

The Art of Information: Culture and History through Diagrams, Graphs, and Maps
T/Th 10:05-11:20
SCHC 281 H01
SCPC Seminar Room, Hollings Library 130

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In the 21st century, we are accustomed to seeing election results or infection rates displayed in visual graphics, but the visual display of information has a complex history. This interdisciplinary course examines the visual display of information through significant historical infographics that are held in the Irvin Dept of Rare Books and Special Collections. Selected infographics, which are collections of visuals that communicate information quickly, will serve as the center of an in-depth historical and cultural study of significant issues from a variety of disciplines. Examples include the organization of knowledge in the French Encyclopedia, the argument for the abolition of the slave trade made by the Brooks slave ship diagram, the study of ancient Rome through maps and architectural illustrations, and a pioneering work of ecology. Introductory readings including cultural studies on information and works from the interdisciplinary field known as “image studies” will serve as the conceptual foundation for the broad range of course materials. By meeting in Rare Books, students will be able to engage in hands-on study of the original material contexts of these images. In addition to written assignments and two presentations, students will produce their own historically-influenced infographic.

PLEASE BUY A USED COPY OF THIS BOOK, WHICH ISN'T AVAILABLE AT THE BOOKSTORE

Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia of Diderot, Jean le Rond d’Alembert (trans. Richard N. Schwab) ISBN 978-0226134765 [[Alibris has used copies from \\$1.50 and up](#); [Amazon has used copies for \\$3 and up](#)]. If it’s impossible to buy a copy, you may use the online version [here](#).

RECOMMENDED

Graphesis: Visual Forms of Knowledge Production, Johanna Drucker ISBN 978-0674724938 [[Amazon has used copies for \\$7 and up](#)]

All other required reading material will be made available through my Microsoft One Drive account, to which all students will have access. You are not required to print out the readings, so since you will likely read them on a screen, please find a way to make notes, either on your device or just on paper (!).

GENERAL KEYS TO SUCCESS IN THIS CLASS

1. **Come to (almost) every class.**
2. **Pay attention and participate.**
3. **Follow the syllabus.**
4. **If something comes up, tell me quickly.**

COURSE SCHEDULE

BACKGROUND

- 1/11 Introductions: syllabus, materials, class members, building
- 1/13 Eric Hayot, "Introduction" to *Information: A Reader* (pp. 1-14)
Umberto Eco, "On the Impossibility of Drawing a Map of the Empire on a Scale of 1 to 1" (pp. 95-106)
- 1/18 Sandra Rendgen, "Line, Color, Area, Symbol: 1,200 Years of Visually Transferring Knowledge" (pp. 4-18, images and captions pp. 19-40)
Scott Christianson, *100 Diagrams that Changed the World* (Exploded View Diagram, 70-1; Astronomicum Caesareum, 82-3; Human Body, 84-5; A New Chart of History, 116-7; Bar Chart, 120-21; Line Graph, 122-3, Phrenology, 128-9; Electrical Circuit Diagram, 130-1; Rose (or Polar Area) Diagram, 142-3; Periodic Table, 148-9; Venn Diagrams, 156-6; London Underground Map, 170-1; Spacetime Diagrams, 172-3; London A-Z, 182-3)
- 1/20 Edward Tufte, *Beautiful Evidence*, pp. 124-139
Whitney Battle-Baptiste et al., *W.E.B. Du Bois's Data Portraits* (pp. 7-22, 102-137)
Sandra Rendgen, *The Minard System* (pp. 7-9, 154-7)
["John Snow's Data Journalism: The Cholera Map That Changed the World"](#) from *The Guardian*
- 1/25 Infographics Today: guest lecture, Jason Porter, Journalism and Media Arts
- 1/27 Barbara Maria Stafford, *Good Looking* (pp. 20-40)
James Elkins, "Art History and Images That Are Not Art," *Domain of Images*, pp. 3-12
- 2/1 John Bender & Michael Marrinan, *The Culture of Diagram* (pp. 19-52 plus plates)
- 2/3 **READING GUIDE DUE**
Johanna Drucker, *Graphesis* (pp. 1-9, 16-33, 40-5)

INFOGRAPHICS

KNOWLEDGE: Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert's *Encyclopedia*

- 2/8 Manuel Lima, *The Book of Trees* (pp. 49-77) [combine for tp]
Richard Yeo, *Encyclopaedic Visions* (pp. 1-32)
Spencer & Krauze, *Introducing the Enlightenment* (pp. 3, 48-51, 58-65, 68-9, 76-7, 84-7)
- 2/10 Jean le Rond d'Alembert, "Preliminary Discourse," Part I (pp. 3-59) OR online [here](#)
Consult the "[Table](#)" [[Eng version](#)] and "[Arbre généologique](#)" in Hollings by 2/22
- 2/15 d'Alembert, "Preliminary Discourse," Part II-end (pp. 60-140)
- 2/17 Denis Diderot, "Encyclopedia" article (from the *Encyclopedia*), pp. 277-307
- 2/22 **READING GUIDE DUE**
David Bates, "Cartographic Aberrations: Epistemology and Order in the Encyclopedic Map" (pp. 1-20)

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY: Giovanni Battista Piranesi's Maps and Views of Rome

2/24 Heather Hyde Minor, *Piranesi's Lost Words* (pp. 1-39)
Jessica Maier, *Rome Measured and Imagined* (pp. 211-229)
Consult Piranesi's "[Plan of Rome and the Campus Martius](#)" and "[Map of Rome](#)" in Hollings and online by 3/15

3/1 J. B. Harley, "Deconstructing the Map" (pp. 1-20)
Christian Jacob, *The Sovereign Map* (pp. 240-268 plus 8 pp. of images at end of pdf)
3/3 Mario Bevilacqua, "The Rome of Piranesi" (pp. 39-60)

3/15 **READING GUIDE DUE**

John Pinto, *Speaking Ruins* (pp. 157-175)

3/17 **Student Presentations: New Infographics**

HUMAN RIGHTS AND LITERATURE: Diagram of a Slave Ship

3/22 Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship* (pp. 308-342)
Cheryl Finley, *Committed to Memory* (pp. 57-86)
Consult the "[Diagram of a Slave Ship](#)" in Hollings by 3/31

3/24 Olaudah Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, pp. 13-28
Reflections on New Infographics Due

3/29 Laurence Sterne, *Sentimental Journey* (pp. 3, 67-75)
Ignatius Sancho, Letter to Sterne (pp. 70-2)
Sterne, Letter to Sancho (pp. 120-121)
Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* (pp. 492-496)
Janet Todd, Sensibility, An Introduction (pp. 1-9)

3/31 **READING GUIDE DUE**

Walk to State House from Hollings Library

ECOLOGY: Alexander von Humboldt's Chimborazo Volcano

4/5 Andrea Wulf, *Invention of Nature* (pp. 1-9, 85-93)
Greg Miller, "[The Pioneering Maps of Alexander von Humboldt](#)"
Alexander von Humboldt, *Personal Narrative* (pp. 15-23, 131-141)
Consult Humboldt's "[Tableau Physique](#)" in Hollings or [English version](#) by 4/12

4/7 Oliver Lubrich, "Mountains in the German Imagination" (pp. 153-171)
Anthony Ozturk, "Geo-Poetics: The Alpine Sublime in Art and Literature" (pp. 77-93)

4/12 **READING GUIDE DUE**

Moret et al., "Humboldt's Tableau Physique revisited" (pp. 12889-12894)

4/14 **Presentations on RBSC material**

4/19 **Presentations on RBSC material**

4/21 **Presentations on RBSC material; Description, Context, and Bibliography due**

*5/3 9:00 Exam day: possible make-up day for presentations [there is no exam for this course]

COURSE POLICIES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will learn about:

European culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, specifically the organization of knowledge, cartography, abolitionism and human rights, and ecology
the history of information display

Students will gain:

in-depth knowledge about major trends in European culture
familiarity with original and rare print materials

Students will engage in academic approaches that:

combine intellectual disciplines (book history, image studies, literary analysis)
consider differences in historical and current media

POLICIES

Teaching and Learning during a Pandemic

This is not a normal semester, and I am not going to enforce my normal expectations. I will accommodate any reasonable request for extra time, absences, or revised assignments. The grading policy below is designed to give you more options to earn credit than you need—you will be graded on a scale of 200 points, and there are more than 200 possible points that you can earn. The grade breakdown below explains the built-in forgiveness policy.

Mental Health

Taking care of your mental and emotional health is essential. Below are some resources.

UofSC Counseling & Psychiatry: 803-777-5223

24-Hour National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 800-273-8255

Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741741 (FREE, 24/7, and confidential)

The Trevor Lifeline (LGBTQ individuals): 866-488-7386

UofSC Police Department: 803-777-4215

Student Care and Outreach Team: If you are ever concerned about someone's health, well-being or safety, you can submit a "Student Care and Outreach Team Incident Report" [here](#).

Attendance

If you feel sick, STAY AWAY. Missing four classes this semester is acceptable, but missing more than four classes can impact your grade.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to practice the highest possible standards of academic integrity. Any deviation from this expectation will result in a minimum academic penalty of your failing the assignment and additional disciplinary measures including referring you to the Office of Academic Integrity. Violations of the University's Honor Code include but are not limited to improper citation of sources, using another student's work, and any other form of academic misrepresentation.

Classroom Decorum and Honor Code

It is the responsibility of every student at the University of South Carolina to adhere steadfastly to truthfulness and to avoid dishonesty, fraud, or deceit of any type in connection with any

academic program. Any student who violates this Honor Code or who knowingly assists another to violate this Honor Code shall be subject to discipline. The university is committed to a campus environment that is inclusive, safe, and respectful for all persons, and one that fully embraces the Carolinian Creed:

As a Carolinian ... I will practice personal and academic integrity; I will respect the dignity of all persons; I will respect the rights and property of others; I will discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas and opinions; I will demonstrate concern for others, their feelings, and their need for the conditions which support their work and development.

To that end, all course activities will be conducted in an atmosphere of friendly participation and interaction among colleagues, recognizing and appreciating the unique experiences, background, and point of view each student brings. You are expected at all times to apply the highest academic standards to this course and to treat other people with dignity and respect.

Students with Disabilities

Within the first week of the semester, students with disabilities should contact me to discuss the logistics of any accommodations needed to fulfill course requirements. In order to receive reasonable accommodations from me, you must be registered with the Student Disability Resource Center (1523 Greene Street, LeConte Room 112A, 803-777-6142). Any student with a documented disability should contact this office to arrange for appropriate accommodations. You may record a class only with my permission. When granted permission to record class, you may use recordings solely for personal educational purposes. Dissemination of recordings in or through any medium is forbidden, and violations of the recording policy will be pursued as an honor code violation.

Academic Freedom, from the American Association of Univ. Professors

“[T]he central purpose of higher education [...] is to challenge students to think hard about their own perspectives, whatever those might be. It is neither harassment nor discriminatory treatment of a student to hold up to close criticism an idea or viewpoint the student has posited or advanced. Ideas that are germane to a subject under discussion in a classroom cannot be censored because a student with particular religious or political beliefs might be offended. Instruction cannot proceed in the atmosphere of fear that would be produced were a teacher to become subject to administrative sanction based upon the idiosyncratic reaction of one or more students. This would create a classroom environment inimical to the free and vigorous exchange of ideas necessary for teaching and learning in higher education.” (For the full statement, see [here](#).)

Grades

I return all graded work, and I give preliminary participation grades around the middle of the semester. I do not post grades on Blackboard. **If you want to estimate your final grade at any point in the semester, keep track of the work I return to you, and add up the points.**

Assignment (number and possible points)	Total points needed for final grade
Participation (30)	25
Reading Guides (5, 16 points ea, 80 possible total points)	75
Presentation on New Infographics (25)	25
Reflection on New Infographics (30)	25

Presentation on RBSC material (25)	25
Description, Context, and Bibliography (30)	25
Total possible points = 220	Total points needed = 200

Grading Scale [total points divided in half]

A = 90–100; B+ = 85–89; B = 80–84; C+ = 75–79; C = 70–74; D+ = 65–69; D = 60–64; F = 59–0

Participation

In order to do well in this course, you will need to be an active participant in class. Being an active participant includes all of the following: volunteering responses to discussion questions (at least once per class is just fine), listening attentively to comments of other students, and contributing to in-class exercises.