

## *Practices of looking: Visual culture and contemporary life.*

ANT3251 – 31360 – Spring 2011

**Instructor:** Craig Campbell (Cultural Forms)  
**Website:** <http://metafactory.ca/practicesoflooking>  
**Class meets:** Tuesday and Thursday 3:30 – 5pm  
**Class location:** SAC 5.118  
**Office location:** SAC 4.122  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 12:30-1:30pm  
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In this course we will be developing methodological and analytical tools for the examination of what has been called visual culture. Visual Culture bridges communication studies, media studies, anthropology, and cultural studies. According to one scholar visual culture experienced through mass media “is now the dominant form of culture which socializes us and provides materials for identity in terms of both social reproduction and change” (Kellner 1995). We will examine this claim and develop our own the framework for studying visual cultures. The primary text for this course is Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright’s book: *Practices of Looking*. They introduce their book by stating that the plethora of visual images today “are central to how we represent, make meaning, and communicate in the world around us” (Sturken and Cartwright 2001: 1). The first section of the course will follow *Practices of Looking* as a guide to critical approaches to the study of visual culture. The second section of the course will look at Susan Sontag’s book *Regarding the Pain of Others* alongside Stephen Eisenman’s *Abu Ghraib effect*. This section will focus on violence and its cultural representation, with special attention paid to cross-cultural images, visual motifs, and their interpretation. Shorter articles from anthropologists and ethnographers will be used throughout the course as critical interjections from the tradition of visual anthropology.

Students in this class will develop sophisticated skills associated with the use of different forms of digital and analogue media, including television, radio, and the internet. Regular access to a computer with internet connection will be essential (broadband connections are highly recommended). If you do not have access to the internet at home, you will find many labs and computers at the University.

### *Required readings*

*Available for purchase at the University Co-op*

Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. 1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1981.  
Sontag, Susan. 2004. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. 1st ed. New York: Picador.  
Sturken, Marita, and Lisa Cartwright. 2009. *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. 2nd ed. Oxford University Press.

*Purchase on your own*

Eisenman, Stephen. 2007. *The Abu Ghraib effect*. Reaktion Books.

*Additional articles will be assigned and you will be given reasonable advance notice.*

Note: This is an abridged syllabus. The full and up-to-date syllabus is available on-line.