J387 G

A Cultural History of Photography

Instructor: Dr. Sherre L. Paris
Lecture/Seminar: Tuesday 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm HRC 2.20F

Office hours: Wed. 2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Location: Journalism area, Belo Center for New Media, Guadalupe & Dean Keeton
Email: slparis@sbcglobal.net

Course Description

This course explores photography through its functions in society as portraiture, art, photojournalism, documentary and reportage, commercial, amateur, snapshot and personal photography. The course covers technologies, photographers and photographs, various philosophical and ontological debates concerning the meanings, purposes and identities of photography and it uses, and critical writings about photography. The course will pay particular attention to critique and analysis of image content within a historical and cultural context. The course is constructed according to a roughly chronological overview, beginning with photography’s pre-history, the ideas, inventors, and processes of the early 19th century, continues with conceptual, sociological and technological developments and issues, and concludes with consideration of contemporary digital concerns.

The course will include illustrated lecture, discussion, assigned readings, potential guest speakers, class presentations and papers, and exams. The course is exceptionally situated to take advantage of the world class collections of the HRC and the Briscoe Center for American History. Students will read view original prints and image producing technologies, read contemporary writings, and access rare and unique primary sources and archives.

Rationale: The more students study the history of photography, its producers and production systems, and the ideas associated with them, the more students may understand their own responses to images, and the more they can develop an intelligent, informed and educated discernment, both of others’ work, and their own.
Required Textbook:


The textbook is available at the University Coop or from various online booksellers such as Amazon, ABE Books, Textbook.com, etc.

Recommended texts:

*Criticizing Photographs*, 4th or 5th edition, by Terry Barrett.


Class structure:

Class meets weekly for three hours at the Humanities Research Center. One part of the class will consist of illustrated lecture, viewing of primary source materials from the HRC collections and archives, and part of the class for student response papers or presentations and discussion.

Course Learning goals:

• Students will learn to recognize photographic processes from the earliest methods to the current digital era and identify significant discoveries, developments and inventions.

• Students will gain an understanding of the chronology of photography’s development within a cultural and historical context.

• Students will learn to identify historically important individuals and agencies as well as iconic photographs.

• Students will learn and discuss the contributions of influential photographers upon the medium’s development.

• Students will learn and discuss the development of theoretical frameworks for understanding photography’s nature and role.

• Students will be encouraged to explore photographic traditions beyond the US/European traditions.

• Students will learn to exercise critical thinking while looking, reading, writing and speaking about photographers and photographic images.

• Students will be encouraged to master visual concepts and the acquisition of vocabulary to verbally communicate ideas and questions about the non-verbal medium of photography clearly and succinctly.

• The course will address the role of photographic witness or documentary photojournalism and its social, political and scientific impact as well as challenges which the digital revolution pose for this tradition of photographic representation.
Course design to achieve learning goals:

• To promote critical thinking about photography, all assignments will require careful looking at and writing about photographs.

• Students will be assigned weekly readings from the required text keyed to lecture topics in the Course Schedule. Additional required readings will be posted to Blackboard and/or placed on reserve at the HRC reading room and as needed, other UT libraries.

• These additional materials are an aid to thinking further about the ideas presented in the class lectures. These other materials will generally be more challenging than the textbook. All readings are required of all students and all students will be expected to bring a one to two page response paper each week for class discussion. Twice during the semester, one time mid-semester, and as final project, each student will conduct an expository presentation and lead the discussion of that work in class.

• All students are expected to read the blackboard assigned materials and textbook assigned materials for the date of the class indicated in the course schedule. Students should take notes on these readings based upon key works and concepts emphasized in the lectures and come prepared to discuss the issues connected to these images in class as well as in the exams and papers required for evaluation.

Student evaluation:
Grading will consist of the following components:

30% based on 3 exams which require recognition and written historical, critical analysis of images.

10% based on 1 presentation of text and images, with accompanying papers, 5-6 pages in length, excluding images, bibliography and/or references.

10% weekly response papers.

10% attendance and discussion.

40% final presentations.

Because it is not possible to duplicate the experience of class lectures and discussions simply by reading assigned texts, and the exams will cover class presentations, class attendance is very important. This class meets once a week for 3 hours so one day missed will put one at great disadvantage.

Excused absences are medical emergencies with documentation or bereavement leave with documentation—see UT policy in Appendix 1

There will be no make-up exams and papers will not be accepted late, nor will absences be excused without written verification of a medical excuse, a death in the family, etc. You should notify me in advance or as soon as practicably possible if you are under emergency medical care.

The grading Matrix is as follows:

30% for three exams, 10% or 50 points each = 150 points.

10% for one presentation = 50 points.

10% for response papers = 50 points
10% for attendance and participation = 50 points

40% Final Presentation (200 points)

Deductions for unexcused absences --the points are minus points. In other words you lose 20 points for every absence.

1 unexcused absence – 20 points
2 unexcused absences – 40 points
3 unexcused absences – 60 points
3 unexcused absences – 80 points
4 unexcused absences are equivalent to missing a full month of classes and will result in an automatic F.

100% = 500 total points

A = 460-500 points; A- = 450-459; B+ = 440-449; B = 410-439; B- = 400-409; C+ = 390-399; C = 360-389; C = 350-359 ; D = 325-349; F = 0-324 or 4 or more unexcused absences.

Class Policies, Courtesy and Attendance:

We will be using Blackboard for this course. Please check the sections marked Syllabus, Course Documents, Assignments and External links to keep up with course deadlines and readings.

You will not need in-class laptops and they must remain powered OFF. You will take notes with pencil and yellow notepaper provided by the HRC. Cell phones, backpacks, cameras, etc., are not permitted in the Zarrow room. You can leave most items in unlocked cubbyholes outside the classroom in a supervised hallway but staff is not responsible for items that go missing.

Please turn off cell phones before class begins. They will need to be left in lockers. In addition, electronic devices (laptop computers, pdas, ipods, recording devices) may not be used in class unless the device is necessitated by a registered disability. If you are a student with a disability who requires an accommodation(s) to participate in this course, please contact me within the first two weeks of the semester. You will be asked to provide documentation from the Student Disability Office. Failure to contact me in a timely manner may delay your accommodations.

If chronic tardiness becomes a problem, the classroom door will be locked at 5 minutes after the beginning of class. If you are late, you will not be allowed into class and be given an unexcused absence.

This syllabus and related materials may not be reproduced without the professor’s express written consent. Students are prohibited from selling (or being paid for taking) notes during this course to (or by) any person or commercial firm without the express written permission of the professor. Notes from this class may not be posted on the Internet or worldwide web. Students are encouraged to share hard copies of class notes with classmates, provided there is no charge for this service.

The professor reserves the right to deviate from the schedule and change the syllabus. Students will be informed of any changes in advance. Blackboard readings will appear a week the week before the class in which they will be discussed. Some of these readings are subject to change.
Tentative Class Schedule: (This syllabus represents current plans and objectives. As the semester progresses, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected, i.e., the arrangement of possible guest speakers.)

1) 1/15
Part I: Introduction to class: Presentation of syllabus and class expectations, over view of HRC required orientation and assignments.

Part II: Illustrated lecture: Idea and Desire: Photography’s Pre-History and Inventions.
Viewing of archival materials from HRC.

Assignment:
Complete all orientation requirements for HRC Reading Room:
http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/collections/guide/photography/

Read: Marien, Part I, Chapter 1.
Extra Readings on Blackboard and HRC reserves; all students are to read all readings. Each student will choose one reading at least 7-10 pages or more in length, or, if less than 7 pages in length, two of these readings for response.

Responses shall be one to two typed pages, 12 pt. type, single-spaced. Each student is to bring 2 copies, one to hand in to me at the beginning of class, and one to keep for reference while presenting. Responses are to consist of at least 3 sections: a brief description or synopsis of reading content, an original response to the reading – what does this information contribute to your understanding of photography, its nature, or the era/society/culture of the time, how does it relate to your own experience and knowledge, do you agree/disagree with its premise, etc., and a well-formed question with which to stimulate discussion.

2) 01/22
Due: Presentation of readings responses and discussion, hereafter designated as R & D.
Topics: The Early Years, 1839-1850’s: Diffusion of Innovation.
Viewing of original materials.
Read: Marien, Part 1, Chapter 2.
Extra Readings on Blackboard and HRC Reserves

3) 1/29
Due: R & D
Read: Marien, Part 2, Chapters 3 to page 90, and 4 to page 103.
Extra Readings on Blackboard and HRC

4) 02/05
Due: R&D.
Review for Exam One.
Read: Marien, Part 2, Chapter 3, page 91 to 97; Chapter 4, page 104 through Chapter 5.
Extra Readings on Blackboard and HRC reserves
5) 02/12
Exam One
Read: Marien, Part 3, Chapter 6.
Extra Readings on Blackboard and HRC reserves

6) 02/19
Due: R & D.
Topics: Early 1900’s – late 1920’s: English and American Social Reform Photography, WWI, American Modernism/The European Avant-Garde.
Read: Marien, Part 3, Chapter 7.
Extra Readings on Blackboard and HRC reserves

7) 02/26
Due: R&D.
Read: Marien, Part 4, Chapters 8 and 9.
Extra Readings on Blackboard and HRC reserves.

8) 03/05
Due: Presentation 1.
Students must arrange 1 week in advance to have the original HRC prints in the room when they present their work.
Topics: 1950’s – 1960’s: Magnum, Robert Frank, American Civil Rights, Art Institute of Chicago.
Read: Marien, Part 5, Chapter 10.
Extra Readings on Blackboard and HRC reserves.

03/12 - Spring Break

9) 03/19
Due: R & D.
Review for exam 2.
Read: Marien, Part 5, Chapter 11.
Extra Readings on Blackboard and HRC reserves.

10) 03/26
Exam 2
Read: Marien, Part 6, Chapter 13.
Extra Readings on Blackboard and HRC reserves

11) 04/02
Due: R & D.
Topics: Personal/Family Photography and Documentary.
Assignment: Bring scans of favorite/oldest/family photographs or any personal work you would like to share for presentation and discussion.
Read: Marien, Part 6, Chapter 13, pages 462-477.
Extra Readings on Blackboard and HRC reserves.
On reserve in Special Collections, Fine Arts Library: Ray’s a Laugh.

12) 04/09
Due: R&D.
Read: Marien, Part 6, Chapters 12 and 13 to page 461.
Readings on BlackBoard and HRC.

13) 04/16
Due: R&D.
Topics: The recent decade and the future: The Digital Era and Crisis of the Real.
Review for exam 3.

14) 04/23
Exam 3.
Final Presentations, Part 1.
Students must arrange 1 week in advance to have the original HRC prints in the room when they present their work.

15) 04/30
Final Presentations, Part 2.

Final presentation papers are to be typed, double-spaced, 12 pt. type, 1 inch margins, with name and EID in upper right corner, pages numbered, and a title describing the subject discussed. For undergraduate students, papers accompanying the presentations are to be of a minimum 10 pages, double-spaced, excluding images, references or bibliography. For graduate students, papers are to be 25 pages, double-spaced, excluding images, references or bibliography. Each student is required to bring 2 copies of papers to class.
APPENDIX I

Required University Notices and Policies

University of Texas Honor Code
The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Documented Disability Statement
The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone), http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/

Plagiarism and the Consequences of Plagiarizing
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/faculty/plagiarism/preventing.html
http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/

Resources for Learning & Life at UT Austin
The University of Texas has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning.
The UT Learning Center: http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/
Undergraduate Writing Center: http://uwc.utexas.edu/
Counseling & Mental Health Center: http://cmhc.utexas.edu/
Career Exploration Center: http://www.utexas.edu/student/careercenter/
Student Emergency Services: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/

Use of Blackboard in Class
This course will use Blackboard—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at http://courses.utexas.edu—to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments. You can find support in using Blackboard at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly.
Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students
Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php.

Religious Holy Days
By UT Austin policy, you must notify the instructor of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, the instructor will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)
If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal.

Emergency Evacuation Policy
Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:
• Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
• If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.
• In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless you’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.
Q drop Policy
The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6). As stated in Senate Bill 1231:
“Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number.”