

**VCS Sample Assessment Grid
2012-2013**

Each area of assessment corresponds to the following numeric evaluation:

- 1 C (insufficient)
- 2 B-/B
- 3 B+/A-
- 4 A (exceptional)

Research Skills				
Visual/ Historical Research Skills: Sources	Insufficient evidence of in-depth research; sources' relevance to thesis problem is unconvincing and/or not well articulated; poor deployment of images; student did not pursue suggested sources.	Some evidence of serious research but range of sources remains limited. Sources are not well examined and are not adequately integrated into the argument; deployment of images not yet optimal. Student made some attempt to pursue additional sources.	Bibliography and notes feature secondary sources across the spectrum of genres (monographs, critical literature, anthologized essays, dissertations etc). Source material, including visual evidence, is logically integrated into student's analysis.	Sources used creatively and imaginatively; sources required travel and/or hard work to collect (e.g. interviews, archival material); sources have not been seriously explored before; sources, including visual evidence, well integrated into thesis arguments. Student thoroughly pursued all suggestions and potential areas of research.
	1	2	3	4
Visual/ Historical Research Skills: Significance & Contribution	Research problem not sufficiently identified and explained; does not have the potential to contribute significantly to the field.	Research problem is identified but is not discussed in relation to existing scholarship and critical literature on the topic. Has promise to contribute to the field but does not realize that potential or explain its significance. Lacks sufficient engagement with the visual.	Highlights a unique emphasis and distinguishes the argument from those advanced in secondary literature. Research problem clearly has potential to contribute to the field of visual studies, but its significance is not yet fully articulated and/or is not adequately grounded in the visual arena.	Exhibits originality and expertise in making new arguments based on thoughtful and thorough primary research. Research problem contributes to the field of visual studies in a meaningful way; its significance and relation to the field are well articulated/
	1	2	3	4

Written Communication				
Critical Writing Skills	Exhibits strength in none of the areas described*	Exhibits strength in several of the areas described*	Exhibits strength in most areas described*	Exhibits strength in all of the areas described*
	1	2	3	4
<p>*Thesis (strength, clarity, and originality) *Argumentation (sophistication of strategies, kinds of evidence marshaled, deployment of theory, use of quotation/paraphrasing/citation) *Composition (prioritization of ideas, transitions, overall structure and flow of the essay, etc)</p>				

	<p>*Style (polish, pacing, poetics) *Mechanics (grammar, punctuation, proofreading, footnote/endnote formats, bibliographic coherence) *Effectiveness of the Intro and Conclusion</p>			
<p>Critical Writing Skills Drafts and Revisions</p>	<p>No significant revisions made between drafts, feedback not incorporated</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p>	<p>Some revision evident between drafts, cursory application of feedback received. Too heavy a reliance on thesis instructor for editing.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Revisions evident between drafts, feedback incorporated mechanically but not fully explored by student. Student not fully able to advance their own manuscript without significant outside assistance.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	<p>Significant improvement made between submitted drafts; feedback incorporated and furthered by student's own initiative.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p>

Visually Enhanced Oral Presentation

<p>Presentation Skills</p>	<p>Offers confused written or extemporaneous account; doesn't connect with audience; doesn't adequately employ or explain visuals; fails to respond cogently during Q&A. Has difficulty understanding feedback from committee members in reviews.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p>	<p>Reads paper occasionally making eye contact with audience; presentation is not always in sync with the visual material; has trouble focusing thoughts during Q&A. Has some difficulty understanding feedback from committee members in reviews.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Reads polished paper or refers to notes frequently making eye contact with audience; extemporizes aptly; integrates visuals effectively; answers questions satisfactorily during Q&A and demonstrates a good understanding of feedback from committee members in reviews.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	<p>Delivers presentation in a professional and well rehearsed manner; engages audience visually via eye contact and gesture; relies on well conceived visual material to make points; rises to challenges of the Q&A with confidence and engages productively with committee feedback.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p>
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Methodology and Contextualization

<p>Historical Contextualization</p>	<p>No historical or visual historical context provided.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p>	<p>Provides minimal historical (cultural, social, political, economic, biographical...) background information.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Builds an argument or interpretation upon a historical foundation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	<p>Subject situated within a complex historical landscape.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p>
<p>Historiography</p>	<p>No evidence of knowledge of the relevant literature.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p>	<p>Cites a minimum of relevant scholarly sources.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Shows evidence of understanding a range of positions in the relevant field or fields of engagement.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	<p>Demonstrates awareness of the scholarly works that constitute the specialized literature and identifies their positions. Engages in a dialogue with key scholars.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p>
<p>Methods of Critical Analysis</p>	<p>No methodology identified. No evident engagement with a</p>	<p>Method not well adapted, inconsistently applied, and/or</p>	<p>Methodological framework sound; theory not yet fully</p>	<p>Theory introduced proficiently,</p>

	relevant theoretical tradition or set of texts. 1	exposition of the theoretical apparatus minimal. 2	unpacked and/or internalized. 3	applied consistently, and fully integrated into the argument. 4
Visual Analysis	Visual material not considered, or used only as illustration, with little or no analysis 1	Visual analysis not fully elaborated 2	Interprets appropriately selected material in a persuasive manner 3	Argues convincingly <i>through</i> use of aptly chosen examples; provides a fully elaborated analysis 4
Critical Reading	Engages with primary, secondary, and theoretical texts at the level of information. Shows no awareness of the author's agenda, position, strategies of argumentation, assumptions, or field of references. 1	Shows some awareness of the intellectual and ideological contexts to which a text contributes but does not identify the devices and strategies the text mobilizes 2	Recognizes the modes of argumentation, forms of evidence, structural and poetic choices contributing to the production of textual meaning 3	Recognizes the modes of argumentation, forms of evidence, compositional and formal choices contributing to the production of textual meaning AND is able to address structural and contextual issues in an analysis of a text 4
Interdisciplinarity	Draws on resources from only one discipline. 1	Shows awareness of multiple disciplinary perspectives 2	Engages with practices, scholarship, and critical frameworks characterizing a range of disciplines 3	Productively and creatively explores the intersections and divergences of discourses produced within different disciplinary contexts. 4

Professional Responsibility				
Understanding Ethics	Shows no awareness of the moral positions implicated in the field of research. 1	Recognizes ethical stakes of a given visual cultural event or cultural intervention but does not grapple overtly with . ethical principles and problems. 2	Factors ethical considerations into the analysis of visual culture and or the production of cultural discourse. 3	Analyzes cultural problems in relation to ethical principals, formulates strategies and questions that demonstrate an awareness of ethical options and impacts. 4
Understanding Cultural Diversity	Demonstrates no awareness of how the topic relates to discourses of power and privilege or politics of cultural otherness 1	Shows basic understanding of cultural power dynamics. 2	Discusses cultural power dynamics in relation to a specific object/event/site/ project but does not address the broader implications of power differentials and/or socially constructed norms. 3	Offers a sophisticated analysis of the cultural power dynamics that produces the project/ object/site/event and shapes the field of reception 4

<p>Professionalism (respects deadlines for submitting work; has good research habits and documentation practices; prepares for meetings and shows up on time for engagements)</p>	<p>No practice in the skills necessary to perform at a professional level</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p>	<p>Identifies areas of professional development that require attention and takes advantage of opportunities to improve professional skills</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Performs competently in the areas identified as critical to achieving professionalism</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	<p>Takes initiatives to exercise professional skills outside of the classroom context; demonstrates prowess in the areas identified as critical to achieving professionalism</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p>
<p>Collaboration</p>	<p>Does not grasp the relational or practical premises of working with collaborators or participate in the intellectual life of the community</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p>	<p>Attempts teamwork; some participation in the intellectual life of the community</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Participates in collaborative initiatives and engages in community building activities.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	<p>Initiates collaborative projects; thinks critically about the implications of this mode of practice; works with others to build community, enhance the collective experience, and/or achieve a common goal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p>
<p>Leadership</p>	<p>Reluctant to take individual initiatives or act in the interests of a group</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p>	<p>Volunteers to assume classroom or program responsibilities that enhance the collective experience</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p>	<p>Organizes others around a shared goal or practice.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p>	<p>Takes extraordinary individual initiatives that model leadership qualities. As a leader, shows sensitivity to the agendas, abilities and positions of others and factors them into the formulation/execution of initiatives.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p>