

ARTH 4929, section 001
University of Colorado
Instructor: Robert Nauman
Office: Fleming Law, 415

CRITICAL ISSUES IN PHOTOGRAPHY
Fall 2009
e-mail: nauman@friu.com
Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00 – 3:00, and by app't

COURSE OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE

This course covers the history and theory of photography during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The relationship of photography to the other arts, as well as to literary, political, social and philosophical issues will be key to this discussion. This is not a techniques class, and less emphasis will be placed on, for example, how daguerreotypes and calotypes were produced (the chemical process), than on why that particular choice of medium was made, and the implications of the medium. Neither is this a survey class. Instead we will look at some of the critical issues that inform photography, examining writings of critics, historians, and photographers in the process.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance: Lectures are considered mandatory. Lectures are designed to serve as a supplement (not substitute) to the readings. You will be responsible for both lecture material and readings on the exams.

Readings: The required texts for this class are Photography: A Critical Introduction, edited by Liz Wells (3rd edition), and The Photograph by Graham Clarke. There will also be additional readings placed on electronic reserve at the library (those are indicated in the syllabus, or will be announced in class). All readings are intended to supplement the lectures and are required.

Note: The readings for this class are fairly extensive. It is expected that you will spend approximately 6 hours per week outside class with reading and writing assignments.

Exams: There will be exams on **Tuesday, September 25, Tuesday, October 27, and Tuesday, December 15 (NOTE THE TIME OF THE FINAL EXAM -- EARLY EXAMS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED)**. Due to the class size, it is not possible to change exam times or dates. **Make-up exams will be allowed only in the case of a medical emergency with a signed medical excuse from your physician.** These exams will be based on the assigned texts and lectures. You will be expected to answer questions in both an analytical and historical context. Exam format will be discussed in further detail prior to the exams.

Disability Services: Students with disabilities who qualify for academic accommodations must provide a letter from Disability Services (DS) and discuss specific needs with the professor during the first two weeks of class. DS determines accommodations based on documented disabilities: Willard 322; 492-8671; www.colorado.edu/sacs/disabilityservices.

Papers: A short paper will be assigned as a take home section of the first exam. More specific information will be handed out in class as to that assignment.

Discussion Groups: Each person in the class will be assigned to two of these groups. The groups will be responsible for critically evaluating the major aspects

of the readings for that day, and guiding the class in a short discussion. Groups and the day(s) for which they are responsible will be assigned during the semester. For these presentations, there will be a written and oral component. The written component will be a short paper (approximately 3 typed pages) that outlines the issues of the readings and summarizes the critical points they make. This paper will be due the day of the presentation (**I do not accept electronic submissions**). **The oral presentation and written component will count 25% of the second and third exam grades. THE WRITTEN COMPONENT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED UNLESS YOU DO THE ORAL PRESENTATION.**

Grading Policy: First exam, 30%; second exam 35%; final exam 35%. Class participation in the discussion groups will be factored into the grade.

COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE: TOPIC/READINGS:

Aug. 25	Introduction
27	Thinking About Photography Readings: Wells, Introduction, pp. 3-6; chap. 1, pp. 11-36; Clarke, Introduction, chap. 1 and 2; Barthes, "Rhetoric of the Image;" Bolton, "Introduction, The Contest of Meaning."
Sept. 1	Histories of Photography/Origins of Photography (part 1) Readings: Wells, chap. 1, pp. 48-63; Batchen, <i>Burning with Desire</i> , chap. 2 and 3.
3	Origins of Photography (part 2)/metal, paper, or glass
8	Photography as Technology; Photography as Art Readings: Wells, chap. 6, pp. 247-59; Clarke, chap. 3; Baudelaire, "The Salon of 1859;" Eastlake, "A Review in the London Quarterly." Short paper on Batchen reading due.
10	Travel Photography Readings: Solomon-Godeau, "A Photographer in Jerusalem."
15	Landscape Photography Readings: Wells, chap. 6, pp. 290-94;

		Clarke, chap. 4 (chap. 5, optional); Bright, "Victory Gardens;" Green, "The New American Frontier."
17		NO CLASS
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22		EXAM 1
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Sept. 24		The Subject as Object: Photography and the Human Body Readings: Wells, chap. 4; Clarke, chap. 7.
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29		Documentary Photography Readings: Wells, chap. 1, pp. 37-48; chap. 2, pp. 67-103; Clarke, chap. 8.
Oct. 1		Picturing <u>Life</u> Readings: Doss, "Introduction, Looking at <i>Life</i> Magazine."
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6		War Photography Readings: Trachtenberg, "Albums of War."
8		Film: <i>War Photographer</i> (James Nachtwey)
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13		Surrealism and Photography Readings: Wells, chap. 6, pp. 269-73; Krauss, "Photography in the Service of Surrealism."
15		Fashion Photography Readings: Bolton, "In the American East;" Niedenthal, "Glamorized Houses."
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20		Photography and Commodity Culture Readings: Wells, chap. 5;

Stein, "The Graphic Ordering of Desire;"
Ewen, "The Dream of Wholeness."

22	Discussion
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27	EXAM 2
Oct. 29	Formalism: From Weapon to Style Readings: Wells, chap. 6, pp. 259-69; Clarke, chap. 9 and 10; Solomon-Godeau, "The Armed Vision Disarmed."
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Nov. 3	The Museum, the Canon, and Photography Readings: Solomon-Godeau, "Canon Fodder;" Nesbitt, "Eugene Atget;" Phillips, "Judgment Seat of Photography."
5	The Artist as Photographer Readings: Wells, chap. 6, pp. 273-88;
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Nov. 10	Personal Photographs and Popular Photography Readings: Wells, chap. 3; Clarke, chap. 6.
12	Boltanski and the Archive
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17	Documentary Photography in the Postmodern Era Readings: Edwards, "Photography out of Conceptual Art," pp. 159-74; Sekula, "On the Invention of Photographic Meaning."
19	Pictorialism/Surrealism in the Postmodern Era Readings: Coleman, "The Directorial Mode;" Grundberg, "On the Dissecting Table."

25/27 NO CLASS -- THANKSGIVING BREAK

Dec. 1	Photography in the Age of Electronic Imaging Readings: Wells, chap. 7; Clarke, chap. 11.
3	Visit: Special Collections /FCQs
8	Guest Lecturer: Eric Paddock
10	TBA

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15 FINAL EXAM 10:30 AM - 1:00 PM