

At the February 13<sup>th</sup> faculty meeting, IDOCS will move approval of Art TA 222 as the Field Supervisor-taught course for the Fall 2003 Term in Asia.

Course: Art TA 222: On-Site/Insight: An Exploration of Visual Culture

Offered: Term in Asia, Fall 2003

Catalog Description:

We are surrounded with visual information. Especially as we enter a new culture or region of the world, it is easy to be overwhelmed by the wealth of visual stimuli. Some experts say a person cannot see what he or she doesn't understand. So how do we learn to see and assimilate new visual information? Do our current visual knowledge and habits get in the way of integrating new information, or do they help us? In this course we will begin with the study of perception and the visual world. We will look at how various artists have taken information about the world and reorganized it for specific purposes, using the recognized elements of design. Specifically we will use the visual environment of Chiang Mai, Hong Kong and Hanoi as places to observe a visual culture that is a rich mixture from many sources: Thai, Chinese, Indian, Cambodian, Lao, European, and North American.

The course is an exploration of visual literacy consisting of the following parts:

- a. An understanding of the role of perception
- b. An understanding of the basic principles of design and how artists use them.
- c. A look at the meeting of Eastern and Western art forms.
- d. The use of Asian architecture as a case study of visual cross currents.

References: [selections from the following]

- Rock, Irvin. *Perception*. Scientific American Books, 1995.
- Shahn, Ben. *The Shape of Content*. Vintage Books, 1961.
- Sullivan, Michael. *The Meeting of Eastern and Western Art*. New York Graphic Society, 1973.
- Fisher, Robert. *Buddhist Art and Architecture*. Thames and Hudson, 1973.
- Architecture of Siam: A Cultural History Interpretation*, Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Mulder, N. *Inside Southeast Asia: Religion, Everyday Life, Cultural Change*. Silkworm Books, 1996
- Coomaraswamy, Ananda K. *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art*. Dover Books.

Rationale:

The intent of the course is to provide students with the tools to equip them to develop accurate perceptions of cultures through visual observations. Students will work with visual perceptions and narrative descriptions, combining readings, research and discussion to reach a thoughtful analysis of how a culture projects its identity through visual means.

The course will contribute to the integration of the courses offered on the Term in Asia. Given that many, if not most, students will have had little, if any, formal introduction to the fields of art or aesthetics, a grounding in visual culture will enhance their appreciation of what they are observing and experiencing. Specifically, understanding visual culture will aid students in the courses in Hong Kong and Vietnam. The observational work in Thailand will inform students' appreciation of the Thai Society course at Chiang Mai University. Using architecture as a case study will help students see and understand their visual environment and present opportunities to explore how culture shapes the use of space. Field trips for the Field Supervisor's course will be easily combined with scheduled field trips.

The course will have an impact on on-campus general education art courses. The Art Department's experience in general education has created a desire to bring a broader, multicultural visual literacy to a

larger range of students. The development of this course is a test case for the visual culture approach to visual literacy.