



Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Allegories and Effects of Good and Bad Government* (detail), 1337–39, fresco, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena.

SYLLABUS

THE ART OF OBSERVATION

Instructor: Kate Mondloch

Language of Instruction: English

UO Credits: 4

Contact Hours*: 40

Student Engagement Hours: 120

SIENA, ITALY

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This interdisciplinary humanities course investigates how we see and experience the visual world, introducing a range of practical strategies for enhancing our observational skills in everyday life. We will approach the topic through hands-on experiences with a range of attentive, close observation techniques as we engage in experiential activities in and around Siena: amateur photography projects, guided journaling, museum visits, neighborhood walks, and more. Students will have the opportunity to create visual experience portfolios to share with the broader GEO community during an online showcase event, inspiring ongoing discussions about the applied value of detailed observation and body-based perception.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND STUDENT OUTCOMES.

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Employ visual analysis and research methods in support of cohesive and persuasive arguments
- Engage with self-inquiry, personal meaning, and creativity through enhanced visual and

- perceptual awareness
- Develop oral presentation skills through presenting ideas, readings, and visual analyses to peers during class discussions
- Develop interdisciplinary thinking and an appreciation for the value of different modes of visual experience in everyday life

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

This course will be conducted through readings, seminar-style discussions, excursions, journaling, photography, and student presentations.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

15%	Participation
30%	Journal writing assignments
30%	Visual observation activities and projects
25%	Collaborative presentations, individual presentations, and final portfolios

COURSE OUTLINE (subject to minor changes)

The course will be organized into three modules. Each module will have its own thematic experiential looking exercises and readings. Throughout the course, students will create both collaborative and individual visual experience portfolios based on the course assignments. The course culminates in a final project in which students share their research portfolios online with the broader GEO community.

Module 1 The Art of Observing: Identifying Visual Intelligence
--

Course Introduction

Visual exercise on color and journal response #1

- Read *Contemplative Photography* (approx. 2 pages)

Artful Walking or Artful Looking activities in small groups

- read assigned walk description in *Strolling Around Siena* before class (approx. 30 pages, including maps)

Read and Reflect: Herman, *Visual Intelligence*, ch.1-5. (approx. 80 pages, including illustrations)

- due before class

Art of Observation experiential activities and discussion

Module 2 The Art of Observing: On Looking

Read and Reflect: Horowitz, *On Looking*, selected chapters (approx. 100 pages)

- due before class

Art of Observation experiential activities and discussion

Human camera exercise and journal response #2

- Read *Contemplative Photography* (approx. 2 pages)
- due on Canvas before class

Artful Walking or Artful Looking activity in small groups

- read assigned walk description in *Strolling Around Siena* before class (approx. 30 pages)

Visual awareness exercise and journal response #3

- Read *Contemplative Photography* (approx. 2 pages)
- due on Canvas before class

Module 3 The Art of Observing: Seeing Siena

Artful Walking or Artful Looking activity in small groups

- read assigned walk description in *Strolling Around Siena* before class (approx. 30 pages)

Collaborative group presentations of Artful Walking projects during class

Individual presentations of Seeing Siena projects during class

Curate and Refine: Workshop Artful Walking and Seeing Siena portfolios

- final portfolio submissions

COURSE READINGS

- Herman, Amy E. (2016) *Visual Intelligence: Sharpen Your Perception, Change Your Life*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. (available as pdfs on Canvas)
- Horowitz, Alexandra. (2014) *On Looking: A Walker's Guide to the Art of Observation*. Scribner. (Any edition or format is fine.)
- Karr, Andy and Michael Wood. (2011) *The Practice of Contemplative Photography: Seeing the World With Fresh Eyes*. Shambhala Press. (available as pdfs on Canvas)
- Reid, Irene. (2018, 2022) *Strolling Around Siena*. Independent publication.

Accessible Education Statement

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center in 360 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Academic Misconduct Statement

The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism.

Prohibited Discrimination and Harassment Reporting

Any student who has experienced sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender-based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment may seek resources and help at [Help for Victims and Survivors](#). To get help by phone, a student can also call either the UO's 24-hour confidential hotline at 541-346-7233 [SAFE], or the non-confidential Title IX Coordinator at 541-346-2204. From the SAFE website, students may also connect to [Callisto](#), a confidential, third-party reporting site that is not a part of the university.

Students experiencing any other form of prohibited discrimination or harassment can find information at [How to Get Support](#). You can contact [Investigations and Civil Rights Compliance](#) through this link and at 541-346-3123, or the [Dean of Students Office](#) at 541-346-3216 for help. As UO policy has different reporting requirements based on the nature of the reported harassment or discrimination, additional information about reporting requirements for discrimination or harassment unrelated to sexual assault, relationship violence, sex or gender based bullying, stalking, and/or sexual harassment is available at [Discrimination & Harassment](#).

The instructor of this class, as a Student Directed Employee, will direct students who disclose sexual harassment or sexual violence to resources that can help and will only report the information shared to the university administration when the student requests that the information be reported (unless someone is in imminent risk of serious harm or a minor). The instructor of this class is required to report all other forms of prohibited discrimination or harassment to the university administration. Specific details about confidentiality of information and reporting obligations of employees can be found at [Employee Reporting Responsibilities](#).

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

UO employees, including faculty, staff, and GEs, are mandatory reporters of child abuse. This statement is to advise you that your disclosure of information about child abuse to a UO employee may trigger the UO employee's duty to report that information to the designated authorities. Please refer to the

following links for detailed information about mandatory reporting: [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect](#).