FALMOUTH
UNIVERSITY

ILLUSTRATION DISCOURSES I & II

MAI130 RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS &

MAI150 PRACTICE AND AUDIENCE

Cover image by Vicky Clark

ILLUSTRATION DISCOURSES LECTURE SERIES

Lecturers
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Georgina Hounsome
Tim Donaldson
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1 What's My Theory?

We all use theories (the term is used here almost interchangeably with "models" and "assumptions"). This lecture starts from a belief that we are better off if we are aware of our theories. It is structured as a set of questions linked to a very loose model of an art practice, followed by an eclectic selection of images for discussion. It will try to suggest some ways to clarify and describe the motivations, goals, boundaries, hopes, fears, and convictions that shape any coherent practice.

2 Interpreting and Adapting The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

Looking at a few of the many creative responses to S T Coleridge's famous ballad, this seminar will consider the process of interpreting another piece of work through your own, and the ability of such work to call forth continuing and divergent adaptations through the communicative power of its language. A central theme will be the question of whether our response to any such works can be embraced by, or reduced to, a discussion of their 'meaning'.

3 Narrative Theory

This lecture will look at narrative theory from Barthes to Bal (and others) and aim to give an overview of the different ways that fictional narratives have been and can be discussed and dissected. It will then move on to suggest ways in which some of these theories might be applied to discussions of graphic novels and illustrated books.

4 Composition

You can't teach someone how to compose better pictures, there is no scientific formula, but what you can do is to increase their awareness of the possibilities that lie within picture-making. The first Impressions, when looking at pictures, are open not only to the recognition of figures and of other represented objects, but also on both conscious and unconscious levels, to the qualities of the physical composition itself. With awareness of the possibilities which lie within composition, the visual communicator can construct their images with potent signifiers, directing the viewers' reading of the work, helping the pictures to express their meaning.

5   Visual Metaphor

Metaphor is based on analogy and involves a leap of the imagination. There are many forms of figurative language. The word metaphor is really just one of the many, which include metonym, hyperbole, allegory, etc. Many modern scholars view metaphor as the central trope of language, both in everyday, prosaic contexts as well as in literature and art. In recent times critical study has adopted the term metaphor as an over-arching name to refer to all figurative language. This lecture will explore the ways in which metaphor can occur in pictures.

6   Boundaries

This session takes as its theme containment and boundaries in graphic novels and comics. The use of panels, speech bubbles and framing devices will be introduced as the lecture then goes on to consider more conceptual approaches to frames and framing, such as the means by which producer presents their work to the world.

7   Remaining in Unknown Territory

This seminar will take Keats' concept of "negative capability" as a point of departure from which to question what we might mean by words like 'intuition' and 'imagination' in relation to creative practice. The emphasis will be on looking at specific examples of work (literary, musical and visual), to see how artists' personal approaches to these questions have informed their work. A central theme will be the eruptive and unpredictable nature of creative practice - how the work itself may often know, better than the maker, where it needs to go.

8   Remaining in Unknown Territory

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9   A Working Practice

The lecture will focus on the evolving nature of working within the illustration industry in relation to my personal authorial practice. Project work will touch on the positive and negative aspects of working commercially, financial and artistic constraints, self-sufficiency and self-publishing. The lecture will include discussion on the various methods for approaching research for personal enquiry and the way this has affected my work. Georgina will give an overview of the diverse opportunities for Illustration and Illustrators focussing on commercial, personal and collaborative projects.

10   Film night

The Artists and the Poet. Illustrational collaborations between Leonard Baskin and Ted Hughes. Tales from Moominland. The life and work of Tove Jannson

11   The "Seismology" of Structuralism, including Semiotics

This session contextualises the work of the French semiotician Roland Barthes within the history of structuralist and Marxist interventions into metaphysical assumptions about representation. Thus we shall work backwards, with Barthes' characterisation, following Brecht, of the "seismology" of the structuralist approach to language. Roland Barthes' analysis of the Panzani pasta advert and his notion of "myth today" manifest the critical imperative which relies upon the "shock" of "seismology." Nevertheless, despite this shake-up of discourse, semiotics and structuralism ultimately rely upon a closed systematicity that eventually will be questioned by subsequent theoretical interventions.

12   Mission Statements I

An initial introduction to mission statements in preparation for the forthcoming mission statements workshop.

13   Deconstruction and Typography: the figure of Writing in the work of Jacques Derrida

This session looks at several terms and tropes in deconstructive reading and writing, such as "*difference"* and "supplement", and asks the question, why might deconstructive reading/writing carry with it the *imperative* to read or write "deconstructively." Typography is examined by the graphic designer Ellen Lupton as the ready discourse for the play of deconstruction, but we'll be able to transpose the textual notions of typography over to other discursive materialities.

14   Slowing time down: correspondences, ambiguity and attendance

In an interview for 'Eye' Sue Coe said, 'The future will not be static. The demand for visual imagery will be colossal. And in the midst of this voracious creation and consumption of imagery, the visual essay offers up a unique respite. Art is about slowing time down, not speeding it up.' (Sue Coe, 1999)

This lecture is about what pictures do in relation to the writing that, more often than not, directs their context and reading; anchoring their meaning. It will look at examples where the re-direction of content by form is most apparent. You could say it is about the way pictures write and how they help to tell stories.

15   Representing The Uncanny

Sigmund Freud weaves a complex exploration into the vicissitudes, translational and otherwise, of the Uncanny, always returning to the inevitably integrated relation between the Uncanny and the representation of the Uncanny. This session will chart Freud's critical reading of ETA Hoffmann's short story "The Sandman," where he identifies strategic figures and tropes for writing the Uncanny, with the ultimate aim of compiling our own archive of operative figures which might convey the various characteristics and effects of uncanniness. This session also gives us the opportunity to read Freud as a critical theorist of literature whose reading practice is informed by a *psychoanalytic* framework – the very framework which he inaugurated and established.

16   Tim Donaldson lecture (Description pending)

17   Artists Books

Artists Books, and *Bookworks* are umbrella-terms that can include many different areas of Fine Art and related practice, that relate to the idea or the format of a book in some way. This talk will explore some current directions within this area of practice, and discuss some of the possibilities and opportunities that the field of Artists Books might offer the authorial illustrator.

18   Visual Narrative

This lecture will focus on creating visual narratives from a range of different starting points including group work and individual exercises. Composition, time and sequence will be explored with a variety of practical workshops and presentations throughout the day. The workshops will present different approaches to creating and telling stories through image and image/word.

19   Deception

This lecture begins by looking at artists who deceive as a means of framing their practice. It then moves on to consider the skills that illustrators and graphic designers traditionally use in order to introduce fictions, lies and deceit into the world. This will allow for the introduction of a range of work and working practices which upon first sight do not look like illustration but actually exemplify working practices which should be considered as such.

Essay 1: Research and Analysis
(MAI 130) Credits: 20

To undertake a written assignment to contextualise personal positioning of practice within contemporary authorial illustration practice.

The objective of this essay is for you to demonstrate an ability to consider the authorial approach you are adopting in your practice and place it in context. You will need to show that you can describe, discuss and analyse the range of theoretical and contextual ideas that relate to authorial illustration as you practice it.

First you will need to choose at least two illustrators/artists whose work you feel can be used to compare and contrast with your practice. You should then spend some time looking very carefully at their work and research its background considering the following points:

- What were the conditions of production? Where and when was it produced? Who was it produced for?

- What genre or specialist field could it be described as?

- Why has the author chosen to include the given content and what has been excluded?

- What is the relationship between the content and the form? Why has this decision been made? What working processes were employed?

As you think through these issues (and others that occur to you) remember to think on the level of the decisions of the author **and** the **social, cultural and political context** in which they were working. From this you should then be able to see a number of themes developing. You should then look for relevant theoretical material which will allow you to develop these ideas. It is often a good idea to use one or two key theoretical texts to allow you to work through the ideas, but a range of material will be needed to give the analysis depth.

From this research you should then **formulate a question** and produce a 3,000 word essay which explores and considers the relevant theoretical, contextual and practical elements that inform your authorial practice by contrasting it with the work of others. The essay must demonstrate the use of theory in its analysis and the integration of theory and practice.

All essays must be word processed. **All essays must be properly referenced using the MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association) system and include a bibliography listing all sources (Hand out to follow)** Essays may be illustrated.

Deadlines: Fri 15 Dec (FT)
                Monday 22 March (PT1)

Aims

This module allows students:

To identify and research the field of practice relevant to the student's intentions and their practice development

To undertake a written assignment to contextualise personal positioning of practice within contemporary authorial illustration practice.

To develop and apply an advanced understanding of appropriate critical, analytical and theoretical thinking in relation to practice.

Core Learning Outcomes		
LO	Learning Outcomes On completion of this Module you should be able to:	Assessment Criteria To achieve the learning outcome you must demonstrate:
1	Rigorous exploration of theoretical contexts that inform the field of practice	Work demonstrates an understanding of a range of theoretical ideas appropriate to the field of illustration
2	Identify and research the field of practice relevant to your project	Work demonstrates knowledge of the broad range of illustration issues and practices associated with them.
6	Articulate synthesis of theory and practice	Work demonstrates a critical awareness of the key theoretical considerations informing practice.
7	Demonstrate critical, analytical and reflective skills	Work demonstrates critical, analytical, and reflective skills in its generation and production.
8	Communicate effectively with a range of audiences using appropriate media	Information is communicated accurately, effectively and in an appropriate format for the intended audience.

Assessment:

The essay is tutor assessed

Indicative bibliography

Baetens, J (2001) The Graphic Novel, London, Leuven University Press

Barker, C (2000) Culture, Meaning, Knowledge: The Linguistic Turn in Cultural Studies. Cultural Studies:Theory and Practice, London: Sage.

Barthes, R (1989) Mythologies, London: Paladin.

Booker, C. (2004) The Seven Basic Plots: Why Tell Stories, London: Continuum.

Carrier, D. (2001) The Aesthetics of Comics, London, Yale

Kiefer, B. (1995) The Potential of Picture Books. From Visual Literacy to Aesthetic Understanding', Englewood Cliffs, NJ:Memill, 1995.

Lewis, David. (2001) Reading Contemporary Picturebooks, Routledge Falmer. London,2001

McCloud, S (1993) Understanding Comics - The Invisible Art, New York, Harper Collins

Nikolajeva, M /Scott, Carole (2001)How Picturebooks Work, Routledge, New York 2001.

Nodelman, Perry. (1988) Words About Pictures, The Narrative Art of Children's Picture Books, University of Georgia Press, Georgia, 1988

Sipe, Lawrence R. How Picture Books Work: A semiotically Framed Theory of Text-Picture Relationships published in Children´s Literature in Education, Vol. 29, No, 1998.

Spitz Handler, E. (1999) Inside Picture Books: Yale University Press, New Haven

Presentation: Practice and Audience
(MAI 150) Credits: 20

To deliver a presentation investigating an area of interest related to authorial illustration practice.

The objective of this presentation is to allow you to demonstrate an ability to understand the potential audiences for your practice and the ways in which it may enter the public domain. You will need to think about:

- How does work reach an audience?
- How does an illustrator decide who that audience is?
- How do illustrators target their work?
- What are the specific considerations for any given sector?
- What compromises may an illustrator have to make to get their work seen?
- What processes of power are involved in illustration being seen?

You may wish to explore general questions of audience in relation to authorial illustration practice, exploring notions of the reception of the work and its place in the market/public sphere. In this case your presentation might be an analysis of how the work of another illustrator/s working in the same field might communicate with its intended audience.

Or you may wish to explore ways in which your negotiated project work might reach its potential audience, and to explore the practical and/or theoretical possibilities of the means of public exposure for your work. This could include research into marketing and publishing, which might take the form of live approaches to the sort of outlets you see as suitable for the sort of work you are producing. Therefore your presentation might contain correspondence with publishers, agents, galleries and other outlets.

However, with both approaches you will need to demonstrate a **theoretical understanding of the issues concerned** based on a **broad range of research**.

From this research you should then **formulate a question** deliver a 15 minute presentation which explores and considers potential audiences and modes of exposure of authorial illustration work in the public domain, demonstrating good understanding and analysis of audiences and reception. It must demonstrate the use of theory in its analysis and the integration of theory and practice.

All presentations must be supported by handing in a text and/or powerpoint documenting its content and including **references using the MHRA (Modern Humanities Research Association) system and include a bibliography listing all sources (Hand out to follow)** Essays may be illustrated.

Deadlines: 19 & 26 March (FT)
                Week 47/48 (undertaken during PT2)

Aim

This module allows students:

To identify and research the relevant field of practice related to the students practice development.

To deliver a presentation investigating an area of interest related to authorial illustration practice.

To develop and apply an advanced understanding of appropriate critical, analytical and theoretical thinking in relation to practice.

Core Learning Outcomes		
LO	Learning Outcomes On completion of this Module you should be able to:	Assessment Criteria To achieve the learning outcome you must demonstrate the ability to:
2	Identify and research the field of practice relevant to your project	Work demonstrates knowledge of the broad range of illustration issues and practices associated with them.
3	Define, specify and deliver an achievable project that is relevant to your individual practice	Work demonstrates the identification, evaluation and production of a project proposal that explores award objectives through critical consideration and application of personal concerns.
4	Solve problems through imaginative and innovative creative practice	Work shows consistent creative application of materials and methods for the generation of art that expresses concepts related to illustration issues.
5	Demonstrate professional competence and self-direction in realising project intentions	Work is developed professionally through planning informed by reflection.
7	Demonstrate critical, analytical and reflective skills	Work demonstrates critical, analytical, and reflective skills in its generation and production.
8	Communicate effectively with a range of audiences using appropriate media	Information is communicated accurately, effectively and in an appropriate format for the intended audience.

Assessment

Indicative bibliography

Arizpe, E/Styles, M.(2003) Children Reading Pictures, Interpreting Visual Texts, London, Routledge Falmer

Baetens, J (2001) The Graphic Novel, London, Leuven University Press

Bal, M (1985) Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative, Edinburgh, EUP

Balloon, R.(2005) Blueprint for screenwriting. A complete writer's guide to story structure and character development. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, London

Handler Spitz, E.(1999) Inside Picture Books, Vail-Ballou Press Inc,

Heller, S / Arisman, M (2000) The Education of an Illustrator, NY, Allworth Press / School of the Visual Arts

McCloud, S (1993) Understanding Comics - The Invisible Art, New York, Harper Collins

Nikolajeva, M/Scott, C. (2001) How Picturebooks Work, Routledge, New York 2001.

Nodelman, P.(1988) Words About Pictures, The Narrative Art of Children's Picture Books, University of Georgia Press, Georgia,

Sabin, R (1996) Comics, Comix & Graphic Novels: A History of Comic Art, London, Phaidon

Sipe, Lawrence R. How Picture Books Work: A semiotically Framed Theory of Text-Picture Relationships published in Children´s Literature in Education, Vol. 29, No, 1998.