**Comm 451 Syllabus Spring 2018**

**USC Annenberg School for Communication**

**Instructor: Jim Hubbard**

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**Visual Communication and Social Change From Film to the Digital Age**

Course Description

Photography has played a unique role in raising awareness and fostering significant social change. One of the goals for this course will examine the continued effectiveness of photography in the digital age. At a time in history when literally of billions of digital photos are being produced annually—in one year an estimated 250 billion digital photos were made and nearly a billion camera phones were said to be in use—developing both a theoretical and practical understanding of the history and current practices of visual communication and its storytelling capabilities, principally through photography, video and film, is critical.

In this course, photography’s evolution will be charted, analyzed and discussed, and we will explore ways to utilize this knowledge to devise new strategies for the use of the photographic image. In recent decades photographs and video have been integrated, of course in mass media usage, but also in an array of interdisciplinary fields of study including sociology, anthropology, education, public health and of art. Serious photo documentary work has and will continue to serve as a critical component in societal discussions and decision-making around global social issues, ie., war, famine, disease and poverty. There will be an ongoing analysis and exploration of the internet’s use of images on blogs and web sites, such as and YouTube and Flickr, and Twitter.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Develop critical awareness of photographic uses in the digital age and image authenticity, manipulation and propaganda methods and ethics.
2. Explore citizen responsibility for assessing, conveying and purveying photographs for information, social awareness and social change.
3. Critically examine the emergence of citizen journalism, participatory photography (PP), photographic empowerment (PE) and their impact on traditional journalism

Individual Documentary Project

Each student will create their own visual documentary project with a minimum of fifteen final photographs from a film or digital camera accompanied by text that will detail the project from its inception to its conclusion and that will be presented at the end of the course as a final project.

Each student will be responsible for production of the pictures and may be as small as 4X6 or 5X7 in size .The mission and scope of the individual documentary projects will be an integral part of the overall learning experience offered in this class and exhaustive discussions regarding each students project proposal and implementation will be a focus of the course even though the general topic should be about your life. Access to a digital or film camera for entire course is necessary.

Grading

1. Class participation/Attendance 20%
2. Photo Documentary Project 20%
3. Mid term paper 20%
4. Final paper 40%

Evaluation Criteria Grades: Students will earn grades based on the following assignments. Specific instructions for each assignment will be provided in class. Final course grades are assigned on the following scale

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 94-100 % = A | 80-83 % = B- | 67-69 % = D+ |
| 90-93 % = A- | 77-79 % = C+ | 64-66 % = D |
| 87-89 % = B+ | 74-76 % = C | 60-63 % = D- |
| 84-86 % = B | 70-73 % = C- | 59 % and below = F |

* Late & Unfinished Work – Students must complete all assignments in order to earn a grade in the course. Any material turned in late will be reduced one letter grade per calendar day late.

Attendance

Attendance and not being late for class is required. Unexcused absence will lead to loss of credit. Class discussion is a vital part of the effectiveness of this course. Any student absent from two or more classes will result in a lower grade.

Required Texts and Additional Reading

The course reading requirements will be a combination of assigned text material and article handouts (most accessible on the internet). Some additional reading requirements may be assigned throughout the course and integrated into reading assignments from required texts.

Required texts:

1/Sontag, Susan (1973) On Photography, McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd, Toronto

2/ Image Ethics in the Digital Age,  Gross, Katz, Ruby; University of Minnesota Press, 2003,

3/ Bending the Frame, Fred Ritchin, Aperture, 2013

Additional ongoing research and reading assignments:

Other reading assignments not from required textbooks will be sent via email links. We will explore current use of the visual image (stills and video) on a regular basis related to news events. This will require critical thinking (analysis) about the use of imagery related to continuing and current global events that shape views and emotions, public beliefs and their capacity for social change.

The National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking defines critical thinking as the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action

Guest Speakers to be announced. Class will meet off campus no more than twice and only if logistics work for the entire class.

Week 1,

Introductions

Review syllabus and emailed documents

Discuss class assignments and reading assignments

Read Everyone is a Photographer by Jim Hubbard

Week 2 ,

Discuss themes of Individual Documentary Project

Group 1 reports

Week 3,

Gross,Katz,Ruby, Image Ethics in the Digital Age, read Introduction and Chapter 1&2

How Nonprofits Can Use Social Media to Spark Change

Becker,H.S., Visual Sociology,Documentary Photography,and

Photojournalism:It’s All a Matter of Context, Read entire article

http://home.earthlink.net/~hsbecker/visual.html

Week 4,

-How Nonprofits Can Use Social Media to Spark Change, From Chronicle of Philanthropy by Maureen West February 20,2011

-Ballerini, Julia, Photography as a Charitable Weapon:Poor Kids and Self--Representation, Radical History Review, Volume 69 Fall 1997

- After Photography by Fred Ritchin, W.W. Norton&Company,Inc.,(2009)

Chapters 1, 2, 7

-Ethics Matters

Week 5

Current journal and academic articles will be emailed for reading assignment and discussion

Through the Lens of Photography: Liberian Culture and Identity from the Other Side by Gabriel Bernard Tait, PhD, (2013) Arkansas State University

pp 1-103

Film, Born Into Brothels

Sontag, Susan, On Photography pp. 1-114

Week 6,

Prepare five page mid term paper due next week.

Edit of individual documentary projects.

Week 7, About to Die, by Barbie Zelizer, Oxford University Press (2010) Chapters 1&2

The visibility of disaster deaths in news images: A comparison of

newspapers from 15 countries by Folker Hanusch University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia, October 2012

Week 8,

Gross,Katz,Ruby, Image Ethics in the Digital Age, Chapter 3&4

Sontag, Susan,On Photography pp.115-152

Week 9

Gross,Katz,Ruby, Image Ethics in the Digital Age, Chapter 5

Ballerini, Julia, Flip:The Homeless Child as Auteur,from the Yale Journal of Criticism,8:2(1995:Fall)

Week

10

Gross,Katz,Ruby, Image Ethics in the Digital Age, Chapter 7&8

Media and Ritual by Johanna Sumiala, Routledge (2013) Chapters 2&3

Week 11

Gross,Katz,Ruby, Image Ethics in the Digital Age,

Chapter 12

Individual documentary project final edit and discussion

Class will meet off campus at Venice Arts to observe how a learning center conducting workshops in participatory visual communication skills to low income youth.

Gross,Katz,Ruby, Image Ethics in the Digital Age, Chapter 13&14

View documentary film To Render a Life

About to Die, by Barbie Zelizer, Oxford University Press (2010)

Chapter 12

Week 13

Gross,Katz,Ruby, Image Ethics in the Digital Age, Chapter 12

Advertising Photography

Prepare and discuss final presentation to class

Week 14

Presentation of Individual Photography projects

Week 15, 16 Final Examination Period

Final Paper due, date TBA

Weekly assignments are subject to change.

Computer use for class related issues, topics and research only during class time. Other uses prohibited. No texting or cell phone use during class. Non compliance to the above stated rules will reflect on final grade.

**Academic Integrity**

The School of Communication is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. It endorses and acts on the Campus policies and procedures detailed in the section titled “University Sanction Guidelines.” These policies, procedures and guidelines will be assiduously upheld. They protect your rights, as well as those of the faculty. It is particularly important that you be aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than yourself. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade in the course, and

be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. If you have any doubts about any of these practices, you must confer with the professor.

**Disability**

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.-5:00p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213)740-0776.

**Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

**Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable.  See additional information in *SCampus*and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

**Support Systems:**

*Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. [engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling)

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255*

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. [www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call*

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. [engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/)

*Sexual Assault Resource Center*

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: [sarc.usc.edu](http://sarc.usc.edu/)

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086*

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. [equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu/)

*Bias Assessment Response and Support*

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/)

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs*

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. [dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu/)

*Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710*

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. [studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/)

*Diversity at USC*

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. [diversity.usc.edu](https://diversity.usc.edu/)

*USC Emergency Information*

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu)

*USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.*

Provides overall safety to USC community. [dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu/)