

UNIVERSITY OF ANTWERP SUMMER SCHOOL

2nd International Visual Methods Seminar: Investigating and Documenting Urban Cultures

August 26 – September 4, 2015, Antwerp, Belgium



CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS

The University of Antwerp announces the second International Visual Methods Seminar, a 10-day program of study in using visual methods for research and teaching in the social and cultural sciences (the first Seminar was held in 2013). The 2015 IVMS will emphasize visual studies of urban cultures and the application of visual methods in general to research and teaching. Seminar activities are designed and led by experienced scholars whose research, leadership and teaching have contributed substantially to the development of a 'more visual' social science.

Overview

Visual methods present distinctive challenges and opportunities for studying and teaching about urban cultures. Some of these appear as ethical and theoretical implications of making, collecting and analyzing photographs and video recordings as evidence about the worlds in which people live. Others emerge in trying to use visual evidence to develop engaging, well-informed presentations and reports for diverse audiences.

The 2015 International Visual Methods Seminar is designed to explore these challenges and opportunities with participants interested in evidence-based visual inquiry. Participants will work closely with tutors and peers to examine visual materials as research data and analytical tools, and as teaching and reporting resources. The seminar will also provide hands-on workshops for participants in developing evidence-based visual presentations and reports for specific audiences, such as disciplinary scholars, students, community and advocacy groups, political constituencies, consumers, or for research subjects themselves.

Program Components and Objectives

The International Visual Methods Seminar program will include morning and afternoon sessions in a lively combination of informal lectures, demonstrations, structured observational exercises, break-out sessions, field trips, mini-projects, individual and small group reviews, critiques and discussions. A key activity will be the step-by-step development of an individual visual project involving the production, analysis, processing and presentation of visual data.

The seminar will pursue these key questions:

- How can visual strategies and methods help illuminate the social organization of the city and processes of everyday urban life?
- What roles can 'found' images and 'researcher-generated' images play within these strategies and methods?
- What special contributions can be made by visual studies that involve direct collaboration with research subjects and community members?
- How can scholars make more effective links between research questions, visual data, and different research reporting formats?
- What new practices for image-making are made possible by contemporary digital technologies and how can the visual images they produce be most usefully integrated with metadata?

Additional information about the schedule of program activities will be published on the dedicated IVMS website <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/summer-schools/visual-methods-seminar>. The scope and sequence of activities will be designed in response to the collective needs and expertise of participants.

Pre-Seminar Activities

Prior to the Visual Methods Seminar, participants will be asked to provide additional materials that will be used to refine the final seminar program and to introduce participants to seminar tutors and each other. These include: (a) a written comment about potential links between their own research, project and professional interests and one or more of the recommended pre-seminar readings; (b) a small set of photographs that provide visual evidence about the culture and social life of their home town. Participants should bring to the seminar a simple or more advanced digital camera and ideally, a laptop computer. These tools are necessary to complete visual exercises and to develop and present a final project.

Setting and Location

The International Visual Methods Seminar will be held in the heart of Antwerp, on the premises of the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, a ten minutes walk from the central train station. Arriving through Brussels or Amsterdam involves just a short, direct train ride to Antwerp Central Station, one of the most beautiful railway stations in the world.

Antwerp is the largest city in Flanders and is situated in the northern part of Belgium. A historic town by the river Scheldt, Antwerp is a bustling trading, artistic and cultural center with an international atmosphere. Antwerp is known for its diamond trade, its massive harbor and as a city of painters and fashion designers. The international travel guide publisher Lonely Planet has added Antwerp to its prestigious [2009] list of the world's ten most interesting cities. 'Few places offer such an appealing mix of classic and modern features.' 'Eclectic art nouveau houses right next to neo-classic villas and medieval castles provide a fantastic backdrop to the many bars and pavement cafés.' Antwerp is a very walkable and culturally diverse city (hosting about 170 different nationalities!) so offering ample opportunity to study aspects of material culture or human behavior. Moreover, world cities like Paris, London, and Amsterdam are only a few hours away by train.

Seminar Tutors

The 10-day program of study will be guided by five seasoned visual scholars:

Richard Chalfen is Senior Researcher at the Center on Media and Child Health at Boston Children's Hospital. He is also Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at Temple University, former Chair of their Department of Anthropology and Director of the MA Program in Visual Anthropology. His research combines interests in cultural anthropology and visual communication and, for the past 20 years, the visual culture of modern Japan. At the Center, he focuses on applying participant media research methods to studies of childhood chronic illness and examining relationships of mobile telephonic media and young people. Publications include *Snapshot Version of Life* (1987), *Turning Leaves* (1991) and *Through Navajo Eyes* (co-author, 1997), and most recently, *Photogaffes—Family Snapshots and Social Dilemmas* (2012).

John Grady is the William I. Cole Professor of Sociology at Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts. He is a past president of the International Visual Sociology Association (IVSA). He is currently the New Media Editor for *Visual Studies*. His research and teaching interests include the study of cities, technology, and social organization. He has written extensively on visual sociology in general and on the use of the visual mass media as evidence for social and cultural analysis. He has produced numerous documentary films including *Mission Hill and the Miracle of Boston* (1979) and *Water and the Dream of the Engineers* (1983).

Paolo Favero is Associate Professor in Film Studies and Visual Culture at the Dept. of Communication Studies, University of Antwerp. As a visual anthropologist, he has devoted the core of his career to the study of visual culture in India and in Italy. A former lecturer at Stockholm University (Sweden), University College London (UK) and the University of Lisbon (Portugal), Paolo has recently written about popular visual culture, interactive image-making practices and visual ethnographic practices in a digital landscape. Paolo is the author of the book *India Dreams: cultural identity among young middle class men in New Delhi* (Stockholm 2005) and the director of the film *Flyoverdelhi* (2004, screened by Swedish and Italian national broadcasters). Between 2009 and 2011 he was an elected member of the Executive Committee of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA).

Luc Pauwels is Professor of Visual Studies at the University of Antwerp (Department of Communication Studies), Belgium. He is director of the 'Visual and Digital Cultures Research Center' (ViDi) at Antwerp, member and former Vice-President of the International Visual Sociology Association (IVSA), and member of ISA's Visual Sociology Working Group (WG03). As a visual sociologist and communication scientist, he has written on visual research methodologies, family photography, urban culture, multimodal website analysis, and scientific visualization. Books include: *Visual Cultures of Science* (2006, UPNE), *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods* (2011, together with Eric Margolis) and *Reframing Visual Social Science* (2015, Cambridge University Press).

Jon Wagner is Professor Emeritus in the School of Education at the University of California, Davis. His research focuses on children's material culture, qualitative and visual research methods, school change, and the physical and social foundations of community life. He is a past President of the International Visual Sociology Association and was the founding Image Editor of *Contexts*, the American Sociological Association's general interest publication. He authored *Misfits and Missionaries: a school for black dropouts* (1977), and also edited two volumes that focus on the intersection of visual studies and social research: *Images of Information: Still photography in the social sciences* (1979) and *Visual Sociology 14(1 & 2): Seeing Kids' Worlds* (1999).

Who Should Attend?

This intensive program of study will be useful for students and faculty involved in teaching visual methods in sociology, anthropology, and communication as well as for scholars from urban studies, social and cultural geography, media and cultural studies, history, criminology, and arts related disciplines who want to complement their current research approaches with visual perspectives. Specific visual or sociological experience is not a pre-requisite, but applicants should have a keen interest in learning more about the visual exploration of society and culture. The seminar will be conducted in English, and participants must have a sufficient command of English to participate actively.

Application Procedure

Applications can be submitted by completing the online registration form at: <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/summer-schools/visual-methods-seminar>. Applications will be open from January 1st 2015 until May 31st 2015. Prospective seminar participants will be asked to provide a short CV or application statement that includes a brief description of their prior experience and specific interest. Applicants will be notified soon after their application whether they have been accepted and provided details on how to pay the tuition fee. Enrollment is limited and will be confirmed only after payment of the tuition fee, and on a first come first served base.

Fees & Costs

The tuition fee is 800 euro and includes refreshments, course materials, receptions and social events. Affordable lodging options will be communicated during the application process. Upon acceptance, the Housing Department of the University of Antwerp will assist participants in finding suitable accommodation. Participants also receive a University of Antwerp student card, granting access to the library, a discount in the student restaurant (lunches for around 5€), and access to the wireless network.

ECTS Accreditation

Upon successful completion of the seminar participants will obtain a course certificate that qualifies for 5 ECTS credit points.

Additional Information?

For administrative and logistic matters, contact the seminar coordinator:

- Piet De Vroede: piet.devroede@uantwerpen.be / tel: 0032(0)3 265 52 83

For questions about the content and format of the program, contact the seminar director:

- Prof. Dr. Luc Pauwels: luc.pauwels@uantwerpen.be

Visit the conference website for regular updates: <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/summer-schools/visual-methods-seminar>.