SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION
CMNS 387-4

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(SPECIAL TOPICS)
Visualization

Prerequisites: 75 credit hours including 2 CMNS and/or IAT upper division courses. Experience with computer-based graphic production or artistic background is recommended. Or instructor's permission.

Overview:
Rapid changes in technologies for creating, recording and disseminating images, text and sound have led to the widespread adoption of visual representation in most aspects of contemporary life. Visualization is not merely a set of techniques for organizing and presenting information. The term also refers to processes for gaining insights into phenomena that we cannot necessarily 'see' or communicate about using other means. Visual culture and visualization processes thus conceived are powerful *ways of knowing*. Visualization is sometimes presented as a strategy for synthesizing complex ideas and containing the flow of massive amounts of information but visual representations are seldom neutral presentations of "facts". The ability to critically analyze and design effective visual communication is of fundamental importance for understanding and participating in contemporary society.

This course investigates theories and techniques of visualization design. Themes covered in the course include: theories of visualization in relation to communication studies; methodologies for studying the interplay of technology, culture and media in visual studies and visual communication design; analysis of imaging conventions and innovations in the context of contemporary global communication; visual communication in diverse cultural contexts; and visualization practices in the creation, mediation and dissemination of information.

This laboratory-based course requires the completion of practical assignments that apply the ideas presented in seminars, workshops and readings. The laboratory component of this course will require work to be done during workshops as well as outside of class hours in order to complete assignments.

The course is designed to help students develop skills useful for the analysis and production of effective visualization materials drawing varied artistic and scientific approaches to visual design. All students are expected to present their work to the class and to participate actively in critiques and discussions of on-going projects. Lab assignments and class activities provide opportunities to explore the interplay of graphic design, visual literacy and critical media analysis in the production and evaluation of effective visual communication.

Required Reading:
To be announced.

Tentative Grading Scheme: (to be confirmed during the first class)

Visualization Analysis and Presentation	15%
Static Visualization Design	20%
Dynamic Visualization Design	20%
Final Project	30%
Participation in Seminars and Workshops and Critique Sessions	15%

The School expects that the grades awarded in this course will bear some reasonable relation to established university-wide practices with respect to both levels and distribution of grades. In addition, the School will follow Policy T10.02 with respect to "Intellectual Honesty" and "Academic Discipline" (see the current Calendar, General Regulations section).