

**Comm451**  
**Visual Communication and Social Change**  
**Number of Units: 4.0 units**  
**Spring 2020 – Thursday – 3:30-6:20pm**  
**Section: 20665R**  
**Location: ANN 211**

**Instructor: Jim Hubbard**  
**Office: ASC333**  
**Office Hours: Before or after class schedule**  
**Contact Info: email [jim@venicearts.org](mailto:jim@venicearts.org) Cell 310-386-1698**

## **I. Course Description**

Analysis of visual communication and photography's evolution; new strategies for the photographic image, photo documentary work and global social issues; analysis of images on blogs, web sites and social media.

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 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 YouTube, Flickr, and Twitter.

Journalism is at a time of incredible technological and economic disruption, leaving individual journalists with a great deal of professional uncertainty due to declining revenues, circulation, and public trust. While many journalists have lost their jobs over the past decade, those who remain are expected to do more with less, more quickly, on more platforms, with less oversight. Photojournalists have been especially hard hit, as the use of digital cameras by all journalists is expected (Anderson 2013; Associated Press 2013). We will take a hard look on honesty and ethics in this explosion of images.

## **II. Student Learning Outcomes**

### **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. Analysis of ethical issues facing professional and amateur image makers.
4. Explore existential questions and visual communication being vital, and formative in shaping global citizens critical and personal worldviews. One student wrote in her final paper last year, “At the beginning of this class (Comm 451) I was not aware of what a world view was. As we went around the class and had to talk about our worldview, I was honestly just listening to what other people were saying and trying to form what I thought I believed. Nervously formulating what I was going to say in front of the class, I decided that I had a feeling what my worldview was. I think the world is messed up. Personally, I am religious so I would like to believe that there is faith in this world, however I think that we have a lot of work to do. Specifically when it comes to visual communication, I feel as though it impacts my worldview in a negative way.”
5. Additional learning outcome is derived from Individual Documentary Project. Students will create their own social change 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 images may be as small as 4X5 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.

## **III. Course Notes**

Students should keep notes on their ongoing Individual Photo Documentary Projects and class discussions.

## **IV. Description and Assessment of Assignments**

Reading assignments will be sent to you a week in advance by email. To get the most out of this class, you must be here. While it is normal to miss a few times during the course of a semester, you cannot “take” this class without attending prepared to discuss and participate in our reading

assignments and your interpretations. Each student in small groups, or individually, will be required to lead in some class discussions.

**In-Class Work**

During both lecture and discussion classes, we will have a variety of participation activities including small group assignments. In class-work you may be assigned a role at any point during the class and will not be scheduled in advance but randomly designated throughout the semester. If you miss by arriving late or leaving early, or by being absent altogether, you will not have an opportunity to make up the work. Because we recognize that some absences and lateness are inevitable, three missing scores will not count against your in-class work grade.

**V. Grading**

**a. Breakdown of Grade** A “B” represents really good work. An “A” represents excellent work. If you are disappointed by a grade, bring your concerns to me and we will discuss your work and help you improve for the next assignment.

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
1- Class participation	100	10
2- Photo Documentary Project	150	15
3- Mid term paper and 2-3 reaction papers to course readings	250	25
4-Final paper	500	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

**b. Grading Scale**

95% to 100%: A	80% to 83%: B-	67% to 69%: D+
90% to 94%: A-	77% to 79%: C+	64% to 66%: D
87% to 89%: B+	74% to 76%: C	60% to 63%: D-
84% to 86%: B	70% to 73%: C-	0% to 59%: F

**c. Grading Standards** The grading scale for this class will be that an A is 94 or above; A- is 90-93; B+ is 87-89; B is 84-86; B- is 80-83, C+ is 77-79 and so on. “A”

- “A” assignments show an eloquent mastery of ideas and their application; are completely free of grammatical and logical errors; demonstrate creativity, rigor, and sophisticated thinking; speak to an audience in a clear and thoughtful manner; and represent the very best of the class’s work.
- “B” assignments show a good use of concepts; employ relevant examples; contain some grammatical errors and logical problems; and represent work that adequately communicates a student’s point of view.
- “C” assignments show a minimally adequate use of concepts; lack relevant examples; have many grammatical errors and serious logical limitations; and demonstrate work that is not well respected in professional or scholarly settings.
- “D” assignments are barely adequate application of concepts; require excessive rewriting and lack compelling examples; have many errors and have significant flaws in logic; and represent work that requires significant improvement.
- “F” assignments fail to meet the major assignment criteria, are late, rife with grammatical or logical errors, and generally do not meet the standards of quality USC Annenberg students are expected to meet.

**d. Grading Timeline** Assignments will be returned 1 week after the date students are assigned. [L] [SEP]

## **VI. Assignment Rubrics**

The prompt for each paper will explain the assignment expectations, consistent with the “grading standards” section above. [L] [SEP]

You will be assigned a series of reaction papers. A reaction paper features your intellectual response to a visual communication topic covered in discussion/ lecture/readings. The reaction papers will vary in length from 2 to 4 double- spaced, typed pages. These papers are to be on hard copy and handed in at beginning of class one week after assigned.

**VII. Assignment Submission Policy** For each reaction paper and midterm paper, students must submit **paper at beginning of class** the day the paper is due. [L] [SEP] Unless you have communicated with me **before** the paper’s due date and time, late penalties will applied. [L] [SEP] The final paper is to be emailed to me on date due listed below in class schedule.

## **VIII. Required Readings and Supplementary Academic Materials**

- 1/ Image Ethics in the Digital Age, Gross, Katz, Ruby; University of Minnesota Press, 2003,
- 2/ Bending the Frame, Fred Ritchin, Aperture, 2013
- 3/ About to Die, Barbie Zelizer, Oxford University Press, 2010

Other reading assignments not from required textbooks will be sent via email links. We will explore current use of the visual imagery (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/private beliefs, world views, 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

### **IX. Laptop Policy**

All undergraduate and graduate Annenberg majors and minors are required to have a PC or Apple laptop that can be used in Annenberg classes. Please refer to the **Annenberg Digital Lounge** for more information. To connect to USC’s Secure Wireless network, please visit USC’s **Information Technology Services** website.

### **X. Add/Drop Dates for Session 001 (15 weeks: 1/13/20 – 5/1/20)**

**Friday, January 31:** Last day to register and add classes for Session 001

**Friday, January 31:** Last day to drop a class without a mark of “W,” except for Monday-only classes, and receive a refund for Session 001

**Tuesday, February 4:** Last day to drop a Monday-only class without a mark of “W” and receive a refund for Session 001

**Friday, February 28:** Last day to drop a course without a mark of “W” on the transcript for Session 001. [Please drop any course by the end of week three (or the 20 percent mark of the session) to avoid tuition charges.]

**Friday, February 28:** Last day to change pass/no pass to letter grade for Session 001. [All major and minor courses must be taken for a letter grade.]

**Friday, April 3:** Last day to drop a class with a mark of “W” for Session 001

### **XI. Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown**

*Important note to students: Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change - and probably will change - based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.*

	<b>Topics/Daily Activities</b>	<b>Readings and Homework</b>	<b>Deliverable/Due Dates</b>
<b>Week 1 Dates: 1/16</b>	Introductions Review syllabus and emailed documents	Read Everyone is a Photographer by Jim Hubbard and will be sent in an email with	Please note that the class will consist of at least five small groups consisting of 3 or 4 students in each group. Each small group

	<p>Discuss class assignments and reading assignments Read Everyone is a Photographer by Jim Hubbard.</p> <p>Discuss individual photo project</p>	<p>the reading attachment.</p> <p>Write one page, double spaced, paper describing your plan for the individual photo project and bring to class next week</p>	<p>will facilitate at least one class and report, question, others in class about their views and description of the week's reading assignments.</p>
<p><b>Week 2</b> <b>Dates:1/23</b></p>	<p>Discuss themes of Individual Documentary Projects and bring one page description of your plan for the photo project.</p>		<p>[<b>MLK Day:</b> Monday, January 20]</p>
<p><b>Week 3</b> <b>Dates: 1/30</b></p>	<p>Read Gross,Katz,Ruby Image Ethics in the Digital Age, read Introduction and Chapter 1&amp;2</p>		
<p><b>Week 4</b> <b>Dates: 2/6</b></p>	<p>-Read How Nonprofits Can Use Social Media to Spark Change, From Chronicle of Philanthropy by Maureen West February 20,2011 -Read Ballerini, Julia, Photography as a Charitable Weapon:Poor Kids and Self-Representation, Radical History</p>		

	Review, Volume 69 Fall 1997		
<b>Week 5</b> <b>Dates: 2/13</b>	Read About to Die, by Barbie Zelizer, Oxford University Press (2010) Chapters 1&2		
<b>Week 6</b> <b>Dates: 2-20</b>	Read Bending the Frame by Fred Ritchin, Aperture Foundation, 2013 Read Chapters 1 &2	Prepare five page mid term paper due next week. Edits of individual photo documentary projects.	<b>[President's Day:</b> Monday, February 17]
<b>Week 7</b> <b>Dates: 2/27</b>	Mid term paper due. Watch film Born Into Brothels in class		
<b>Week 8</b> <b>Dates: 3/5</b>	Class edit of individual photo projects progress	Each student will show their project images on full screens from their computer	
<b>Week 9</b> <b>Dates: 3/12</b>	Read 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) Will send atta- chment		
<b>Spring Break</b> <b>Dates: 3/19</b>	No Classes		
<b>Week 10</b> <b>Dates: 3/26</b>	Read Gross,Katz,Ruby, Image Ethics in the		

	Digital Age, Chapter 12, &13 View documentary film To Render a Life in class		
<b>Week 11</b> <b>Dates: 4/2</b>	Read About to Die Chapters 7&8 Watch film Stranger With A Camera in class		
<b>Week 12</b> <b>Dates: 4/9</b>	Read Bending the Frame Chapters 5&6		
<b>Week 13</b> <b>Dates: 4/16</b>	Watch film Finding Vivian Maier in class		
<b>Week 14</b> <b>Dates: 4/23</b>	Relevant Academic readings will be sent to you from Academic Journals	Prepare and submit your class and professor evaluations	
<b>Week 15</b> <b>Dates: 4/30</b>	Presentation of Final Individual Photography projects in class		
<b>STUDY DAYS</b> <b>Dates: 5/2-5/5</b>	Prepare final papers		<b>No final examinations may be scheduled on Study Days.</b>
<b>No FINAL EXAM for Comm 451</b> <b>Continue work on your final paper during this period.</b> <b>Submit your Final paper Friday 5/8 by 3:00pm via email jim@venicearts. org</b>	Submit your Final paper Friday 5/8 by 3:00pm via email jim@venicearts.org		

**XII Additional Policies /Technology Use** - Students should come to class prepared to be fully engaged as listeners and participants, and should use only technologies (laptops), to support learning and participation, and not as distractions. Do not use smartphones in class.

### **Communication**

**Please contact Jim Hubbard in class if you want to meet or email [jim@venicearts.org](mailto:jim@venicearts.org)**

### **Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems**

#### **a. Academic Conduct**

##### *Plagiarism*

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](http://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, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

#### **b. Support Systems**

*Counseling and Mental Health* - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

[studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline* - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP)* - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call

[studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault](http://studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)*- (213) 740-5086 / Title IX – (213) 821-8298

[equity.usc.edu](http://equity.usc.edu), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

*Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*

[usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care\\_report](https://usc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity |Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

[dsp.usc.edu](https://dsp.usc.edu)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*

[uscsa.usc.edu](https://uscsa.usc.edu)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](https://diversity.usc.edu)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu), [emergency.usc.edu](https://emergency.usc.edu)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](https://dps.usc.edu)

Non-emergency assistance or information.

*Annenberg Student Success Fund*

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/annenberg-scholarships-and-awards>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

*Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]*

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally “breaking bread” over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab!

Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.