

Visual Materials as Historical Sources (A004000)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0

Study time 150 h

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 2)

Dutch

Gent

lecture

excursion

independent work

seminar

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Belaen, Johan

LW03

staff member

Vandersmissen, Jan

LW03

staff member

Van Bruaene, Anne-Laure

LW03

lecturer-in-charge

Bevernage, Berber

LW03

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

[Bachelor of Arts in History](#)

crdts

5

offering

A

[Elective Set History](#)

5

A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Methodology

Iconography

Iconology

Paintings

Prints

Photographs

Film

Cartoons

Position of the course

Methodological introduction to the use of images as a historical source.

Contents

Introduction to iconographical theories and models, within the context of the discipline of history.

Summarized overview of the history of visual media.

Analysis of multiple types of images as historical sources. A minimum of 3 of the following types of images will be dealt with:

- Drawings
- Paintings
- Prints
- Heraldic sources
- Photographs
- Moving images (non-fiction)
- Cartoons in mass media

The classes on the premodern period focus on the visual culture of the Low Countries, including religious painting, genre painting, family portraits and political prints. For the modern and contemporary period the focus lies on photography in contexts of war, family portraits and colonialism.

Initial competences

This course builds on the final competences of "Overview of Historical Criticism", "History of the Middle Ages", "History of the Early Modern Period", "History of Modern and Contemporary Times", "History of Belgium" and on the courses on "Heuristics".

Final competences

- 1 To have insight into the methodology of history.
- 2 To have basic knowledge about the diversity of sources and scientific literature used for historical research, and to master the specific skills to read and interpret sources.
- 3 To critically apply quantitative and qualitative methods and techniques.
- 4 To select the most appropriate sources in order to solve a specific historical question.
- 5 To motivate the use of a heuristic method and bibliographical research on the basis of scientific criteria.
- 6 To appreciate the importance of scientific integrity.
- 7 To contextualize and interpret historical research and one's own historical actions within a social framework.
- 8 To interpret contemporary developments from a historical-comparative perspective.
- 9 To display cultural sensitivity, respect for diversity, and the ability to reflect about continuity and change in a long-term perspective.
- 10 To have insight into the workings of archives and heritage institutions.
- 11 To apply digital methods, tools and strategies during a research process (discover, collect, enrich, visualise, disseminate).

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Seminar, Excursion, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

No lesson recordings will be provided.

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: Slides

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : Dutch

Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Reader

Name: Reader

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : Other

Available on Ufora : Yes

References

Course content-related study coaching

Tutors Davy Verbeke and Tineke van Gassen provide support for the individual assignment.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Written assessment with open-ended questions

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

The periodical evaluation is based on the reader, information provided during the lectures and on PP's available on Ufora.

The permanent evaluation consists of an individual assignment in which historical images are sought for an article in a history journal, a research project or a public history project. With the found material, students conceive a small scale virtual exhibition with the digital collection and publication platform Omeka S. Every image is provided with metadata, a description of its content and historical context. The student also justifies his research strategy and choice of images.

Calculation of the examination mark

50% periodical evaluation – 50% permanent evaluation

When the student obtains less than 10/20 for one of the components, they can no longer pass the course unit as a whole. If the total score does turn out to be a mark of ten or more out of twenty, this is reduced to the highest fail mark (9/20).