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Office hours by appointment

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ARH 350-01 (Spring 2017): History of Photography
T/R 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. in Cone 107 (WAM)

This is an advanced undergraduate course that focuses on the history and theory of photography with an emphasis on photography as a creative form of visual expression in 20th & 21st-century American culture. A radical proposition underlies the logic of this course: namely, that photography (broadly defined) has been the most influential visual medium of modern times. The implications of this thesis will be explored throughout the semester. Continuing themes throughout the course will be photography as a mediated transcription of “the real” and the complexities of photography as a means of creative expression poised between the political engagements of social documentary and the visual pleasure of a modernist (formalist) aesthetics. The emphasis throughout will be on informed discussion and personal critical responses to texts and images. Students will be challenged to engage in variously structured ways with each other and with their teacher.

Close reading, understood as a crucial activity situated at the heart of liberal humanism, will be practiced in an overtly self-conscious and critical fashion. To this end, each student will be asked to confront, at length and with undivided attention, a wide-ranging series of texts included in a Course Reading Packet (see below). In an earlier, pre-digital age, there was a general default expectation with regard to the ratio of time spent reading relative to time spent in the classroom: two hours of reading per week for every course credit hour. This means that I will be counting on you to budget six hours per week of concentrated and undistracted close reading time. Given the screen-centered nature of the present culture, this may take some commitment and perseverance on your part. Deep literacy (to be discussed) is at the heart of this course. Students will be expected to consult UNCG’s Canvas and UNCG e-mail on a regular basis as a way of keeping updated as to all course assignments and changes as we go.

Required Readings -- Course Reading Packet
It is an essential part of this course that you spend time, energy, and care in creating your own bound hardcopy version of the Course Reading Packet (DUE: Thurs., Jan. 26). These texts constitute the objects of study for the 3 exams. They should be read carefully according to the timetable listed in the Class Schedule (see below). Bring your CRP to every class (PLEASE!)

Grading
I will be doing my best to separate out my role as teacher, ally, and advocate for the pleasures and difficulties of photography and the history thereof from that of authority, gatekeeper, and grader. (It’s my job to do both.) To this end I will be using a contract grading system. The successful completion of the following requirements will insure a final course grade of B+: 

1. No more than 2 [two] unexcused absences for the Semester.
2. Timely completion of all reading assignments (before or after the corresponding lecture).
3. A combined average of 75 points out of 100 on the three exams. [See p. 6 for Grading Scale]
4. Good-faith class participation in group work, class discussions, conferences with me, etc.
Course Upgrade
Those of you interested in a higher grade will need to fulfill all requirements for the B+ (1-4 listed above) and achieve a combined average score on the Midterm and Final Exams of 88-92 (A-), 93-96 (A), and 97-100 (A+).

Class Schedule (Subject to Change!)

1. 1/17 Course Preliminaries

2. 1/19 Looking, Reading, and Interpretation
   Reading

3. 1/24 Early Histories: Daguerre & Talbot
   Reading

4. 1/26 Photography & Modernism * [Course Reading Packets Due before Class]
   Readings

5. 1/31 Lewis Hine
   Reading

6. 2/2 Alfred Stieglitz
   Reading

7. 2/7 Lucinda Devlin: Sightlines (Weatherspoon Art Museum Exhibition)
   Reading

8. 2/8 Edward S. Curtis, The North American Indian
   Readings
9. 2/14 Eugene Atget

**Reading**

*10. 2/16 No class. We will attend the following exhibition and evening lecture instead:
   
   *Stephen Fletcher, “Light and Air: The Photography of Bayard Wootten”*
   Thursday, February 16, 5:00 p.m.
   GPS (Greensboro Project Space)
   *The Anvil Building, 219 W Lewis St, Greensboro, NC 27406*

11. (2/21) **Exam # 1 on Classes 1-10** (Slide Identifications, Text Identifications, True/False & Multiple Choice Questions)

12. 2/23 Susan Sontag’s *On Photography*

**Readings**

13. 2/28 Susan Sontag (continued)

14. 3/2 Dorothea Lange

**Readings**

15. 3/7 Walker Evans

**Readings**

16. 3/9 Henri Cartier-Bresson

**Reading**

**SPRING BREAK**

17. 3/21 Roy DeCarava

**Readings**

*18. 3/23 No class. Evening Lecture at 7:00 p.m. in the Weatherspoon Auditorium
George Dimock, “The Poetics of Incongruity in the Photographs of Lucinda Devlin”

19. 3/28 Robert Frank

**Readings**
[18] Jack Kerouac, “Introduction to The Americans”
20. 3/30 **Exam # 2 on Classes 12-19**

21. 4/4 Martha Rosler  
**Reading**  

22. 4/6 Allan Sekula  
**Reading**  

23. 4/11 Sally Mann  

24. 4/13 Barbara Kruger, Cindy Sherman, and Sherrie Levine (Postmodern Photography)  
**Reading**  

25. 4/18 Jeff Wall  
**Reading**  

26. 4/20 Joel Sternfeld  
**Reading**  

27. 4/25 TBA

28. 4/27 **Exam #3 on Classes 21-27** (Student Course Evaluations)

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**Course Reading Packet Assembly Information**

This course relies heavily on a Course Reading Packet (CRP). The theory and practice of reading and of putting words to images will be a crucial issue throughout the semester. In order for all of us to be on the same page (literally), each student is required to assemble the CRP according to the following guidelines. (Please note – all texts are available under “Files” in Canvas.)

1. Title page (see template)  
2. Syllabus  
3. Readings (#’s 1-24) should be printed, numbered, and bound together in the order listed.

Please note: the form of binding is up to you. The requirement is that the completed Course
Reading Packet be stable & easily transportable and that your NAME appear on the front cover. The first major graded assignment of the semester will be to successfully create your Course Reading Packet. It is due before class on Thursday, January 26. A further cautionary note: It will take time, patience, and careful attention to assemble this crucial document. Do not try to do this assignment quickly or at the last minute. It will only make you frustrated. I urge you to help save the planet by finding a printer that will print out your documents on both sides of the page.

**TEXTS for CRP (To be Assembled in the Following Order)**

[8] Edward S. Curtis and *The North American Indian*  
## Grading Scale for Exams

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<td>A+</td>
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