

ARTH 220: HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

“History of Photography” explores the historical development of photography and considers the medium’s aesthetic components as well as the theoretical and representational issues it raises. As an art form that relies on mechanical processes for the production of “realistic” images, photography is often wrongly assumed to be an inherently “truthful” and non-biased medium. Behind every camera, however, is a photographer, and in front of every photo is a viewer. This course will consider the ways in which the photographer’s personal cultural “lenses” influence what subjects and approaches he or she might use in his/her work, as well as the ways in which viewers similarly use cultural “lenses” to interpret works from various perspectives. Using a workshop, lecture and discussion format, students will investigate four areas of diversity understanding, including self-identification, diversity appreciation and value, diversity consciousness of community and society, and diversity in a democratic society.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Students enrolled in “History of Photography” will complete the following goals and objectives:

Goal I: In order to gain a broader understanding of intellectual-cultural activities and products of past and present societies, including diverse cultures and subcultures in the United States and throughout the world, all students will:

- Objective 1:** Identify and analyze key artists, movements and ideas in the history of world art and photography.
- Objective 2:** Discuss ethnicity, race, class and/or gender perspectives related to the topics covered in the course
- Objective 3:** Demonstrate through language and art a knowledge of cultures different from their own.

Goal II: In order to gain factual knowledge and, in turn, demonstrate the skills and methodologies of art history, all students will:

- Objective 1:** Examine primary historical and literary texts integral to the study of art history and photography.
- Objective 2:** Participate in themed group discussions considering the form and content of particular photographs, and apply skills of visual analysis to discover their structure and meaning.
- Objective 3:** Evaluate, through oral and written processes of analysis and interpretation, the social, historical, literary, philosophical and aesthetic features of a photograph as a work of art.

Goal III: In order to demonstrate their knowledge of a particular subject matter, as well as deepen their understanding of both the subject and discipline as a whole, students will :

- Objective 1:** Write a minimum of 4,000 words in a variety of phased assignments which reflect the genres, techniques, processes and conventions used by professionals in the disciplines of art history and photography.
- Objective 2:** Demonstrate through writing comprehension of important concepts and/or data relating to the disciplines of art history and photography.
- Objective 3:** Analyze and synthesize through writing important concepts and/or data relating to the disciplines of art history and photography.

TEXT

The text for "History of Photography" is Naomi Rosenblum, *A World History of Photography*, Third Edition, New York: Abbeville Press, 1997. Copies are available at the University of Scranton Bookstore. Additional internet sources for themed discussions will also be assigned.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be graded on attendance and participation (17% of final grade); two examinations (2 at 11% for 22% of final grade); four art reviews (4 at 11% for 44% of final grade); and one research paper (1 at 17% for 17% of final grade). All requirements must be completed during scheduled times, and are described in detail below. Late assignments will be dropped a letter grade per day.

CLASS ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION

Class attendance and participation in group discussion will form an essential part of your grade. Worksheets will be used to help students develop discussion ideas, and to track participation. Given the media-dependent nature of this course, failure to attend class will adversely affect a student's grade.

EXAMS

Two exams will be given during the course of the semester, including the final exam, which is non-cumulative. All exams will consist of a short slide identification section, a series of terms or short-answer questions, and a set of essay questions. Since slides will be presented as part of the exams, all exams will have time restrictions.

ART REVIEWS

During the course of the semester, students enrolled in "History of Photography" will participate in four workshops and review four associated art events, including a walking tour, gallery exhibition, film screening, and bus trip, for which times and details will be announced. These events are:

- 1. Walking Tour:
Lackawanna Historical Society Camera and Photo Collection.**
- 2. Gallery Review:
University of Scranton Art Gallery Exhibition.**
- 3. Film Screening:
"Triumph of the Will" and "Night and Fog."**
- 4. Bus Trip
Eastman/Kodak House Photography Museum.**

Three page written reviews evaluating these works/events are required. Reviews should use the following format:

1. Introduction

Completely identify the event you are reviewing, including its title, location, date, time, speaker or exhibiting artist/s, and size and type of audience in attendance.

2. Ideas Addressed by Event

Outline the major concepts addressed by the speaker and/or exhibition.

3. Presentation of Ideas During Event

Describe how the important ideas noted above are expressed in particular works of art and/or speaker's statements.

4. Evaluation

Discuss whether or not the presentation of main ideas during the event was successful, given the event's time, location, audience, etc. When were ideas made clear, and when could they have been better conveyed? How and why?

NOTE: If you are enrolled in more than one art history or studio course, please check with your instructor to avoid duplication of film, gallery and museum assignments. Art reviews cannot be submitted for credit in more than one course! Alternate assignments must be arranged to prevent conflicts!

RESEARCH PAPER

Students enrolled in "History of Photography" will complete a ten- to fifteen-page research paper relating a photographer and his/her work to its larger historical context, and incorporating an analysis of issues relating to the photograph's principal subject and audiences. This paper, and the development of it, will form a major part of the course, and will be graded incrementally at four distinct stages, as listed below:

1. Annotated Bibliography (2% of 17%)

Annotated bibliographies for research paper must include at least ten sources. Of these sources, at least three must be primary sources. Sources should include discussions of artistic content and context, as well as relevant historical issues.

2. Outline Discussion (2% of 17%)

Preliminary outlines for research papers will be discussed in class as informal progress reports, and submitted to the instructor in written form. Outlines should clearly articulate the thesis of the paper and list major thematic sections to be developed in sentence and paragraph form.

3. Research Paper Discussion (2% of 17%)

Depending on class size, brief paper presentations will be given during class. Presentations should fully reflect complete and articulate arguments to be found in the final written form of the research paper. Students are expected to actively critique presentations, and to initiate discussions on topics presented.

4. Final Draft (11% of 17%)

A final, written draft of the research paper will be submitted to the instructor on the last day of class. The paper should contain complete footnotes and bibliography in accordance with accepted MLA or Chicago Manual of Style formats.

GRADE SCALE

The following grade scale is used by the Art and Music Program:

A (96-100); A- (90-95); B+ (88-89); B (85-87); B- (80-84); C+ (78-79); C (75-77); C- (70-74); D+ (68-69); D (60-67); F (below 60).

ACADEMIC CODE OF HONESTY

Students are expected to act in accordance with the Academic Code of Honesty of the University of Scranton. If you are unfamiliar with this policy, please contact the CAS Dean's Office to obtain a policy brochure.

CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR

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CLASS SCHEDULE *Order of scheduled classes may change slightly.

1. Introduction: Portraits and Positionality
2. Workshop 1: Lackawanna Historical Society Camera Collection
3. Chapter 1: Early Years
4. Chapter 2: Plentitude of Portraits
5. Discussion 1: Age and Disability:
Lewis Carroll and Dr. Hugh Welch Diamond
6. Chapter 3: Landscape and Architecture
7. Discussion 2: Native Americans and the American West:
Edward Curtis and William Jackson
8. Workshop 2: University of Scranton Art Gallery Exhibition
9. Chapter 4: Objects and Events
10. Discussion 3: Race and Ethnicity:
Hill & Adamson and Underwood & Underwood
11. Chapter 5: Photography and Art
12. Chapter 6: New Technology
13. Discussion 4: Urbanization and Immigration:
Eugene Atget and Alfred Steiglitz
14. Review I
15. Test I
14. Chapter 7: Art Photography
15. Chapter 8: Social Scene
16. Discussion 5: Class and Social Reform:
Lewis Hine and Jacob Riis
17. Workshop 3: Film Screening of "Triumph of the Will" and "Night and Fog"
18. Chapter 9: Modernism
19. Chapter 10: Print Media
20. Discussion 6: The Great Depression and the FSA:
Walker Evans and Dorothea Lange
21. Chapter 11: Straight Image
22. Discussion 7: Civil Rights and African-American Identity:
James Van Der Zee and Carrie Mae Weems
23. Workshop 4: Eastman Kodak House Bus Trip
24. Chapter 12: Manipulation and Color
25. Discussion 8: Feminism and Gender Issues:
Cindy Sherman and Barbara Kruger
26. Review II
27. Test II

INTRODUCTION AND DISCUSSION OVERVIEWS

Introduction:

Portraits and Positionality

As stated in the first paragraph of the syllabus, photographs, despite the mechanical processes involved in producing them, are highly subjective, as both photographers and viewers use cultural “lenses” when framing and viewing photographs. The implications of these “lenses” in the production of meaning in a photograph can be particularly problematic when the image being framed and interpreted represents another human being, whose own cultural reality might be quite different from that of the photographer or the viewer. In this session, students will use diversity worksheets to identify their own cultural lenses. They will then view photographs by and of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, and discuss ways in which those photographs may be perceived. This process will address the diversity areas of self-identification and diversity appreciation and value.

Discussion 1:

Age and Disability: Lewis Carroll and Dr. Hugh Welch Diamond

Throughout the history of photography, the rights and perspectives of diverse individuals have often been misrepresented, particularly if those individuals have been unable to control the ways in which their images have been made and displayed. Age and disability are two factors that can limit an individual's control over his or her own image: young children and adults with certain mental conditions are often unable to understand or direct the use and production of certain images. During the late nineteenth century, the writer, clergyman, and amateur photographer Lewis Carroll (Reverend Charles L. Dodgson) produced photographs of the children of family friends which are today considered very nearly pornographic, while the psychiatrist and author Dr. Hugh Welch Diamond, in the name of science, took photographs of inmates at the Surrey County Asylum for use in his publication *The Physiognomy of Insanity*. In this session, students will consider the rights of individuals in terms of age and disability, discuss how these rights might be violated or enforced, and examine related issues of censorship and the regulation of images. This process will address the diversity areas of diversity appreciation and value and diversity consciousness of community and society.

Discussion 2:

Native Americans and the American West: Edward Curtis and William Jackson

During the nineteenth century, the United States actively pursued a political agenda of westward expansion that decimated the indigenous tribes of North America and claimed new territories as its own. Often, these political policies were reinforced by texts and images circulating throughout mainstream culture. In order to facilitate expansion, Native Americans were routinely depicted as either helpless children unable to cope in a technological society, or as exotic anthropological specimens documented on the verge of extinction, while western landscapes were prized for the wealth and variety of their natural resources. In this session, students will view photographs of Native Americans and western landscapes by the Edward Curtis and William Jackson. They will then consider these representations of people and places from both Native American and European-derived perspectives, paying special attention to issues of realism versus abstraction in depictions of the figure, and attitudes concerning nature as a life-giving force to be respected, versus the natural environment as an arena for industrial development. The impact that these nineteenth century actions and attitudes continue to have on the lives of Native Americans today will also be explored. This process will address the diversity areas of diversity consciousness of community and society and diversity in a democratic society.

Discussion 3:

Race and Ethnicity: Hill & Adamson and Underwood & Underwood

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the political practices and ideologies of nationalism and colonialism gave rise to a widespread interest in ethnic and non-western identities, as demonstrated in Hill and Adamson's portrait photographs of European peasants, and Underwood and Underwood's news photographs of "exotic" locales. Often billed as works that celebrated a diversity of cultures, these photographs could also present stereotypical views of individuals and lifestyles outside of mainstream Western society. During this session, students will consider their own ethnic identities to discern the ways in which they might be marginalized or essentialized, as well as celebrated and validated. This process will address the diversity areas of self identification and diversity appreciation and value.

Discussion 4:

Urbanization and Immigration: Eugene Atget and Alfred Steiglitz

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the combined forces of urbanization and immigration gave rise to new city spaces inhabited by residents from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Atget's photographs of Paris and Steiglitz's photographs of New York helped to define these cities in visual terms, clearly delineating how different spaces in the built environment were used and accessed by individuals from different social classes. During this session, students will consider how elements of class and privilege continue to define the ways in which visitors and residents move through city spaces. This process will address the diversity areas of diversity appreciation and value and diversity consciousness of community and society.

Discussion 5:

Class and Social Reform: Lewis Hine and Jacob Riis

During the nineteenth century, many American photographers documented the harsh living and working conditions that were being created by the strains of industrialization, urbanization and immigration. Lewis Hine used his photographs of children in breakers and mills to crusade for child labor laws, while Jacob Riis published his photographs of New York city tenements and slums in his book *How the Other Half Lives*. While these images were instrumental in bringing about social reform, they have also been critiqued for objectifying their impoverished subjects. During this session, students will consider the class and ethnicity of both the photographers and their subjects to understand how dominant classes in society may simultaneously assist and patronize others. This process will address the diversity areas of diversity consciousness of community and society and diversity in a democratic society.

Discussion 6:

The Great Depression and the FSA: Walker Evans and Dorothea Lange

During the 1930s, the federally-funded Farm Security Administration hired photographers to document the lives of Midwestern farmers who had been displaced by environmental and economic crises of the early twentieth century. During this session, students will review primary FSA documents which instructed photographers on which subjects might be most appropriate to photograph, given the FSA's dual concerns of public approval for the expenditure of federal funds, and the effectiveness of photographs as tools for generating public support for social change. Students will compare their own definitions of "American" identities with those promoted by the FSA, particularly in regard to rural, agricultural values versus urban, industrial ones. This process will address the diversity areas of self identification and diversity in a democratic society.

Discussion 7:

Civil Rights and African-American Identity: James Van Der Zee and C.M. Weems

Since the late nineteenth century, African-American photographers have used the camera to document and interpret the challenges and triumphs faced by individuals of color in a

predominantly white society. Works by James Van Der Zee depicted prominent figures of the Harlem Renaissance, while later photographs by Carrie Mae Weems considered the socio-economic difficulties still confronting minority populations today. During this session, students will review United States legislation concerning African-American rights, ranging from Jim Crow laws to the Civil rights movement. This process will address the diversity areas of diversity consciousness of community and society and diversity in a democratic society.

Discussion 8:

Feminism and Gender Issues: Cindy Sherman and Barbara Kruger

During the late twentieth century, feminism came to the forefront of American politics, culture and art. Photographs like Cindy Sherman's self-portraits, in which she assumed various personas from history and society, and Barbara Kruger's mixed media works, which borrowed images from news and advertising sources, commented on the traditional roles of women in a patriarchal culture, and presented female views on contemporary issues. During this session, students will consider the changing perspectives of gender in the arts, as well as society at large. This process will address the diversity areas of diversity appreciation and value and diversity in a democratic society.

WORKSHOP OVERVIEWS

Workshop 1: Lackawanna Historical Society Camera Collection

Students will tour the Lackawanna Historical Society in order to view historical cameras and photographs first hand. They will also consider how and why equipment and images were preserved within the context of the historical society's collections, and what audiences and interests they were intended to serve. This process will address the diversity areas of diversity consciousness of community and society and diversity in a democratic society.

Workshop 2: University of Scranton Art Gallery Exhibition

Students will tour an exhibition at the University of Scranton Art Gallery which addresses issues of diversity in photography. While this exhibition will be determined in keeping with relevant academic calendars, past exhibitions at the University of Scranton relevant to these subjects have included *Women of the Native Struggle: Photographs by Ronnie Farley*, and *Contemporary Latin American Photography*. Diversity speakers will also be present at the exhibition opening. This process will address the diversity areas of self identification, diversity appreciation and value, diversity consciousness of community and society and diversity in a democratic society.

Workshop 3: Film Screening of "Triumph of the Will" and "Night and Fog"

Students will view the films "Triumph of the Will" and "Night and Fog," which portray, respectively, Hitler's vision for Germany under the Third Reich, and the findings of Allied liberators of concentration camps in the wake of World War II. A comparison of the films is instructive in that the works present two very different views of what Hitler deemed necessary for the creation of an Aryan state: the validation of an archetypal "Germanness," and the annihilation of Jews. Students will consider the films in terms of their use for propaganda and documentation, as well as their broader implications concerning national identities and religious affiliations. This process will address the diversity areas of diversity appreciation and value and diversity consciousness of community and society.

Workshop 4: Eastman Kodak House Bus Trip

Students will tour the Eastman Kodak Photography Museum to view historical photographs first hand. As the trip is scheduled for late in the semester, students will be able to use

actual works to discuss all diversity issues covered in class. This process will address the diversity areas of self identification, diversity appreciation and value, diversity consciousness of community and society and diversity in a democratic society.