

# VISUALIZING SAN FRANCISCO: EXPLORING SIGNAGE & PUBLIC SPACES

ART 295



# **VISUALIZING SAN FRANCISCO: EXPLORING SIGNAGE & PUBLIC SPACES**

**Students in Transition**

Mondays 12:45 pm – 3:30 pm

21850

Kalmanovitz Hall 263

ART 295 – 02

University of San Francisco / Art + Architecture

Spring 2012

Stacy Asher / Instructor





Reading Signs

SIT Seminar / Art 295  
University of San Francisco  
Art + Architecture / Spring 2012

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[http://stacyasher.com/Art295\\_SIT\\_USF.html](http://stacyasher.com/Art295_SIT_USF.html)





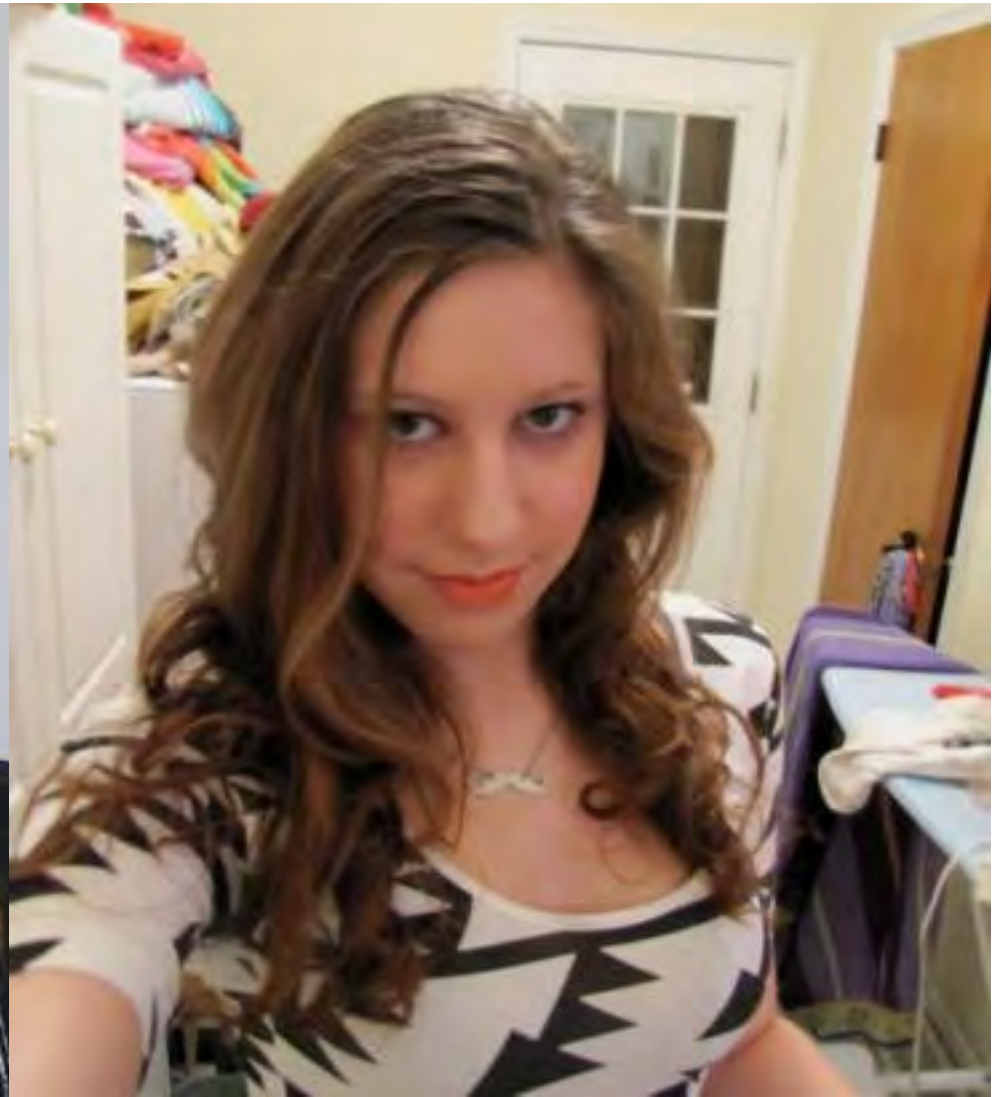
Andrew M. Cole



Caren J. Balance



Madeline J. Feder



Maria M. Morelli



Dior Y. Geyton

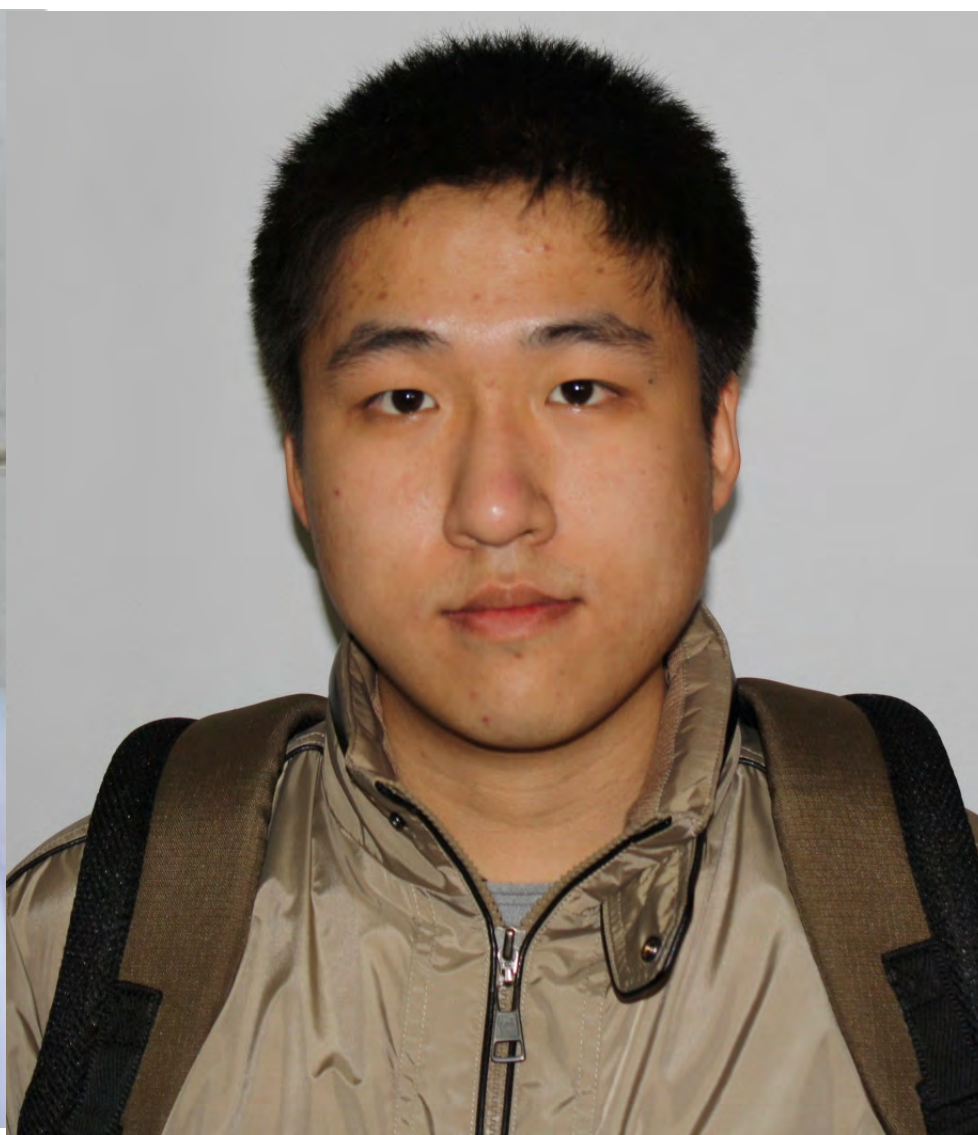


Ma'Keda Habtemariam





Rachel K. Kaya



Yihan Jiang

Welcome!~



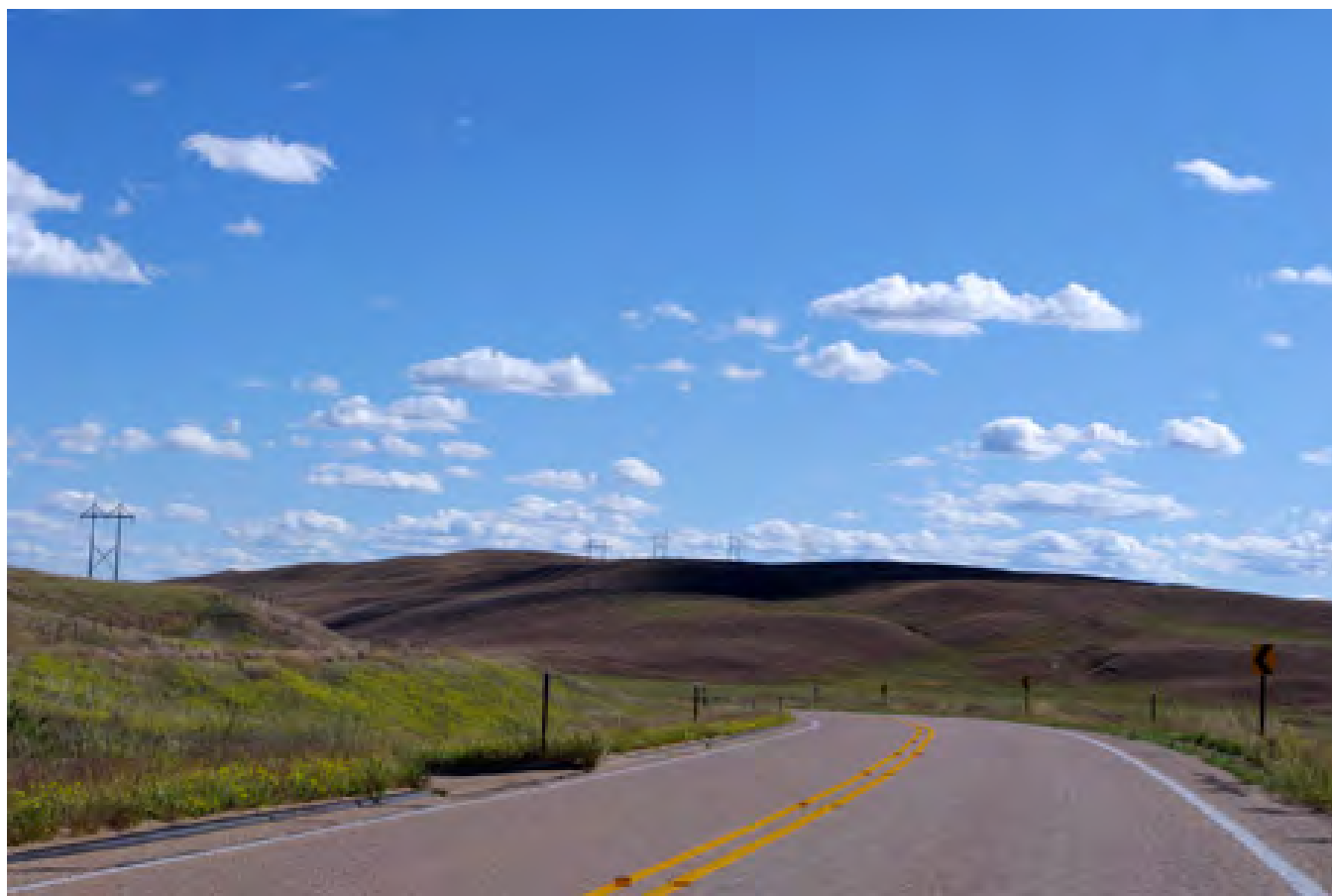


















San Francisco is a city of contrast with a diverse population.

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.





















Translations use details when you tell







When Flushing,  
make sure  
water shuts off









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.

What is Graphic Design?

What is Typography?

What is the role of Typography?

What is the role of Graphic Design?



What is mission of USF?

What are the core values of USF?

<http://www.usfca.edu/about/mission/>

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?

what is graphic design?

what is signage and what kinds of signage exist?



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.



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Investigators  
Journalists  
Anthropologists  
Historians  
Detectives  
Reporters

Relations among signs in formal structures



## **Keywords / Themes**

Design, Graphic Design, Typography, Visual Communications, Identity, Urban Form, Advertising, Communications, Communities, Urban Planning, San Francisco, Posters, Billboards, Banners, Way finding Systems, Audience and Identity, Diversity, Neighborhoods, Public Space, Private Space, Landscape

## **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.



The Golden Gate Park, Ocean Beach, Mission, Castro, Baker Beach, Chinatown, Fisherman's Wharf, Sunset, Haight-Ashbury, Pacific Heights, Potrero Hill, China Basin, Bayview / Hunters Point, SOMA, Tenderloin, Financial District, Golden Gate National Parks.

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

How signage changed, enlivened or promoted action

1900's - The Great Fire and Earthquake, The Victorian Era, WWI

1920's - Prohibition and Bootlegging, Panama Pacific Exposition

1930's - The Great Depression, the Golden Gate International Exposition, 49-Mile Scenic Drive, Work Projects Administration; WPA

1940's - World War II, Historic Walking Tour of Fisherman's Wharf

1950's - Freeway Development and Suburbia, Bay Bridge Development

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

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

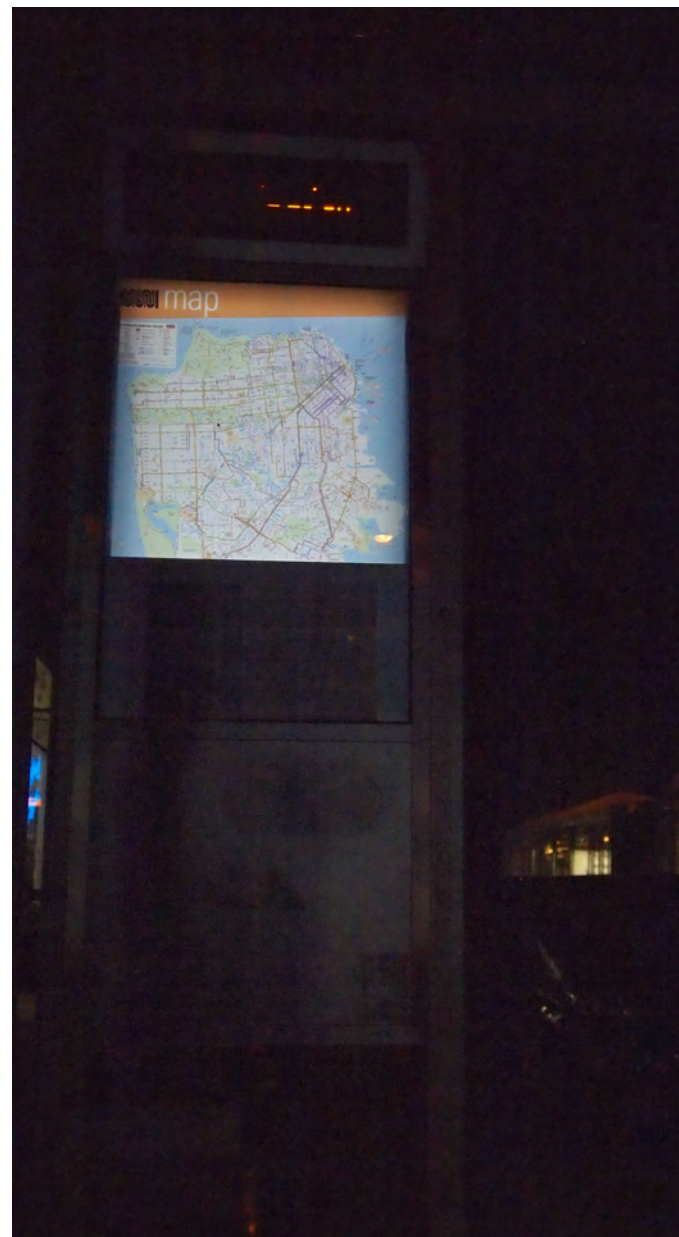
1980's - Vinyl Technologies and the Beginning of the  
Digital Era

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

2000's - New Legislation, Prop G, 2008 Election, New  
Technologies: the LED and Kinetic Signage, Signage in  
the Future













DOLL HOUSE  
FURNITURE  
ANTIQUE-KIMONOS

WATCH JEWELRY REPAIR CENTER

鐘錶 珠寶 修理中心

精工修理各國名錶 抹錶油 換錶帶 換電池

EMPERESS  
OF  
CHINA







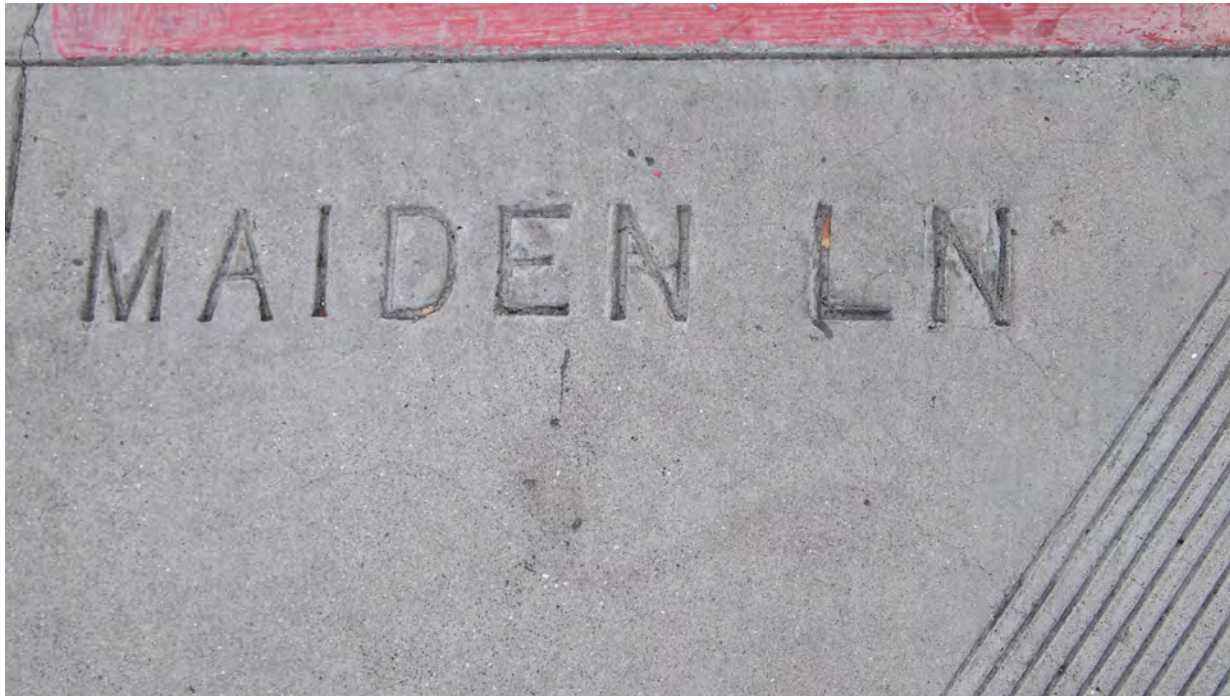














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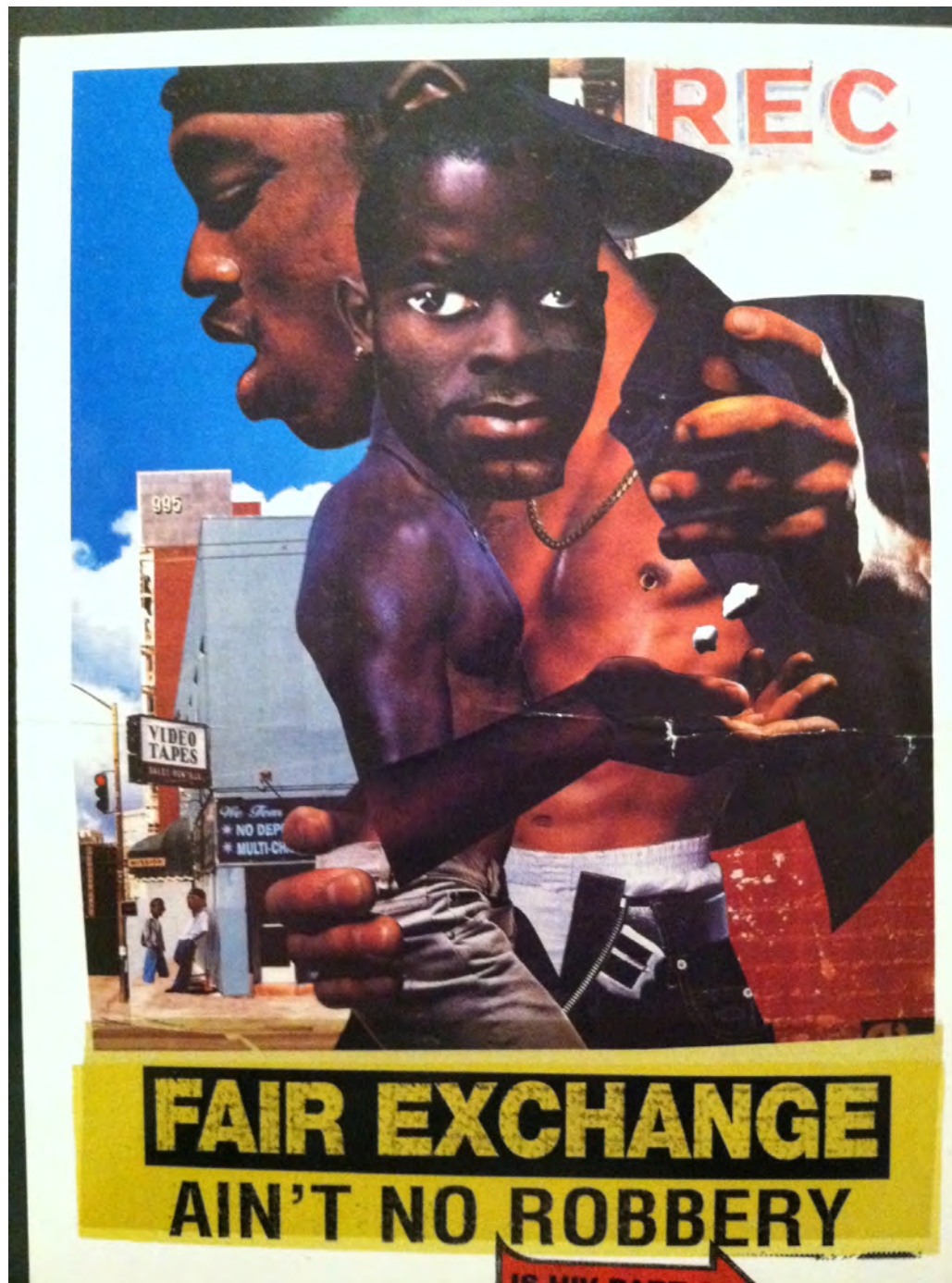
Why look at history?  
Why study the past?











Black Brothers of Esteem  
San Francisco Aids Foundation  
design research / Public Service Campaign















<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ghfklQz3Qgk&feature=related>



This gorgeous film pictures San Francisco's main thoroughfare as seen from the front window of a moving Market Street cable car, before the downtown area was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake and fire. This unusual record has been called the first "structural film" because it follows exactly the externally imposed structure of the car ride.

PHAP 4-5



ABOUT 1910

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CALEGARI COLLECTION



DEDICATED  
TO THE CITY OF  
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BY THE  
BEETHOVEN MAENNERCHOR  
OF NEW YORK  
AUGUST 6<sup>th</sup> 1915  
UNDER THE AUSPICES  
OF THE  
GERMAN-AMERICAN AUXILIARY  
TO THE PANAMA PACIFIC  
INTERNATIONAL EXPOSITION














THE MAGNOLIAS  
A GIFT FROM THE DE LAVEAGA FAMILY  
IN HONOR OF

JOSE VICENTE DE LAVEAGA  
- WHOSE GENEROSITY CREATED DE LAVEAGA DELL -  
AND IN LOVING MEMORY OF THE MANY LIVES AND  
HEARTS THAT HAVE BEEN TOUCHED BY AIDS

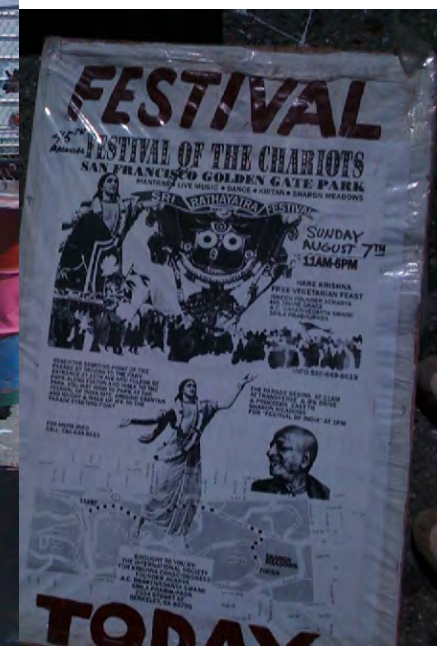




















~ Psychedelic & Acid ~  
~ Music, Art, Videos ~

# Psychedelic Jukebox





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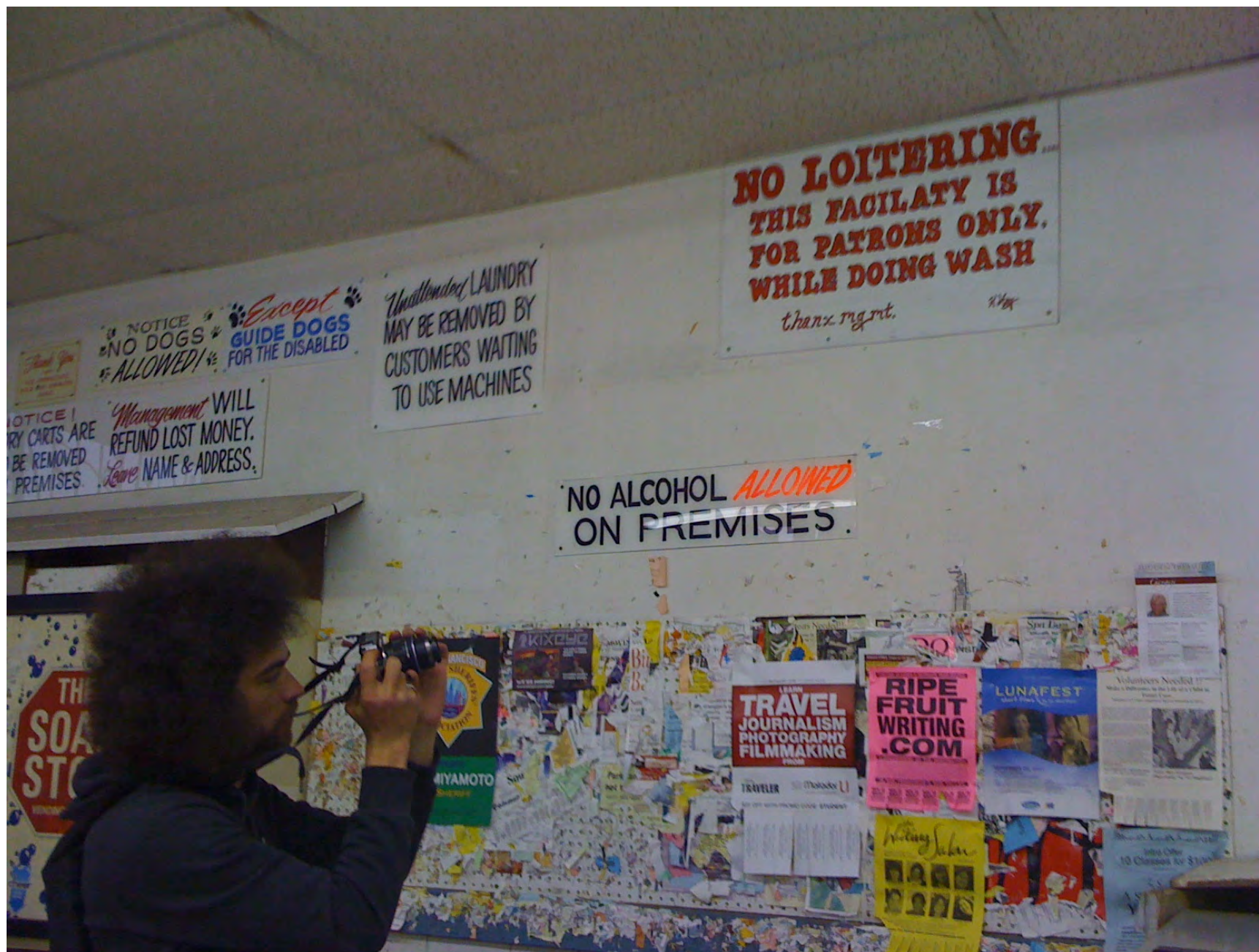






Listen







Even before the emergence of anthropology as an academic discipline in the 1880s, ethnologists were using photography as a tool of research.

[1] Anthropologists and non-anthropologists conducted much of this work in the spirit of salvage ethnography or attempts to record for posterity the ways-of-life of societies assumed doomed to extinction (see, for instance, the Native American photography of Edward Curtis)

The act of photographing in public is an art itself. Photography will be an integral part of this course.





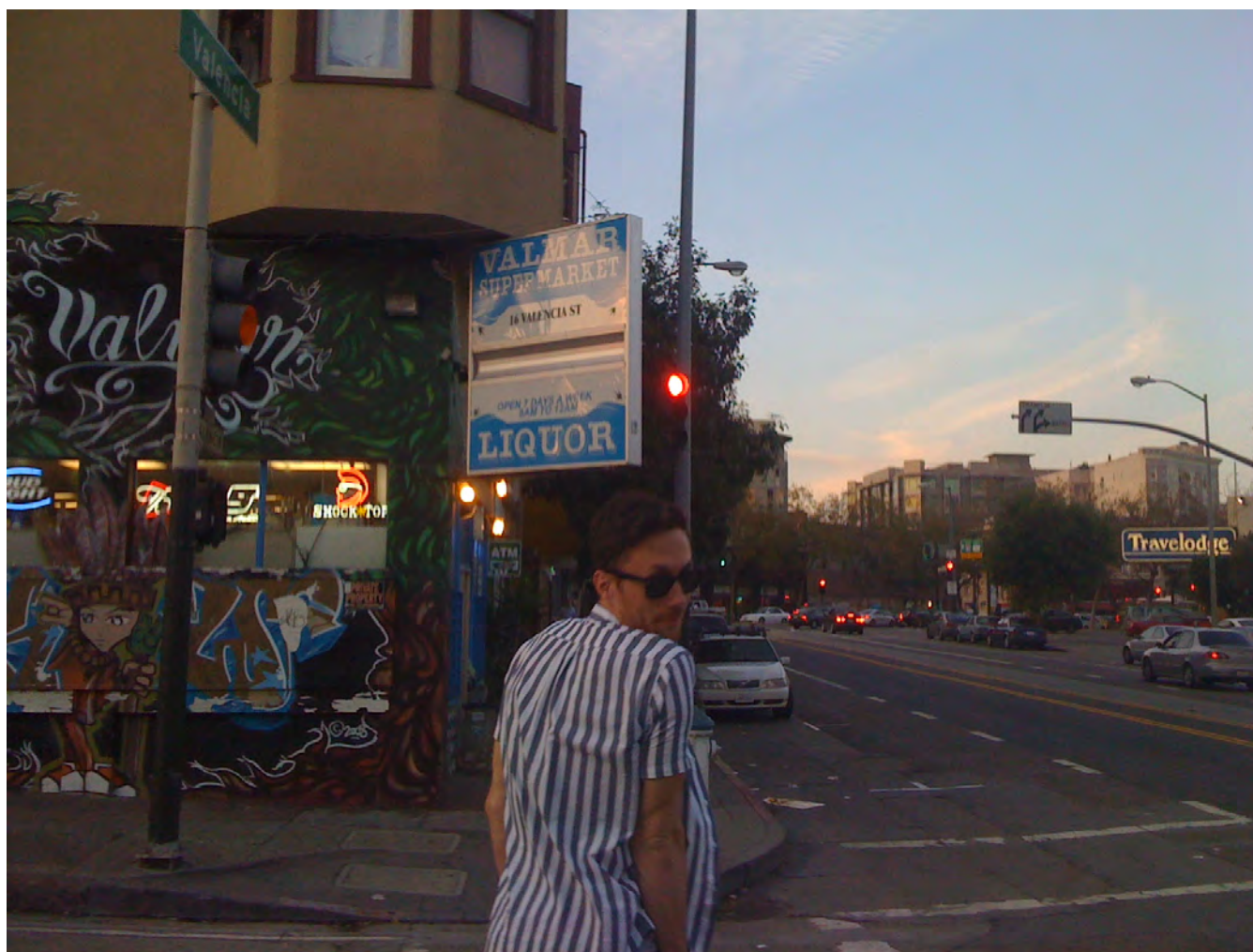
Native American Horsemen & Horses by Edward Curtis.  
Library of Congress photo





















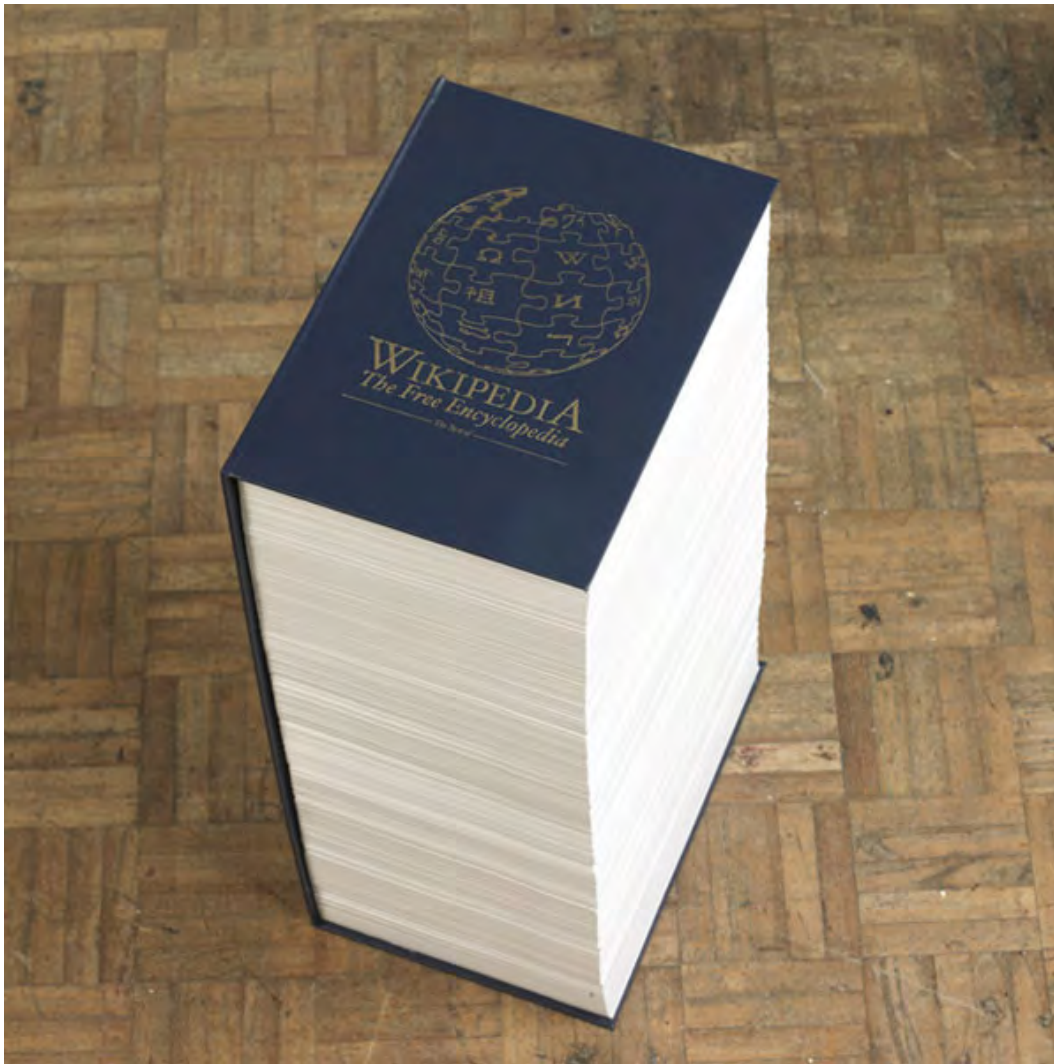






# Research!

<http://vator.tv/news/2009-06-09-the-first-printed-volume-of-wikipedia>













## **Suggested Thought Paper Format:**

### A. Introductory paragraph

1. Write a lead sentence that gains the reader's attention. Example: "When speaking of families, it is important to consider the issue of sexual behavior."

2. Introduce your thesis or most important argument. Example: "The American Revolutionary War was less of a social revolution than it was a fight for economic autonomy."

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.















## **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.

Visual representations from all cultures, such as sandpaintings, tattoos, sculptures and reliefs, cave paintings, scrimshaw, jewelry, hieroglyphics, paintings and photographs are included in the focus of visual anthropology.

Human vision, its physiology, the properties of various media, the relationship of form to function, the evolution of visual representations within a culture are all within the province of visual anthropology.

Since anthropology is a holistic science, the ways in which visual representation are connected to the rest of culture and society are central topics.

























reading for next week



## Learning Historical Research

<http://www.williamcronon.net/researching/landscapes.htm>

Also for next week:

map out the field trips for the course.

find a map of SF and circle or mark where we will be going this semester.

do the reading

prepare thought paper.



