

HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

VAH 2242G – winter 2017

Western University, Department of Visual Arts

Class time: Thursdays 9:30-11:30 am (this is a blended course with online content in addition to weekly class meetings)

Location: NCB 114

Professor Sarah Bassnett

Email – sarah.bassnett@uwo.ca

Office hours – Thursdays 11:30 am – 12:30 pm and by appointment in VAC 220

Teaching assistant – Beatriz Asfora: basfora@uwo.ca

Office hours – TBA in VAC 242

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course takes a thematic approach to issues and debates in the history of photography. Throughout the course, we look at the work of key photographers, discuss ideas by key theorists and historians, and consider how photographs relate to the social, political, and artistic context in which they were produced. We examine the social and cultural role of photography, including how photography has been mobilized to advance particular political agendas and how it has influenced ideas about people from various classes and cultures. As we investigate the field of art photography, our focus is on stylistic movements from pictorialism, modernism, and postmodernism. This survey introduces students to the exciting field of photography studies and prepares them to critically engage with our image-saturated world. This is a blended course with online content in addition to weekly class meetings.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- describe and analyze the formal properties of a range of photographs using appropriate terminology
- explain the significance of the work of important photographers from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries, including how it relates to the social, political, and artistic context in which it was produced
- summarize the main argument of scholarly essays and explain your point of view on the issues in writing
- conduct research using library resources, such as books and journal articles in databases, and use the sources effectively to support your analysis of selected photographs
- participate constructively in discussions and by listening respectfully to the views of others, both online and in class

PREREQUISITE / ANTI-REQUISITE

The prerequisite is VAH 1040E or the former VAH 040. The anti-requisite is VAH 2282E. You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that you have not taken an anti-requisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as the basis for an appeal. If you are not eligible for a course, you may be removed from it without an adjustment to your fees. These decisions cannot be appealed.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Required text for this course:

Photography: a critical introduction 5th edition, ed. Liz Wells (London: Routledge, 2015)

The book is available at the University Bookstore and is also on two-hour reserve at Weldon Library. Additional readings are posted as PDFs on OWL Sakai in the Resources folder. Also on reserve at Weldon: Naomi Rosenblum, *A World History of Photography* (New York: Abbeville Press, 2007).

Class preparation: This is a blended course, which means it is essential that you read the assigned texts, watch the videos, and participate in activities before each class. The equivalent of 1 hour of weekly class time is directed to online activities such as watching videos and contributing to discussions on OWL. In order to read or watch actively and to create a record of your thoughts on the texts, I highly recommend taking notes, which you can then review for tests and exams. Completing the assigned readings, watching the videos, etc. will take most students a total of approximately 2-3 hours a week.

You are responsible for material covered in the lectures and for the readings. You are expected to have done the readings in preparation for the day they are listed. Attendance and participation in all classes is mandatory. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed from a classmate.

ASSIGNMENTS

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION 10% (weekly)

READING RESPONSES – 10% (weekly)

VISUAL ANALYSIS ESSAY 30%

MID-TERM TEST & EXAM 20% and 30% (February 9 and final exam period)

GRADING

Attendance & participation	10%	Weekly
Reading responses	10%	Weekly
Mid-term Test	20%	Feb. 9
Visual analysis essay	30%	March 9
Final exam	30%	Exam period (April 9-30)