



Indraprastha College for Women

University of Delhi

Work Plan for ODD SEMESTER – 2026

Course Name:	BA(H)Sociology/BAP_ DSE
Paper Title:	Visual Culture
Unique Paper Code:	2303100007
Semester:	V
Faculty(s):	Ms. Priyanka Danu
Year:	2026

Work Plan			
Unit No.	Learning Objective	Lecture No.	Topics to be Covered
Unit I	To problematise the taken-for-granted idea that seeing is a natural, biological act, and to introduce students to the visual construction of the social world, situating this within the context of modernity.	1	Course introduction; defining "visual culture" as a field distinct from art history
		2	Why 'seeing' needs to be problematised perception as socially trained, not purely optical
		3	visual culture as everyday practice
		4	spectatorship as an object of study; self-reflexivity in the field
		5	Berger, Ways of Seeing - image, power, and the historical tradition of oil painting
		6	Berger, Ways of Seeing (contd.)
		7	Modernity and Visuality
		8	Debord, The Society of the Spectacle, "Separation Perfected" - spectacle as mediated social relation
		9	alienation, passive consumption, and critiques of spectacle theory
		10	Narrativizing Visual Culture - Eurocentrism in visual theory; narrative and visuality
		11	polycentric multiculturalism; visual culture beyond the Western canon
		12	"Global Events and Local Narratives: 9/11 and the Chitrakaars" vernacular translation of global events through folk-art tradition

Unit II	To examine different visual environments and representations, with illustrations that elucidate how visuals constitute the relationship between self and the everyday covering the state's gaze, contestation, identity, and daily life.	13	Introduction to state power and visibility as mechanisms of control
		14	Foucault, "Panopticism"
		15	Foucault (contd.)
		16	Application/discussion: CCTV, digital surveillance, smart cities
		17	Biometric technology as an extension of the state's visual gaze
		18	Gilbert (contd.)
		20	Power, Knowledge and Gaze of the State
		21	Introduction to Visual Contestations - visual space as contested terrain
		22	Morris, "Folk Humour and Carnival Laughter" (Bakhtin) - carnivalesque, grotesque realism
		23	Morris (contd.)
		24	Carnavalesque logic in contemporary protest, satire, and street theatre
		25	Enguix, "Pride Parades, Public Space and Sexual Dissidence" visibility as political strategy
		26	Enguix (contd.) tensions between visibility, commercialisation, and dissidence
		28	Introduction to Visual Practices and Identity Formation
		29	Bourdieu, Distinction, "Introduction" taste as socially conditioned, not innate
		30	Bourdieu (contd.) cultural capital, legitimate vs. popular taste, symbolic violence
		31	Srivastava, "Urban Spaces, Disney-Divinity and Moral Middle Classes in Delhi" Disneyfication of urban space
		32	Srivastava (contd.) religiosity, consumerism, and visual respectability in Indian cities
		33	MacDougall, "Photo Hierarchicus" photography and the reproduction of social hierarchy in India
		34	MacDougall (contd.) studio photography, family albums, and self-presentation
		35	Comparative discussion class, caste, and the visual construction of the self
		37	Introduction to Visual Cultures of Everyday Life the everyday as a site of analysis
		38	De Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life, "General Introduction" strategies vs. tactics
		39	De Certeau (contd.)

			walking, consuming, looking as tactical/everyday practices
		40	Pinney, "What Do Pictures Want Now?" popular/religious image circulation among rural consumers
		41	Pinney (contd.) agency of images; rural visual economies; calendar art
		43	Goldsmith, "The Readymades of Marcel Duchamp" the readymade as radical intervention in art
		44	Goldsmith (contd.) ambiguity, aesthetic revolution, everyday objects as art
		45	Unit II & full-course synthesis; recap and exam preparation discussion

Unit	Contents/Syllabus
I	(12 Hours) This unit problematises the idea that ‘seeing’ is a natural process, and introduces students to the visual construction of the social world. It also examines the process of seeing in the context of modernity. a. The Process of ‘Seeing’ b. Modernity and Visuality
II	(33 Hours) This unit examines different visual environments, with illustrations to elucidate the manner in which visuals allow the constitution of the relationship between self and the everyday. a. Power, Knowledge and Gaze of the State b. Visual Contestations c. Visual Practices and Identity formation d. Visual Cultures of Everyday Life
S. No.	Name of Authors/Books/Publishers
1.	Mitchell, W.J.T. (2002) ‘Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture’, Journal of Visual Culture, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 165-180.
2.	Berger, John (1972) Ways of Seeing. London: Penguin, pp. 7-33.
3.	Debord, Guy (1994) ‘Separation Perfected’, in The Society of the Spectacle. New York: Zone Books, Chapter 1, pp. 11-24.
4.	Shohat, Ella & Robert Stam (2002) ‘Narrativizing Visual Culture’, in N. Mirzoeff (ed.) The Visual Culture Reader, 2nd ed. London: Routledge, pp. 37-57.
5.	Chatterji, Roma (2012) ‘Global Events and Local Narratives: 9/11 and the Chitrakaars’, in Speaking with Pictures: Folk Art and Narrative Tradition in India, pp. 62-103.
6.	Foucault, Michel (1977) ‘Panopticism’, in Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. New York: Pantheon; reprinted in Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 1-12.

7.	Gilbert, Emily (2010) 'Eye to Eye: Biometrics, the Observer, the Observed and the Body Politic', in F. MacDonald, R. Hughes & K. Dodds (eds) <i>Observant States: Geopolitics and Visual Culture</i> . London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 225-246.
8.	Morris, Pam (1994) 'Folk Humour and Carnival Laughter', in <i>The Bakhtin Reader</i> . London: Arnold, pp. 194-206.
9.	Enguix, Begonya (2009) 'Identities, Sexualities and Commemorations: Pride Parades, Public Space and Sexual Dissidence', <i>Anthropological Notebooks</i> , Vol. XV, No. 2, pp. 15-35.
10.	Bourdieu, P. (1984) 'Introduction', in <i>Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste</i> . London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 1-7.
11.	Srivastava, Sanjay (2009) 'Urban Spaces, Disney-Divinity and Moral Middle Classes in Delhi', <i>Economic and Political Weekly</i> , Vol. XLIV, Nos. 26 & 27, pp. 338-345.
12.	MacDougall, David (1992) 'Photo Hierarchicus: Signs and Mirrors in Indian Photography', <i>Visual Anthropology</i> , 5(2), pp. 3-29.
13.	Certeau, Michel de (1984) 'General Introduction', in <i>The Practice of Everyday Life</i> (trans. Steven Rendall). Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. xi-xxiv.
14.	Pinney, Christopher (2004) 'What do Pictures Want Now: Rural Consumers of Images, 1980-2000', in <i>Photos of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India</i> . London: Reaktion, pp. 181-200.
15.	Goldsmith, Steven (1983) 'The Readymades of Marcel Duchamp: The Ambiguities of an Aesthetic Revolution', <i>Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism</i> , Vol. 42, Issue 2, pp. 197-208.

Paper Components			
Credits	Lecture (L)	Tutorial (T)	Practical (P)
	3	1	Nil
Assessment Scheme			
S.No.	Component	Marking Scheme	Total Marks
1	Internal Assessment - Assignment/Quiz/Project/Presentation - Class Test - Attendance		30
		12	
		12	
		6	
2.	Continuous Assessment (Tutorial) - Activity 1 - Activity 2 - Attendance		40
		15	
		20	
		5	
3.	Practical		

	• Continuous Assessment		NA
	• End Term Written/Practical Exam		
	• Viva		
4.	End Semester Examination		90