



Using Photographs as Historical Evidence

HIS 326 COURSE GUIDE Writing Intensive and Research Intensive Spring 2006

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and by appointment

Scope of the Course

This course takes a case study approach to evaluating the content and history of photographs as historical evidence. We will explore the history of photography by focusing on different types of photographs in particular social contexts from the evolution of portrait photography, to compelling images of the American Civil War, one of the earliest wars ever to be photographed, to the history of social documentary from the turn of the twentieth century through the Great Depression. Overall, we will strive to go beyond the use of photographs as mere illustrations to understand the richer meanings of their visual content as primary source evidence that must be critically evaluated in historical context. You will put these methods and perspectives into practice by developing a term paper that uses a particular type of photograph as primary source evidence (rather than as simple illustration) for your thesis.

Course Learning Objectives

- Learn strategies for “reading” photographs as historical evidence.
- Understand that photographs are cultural artifacts that must be critically evaluated in historical context.
- Evaluate how technological change affected the results and meanings of photographic evidence.
- Analyze the visual content of two different types/genres of photographs
- Develop a research paper using photographs as primary source evidence rather than simple illustrations (12-15 pages)
- Practice such research skills as defining an interesting and focused topic, creating a meaningful research bibliography, and using primary source evidence to defend and explain a thesis statement.

Required Readings

Journal Articles and Book Chapters: (available as indicated on ereserves or electronic journal databases.)

Cohen, Lizabeth. “Embellishing a Life of Labor.” In Dell Upton and John Vlach, eds. *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986. [ereserves]

Curtis, James C. “Dorothea Lange, Migrant Mother, and the Culture of the Great Depression,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 21 (Spring 1986): 1-20. [Use Journal Finder]

Curtis, James C. and Sheila Grannen. “Let Us Now Appraise Famous Photographs: Walker Evans and Documentary Photography,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 1-23. [Use Journal Finder]

Davidson, James West and Mark Hamilton Lytle, “The Mirror with a Memory.” In *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1992, pp. 178-200. [ereserves]

Kasson, Joy. “American Indian Performers in the Wild West.” In *Buffalo Bill’s Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2000. [pp. 161-219; ereserves]

Levine, Lawrence W. “The Historian and the Icon: Photography and the History of the American People in the 1930s and 1940s.” In *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. [ereserves]

Natanson, Nicholas. “The Photo Series: Ben Shahn’s Southern Meditations.” In *The Black Image in the New Deal : The Politics of FSA Photography*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992, pp. 85-112. [ereserves]

Orvell, Miles. *American Photography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. [ereserves]

- Sandweiss, Martha A. “‘Momentoes of the Race’”: Photography and the American Indian.” In *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. [ereserves]
- Seixas, Peter, “Lewis Hine: From Social to Interpretive Photographer.” *American Quarterly* Vol. 39, No. 3 (Autumn, 1987): 381-409. [Use Journal Finder]
- Severa, Joan L. *Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900*. Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1995.
- Trachtenberg, Alan, “Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs.” *Representations* 9 (1985): 1-32. [Use Journal Finder]
- Wajda, Shirley Teresa, “The Artistic Portrait Photograph.” In *The Arts and the American Home, 1890-1930*, ed. by Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994. [ereserves]

Evaluation

Participation	10%
Portrait or Civil War analysis	20%
Social Documentary analysis	20%
Term paper	50%

Participation (10%)

You will have a variety of opportunities to participate in class discussion and workshops throughout the semester, and active participation in the course will improve your learning significantly. Active participation includes doing the assigned reading before class, taking notes on class discussion and lectures, making substantive contributions to class discussion, turning work in on time, and active engagement in research and writing workshops. Please note that unless arrangements have been made well in advance of due dates, late assignments will be penalized by a 3% reduction in the final grade for every day the assignment is late. Assignments later than one week will not be accepted for credit without an extremely impressive explanation.

Photographic Analyses (40%)

You will complete an analysis of two different types or genres of photographic evidence. These assignments will entail selecting an appropriate photograph and using assigned readings to evaluate its visual content in historical context. You will receive a more specific set of questions for analysis and instructions for finding an appropriate photograph well in advance of the due date. Each analysis will be the equivalent of about 5 pages, typed and double-spaced.

Make note of the following due dates:

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|------------|------------------------------------|
| 6 February | Portrait or Civil War analysis due |
| 3 March | Social Documentary analysis due |

Term Paper (50%)

You will develop a final research paper using a particular type or genre of photograph as historical evidence. Your research bibliography should contain at least 5 scholarly books or journal articles and about 3-5 photos. The final paper should be about 12-15 pages typed and double spaced, with Turabian-style footnotes and bibliography. We will be developing this assignment throughout the semester. This assignment will be the exclusive focus of the course during the month of April, which is organized as a series of workshops devoted to specific term paper revision issues.

Research skills this assignment will teach you include the following:

- Constructing an interesting and clearly focused research topic
- Using photographs as primary source evidence
- Developing a meaningful research bibliography
- Synthesizing scholarly arguments
- Developing an original thesis or argument
- Practicing scholarly citation methods
- Effective strategies for revising and improving your written analysis of evidence and thesis development

Due dates (see course schedule for writing workshops related to term paper development and revision):

17 February	Preliminary term paper photograph selections due for extra participation credit
13 March	Topic description with photographs and preliminary bibliography due
29 March	Email me your working thesis statement by noon
5 April	Complete term paper draft due with footnotes, bibliography, and photographic evidence
1 May	Final, revised term paper due

Course Schedule

9 January Introductions

Nineteenth Century Photography: Portraits and Civil War

11 January Portraits Before Photography
Read: Orvell, Ch. 1. Introduction, pp. 13-18. [ereserves]

13 January Daguerreotypes and Other Cased Images
Read: Orvell, Ch. 2 Presenting the Self pp. 19-38. [ereserves]

16 January MLK Holiday

- 18 January Cartes de Visite and Other Photos on Paper
Read: Wajda, Shirley Teresa, "The Artistic Portrait Photograph." In *The Arts and the American Home, 1890-1930*, ed. by Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994. [ereserves]
- 20 January Stereographs and Civil War: Marketing vs. Documentation
Read: Orvell, Ch. 4. Seeing and Believing, pp. 61-80. [ereserves]
 Trachtenberg, Alan, "Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs." *Representations* 9 (1985): 1-32. [Use Journal Finder]
- 23 January Photography and Civil War: Facts vs. Interpretations
Read: Trachtenberg, Alan, "Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs." *Representations* 9 (1985): 1-32. [Use Journal Finder]
- 25 January **Research Workshop:** Topic development
- 27 January Souvenir vs. Personal Portrait
Read: Sandweiss, Martha A. "'Momentoes of the Race': Photography and the American Indian." In *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. [ereserves]
- 30 January Constructing "Indians"
Read: Kasson, Joy. "American Indian Performers in the Wild West." In *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: Celebrity, Memory, and Popular History*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2000. [pp. 161-219; ereserves]
- 1 February Family Portraits in the Segregated South
Read: Elizabeth Arnold, "Family Pictures 'Out of Place': Race, Resistance, and Affirmation in the Pope Family Photograph Collection, 1890-1920" MA Thesis, UNCG, 2006.
- 3 February Family Portraits in the Segregated South
Read: Elizabeth Arnold, "Family Pictures 'Out of Place': Race, Resistance, and Affirmation in the Pope Family Photograph Collection, 1890-1920" MA Thesis, UNCG, 2006.
- 6 February **Portrait or Civil War Analysis due.**

Social Documentary and the Twentieth Century

- 8 February Turn of the Century Technology
Read: Orvell, Ch. 6. Photography and Society, pp. 105-140. [ereserves]

- 10 February Jacob Riis and the Reformer's Eye
Read: Lytle, "The Mirror with a Memory." In *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*, pp. 178-200. [ereserves]
- 13 February Using Photos as Evidence of the Immigrants' Perspective
Read: Cohen, Lizabeth. "Embellishing a Life of Labor." [ereserves]
- 15 February America and Lewis Hine
- 17 February Lewis Hine and the American Worker
Read: Seixas, Peter, "Lewis Hine: From Social to Interpretive Photographer." *American Quarterly* Vol. 39, No. 3 (Autumn, 1987): 381-409. [Use Journal Finder]
For extra participation credit turn in to me your selected photographs as samples for the workshop
- 20 February **Research Workshop:** Topic refinement and bibliographic development.
- 22 February The Great Depression
Read: Levine, Lawrence W. "The Historian and the Icon: Photography and the History of the American People in the 1930s and 1940s." In *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. [ereserves]
- 24 February Dorothea Lange
Read: Curtis, James C. "Dorothea Lange, Migrant Mother, and the Culture of the Great Depression," *Winterthur Portfolio* 21 (Spring 1986): 1-20. [Use Journal Finder]
- 27 February Walker Evans
Read: Curtis, James C. and Sheila Grannen. "Let Us Now Appraise Famous Photographs: Walker Evans and Documentary Photography," *Winterthur Portfolio* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 1-23. [Use Journal Finder]
- 1 March Ben Shahn
Read: Natanson, Nicholas. "The Photo Series: Ben Shahn's Southern Meditations." In *The Black Image in the New Deal : The Politics of FSA Photography*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992, pp. 85-112. [ereserves]
- 3 March **Social Documentary analysis due**
- 6-10 March SPRING BREAK

Term Paper

13 March	Topic description with photographs and preliminary bibliography due
15 March	TBA
17 March	Research Workshop: Topic Revision
20 March	Research Workshop: Topic Revision
22 March	Research Workshop: Topic Revision
24 March	Pre-writing workshop: Draft development; use of visual evidence, including captions and identification of photos; citation formatting; and other practical stuff
27 March	Pre-writing workshop: Draft development; use of visual evidence, including captions and identification of photos; citation formatting; and other practical stuff
29 March	Working thesis statements due.
31 March	Writing workshop: Thesis statements and other intellectual stuff
3 April	Writing workshop: Thesis statements and other intellectual stuff
5 April	<u>Complete</u> term paper draft due (all 12-15 pages of it) with footnotes, bibliography, and photographic evidence
7 April	Revising workshop: Thesis statements
10 April	Revising workshop: Paragraph development and organization of argument
12 April	Revising workshop: Paragraph development and organization of argument
14 April	Holiday
17 April	Revising workshop: Strategies for footnoting
19 April	Revising workshop: Use of visual evidence, including captions and identification of photos
21 April	Revising workshop: TBA
24 April	Revising workshop: TBA
26 April	Revising workshop: TBA
28 April	Revising workshop: TBA
1 May	Final term paper due.