

# ART451-01/601-02: Hist. of Photographic Media and Camera Arts

Instructor: Prof. Roann Barris  
Fall 2009: TH 9:30-10:45  
Class location: 208 POWELL

Office: 213 Powell; ph: 831-6001  
HRS: M W 11-3; other times by appt.  
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*This course qualifies as an upper level art history elective (in area C of the art history distribution).*

## *Course Description:*

This course examines the history and invention of photography and the camera. We will survey the major themes, inventions, and aesthetic developments in the history of photography from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century through the early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. We will explore the reciprocal relationships between social thought and developments and photography's impact on the public understanding of these events, the impact of movements in art on trends in photography, and the impact of photography on trends in recent art.

## *Goals and Objectives:*

- develop familiarity with the history of photographic media
- be able to identify key movements, photographers, and significant works, and analyze them using principles of art historical analysis
- relate these movements and works to social, economic, and political developments
- recognize the impact of changing technological processes on photography
- be able to locate your individual photographic practices within the history of photography and discuss this history in writing

## *Required Textbook:*

Robert Hirsch, *Seizing the Light: A Social History of Photography*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (McGraw Hill, 2009). Additional readings available through course reserves and/or JSTOR.

## Course Requirements and Expectations

Attendance is expected and class participation will make this a better class. In a class this size, I am generally aware of who is present or absent, so I do not use a sign-in sheet. I will not be concerned if you miss a couple of classes, although I would like to be notified in advance if at all possible. There will be weekly quizzes and although the points on each are limited, missing them will have an impact on your grade. You will also be involved in planning a class exhibition; attendance will obviously be necessary. In sum, give your fellow students – and me – the same respect you expect us to give you – come on time; do not walk out in the middle of class; do not engage in texting, checking for phone messages, cleaning your backpack and notebooks, or other distracting behaviors.

### I. Personal reading log

For all assigned reading, including textbook chapters and any supplemental texts, outline the main points in the reading, note any questions or ideas these suggest to you, and identify and

define key terminology and/or unfamiliar words. This is a personal notebook and will not be graded, but I may collect them or ask to see them. The weekly quiz will be based equally on the reading and in-class material.

## II. Weekly quizzes

12 quizzes (no quiz week 7 or week 14), based on course content. They will be short, probably in the last 15 minutes of class (although this may vary). They will include 2 or 3 identifications of photographs from Artstor image groups appropriate to the week's work but the focus will be on ideas. 15 points each = 180 max.

## III. Term project: in-depth study of a photographer

This project should be based on the selection of a photographer of particular interest to you and your goals as an artist or historian. Your study should examine the process used by the photographer, the compositional approach he or she is noted for, typical subject matter used and the reason or meaning behind it, the historical reception to this work, and your personal reception. In addition to research based on the use of books and journal articles, you should include experiential research: replicate the processes, techniques, and content of the photographer and create two works which are either exact reproductions of his or her work or works by you in the style of the photographer. We will plan a class exhibition in the Powell lobby to include one example for each photographer studied, and a brief write-up explaining the photographer's work.

For those of you who do not want to study one photographer in depth, the alternative is a paper on a theme of relevance to the class with a class presentation of your findings. In all cases, your theme or photographer must be approved by me prior to October 1. If someone else chooses your topic before you, I will not approve it. In other words, don't procrastinate! The length of the paper should be at least 2800 words. I expect you to meet with me individually prior to November 1 to discuss your progress.

Your research must use acceptable sources: books and journal articles. There are acceptable history of photography web sites but Wikipedia is not one of them.

### 300 points total

project meets requirements for length and content, and demonstrates high level of quality in concern for writing, organization and overall project	300
project does most of the above at an acceptable level but overall project lacks evidence of having gone beyond the readily available material and/or conclusions	260
Project is missing historically relevant material or fails to meet one of the above criteria for a good project	220
Project is incomplete in terms of content, approach to theme, and submitted components	0

## IV. Two exams: midterm and final

150 points ea.

These will include identifications of work from the artstor image groups and content questions similar to the questions on quizzes. You will be allowed to bring an index card with handwritten notes to the exam. If you have an A on all work going into the final and you feel confident with your project, you do not need to take the final exam.

## Web Resources:

**class web site:** [www.radford.edu/rbarris](http://www.radford.edu/rbarris) (Link to the page for ART451). Please note that I do not use WEBCT but I do post summaries, reminders and handouts on the class web site.

**ARTSTOR:** [www.artstor.org](http://www.artstor.org) [access class folder HISTPHOTOF09 with this password: *art451fall2009* (all lowercase letters, no spaces; directions are included later in the syllabus)]

### Using ARTstor

Artstor is an image library to which Radford University subscribes. The Artstor image groups may contain works which are not in the textbook. When I cannot locate the exact works, I look for works by the same photographer or using similar processes and content.

If you've taken an art history class at Radford before, you've probably used Artstor and you're already registered, but you do need to sign up for the class folder (see directions below).

*VERY IMPORTANT!!! The first time you use Artstor, you must either be on campus or go to the artstor site by using the Radford library link. Once you have a log-in and password, you can work from home for 4 months without working on a campus computer.*

How to register:

1. Open your browser.

2. Type in: [www.artstor.org](http://www.artstor.org)

Go to tools and make sure pop-ups are allowed. If you don't, it will not work.

3. Click on the orange box on the right which says "GO." A new window opens up.

4. Click on the question: "not registered?" [unless you're already registered]

5. Fill in the box with your email and password. Uncheck the boxes about receiving information and surveys (unless you want to get them). Hit "submit."

The next time you use Artstor, when it opens up, you hit LOG IN, and enter your email address and password.

6. The first time you access the class folder, you must go to the FIND tab in the banner at the top (below your browser buttons). When you hit FIND, at the bottom of the menu are the words "unlock password-protected folder." Select that option. Another box opens up with your name already filled in. Type in the password: *art451fall2009*

Now you have access to the class folder (HISTPHOTOF09) for the rest of the semester.

For more information, watch these videos in Youtube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oAIQsiINIAA>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bP0VZhbeqC4>

## Academic Rules of Etiquette

**Academic Honesty:** Students are expected to abide by the Radford University Honor Code in this and all your classes. This includes the avoidance of plagiarism on all writing assignments. If I suspect plagiarism on an essay, I will give you a chance to establish your innocence. If you can't, you will receive an F for the assignment.

**Assistance for Students with Disabilities:** If you believe that you have a learning or other disability, you should go to the Disabled Student Services Office. They will give you paperwork to bring to me so that we can work out an approach to compensate for your disability. If you

have other problems which do not fall into the domain of the DSSO but which are affecting your course work, you should come and speak to me. I won't try to be a therapist or counselor but I may be able to help you resolve a course-related conflict.

Academic Freedom: from the Radford University Handbook:

Faculty and students “have the right to express their views without fear of censorship or penalty. Such freedom must apply both to teaching and research and includes not only the rights of a teacher in teaching but the rights of a student in learning.”

Academic Courtesy: Respect the effort that everyone makes when it comes to getting an education. I take teaching seriously and I take each one of you just as seriously. This applies to contact both in and outside of the classroom. If your group has a meeting planned, show up for it. Be willing to adjust your schedules in order to work together. And use email appropriately: If you contact me by email, include a subject in the subject line, identify the class you're in, and address the letter to me by name (Dr. Barris or Prof. Barris). Reread what you've written to make sure it's legible and reasonable (ie, not written in the height of passion when you're likely to say things you'll regret later), and that you have a question which can't be answered by reading the syllabus and which can be answered in email. I will not answer questions about specific grades in email.

Computer use is acceptable in this class but you must sign an agreement about how it will be used and sit near the front of the room.

## Personal Grading Chart

Quizzes 1 - 12, @15 ea

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quiz total	(180)	
midterm	(150)	
term project	(300)	
final	(150)	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(780)</b>	

A = 700; B = 620; C = 530; D = 420; below 420 = F

## Outline of Topics and Useful Dates

WEEK	TOPIC	ASSIGNED READING
1	Course intro; From optics to chemistry in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century	Text, chapter 1 Talbot essays on photogenic drawing (ERES)
2	the daguerreotype: portraits and the beginning of studio practices	ch. 2
3	new technologies: the paper/glass debate and the amateur/professional debate	ch. 4; Holmes on the stereograph (ERES)
4	documenting reality in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century: photographing war	ch. 5
5	creating a photographic language (1): European romanticism	ch. 6
OCT 1	approval of term project before this date	
6	creating a photographic language (2): the American landscape	ch. 7 Krauss: Photography's Discursive Spaces (JSTOR)
OCT 7	ART21 PREVIEW: BONDURANT AUD., 7 - 9 PM	
OCT 13	midterm	material from weeks 1 - 6
7	documenting movement	ch. 8 and ch. 13
8	<i>Camera Work</i> , pictorialism and the photo-secession	ch. 9
OCT 22	NO CLASS (SECAC CONF. IN MOBILE, AL)	use time for independent project
OCT 23	Last day to withdraw	
9	photographic modernism, pt 1: the constructivist vision	ch. 10
Nov 1	individual meetings to discuss term project prior to this date	
10	photographic modernism, pt 2: the surrealist vision	ch. 11

11	constructing social reality: American photography between the wars	ch. 12
12	Photographic books and the new photojournalism	ch. 14; Squiers: Picturing Scandal (RES and ERES)
THANKSGIVING BREAK: NOV 21 - NOV 28		
13	the second “new vision”: popular culture and photography in the 60s and 70s	ch. 16-17
DEC 8	install class exhibition	
DEC 10	Final projects due no later than 5 pm	
14	new media and new portraits at the end of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century	ch. 18
DEC 15, 2:45 pm	Final exam	

## Bibliography

Talbot, William Henry Fox, “Some Account of the Art of Photogenic Drawing...” and “The Process of Calotype Photogenic Drawing.” In Beaumont Newhall, ed., *Photography, essays & images: Illustrated Readings in the History of Photography*. (NY: Museum of Modern Art, 1980), 23-35. (ERES)

Holmes, Oliver Wendell, “The Stereoscope and the Stereograph.” In Newhall, 53-61. (ERES)

Krauss, Rosalind. “Photography’s Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View.” *Art Journal* 42, 4 (Winter 1982), 311 - 319. (JSTOR)

Squiers, Carol, “Picturing Scandal: Iranscam, the Reagan White House, and the Photo Opportunity.” in Squiers, ed., *The Critical Image: Essays on Contemporary Photography*. (Seattle: Bay Press, 1990), 121-138. (RES and ERES) [TR642 .C74 1990]

ERES = electronic course reserves

RES = book on reserve at the Circ Desk

JSTOR = locate the article by doing a JSTOR search and download to your computer