

University of Calgary
Department of Communication, Media and Film

Communication and Media Studies COMS 401.43, LEC 2

Special Topics in Communication Studies

Photography: A Social History

Winter 2017

Mon., Jan. 9 – Mon., Apr. 10 (excluding Feb. 20)

Lectures: Mon. 15:00 – 17:45

Instructor: Annie Rudd
Office: SS 312
Office Phone: (403) 220-5458
E-Mail: annie.rudd@ucalgary.ca
Web Page: D2L available through MyUofC portal
Office Hours: W 1-3pm, or by appointment

Course Description

In this course, students will be introduced to an inclusive and interdisciplinary history of photography, and will engage with key questions and debates that have surrounded the practice of photography during critical moments in its history. Studying photography and its cultural meanings from the earliest Victorian photographs to the ubiquitous digital imagery of the present day, we will explore the social, political, and ethical implications of taking photographs—and appearing in them—as they have emerged over the course of photography's history. In doing so, we will consider how these implications have shifted over time and across the medium's myriad functions. Approaching photography's social history thematically rather than chronologically, this course will allow students to make connections between the photography of the past and that of our image-saturated present moment.

Objectives of the Course

This course aims:

- to familiarize you with major developments and themes in the history of photography, focusing broadly on the social meanings of photographs;
- to equip you with a theoretical apparatus and a vocabulary that will enable you to critically interpret photographs;
- to introduce you to techniques of historical research involving the use of photographic images.

Textbooks and Readings

The textbook for this course is *Photography: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Liz Wells, 5th edition (2015), which is available at the campus bookstore. Please be sure to get the 5th edition—earlier editions differ substantially from this one. All other readings will be posted on D2L.

Internet and electronic communication device information

Laptops and tablets are permitted in this class provided that they are used solely for note-taking and other in-class activities, and they do not present a distraction to you or others. The use of smartphones is not permitted in class—they must be silenced and placed in your bag during class, but can be used during the break. The unauthorized use of electronic devices for audio and video recording is prohibited.

If distraction due to electronic devices is impeding class participation, a policy prohibiting the use of all electronic devices may be introduced. Therefore, it's in your best interest to ensure that you are using laptops exclusively for class work.

Assignments and Evaluation

| Weight | Assignment | Due |
|---------------|---|---------------------|
| 10% | Reading response 1 | January 23 |
| 10% | Reading response 2 | February 27 |
| 15% | Image study 1 | February 13 |
| 15% | Image study 2 | March 13 |
| 30% | Final essay (8-10 pages) | April 3 |
| 20% | Participation and in-class assignments (includes class presentation) | Throughout semester |

Reading Responses

You will be required to write two reading responses; the first is due January 23 and the second is due February 27. In these short responses, you will be expected to offer critical engagement with ideas presented in one or more of the assigned readings. You are welcome to connect these ideas to your own experiences, or to discuss images you find particularly interesting, but the quality of writing should be appropriate to an academic audience and you should provide proper citations for any quotes that you include. Reading responses will be assigned a letter grade but minimal qualitative feedback; if you'd like to know why you got the grade you did, you may inquire via email or visit office hours.

Image Studies

You will be required to write two image studies; the first is due February 13 and the second is due March 13. With these image studies, you will choose one or more photographs and offer a critical analysis of your chosen image(s) with reference to course readings and, if you like, class discussions. Reading responses will be assigned a letter grade but minimal qualitative feedback; if you'd like to know why you got the grade you did, you may inquire via email or visit office hours.

Final Essay

Your major assignment for this class will be a final essay of 8-10 pages, due on April 3. Building on your image studies and reading responses completed throughout the term, you will craft a well-researched, thoughtfully argued essay that offers critical analysis of one or more photographs, with reference to course readings as well as at least two outside readings. This essay will be accompanied by an annotated bibliography.

Participation and In-Class Assignments

As this is a smaller class without tutorial sections, regular participation is expected and will be essential not only to your success, but to the experience that each student has in the class. Your participation will be assessed based on the frequency and quality of your contributions to class discussions, your participation in in-class group activities, and a brief presentation that you will give to the class. (More details on presentations will be provided in class.) Given the importance of participation, regular attendance is essential. You should come to every class with the readings completed and in hand, ready to discuss them.

Registrar-scheduled Final Examination: No

Note: All assignments and exams weighted more than 10% must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course.

Submission of Assignments: Please hand in your essays directly to your TA or instructor if possible. If it is not possible to do so, a daytime drop box is available in SS320; a date stamp is provided for your use. A night drop box is also available for after-hours submission. Assignments will be removed the following morning, stamped with the previous day's date, and placed in the instructor's mailbox.

Please include your name and ID number on all assignments, and be prepared to provide picture ID to pick up assignments or look at marked final exams in SS 320. Personal information is collected in accordance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*. For more information, see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy>

Note: It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of each submitted assignment and to ensure that the proper version is submitted (particularly in courses requiring electronic submission). Including a version date in your file name may be useful.

Policy for Late Assignments

Assignments submitted after the deadline may be penalized with the loss of a grade (e.g.: A- to B+) for each day late.

Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

- Students seeking accommodation for transient illnesses (e.g., the flu) should contact their instructors. Whenever possible, students should advise their instructors in advance if they will be missing quizzes, presentations, in-class assignments, or group meetings.
- When accommodations are granted, they may take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test.
- For information on Deferrals of Final Exams and Term Work, see sections G.6 and G.7 of the *University Calendar* at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html> and <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>

Writing Skills Statement

Department policy directs that all written assignments (including, to a lesser extent, written exam responses) will be assessed at least partly on writing skills. Writing skills include not only surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc) but also general clarity and organization. Sources used in research papers must be properly documented. If you need help with your writing, you may use the Writing Centre. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Grading & Grade Scale of the Department of Communication, Media and Film

Final grades are reported as letter grades. Short writing assignments (reading responses and image studies) will be reported as raw point scores, while final essays will be reported as letter grades.

The following chart outlines the grade scale percentage equivalents used in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. In calculating final grades in this course, letter grades will be converted to the midpoint of the percentage range, as shown in the final column of the table below.

| Grade Point Value | Description | Grade | Dept of CMF grade scale equivalents* | Letter grade % equivalent for calculations* * |
|-------------------|--|------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 4.00 | Outstanding | A+ | 96 - 100% | 98.0% |
| 4.00 | Excellent—superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter. | A | 90 - 95.99% | 93.0% |
| 3.70 | | A - | 85 - 89.99% | 87.5% |
| 3.30 | | B+ | 80 - 84.99% | 82.5% |
| 3.00 | Good--clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete. | B | 75 - 79.99% | 77.5% |
| 2.70 | | B- | 70 - 74.99% | 72.5% |
| 2.30 | | C+ | 65 - 69.99% | 67.5% |
| 2.00 | Satisfactory—basic understanding of the subject matter. | C | 60 - 64.99% | 62.5% |
| 1.70 | | C- | 55 - 59.99% | 57.5% |

| | | | | |
|-------------|--|-----------|-------------|-------|
| 1.30 | Minimal pass—marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the same subject | D+ | 53 - 54.99% | 54.0% |
| 1.00 | | D | 50 - 52.99% | 51.5% |
| 0.00 | Fail – unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements. | F | 0- 49.99% | 0% |

* If percentages are used to calculate final grades, then grades falling within these ranges will be translated to the corresponding letter grades.

** These percentage equivalents will be used for calculating final grades unless an alternative method of final grade calculation is outlined above.

Plagiarism

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possibly suspension or expulsion from the university.

You must document not only direct quotations but also paraphrases and ideas where they appear in your text. A reference list at the end is insufficient by itself. In-text citations must be provided, and readers must be able to tell exactly where your words and ideas end and other people's words and ideas begin. Wording taken directly from a source must be enclosed within quotation marks (or, for long quotations, presented in the format prescribed by the documentation style you are using). Paraphrased information must not follow the original wording and sentence structure with only slight word substitutions here and there. These requirements apply to all assignments and sources, including those in non-traditional formats such as Web pages or visual media.

For information on citation and documentation styles (including APA, Chicago, IEEE, MLA, and others), visit the links provided at <https://ucalgary.ca/ssc/resources/writing-support/436> . If you have questions about how to document sources, please consult your instructor or the Writing Centre (3rd Floor TFDL, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>).

Academic Misconduct

For information on academic misconduct and its consequences, please see the University of Calgary Calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

Research Ethics

Whenever you perform research with human participants (e.g., surveys, interviews, or observations) as part of your university studies, you are responsible for following university research ethics guidelines. Your instructor must review and approve your research plans and supervise your research. For more information about your research ethics responsibilities, see <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/research/resources/ethics>

Important information, services, and contacts for students

| For information about . . . | Visit or contact . . . |
|--|---|
| ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING (ASC) | SS 102 403-220-3580 artsads@ucalgary.ca |
| CAMPUS SECURITY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calgary Police Service • Emergency Text Messaging • Emergency Evacuation & Assembly • Safewalk Program | http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ 403-220-5333 403-266-1234 Emergency: call 911 http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/textmessage http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints If you feel uncomfortable walking alone at any time, call Campus Security for an escort (220-5333). For more information, see http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/ |
| DESIRE2LEARN (D2L) Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT help line | http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/desire2learn/home/students 403-220-5555 or itsupport@ucalgary.ca |
| STUDENT SUCCESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing Support Services • Student Services Mobile App | http://ucalgary.ca/ssc http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support http://ucalgary.ca/currentstudents |
| STUDENTS' UNION CONTACTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty of Arts Reps • Student Ombudsman | https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/ http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds |
| SU WELLNESS CENTRE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling Services • Health Services • Distress centre 24/7 CRISIS LINE • Online resources and tips | 403-210-9355 (MSC 370), M-F, 9:00–4:30 pm http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/counselling http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/health 403-266-HELP (4357) http://ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/healthycampus If you're concerned about a friend or your own well-being, it is important to seek help early. Call or visit the SU Wellness Centre or the 24-hour crisis line. |

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

Week 1

January 9

Introduction and discussion of some key concepts.

Week 2

January 16

Theorizing photography, reading an image.

Required reading:
Reader, pp. 28-44.

Week 3

January 23

The portrait photograph.

Required readings:
Reader, pp. 135-158.

Week 4

January 30

Photography, power, and discipline.

Required reading:
Reader, pp. 191-201, 117-127 (read to end of section, not end of page).

Week 5

February 6

Photography as documentation.

Required reading:
Reader, pp. 90-114 (end of section).

Week 6

February 13

The news image.

Required reading:
Reader, pp. 80-89.

Week 7

February 20

No lecture—Happy Reading Week!

Week 8

February 27

Film screening in class—no reading assignment.

Week 9

March 6

The circulating image.

Required readings:

Reader, pp. 21-28.

Week 10

March 13

Photography and commodity culture.

Required reading:

Reader, pp. 233-241 (end of section), 246-252.

Week 11

March 20

Family photography.

Required reading:

Reader, pp. 159-168 (end of section), 178-188.

Week 12

March 27

Photography and the body.

Required reading:

Reader, pp. 201-211 (end of section).

Week 13

April 3

The manipulated photograph.

Required reading:

Reader, pp. 221-225 (end of section), 152-3 (section titled "Informality and intimacy")

Week 14

April 10

Review of the semester's material and concluding discussion.

Required readings:

None.