest Speaker: TBA
Topic: TBA
Assignment 3:
Mini Research Submission: Map + Report
(English: no less than 4 pages, or Chinese: no less than 2000 words)

Art Basel Tour
Date and Time: TBA

Week 12 (24 Mar)
Different Art Forms as Research & Course Review
Readings for Presentation:
2. TBA

Week 13 (31 Mar)
Proposal Presentation & Discussion
@CU Library

Week 15 (14 Apr).
@CU Library
* Submission: Individual Report
(English: no less than 8 pages, or Chinese: no less than 4000 words)

Assessment Scheme
- Attendance and participation ------------------------------- 10%

- Assignments ----------------------------------------------- 30%
  1. Familiar Stranger (10%)
  2. Visual Diary (10%)
  3. Map Research (10%)

- Group Lecture Presentation ---------------------------------- 10%
Base on the readings of every week, each group will choose one topic and give the class a 20min-presentation.
- Project Proposal Presentation + Final project Presentation  ------------ 30%
Students are required to carry out one major individual or group research project on a virtual community or subculture of their choice. In the end of this semester, an in-class presentation will be given with self-produced photos and/or video segments. There will be several mandatory tutorial exercises (in class) for students to better prepare and carry out these projects. Students are advised to discuss with the lecturer about the topic of their major research projects as soon as possible.

- Individual Report  ------------------------------------------------------------- 20%
According to the group project, each student is required to submit a report. (English: no less than 8 pages, or Chinese: no less than 4000 words)

Learning Outcomes
On satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. Explain key distinctions between methodological approaches in visual research.
2. Identify key characteristics of good ethnographic research practice and techniques.
3. Specify appropriate methods for visual observation and data collection in community-based and professional research contexts.
4. Recognize current debates and technological challenges in visual culture and new media.

Supplementary Readings


Gray, A.: *Research practice for cultural studies: Ethnographic methods and lived


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