ART 131 – HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Sample syllabus

Note that the actual syllabus will be different from this sample. This sample is from a previously taught section. Enrolled students will receive a current syllabus at the beginning of the semester.

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Email: Course related email should be sent using the email client in Blackboard/WebCT
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ABOUT THIS COURSE
This course is a survey of photography as an historical and contemporary form of art and communication. The student will develop appreciation for, and comprehension of, the issues, practices and theories involved in visual communication as well as gain insights into the role of photography with regard to social, cultural, and political shifts and events from its inception in early 19th Century to the present day.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify specific examples of inventiveness in early 19th century photographic processes, and apply them to social and political events of the time.
- Differentiate those elements in photographs that delineate historical content from those marking aesthetic expression.
- Identify at least three important historic photographers, and three contemporary photographers and articulate the contributions of each.
- Explain the role of economic, political and social influences on photographic trends and expression.
- Distinguish the differences between, and motivating factors behind, the various uses to which photography has been put by people prioritizing different social, cultural, economic, and political concerns.
- Identify and describe contributions to historical and contemporary photography made by individuals and groups outside of Europe and the United States.
- Analyze the production of visual images and the image-making and image-disseminating processes, and discuss these issues in class.
- Analyze and communicate the role of photography with regard to social, cultural, and political shifts and events from its inception in early 19th Century to the present day.
- Students will apply these insights to the investigation of both historical and current
visual trends.

**REQUIRED TEXT**

**GRADING**
Contributions to weekly discussion board 30%
Assignments 40%
Research Paper 30%

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION**
This is an on-line class. You are required to complete all reading and participate in the on-line discussion board at least once during the week. I will “close” the discussion board at the end of each week. Timely and active participation in the discussion board is considered the equivalent to attendance and participation in the class.

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**WEEK 1: Nature of the photographic process. Early concepts and discoveries.**
- **Required Reading:** Rosenblum, Chapter 1
- **Discussion Board Topic:** Who are you and why are you interested in studying the history of photography?
- **Assignment:** Western society was ready (perhaps even eager) for the invention of photo processes prior to the public announcements of the Dauguerreotype and Calotype. Rosenblum offers evidence to support this. Identify and explain 2 reasons she gives in support of this notion.
  ⇒ Submit a Word Document. One – Two pages (approx. 500 –1000 words) - Use 12pt Times, Baskerville or similar font - Set Document margins to 1 inch all around - Document will be double-spaced. At top of page, in 14pt font, include your name and the title *Week 1 Assignment.*

**WEEK 2: The fascination with portraits.**
- **Required Reading:** Rosenblum, Chapter 2
- **Discussion Board Topic:** Search your memory. What is the earliest photograph of yourself that you know of? What was the year? How old were you? What was the occasion for being photographed? Was it posed, or a moment caught on the fly? Was it important to those involved? If so, why? If not, why not? Do you remember anything about the time of the photo that’s not in evidence in the photo? In what ways is your memory of the event linked to the photo of the event?
- **Assignment:** The year is 1850. You're a member of the Working Class living in a major Western European city. Write a letter to your friend in the country and explain that you're thinking of having a portrait made of yourself. You're considering 2 options, an oil painting or one of the "new" photo processes. Weigh all facts you must consider for both, using your friend as a sounding board. Assume your friend knows little to nothing about photography. What are the pro's and con's of each? What do you decide? Your letter should clearly show you understand the social/cultural, economic, and technical considerations.

- **Required Reading**: Rosenblum, Chapter 3
- **Discussion Board Topic**: Discuss the photographers shown in this week’s slide show.
- **Assignment**: The year is 1870. You're an American photographer preparing a photographic journey to the Western US. Your photo process of choice is wet plate collodion. You have good financial backing but you want to find a partner.

Write an advertisement for a partner to run in the local newspaper (Craigslist has yet to be invented). Your ad should explain how the photo process works in the field, what equipment is used, what equipment you'll need to transport, how you plan to transport, what a typical day will look like once you're on the job, what hardships you might encounter, the characteristics you'll look for in a partner, how you plan to turn a profit and the manner in which you anticipate the photos being disseminated once you return.

You're in luck! Your cousin edits the local paper and will run an ad for you of any length for free!

- Submit a Word Document. One – Two pages (approx. 500 -1000 words) - Use 12pt Times, Baskerville or similar font - Set Document margins to 1 inch all around - Document will be double-spaced. At top of page, in 14pt font, include your name and the title *Week 3 Assignment*.

WEEK 4: Documentation: Objects and Events.

- **Required Reading**: Rosenblum, Chapter 4 [Read all sections including A Short Technical History: Part 1, and The 19th century forerunner to photojournalism.]
- **Discussion Board Topic**: Discuss elements of this week’s content that intrigue you.
- **Assignment**: What is your cultural heritage? (My ancestors hailed from a variety of Western European places: France, Germany, England, Ireland, The Netherlands.) How did early photography affect this culture? Conduct some independent research and try to find benefits photography brought to this culture and "your" people, as well as harms photography brought to this culture and "your" people. Your particular area of the planet may not have been affected by photography in 1839; in this case you'll discuss the time and nature of your region's earliest relationship with photography.

- One – Two pages (approx. 500 -1000 words) - Use 12pt Times, Baskerville or similar font - Set Document margins to 1 inch all around - Document will be double-spaced. At top of page include your name and the title *Week 4 Assignment*.


- **Required Reading**: Rosenblum, Chapters 5 & 6
- **Discussion Board Topic**: Discuss elements of this week’s content that intrigue you.
- **Assignment**: Rosenblum states that 3 main positions about the potential of the camera emerged in the early year of photography. One, “that photographs should not be considered art because they were made with a mechanical device and by physical and chemical phenomena instead of the human hand and spirit.” Two, “photographs would be useful to art but should not be considered equal in creativeness to drawing and painting.” And three, “camera images were or could be as significant as handmade works or art and that they might have a beneficial influence on the arts and on culture in
general.”

Write in more detail about these 3 positions and give examples of individuals and groups advocating for and against each.

⇒ Submit a Word Document. One – Two pages (approx. 500 -1000 words) - Use 12pt Times, Baskerville or similar font - Set Document margins to 1 inch all around - Document will be double-spaced. At top of page, in 14pt font, include your name and the title Week 5 Assignment.

WEEK 6: Art Photography: Another Aspect. 1890 – 1920
- Required Reading: Rosenblum, Chapter 7
- Discussion Board Topic: Discuss elements of this week’s content that intrigue you.
- Assignment: What was Pictorialism, what was its origins, what was this “ism” a reaction against, what were the differences, if any, between Pictorialists in the United States and Europe, what where some of the pictorial qualities of artworks made under this “ism”, who were some of the main practitioners of it, and what did they do to make their work stand out from the rest?
  ⇒ Submit a Word Document. One – Two pages (approx. 500 -1000 words) - Use 12pt Times, Baskerville or similar font - Set Document margins to 1 inch all around - Document will be double-spaced. At top of page, in 14pt font, include your name and the title Week 6 Assignment.

- Required Readings: Rosenblum, Chapter 8. Several other readings and resources for the following lesson will be provided.
- Lesson: The perpetrators' compulsion for self-indictment: from US lynchings to Kymer Rouge to Abu Graib.
- Discussion Board Topics:
  1. What did you find interesting from Chapter 8?
  2. Discuss the content for the Lesson: The perpetrators' compulsion for self-indictment: from US lynchings to Kymer Rouge to Abu Graib.
- Assignment: Paper Proposal

Submit two 1-paragraph proposals for your Final Paper. You may choose as your research topic any theme, issue, person, movement, or aspect of the History of Photography. Your proposal must be accepted by the instructor for you to proceed. This will be a 8 – 10 page paper.

Notice that the requirement is to propose 2 topics instead of one. This will save time as you're more likely to hit on one I think is viable by suggesting two. Your topic may date to the present day!

Submit 1 Word Document with both proposals named: lastname_proposal.doc

- Required Reading: Rosenblum, Chapter 8. Several other readings and resources for the following lesson will be provided.
Lesson: The perpetrators’ compulsion for self-indictment: from US lynchings to Kymer Rouge to Abu Graib.

Discussion Board Topics:

1. Discuss the content for the Lesson: The perpetrators’ compulsion for self-indictment: from US lynchings to Kymer Rouge to Abu Graib.

⇒ Assignment: Is the camera a credible witness against atrocity? Can you identify historical or contemporary examples of abuse of power and the use of photography going together? The perpetrators of crimes and atrocities often make their own photographic documents of their actions; why do you suppose this is? In the case of American lynching photographs not only was there no attempt made to hide this documentation, the images were actually sent out as postcards. Why would anyone create such a record that could be used against them later? Does the photographer have a responsibility to stop an atrocity from taking place? Can you imagine scenarios where you’re answer to this question would vary?

⇒ Submit a Word Document. One – Two pages (approx. 500 -1000 words) - Use 12pt Times, Baskerville or similar font - Set Document margins to 1 inch all around - Document will be double-spaced. At top of page, in 14pt font, include your name and the title Week 8 Assignment. Submit using the SafeAssign tool on our Home Page.

WEEK 9: Art, Photography, and Modernism.

⇒ Required Reading: Rosenblum, Chapter 9 [All sections required reading except, A Short Technical History: Part II.]

⇒ Discussion Board Topics: Discuss elements of this week’s content that intrigue you.

⇒ Assignment: Write a profile of one of these photographers featured in the reading for the week:

- Man Ray (Emmanuel Radnitsky)
- Alexander Rodchenko
- John Heartfield (Helmut Herzfelde)
- Hannan Hoch
- Andre Kertesz
- Manuel Alvarez Bravo
- Alvin Langdon Coburn
- Karl Blossfeldt
- Albert Renger-Patzsch
- Tina Modotti
- Laura Gilpin
- Berenice Abbott
- Paul Outerbridge
- Imogen Cunningham
- Margaret Bourke-White
- Hans Bellmer
- Barbara Morgan

Use the profiles at the end of Chapter 9 on Moholy-Nagy, Strand, and Weston as guides. Your profile should contain some biographical information (where did he or she come from?; where did he or she work?), some telling of the kind of
photography he/she engaged in. What movement was he/she associated with? Who influenced this person’s work and who in turn did she/he influence? And any other information you discover and think is important.

⇒ Submit a Word Document. One – Two pages (approx. 500 -1000 words) - Use 12pt Times, Baskerville or similar font - Set Document margins to 1 inch all around - Document will be double-spaced. At top of page, in 14pt font, include your name and the title Week 9 Assignment. Submit using the SafeAssign tool on our Home Page.

WEEK 10: Words and Pictures: Photography in Print Media 1920 - present day.

- **Required Reading:** Rosenblum, Chapter 10
- **Discussion Board Topic:** Discuss elements from Rosenblum’s Chapter 10 that intrigue you.
- **Lesson:** Implicit and Explicit Meaning

Chapter 10 puts many different ways of working and presenting photographs under the umbrella *Words and Pictures*. One could easily argue that more is put under this umbrella than appropriate. However, the focus starts out on magazine photo stories before digressing in other directions, and it is this focus that our lesson plays off of.

Instructions:

1. Go to [Socialdocumentary.net](http://Socialdocumentary.net)
2. From the Home page select a featured documentary photo project. There are about 20 or so, some linked on a left hand column and a few with larger windows in the middle of the page (the featured featured).
3. Feel free to look at a few projects before settling on the one you’ll work with, but **do not** read any captions or exhibit abstracts. In other words, don’t seek out any information other than the visual. Here’s the tricky part – you may find one that does not even offer captions but this is not good since you’ll need the captions later. Look for a heading indicating captions directly below the name of the photographer, the title of the project, and the location. If there are captions you’ll see the option in this upper left area along with thumbnails, and exhibit abstract. You must choose a project that has captions available.
4. Once you’ve selected your project, go through the slides in order, and remember **do not** read the captions. The first time through don’t take notes. Go through the slides again and start writing (feel free to use the pause button!). Now, before you move on, please write a 1-page length response in which you answer these questions:
   a. What is this project about?
   b. What is the story being told?
   c. Is the photographer pushing a point?
   d. Where are the photographer’s sympathies.
   e. What is your emotional response to the story?
   f. Do you like the photos?
   g. With whom, if anyone, in the photo essay do your sympathies lie?
5. Once you’ve completed writing your first response, click on the **Exhibit Abstract** link for the project you just wrote about and read what the photographer wants you to know about the project. Now click on the **Caption** link and look at the photos again only this time take a moment to read the captions as you go. Also, read the **artist statement if there
is one. Now - keeping in mind that the experience of seeing the photos along with textual information is a different experience from viewing the photos cold - write a second 1-page length response in which you address the same questions above. End this response with a paragraph in which you consider this exercise and what you discovered about how you personally process visual and visual/textual information.

6. Submit this as a Word document. At the top of your response include your name, then Photographer: The name of the photographer whose work you looked at and Title: The title of the photo project you wrote about.

7. No need to submit this via SafeAssign. Please submit in Assignment area. Look for

WEEK 11: Photography since 1950 The Straight Image.

- **Required Reading:** Rosenblum, Chapter 11
- **General Discussion Board Topic:** Discuss aspects of this week’s content that most interested you.
- **Peer Group Discussion Board Topic:** Each student will communicate more with his or her peer group concerning the term paper. You should go from the general (your proposal) to the more specific by providing the main points your paper will consider. Also, you’ll list the helpful resources you’ve found thus far. Here’s a good example of what one student had to share:

**HELLO GROUP,**

**MY TERM PAPER WILL BE ON DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY, A TYPE OF PHOTOGRAPHY THAT USES DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY. I PLAN TO INCLUDE THINGS IN MY PAPER SUCH AS:**

1. THE HISTORY OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY
2. AN EXPLANATION ON HOW DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY TECHNICALLY WORKS AND THE WAY IT IS STORED ON COMPUTERS HAS CHANGED OVER TIME (FROM .GIF FILES TO .PNG FILES, ETC)
3. THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY ON THE WORLD
4. EXPLANATION OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY’S RELATIONSHIP WITH VIDEO

**THE REASON I CHOSE THIS TOPIC IS BECAUSE I AM REALLY INTERESTED IN TECHNOLOGY. BEING A COMPUTER SCIENCE MAJOR, UNDERSTANDING THE WAY IMAGES ARE STORED ON COMPUTERS IS SOMETHING THAT WILL BE USEFUL TO ME.**

**ALSO, I HAVE DONE A LOT OF VIDEO EDITING (BASICALLY BATCH PHOTO EDITING) ON MY OWN, WHICH HAS GIVEN ME SOME INSIGHT INTO HOW PHOTOGRAPHS ARE STORED ON COMPUTERS. AS A RESULT, I ALREADY HAVE SOME INSIGHT INTO DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY.**

**SOME RESOURCES THAT I HAVE ALREADY TRACKED DOWN ARE:**

http://www.cambridgeincolour.com/tutorials.htm
http://www.shortcourses.com/

- **Assignment:** Outline Chapter 11
  - A good skill to develop as you research for your term paper is to glean the key points to something you’re reading. This assignment is designed to help you develop that skill.
Create an outline of Chapter 11. It will include as many main ideas and sub-points as you deem appropriate.

For a brief tutorial on basic outlining, take a look at 
http://www.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/research/outlining.html

A decent how-to on making an outline in Word can be found at 
http://www.ehow.com/how_2190262_create-outline-microsoft-word.html

Note, the tutorial fails to mention that the “demote” and “promote” buttons show as green arrow icons but you can display their names by hovering over the icon with your cursor.

Submit this as a Word doc named lastname_week11
Upload to the regular assignment area – not SafeAssign. No citations required.

WEEK 12: Photography since 1950: Manipulations and Color, and First Draft Due.

Required Reading: Rosenblum, Chapter 12 [Except A Short Technical History: Part III]

General Discussion Board Topic: Discuss aspects of this week’s content that most interested you.

Peer Group Discussion Board Topic: Continue conversing with your group. Help one another with research questions. Share ideas.

Assignment: Outline Chapter 12: Follow instructions for Week 11. Submit as lastname_week12

Assignment: First Draft of Paper due to your peer group. The final paper length requirement is 8-10 pages. Your draft may be a bit shorter than this but at least 5-6 pages. Your draft will include a “Works Cited” page and proper in-text MLA citations as well.

You will turn this draft in at 2 locations:
1. Within your peer discussion group create a new message. For subject enter your last name and the words First Paper Draft. You have now shared your first draft with your peers.
2. Submit your first draft to me via the SafeAssign icon on our home page. The due date is the same for both submissions (Friday 5pm). You’ll earn one of 3 grades for this: a “2” means you submitted a complete first draft as instructed (length and citation are as required), a “1” means you submitted an incomplete first draft (length and citation are not as required), a “0” means you did not submit an acceptable first draft.

In your *Peer Discussion Area - Each student will provide suggestions and clarifying questions for every person in the group in response to the first drafts. This conversation should start early in the week.

For each of your peers you must answer these questions:

1. What are the strengths of the paper?
2. How can the paper's structure be improved?
3. Is there a clearly articulated thesis?
4. Are authoritative resources being used?
5. How can grammar be improved?
6. How can the structure of the paper be improved?
7. Is something missing from the treatment of the topic?
8. Any insights, questions, and suggestions are welcome!

The idea is to strengthen the papers with early peer input and accountability. This conversation should start early in the week.

* Do not conduct this conversation using email. I need to see it.

WEEK 14: Second Draft

- **Assignments:** Second Draft of Paper due to your peer group. The final paper length requirement is 8-10 pages. This second draft should be in the 7-11 page range. Your draft will include a “Works Cited” page and proper in-text MLA citations as well.

You will turn this draft in at 2 locations:
1. Within your peer discussion group create a new message. For subject enter your last name and the words Second Paper Draft. You have now shared your second draft with your peers.
2. Submit your second draft to me via the SafeAssign icon on our home page. The due date is the same for both submissions (Friday 5pm). You’ll earn one of 3 grades for this: a “2” means you submitted a complete second draft as instructed (length and citation are as required), a “1” means you submitted an incomplete second draft (length and citation are not as required), a “0” means you did not submit an acceptable second draft.


In your *Peer Discussion Area - Each student will provide suggestions and clarifying questions for every person in the group in response to the second drafts. This conversation should start early in the week.

Once again, ask the questions listed above for the first draft. In addition comment on whether the suggestions provided last time were incorporated into the second draft. How else has the paper been improved? How can it still be improved? Finally, what grade do you think the paper should earn as is?

The idea is to strengthen the papers with early peer input and accountability. This conversation should start early in the week.
* Do not conduct this conversation using email. I need to see it.

**Finals Week: Papers Due Friday December 18th at 8:00pm**
- *Late papers not accepted.*