

# HUMN 1049 UNDERSTANDING VISUAL CULTURE

**Credit Points** 10

**Legacy Code** 101979

**Coordinator** Sebastian Byrne ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Sebastian Byrne/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Sebastian%20Byrne/))

**Description** Visual media are a major feature of everyday life in contemporary society. The circulation of images shapes our sense of who we are individually and collectively; how we move through the world; and the possibilities that exist for enacting social change. This subject introduces students to the histories and theories of visual culture, from painting and photography, through cinema and television, to digital media, including social media and user-generated content. Students will gain practical skills in analyzing visual and audiovisual texts as well as a comprehensive understanding of the role of visual culture in the production and maintenance of power relations. These skills are crucial to engaging critically with contemporary culture.

**School** Humanities & Comm Arts

**Discipline** Studies in Human Society, Not Elsewhere Classified.

**Student Contribution Band** HECS Band 4 10cp

Check your fees via the Fees ([https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current\\_students/fees/](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/fees/)) page.

**Level** Undergraduate Level 1 subject

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this subject, students should be able to:

1. Recognise a range of visual, audio-visual and multi-media forms and genres.
2. Explain relevant key concepts and terminologies
3. Analyse a range of visual texts important to the study of visual culture, historical and contemporary art, and digital media forms
4. Demonstrate critical reading skills in the field of visual culture

## Subject Content

This subject is modularised and teaching and content may vary slightly from semester to semester based upon staff teaching and research expertise. The subject will focus on different visual modes, such as painting, photography, screen cultures and digital cultures. The subject will examine concepts and methodologies of visual culture study and analysis, which may include

- representation
- perspective
- composition
- framing
- modes of spectatorship
- viewing practices
- semiotics
- meaning
- ideology
- genre

## Assessment

The following table summarises the standard assessment tasks for this subject. Please note this is a guide only. Assessment tasks are regularly updated, where there is a difference your Learning Guide takes precedence.

Type	Length	Percent	Threshold	Individual/ Group Task	Mandatory
Quiz	Weekly quiz (run over 10 weeks total): best 8 of 10 will be counted for assessment	20	N	Individual	Y
Essay	1,000 words	40	N	Individual	Y
Final Exam	1,200 words	40	N	Individual	Y

Prescribed Texts

- A Subject Reader will be available from the Connect Bookshop

Teaching Periods

## Autumn (2025)

### Bankstown City

**On-site**

**Subject Contact** Sebastian Byrne ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Sebastian Byrne/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Sebastian%20Byrne/))

View timetable ([https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject\\_code=HUMN1049\\_25-AUT\\_BK\\_1#subjects](https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=HUMN1049_25-AUT_BK_1#subjects))

### Penrith (Kingswood)

**On-site**

**Subject Contact** Sebastian Byrne ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Sebastian Byrne/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Sebastian%20Byrne/))

View timetable ([https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject\\_code=HUMN1049\\_25-AUT\\_KW\\_1#subjects](https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=HUMN1049_25-AUT_KW_1#subjects))

### Parramatta - Victoria Rd

**On-site**

**Subject Contact** Sebastian Byrne ([https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Sebastian Byrne/](https://directory.westernsydney.edu.au/search/name/Sebastian%20Byrne/))

View timetable ([https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject\\_code=HUMN1049\\_25-AUT\\_PS\\_1#subjects](https://classregistration.westernsydney.edu.au/odd/timetable/?subject_code=HUMN1049_25-AUT_PS_1#subjects))