

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE

Anthropology 325L [31415::31425] – fall 2013

[P]hotography is not best understood as a particular art or medium, but rather in terms of the form of the image it produces. . .

Peter Osborne¹

Ultimately, Photography is subversive not when it frightens, repels, or even stigmatizes, but when it is pensive, when it thinks.

Roland Barthes²

Overview.

This course applies concepts and practices from anthropology and cultural studies to photography and the study of memory, place, and everyday life. The course aims at developing counter-intuitive and subversive approaches to practices of looking (observation) and techniques of representation. Whereas photographs are often taken to be simple documentary technologies, we will invert this idea and explore how images can be transient and ephemeral by focusing on sites of encounter and orders of engagement. This course is organized as a split theory/hands-on exploration of the photographic image and image-making. At all points in the course students are drawn into the use of image-making as an interpretive and critical engagement with course readings. We will begin with techniques of visual inquiry established by visual anthropologists and documentarians as well as artists working in the vein of documentary traditions. Students taking this course will work primarily with still photographic images. The goal of this course is to learn about the field of visual anthropology and to gain skills in using photographic methods in research. *Students will be expected to have at their disposal a camera (digital or analogue).*

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¹ (2010) Infinite exchange: the social ontology of the photographic image. *Philosophy of Photography*, 1 (1). pp. 59-68.

² (1983) *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Seminars, Labs, and Studios.

Seminar: Tuesdays 3:30 – 5pm (SAC 4.118)

Labs: Fridays 10 – noon; 1 – 3pm (SAC 4.120)

Studios: tba (SAC 4.120)

Here's how this class works: You come to class every Tuesday having read the relevant chapters or articles and having prepared any assignments I've given you. These classes will be set up like a *seminar*. I'll do some lecturing but mostly we'll be actively discussing ideas related to the reading you're doing. Fridays you go to your *lab* (which meets as a group of ten). These days are reserved primarily for presentations but you will also be able to use it for independent and group work. You are also required to log two-hours of *studio* time.

Studio hours.

For each of the assignments you are required to work in a studio group. The studio group will be organized on a rotating basis from the larger Friday lab group; you will need to find a time that works with your other group-mates. You are required to spend two lab hours each week. While you are not monitored in your activities, I expect that you will spend the time working with software, on your assignments, or at least reading. Don't forget to fill out the sign-in sheet.

1. Studio Groups (1hr/week)
2. Individual work time (1hr/week)

Materials.

There are two books required for this course. Note that you must purchase the second edition of *The Photography Handbook*:

Highmore, Ben. 2002. *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction*. London; New York: Routledge.

Wright, Terence. 2004. *The Photography Handbook*. London; New York: 2nd ed. Routledge.

Additional readings may be assigned and shared as library references or digital files (pdfs). These will be made available with advance notice.

Assessment and grading.

Evaluation in this class is based on attendance, participation, and your performance on assignments. A rough guide to the breakdown of the valuation of each assignment is below:

Assignments. (65%)

- #1 = 5 points
- #2 = 5 points
- #3 = 5 points
- #4 = 5 points
- #5 = 10 points
- #6 = 10 points
- #7 = 20 points

Participation. (35%)

Attendance, minor writing assignments, group work, etc.

Grades for each component will be given in points. Violations of the Code of Student Behaviour can result in failing grades.

Late assignments will not be accepted unless there are viable reasons, such as an illness (physician's note required) or an Act of Vengeful God (like a flood, tornado, hurricane, storm of frogs, rain of blood, or a blizzard). Late assignments will be marked down by two points for every day they are late. For example, an assignment that is worth 20 points to your final grade will receive a maximum of 18/20 if it is handed in one day late. It will receive a maximum of 16/20 if it is handed in two days late, etc.

Attendance Policy.

Attendance for seminar and lab is expected and is mandatory. You are also required to attend. Students with two or more unexcused absences from the lab sections will have their final evaluation reduced by at least one letter grade.

Readings, assignments, and topics are subject to change (with reasonable notice), reflecting the general pace of student/instructor progress in this class.

Schedule of Readings.

*Note that in some cases I may change reading or add new ones. You will be given adequate notice in these instances.

September	<p><u>Tues. 09-10</u> Read: Highmore, 1-3. <i>Figuring the Everyday</i>. Assignment #1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assignment given on in the Seminar on Sept. 6.• Work on assignment in Lab on September 13• Assignment is due on September 17. <p><u>Tues. 09-17</u> Read: Highmore, 4-6. <i>The marvelous and trash Aesthetics</i> Assignment #2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assignment given on in the Seminar on Sept. 10.• Work on assignment in Lab on September 20.• Assignment is due on September 23. <p><u>Tues. 09-24</u> Read: Highmore, 7-9. <i>Poetics of Everyday life</i> Assignment #3</p>
October	<p><u>Tues. 10-01</u> Wright, Chapter 1: Historical outline of photographic representation</p> <p><u>Tues. 10-08</u> Wright, Chapter 2: Pre-production</p> <p><u>Tues. 10-15</u> Wright, Chapter 3: The photographic image</p> <p><u>Tues. 10-22</u> Wright, Chapter 4: Post-production</p> <p><u>Tues. 10-29</u> Wright, Chapter 5: The documentary photograph</p>

November	<u>Tues. 11-05</u> Wright, Chapter 6: Photography as cultural critique
	<u>Tues. 11-12</u> Wright, Chapter 7: The ethics of photojournalism
	<u>Tues. 11-19</u> Wright, Chapter 8: Characteristics of digital photography
	<u>Tues. 11-26</u> Wright, Chapter 9: ..conclusion and beyond
	<u>Tues. 12-03</u>
	<u>Tues. 12-10</u>

Notices.

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

UT Honor Code (or statement of ethics) and an explanation or example of what constitutes plagiarism (Link to University Honor Code: <http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html>)

“By UT Austin policy, you must notify me 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, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.”

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.

Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy.
Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.

In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors.

Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050

Link to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency