



CART12011 Semiotics and Design for Visual Artists

Term 1 - 2022

Profile information current as at 13/12/2025 03:56 pm

All details in this unit profile for CART12011 have been officially approved by CQUniversity and represent a learning partnership between the University and you (our student). The information will not be changed unless absolutely necessary and any change will be clearly indicated by an approved correction included in the profile.

General Information

Overview

This unit introduces you to a range of cross-disciplinary approaches to visual communication relevant to visual artists. These include visual communication theory, design and semiotics (the study of signs). Using a combination of theoretical approaches to visual communication, you will develop creative tools to support your practical endeavours as a visual artist and use analytical tools to better observe the functioning of mass media imagery and contemporary visual art practices.

Details

Career Level: *Undergraduate*

Unit Level: *Level 2*

Credit Points: 6

Student Contribution Band: 8

Fraction of Full-Time Student Load: 0.125

Pre-requisites or Co-requisites

18 credit points

Important note: Students enrolled in a subsequent unit who failed their pre-requisite unit, should drop the subsequent unit before the census date or within 10 working days of Fail grade notification. Students who do not drop the unit in this timeframe cannot later drop the unit without academic and financial liability. See details in the [Assessment Policy and Procedure \(Higher Education Coursework\)](#).

Offerings For Term 1 - 2022

- Online
- Rockhampton

Attendance Requirements

All on-campus students are expected to attend scheduled classes – in some units, these classes are identified as a mandatory (pass/fail) component and attendance is compulsory. International students, on a student visa, must maintain a full time study load and meet both attendance and academic progress requirements in each study period (satisfactory attendance for International students is defined as maintaining at least an 80% attendance record).

Website

[This unit has a website, within the Moodle system, which is available two weeks before the start of term. It is important that you visit your Moodle site throughout the term. Please visit Moodle for more information.](#)

Class and Assessment Overview

Recommended Student Time Commitment

Each 6-credit Undergraduate unit at CQUniversity requires an overall time commitment of an average of 12.5 hours of study per week, making a total of 150 hours for the unit.

Class Timetable

[Regional Campuses](#)

Bundaberg, Cairns, Emerald, Gladstone, Mackay, Rockhampton, Townsville

[Metropolitan Campuses](#)

Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, Sydney

Assessment Overview

1. **Portfolio**

Weighting: 30%

2. **Reflective Practice Assignment**

Weighting: 30%

3. **Written Assessment**

Weighting: 40%

Assessment Grading

This is a graded unit: your overall grade will be calculated from the marks or grades for each assessment task, based on the relative weightings shown in the table above. You must obtain an overall mark for the unit of at least 50%, or an overall grade of 'pass' in order to pass the unit. If any 'pass/fail' tasks are shown in the table above they must also be completed successfully ('pass' grade). You must also meet any minimum mark requirements specified for a particular assessment task, as detailed in the 'assessment task' section (note that in some instances, the minimum mark for a task may be greater than 50%). Consult the [University's Grades and Results Policy](#) for more details of interim results and final grades.

CQUniversity Policies

All University policies are available on the [CQUniversity Policy site](#).

You may wish to view these policies:

- Grades and Results Policy
- Assessment Policy and Procedure (Higher Education Coursework)
- Review of Grade Procedure
- Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure
- Monitoring Academic Progress (MAP) Policy and Procedure – Domestic Students
- Monitoring Academic Progress (MAP) Policy and Procedure – International Students
- Student Refund and Credit Balance Policy and Procedure
- Student Feedback – Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Information and Communications Technology Acceptable Use Policy and Procedure

This list is not an exhaustive list of all University policies. The full list of University policies are available on the [CQUniversity Policy site](#).

Unit Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

1. Apply concepts of 2D or 3D design to enhance your visual literacy and design efficacy
2. Discuss how design theory, visual communication theory and semiotics can be used to support your creative practice
3. Explain the process of signification in the context of contemporary visual art practices or mass media imagery and advertising.

Not applicable.

Alignment of Learning Outcomes, Assessment and Graduate Attributes



Alignment of Assessment Tasks to Learning Outcomes

Assessment Tasks	Learning Outcomes		
	1	2	3
1 - Portfolio - 30%	•		
2 - Reflective Practice Assignment - 30%		•	
3 - Written Assessment - 40%			•

Alignment of Graduate Attributes to Learning Outcomes

Graduate Attributes	Learning Outcomes		
	1	2	3
1 - Communication	•	•	•
2 - Problem Solving	•	•	
3 - Critical Thinking	•	•	•
4 - Information Literacy	•	•	•
5 - Team Work			
6 - Information Technology Competence		•	•
7 - Cross Cultural Competence			•
8 - Ethical practice			
9 - Social Innovation			
10 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures			

Alignment of Assessment Tasks to Graduate Attributes

Assessment Tasks	Graduate Attributes									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1 - Portfolio - 30%	•	•	•	•						
2 - Reflective Practice Assignment - 30%	•	•	•	•		•				
3 - Written Assessment - 40%	•		•	•		•	•	•		

Textbooks and Resources

Textbooks

There are no required textbooks.

IT Resources

You will need access to the following IT resources:

- CQUniversity Student Email
- Internet
- Unit Website (Moodle)

Referencing Style

All submissions for this unit must use the referencing style: [American Psychological Association 7th Edition \(APA 7th edition\)](#)

For further information, see the Assessment Tasks.

Teaching Contacts

Patrick Connor Unit Coordinator
p.connor@cqu.edu.au

Schedule

Week 1- Unit Introduction & 2D Design Basics. - 07 Mar 2022

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to unit. • Elements of design. • Principles of design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Week 1 study guide. • View: Week 1 Moodle resources. • Attend: Week 1 tutorial. • Complete: Week 1 tutorial activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About this unit. • Assessment overview. • The elements and principles of design. (unlocking design theory).

Week 2 - Thinking About Colour. - 14 Mar 2022

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour temperature. • High Key and Low Key colour. • Colour value as tonal value. • The influence of Chevreul. • Perception of colour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Week 2 study guide. • View: Week 2 Moodle resources. • Attend: Week 2 tutorial. • Complete: Week 2 tutorial activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colour theory for artists. • Chevreul and modern painting. • Haptic Illusions.

Week 3 - 3D Design Basics. - 21 Mar 2022

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
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- Form and volume.
- Positive and negative space.
- Plane and texture.
- Rhythm and repetition.
- Proportion and scale.
- Emphasis.

- **Read:** Week 3 study guide.
- **View:** Week 3 Moodle resources.
- **Attend:** Week 3 tutorial.
- **Complete:** Week 3 tutorial activity.

- 3D Design Basics.
- Assessment 1 task.
- Constructing armature for a maquette.

Week 4 - Visual Communication. - 28 Mar 2022

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is good design? • Noise and context. • Sensual Theory and Perception Theory. • McLuhan: "The Medium is the Message". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Week 4 study guide. • View: Week 4 Moodle resources. • Attend: Week 4 tutorial. • Complete: Week 4 tutorial activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Communication model. • Visual communication. • McLuhan.

Week 5 - Semiotics and Structuralism. - 04 Apr 2022

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structuralism. • Semiotics. • Signs and signification. • Barthes: "The Death of the Author". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Week 5 study guide. • View: Week 5 Moodle resources. • Attend: Week 5 tutorial. • Complete: Week 5 tutorial activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sausure and Peirce. • signifier. • signified. • icon. • index. • symbol. • metonymy. • reading the sign.

Vacation Week - 11 Apr 2022

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
NA	NA	NA

Week 6 - Poststructuralism. - 18 Apr 2022

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Universal' structures and intertextuality. • Poststructuralism and subjectivity. • Derrida and "There is nothing outside of the text". 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Week 6 study guide. • View: Week 6 Moodle resources. • Attend: Week 6 tutorial. • Complete: Week 6 tutorial activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intertextuality • Poststructuralism and subjectivity. • Derrida and deconstruction. <p>Folio of Design Tasks. Due: Week 6 Friday (22 Apr 2022) 11:45 pm AEST</p>

Week 7 - Mass Media and the Visual Arts. - 25 Apr 2022

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass media and the visual arts. • Benjamin and "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". • Baudrillard on culture as signs and texts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Week 7 study guide. • View: Week 7 Moodle resources. • Attend: Week 7 tutorial. • Complete: Week 7 tutorial activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass Media and the visual arts. • Jeff Koons. • Mike Parr. • Michael Zavros.

Week 8 - Image and Text, Advertising and Visual Arts. - 02 May 2022

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iconic signs and photography. • Nested signs. • Image and text in advertising. • Image and text in the visual arts. • Subverting meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Week 8 study guide. • View: Week 8 Moodle resources. • Attend: Week 8 tutorial. • Complete: Week 8 tutorial activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image and text in advertising and the visual arts. • Barbra Kruger. • Richard Bell. • Imants Tillers.

Week 9 - Social Semiotics. - 09 May 2022

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is social semiotics? • Structural semiotics vs social semiotics. • The three circles of social semiotics. • The dimensions of social semiotics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: Week 9 study guide. • View: Week 9 Moodle resources. • Attend: Week 9 tutorial. • Complete: Week 9 tutorial activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social semiotics and social agency. <p>Reflective Practice Assignment. Due: Week 9 Friday (13 May 2022) 11:45 pm AEST</p>

Week 10 - Representations of Identity and Diversity. - 16 May 2022

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Representations of identity and diversity.• Gender studies and queer theory.• Identity diversity and the visual arts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read: Week 10 study guide.• View: Week 10 Moodle resources.• Attend: Week 10 tutorial.• Complete: Week 10 tutorial activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Representations of identity and diversity.• Juan Davilla.• David Hockney.• Michael Zavros.• Doron Langberg.

Week 11 - Representations of Australian Indigenous Culture. - 23 May 2022

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is the audience?• What is cultural appropriation?• What are the theories of 'Otherness'?• What are representations of social identities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read: Week 11 study guide.• View: Week 11 Moodle resources.• Attend: Week 11 tutorial.• Complete: Week 11 tutorial activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theories of otherness exposing the power of representations.• Richard Bell.• Tony Albert.

Week 12 - Semiotics and Feminism. - 30 May 2022

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Media representations of 'womanhood'.• Feminism and the visual arts: a brief overview.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attend: Week 12 tutorial.• Read: Week 12 study guide.• View: Week 12 Moodle resources.• Complete: Week 12 tutorial activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Key feminist artists and artworks.• Barbara Kruger.• Judy Chicago.• Cindy Sherman.• Julie Brown-Rrap. <p>Written Assessment: Semiotic analysis. Due: Week 12 Friday (3 June 2022) 11:45 pm AEST</p>

Review/Exam Week - 06 Jun 2022

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
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Exam Week - 13 Jun 2022

Module/Topic	Chapter	Events and Submissions/Topic
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Assessment Tasks

1 Folio of Design Tasks.

Assessment Type

Portfolio

Task Description

Assessment 1 involves the submission of a folio of design tasks. The four (4) design tasks concern the application of 2D and 3D design concepts. The design tasks provide the opportunity for you to enhance your visual literacy and design efficacy (Learning Outcome 1).

For task descriptions for these four (4) design tasks, please refer to your assessment tile in Moodle.

Assessment Due Date

Week 6 Friday (22 Apr 2022) 11:45 pm AEST

Submit Assessment 1- Folio of Design Submit both the Assessment 1 rubric and the Folio of Design Tasks document via Moodle by the due date and time to complete your submission for this assessment.

Return Date to Students

Week 7 Friday (29 Apr 2022)

Assessment results and feedback will be available via Moodle.

Weighting

30%

Assessment Criteria

1. Use of design elements. (20%)
2. Use of design principles. (20%)
3. Integration of design elements and principles to achieve a balanced and unified design. (20%)
4. Presentation and attention to requirements of task. (20%)
5. Effectiveness of visual communication. (20%)

Referencing Style

- [American Psychological Association 7th Edition \(APA 7th edition\)](#)

Submission

Online

Submission Instructions

Please submit both your Assessment 1 Marking Sheet and your completed Folio of Design Tasks document to successfully complete your submission. Please add your name and student number to both documents.

Learning Outcomes Assessed

- Apply concepts of 2D or 3D design to enhance your visual literacy and design efficacy

Graduate Attributes

- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Information Literacy

2 Reflective Practice Assignment.

Assessment Type

Reflective Practice Assignment

Task Description

In this assessment, you will discuss in 1000 - 1250 words, how design theory, visual communication theory and semiotics can be used to support your own creative practice.

To do this, you will reflect on one of the design tasks that you completed this term and describe both your challenges and successes when integrating design elements and principles in the completion of that task. To do this you will:

A) describe how your design decisions could be improved and how these changes would improve how your design communicates to others.

B) support this reflective discussion with quality research. This research must investigate how design theory, visual communication and semiotics can be used in a cross-disciplinary approach to support your creative practice.

This assessment addresses learning outcome 2:

- Discuss how design theory, visual communication theory and semiotics can be used to support your creative practice.

Assignment format:

- Use 12-point Times New Roman font for the body of the essay.
- 1.5 spacing throughout
- You may use sub-headings if you wish to organise your assignment. These may be in a different colour or different size font.
- Include in-text references (citations) throughout the assignment.
- Include your name and student number in the header of the document
- Include page numbers in the footer of the document
- Include a Reference List at the end of the assignment in APA style, 7th edition.
- You should have a minimum of 10 references for this assignment.
- Do NOT cite from Wikipedia or other websites that do not have an acknowledged author.

Important information about Word Count:

The word count is considered from the first word of the introduction to the last word of the conclusion. It excludes the cover page, abstract, contents page, reference page and appendices. It includes in-text references and direct quotations.

Assessment Due Date

Week 9 Friday (13 May 2022) 11:45 pm AEST

Please submit your Reflective Practice Assignment as a word document. Both your Reflective Practice Assignment and the Assessment 2 rubric should be submitted via Moodle to successfully complete this submission

Return Date to Students

Week 10 Friday (20 May 2022)

Assessment results and feedback will be provided via Moodle.

Weighting

30%

Assessment Criteria

1. Evidence of research and integration of theoretical perspectives (20%)
2. Structure (10%)
3. Self-Reflection (20%)
4. Writing Standard (20%)
5. Attention to requirements of task (20%)
6. Referencing (10%)

Referencing Style

- [American Psychological Association 7th Edition \(APA 7th edition\)](#)

Submission

Online

Submission Instructions

Submit your assessment 2 document and the assessment 2 rubric via Moodle.

Learning Outcomes Assessed

- Discuss how design theory, visual communication theory and semiotics can be used to support your creative practice

Graduate Attributes

- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Critical Thinking
- Information Literacy
- Information Technology Competence

3 Written Assessment: Semiotic analysis.

Assessment Type

Written Assessment

Task Description

For this assessment you will identify and research the work of one (1) prominent, critically established, contemporary visual artist **or** one (1) successful mass media advertisement/work of commercial graphic design.

Using either the selected visual artwork or graphic advertisement, you will provide a written semiotic analysis (1000-1250 words) to clearly describe how you believe that text communicates its meanings to you. Your written semiotic analysis should incorporate appropriate semiotic and design terminology. (Be sure to include the terms: sign, signifier, signified, text, genre, code, intertextuality, connotation and denotation. Other terms like: metonymy, indexical sign, iconic sign, symbolic sign, trope, textuality and hybrid text may also be applicable.)

This assessment focuses on the following learning outcome:

· Explain the process of signification in the context of contemporary visual art practices or mass media imagery and advertising.

Assignment format:

- Use 12-point Times New Roman font for the body of the essay.
- 1.5 spacing throughout
- You may use sub-headings if you wish to organise your assignment. These may be in a different colour or different size font.
- Include in-text references (citations) throughout the assignment.

- Include your name and student number in the header of the document
- Include page numbers in the footer of the document
- Include a Reference List at the end of the assignment in APA style, 7th edition.
- You should have a minimum of 10 references for this assignment.
- Do NOT cite from Wikipedia or other websites that do not have an acknowledged author.

Important information about Word Count:

The word count is considered from the first word of the introduction to the last word of the conclusion. It excludes the cover page, abstract, contents page, reference page and appendices. It includes in-text references and direct quotations.

Assessment Due Date

Week 12 Friday (3 June 2022) 11:45 pm AEST

Your semiotic analysis and the assessment 3 rubric should be submitted via Moodle to successfully submit this assessment.

Return Date to Students

Review/Exam Week Friday (10 June 2022)

Assessment results and feedback will be available via Moodle.

Weighting

40%

Assessment Criteria

1. Evidence of research and integration of theoretical perspectives (25%)
2. Structure (15%)
3. Writing standard (20%)
4. Attention to requirements of task (25%)
5. Referencing (15%)

Referencing Style

- [American Psychological Association 7th Edition \(APA 7th edition\)](#)

Submission

Online

Submission Instructions

Please complete your assessment submission via Moodle.

Learning Outcomes Assessed

- Explain the process of signification in the context of contemporary visual art practices or mass media imagery and advertising.

Graduate Attributes

- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Information Literacy
- Information Technology Competence
- Cross Cultural Competence
- Ethical practice

Academic Integrity Statement

As a CQUniversity student you are expected to act honestly in all aspects of your academic work.

Any assessable work undertaken or submitted for review or assessment must be your own work. Assessable work is any type of work you do to meet the assessment requirements in the unit, including draft work submitted for review and feedback and final work to be assessed.

When you use the ideas, words or data of others in your assessment, you must thoroughly and clearly acknowledge the source of this information by using the correct referencing style for your unit. Using others' work without proper acknowledgement may be considered a form of intellectual dishonesty.

Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in your university study ensures the CQUniversity qualification you earn will be valued as a true indication of your individual academic achievement and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

As a student, you are responsible for reading and following CQUniversity's policies, including the [Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure](#). This policy sets out CQUniversity's expectations of you to act with integrity, examples of academic integrity breaches to avoid, the processes used to address alleged breaches of academic integrity, and potential penalties.

What is a breach of academic integrity?

A breach of academic integrity includes but is not limited to plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, cheating, contract cheating, and academic misconduct. The Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure defines what these terms mean and gives examples.

Why is academic integrity important?

A breach of academic integrity may result in one or more penalties, including suspension or even expulsion from the University. It can also have negative implications for student visas and future enrolment at CQUniversity or elsewhere. Students who engage in contract cheating also risk being blackmailed by contract cheating services.

Where can I get assistance?

For academic advice and guidance, the [Academic Learning Centre \(ALC\)](#) can support you in becoming confident in completing assessments with integrity and of high standard.

What can you do to act with integrity?



Be Honest

If your assessment task is done by someone else, it would be dishonest of you to claim it as your own



Seek Help

If you are not sure about how to cite or reference in essays, reports etc, then seek help from your lecturer, the library or the Academic Learning Centre (ALC)



Produce Original Work

Originality comes from your ability to read widely, think critically, and apply your gained knowledge to address a question or problem