

Week 03

Monday, September 17



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**VISUALIZING  
SAN FRANCISCO:  
EXPLORING SIGNAGE  
& PUBLIC SPACES** ART 195



FYS Seminar / Art 195  
Monday, September 17

Week 03

[http://stacyasher.com/Art195\\_FYS\\_USF.html](http://stacyasher.com/Art195_FYS_USF.html)



Reading Signs

review student blogs

highlights:

Kendell

<http://dsfthroughsignage.blogspot.com/>

Zack

<http://zmcsignage.blogspot.com/>

John

<http://johnwsfsignage.tumblr.com/>

San Francisco is a city of contrast with a diverse population.

Visual communications consist of text (letter forms or typography) and image and are present everywhere throughout San Francisco.

Signage is located in public space in the form of directional signage, retail signs, banners, posters, billboards and advertisements and is found on the streets or inside and outside of buildings.

The object of signage is to establish a sense of place, attract audiences and draw attention to the content of the intended visual communications.

Signage can say something or tell stories about the spaces and places in San Francisco.

This course will survey an array of graphic design styles, typographic forms and media dating from the early days of San Francisco to the present in the form of

signage.











Open

EVERYDAY

7AM to 9:45PM





Translations use details when you  
tell



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to this wall.

AMERICAN  
ROCKERS





Signage connects audiences to their communities and creates identity in the urban landscape.

This class will compare and contrast different graphic design styles and visual languages of historical eras from MULTIPLE DISTRICTS OF SAN FRANCISCO.

Students, as new citizens of San Francisco, will tour various neighborhoods and communities throughout the city to:

observe

document

[with photography + field notes]

analyze and collect examples of signage

**reflect** on the intended audience and then engage in writing about their discoveries in the form of a...

**thought paper**

what is a thought paper?

Students will learn to read the city around them and better navigate their way through San Francisco's public spaces.

**KEEP OUT**

What is public?

What is private?

What is a place?

What is a space?

What signs are present?

What kinds of meanings are made?

This course will be an introduction to:

**Semiotics**, also called semiotic studies or (in the Saussurean tradition) semiology, is the study of signs and sign processes (semiosis), indication, designation, likeness, analogy, metaphor, symbolism, signification, and communication.

Semiotics is closely related to the field of linguistics, which, for its part, studies the structure and meaning of language more specifically. Semiotics is often divided into three branches:

## Semantics

Relation between signs and the things to which they refer; their denotata, or meaning

## Syntactics

Relations among signs in formal structures

## Pragmatics

Relation between signs and the effects they have on the people who use them



Semiotics is frequently seen as having important anthropological dimensions; for example, Umberto Eco proposes that every cultural phenomenon can be studied as communication.

[1] However, some semioticians focus on the logical dimensions of the science. They examine areas belonging also to the natural sciences – such as how organisms make predictions about, and adapt to, their semiotic niche in the world (see semiosis).

In general, semiotic theories take signs or sign systems as their object of study: the communication of information in living organisms is covered in biosemiotics or zoosemiosis.

Syntactics is the branch of semiotics that deals with the formal properties of signs and symbols.

[2] More precisely, syntactics deals with the “rules that govern how words are combined to form phrases and sentences.”

[3] Semantics deals with the relation of signs to their designata and the objects which they may or do denote; and, pragmatics deals with the biotic aspects of semiosis, that is, with all the psychological, biological, and sociological phenomena which occur in the functioning of signs.

Investigators  
Journalists  
Anthropologists  
Historians  
Detectives  
Reporters

Relations among signs in formal structures

## **Field Trips**

Students will visit and carefully study the following districts in San Francisco to observe, document and compare and contrast what types of signage have and are present and who the intended audience is.

## **Key moments, Themes, Places**

How signage changed, enlivened or promoted action

1890's - The Victorian Architectural Style

1960's - Haight-Ashbury, Civil Rights, Anti-War and the Summer of Love

1970's - San Francisco Sign Ordinance, Gay Rights, Bill-board Liberation Front

1980's - Vinyl Technologies and the Beginning of the Digital Era, Regan Era, social / political influences?

1990's - Dot-Com Boom, Gentrification, Interactive Signage

2000's - Nostalgic view of the 1960's. What was it really like? How can we learn from this knowledge of the past?













~ Psychedelic & Acid ~  
~ Music, Art, Videos ~

# PSYCHEDELIC JUKEBOX



PHAP 4-5



ABOUT 1910

ARKANSAS + 18TH ST.

CALEGARI COLLECTION

**DOLE**

**PHONE**

415 666 0 666.



Listen





## Suggested Thought Paper Format:

A. Introductory paragraph

I. Write a lead sentence that gains the reader's attention.

**“What is it that makes a sign appealing to the reader?** Do the color, the size, and the style of writing combine to create something that catches a person's eye? The more you look into what is behind the sign in front of you, the more that you realize how subjective every sign is.”  
–Zach Cecil

2. Introduce your thesis or most important argument.

3. Introduce sub-arguments or sub-themes that you are going to use to support your thesis.

B. Body of the paper

1. Discuss the sub-themes that you identified in the introductory paragraph, in separate paragraphs.

2. Write down page numbers of the book (document reader) that you're going to use to support these sub-themes.

## C. Conclusion

1. Restate your thesis and sub-themes.

2. Write any closing comments or implications of your argument.

PROOF READ

## **Areas of study for this course**

Journalism

Communication Studies

Urban Planning

Graphic Design

Sociology

Psychology

Semiotics

Architecture

Marketing / Promotions

Public Relations

Anthropology

Archeology

## **Ethnography**

Ethnography (from Greek ethnos = folk/people and grapho = to write) is a qualitative method aimed to learn and understand cultural phenomena which reflect the knowledge and system of meanings guiding the life of a cultural group.[1]

[2] It was pioneered in the field of socio-cultural anthropology but has also become a popular method in various other fields of social sciences—particularly in sociology,

[3] communication studies, history. —that studies people, ethnic groups and other ethnic formations, their ethno-

genesis, composition, resettlement, social welfare characteristics, as well as their material and spiritual culture.

[4] It is often employed for gathering empirical data on human societies and cultures. Data collection is often done through participant observation, interviews, questionnaires, etc. Ethnography aims to describe the nature of those who are studied (i.e. to describe a people, an ethnos) through writing.

[5] In the biological sciences, this type of study might be called a “field study” or a “case report”, both of which are used as common synonyms for “ethnography”. [6]

# Visual Anthropology

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual\\_anthropology](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visual_anthropology)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Visual anthropology is a subfield of cultural anthropology that is concerned, in part, with the study and production of ethnographic photography, film and, since the mid-1990s, new media.

While the term is sometimes used interchangeably with ethnographic film, visual anthropology also encompasses the anthropological study of visual representation, including areas such as performance, museums, art, and the production and reception of mass media.

09/17

Discuss Thought Papers

Discuss Readings:  
“The World as Text”

Dialogue.... What does it mean to READ the landscape or the city?

What is a traditional text?

What is a non-traditional text?



## GOAL:

Understanding the world around us and reducing the distance between the classroom and the “real world”

## INTERPRETATION

Learn how writing and discussion is crucial to learning how to think.

Understand that students who read their worlds more actively are not only better students, but better citizens of the world.

Slow down and look at the signage in ways you may not have previously seen them.

Slow the interpretive process down to make more conscious your meaning making, a process you undertake all the time—whether you intend to or not.

Visual elements: see them / read them? what is the difference?

De-code? en-code?

SEMIOTICS: everything is a sign

A sign is an object or idea or combination of the two that refers to something besides itself, and it depends on others to recognize that it's a sign.

What is a semiotic situation?

Dialogue about today's field trip Haight-Ashbury

What do you know about the history of Haight-Ashbury?

What assumptions do you make?

What do you think you will see?

What do you want to see?

What "history" is still present? What are the signifiers of this?

Consider the act of interpretation....

Why is it important to write about your discoveries?

“How can I tell what I think,  
until I see what I have said”

EM Forster

*Writing is fundamentally connected to reading  
and to thinking*

**Week 03** - Monday, September 18

Haight-Ashbury and the Upper Haight, The Corner of Haight Street and Ashbury Street: the Famous Street Sign, Sixties Art—Op Art, Pop Art, Psychedelic Graphics and Peace Signs.

Discussion of previous week's field trip, readings, and Thought Paper Assignment [30 min]

Field Trip:

Haight-Ashbury and the Upper Haight, The corner of Haight Street and Ashbury Street. Students will document signage with photography and take field notes, observing tourists and what they document with their cameras.

Reading:

Silverman, Jonathan, Dean Rader, The World as Text: Writing, Reading, and Thinking about Culture and Its Contexts, Introduction, pages 1-27

\*Narrative Archaeology: Reading the Landscape

<http://web.mit.edu/comm-forum/mit4/papers/hight.pdf>



Thought Paper Assignment:

Why is the street sign at the corner of Haight & Ashbury a destination for tourists?

Define: counterculture

Describe a predominant visual language of this area?

How does the signage contribute to your understanding of what happened at this site?

During the mid-sixties a phenomenon occurred in San Francisco that was to have a profound effect of America and the rest of the world. It was the emergence of a genuine counterculture; a vast segment of American youth, who openly declared ambitions counter to the prevailing American dream, that is, they stood in opposition to its ideals and the then current war in Vietnam.

This counterculture had its focus and apotheosis in an area of San Francisco known as the Haight-Ashbury, the intersection of two streets whose very names soon became synonymous with the movement, and the people themselves.









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# PSYCHEDELIC JUKEBOX









12:30-2:15

Visit Haight-Ashbury district

2:15-2:30

Return to Lone Mountain / classroom

2:30-3:25 Discuss what was discovered and talk about next week's reading, thought paper and field trip.