



University of
New Haven

Photographic Storytelling: Italy Past and Present

Section I: Course Overview

Course Code: PHT305

Subject Area(s): Photography

Prerequisites: One 200-level course or two 100-level courses in photography, art history, or another relevant subject area

Language of Instruction: English

Total Contact Hours: 45

Credits: 3

Course Fees: None

Course Description

This course aims to acquaint students with the history of Italy, from the unification process (1861) to the present through photography. Students will learn, through a combination of in-class lectures and presentations, field trips and visits to exhibitions, about the country's key events by analyzing iconic images, and reportages, in relation to what is produced in other countries. Emphasis is placed on analyzing images, understanding their aesthetic and historical contexts, as a means through which decipher Italian society. Complementary to the academic side of the course is the practical side, consisting in learning the basics of photographic techniques (basic camera skills, composition). Students will work on weekly journals/projects to document the traces of the past in everyday reality.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students are able to:

- Recall, through photographs/photographic projects, key events in the history of Italy from unification to the present day.
- Identify how to read, deconstruct, and contextualize a photographic image through written analysis.
- Develop basic photographic skills, especially how to photograph manually, edit and combine images in a coherent narrative flow.

- Practice, through weekly assignments, how to use photography as a coherent, narrative language.

Section II: Instructor & Course Details

Instructor Details

Name: TBC

Contact Information: TBC

Term: TBC

Course Day and Time: TBC

Office Hours: TBC

Grading & Assessment

The instructor assesses students' mastery of course learning objectives by using the forms of assessment below. Each of these assessments is weighted toward the final grade. The Assessment Overview section provides further details for each.

Engagement - 20%

Weekly Photo Journal - 15%

Weekly Image analysis - 15%

Midterm Exam 25%

Final Exam 25%

Assessment Overview

This section provides a brief description of each form of assessment listed above. Forms of assessment may be slightly modified in the term syllabus.

Engagement (20%): Students are expected to be engaged in class, to have read the CEA CAPA Engagement Policy, and to understand the [Class Engagement Rubric](#) that outlines how engagement is graded.

Weekly Photo Journal (15%): every week students should take 3 photos, no matter whether with a camera or a smartphone, related to or inspired by the lesson's theme and a concise written analysis (no more than 150 words) of its topic, context, and structure. The student will be asked, without requiring any specific photographic skills, to take (and comment on) images that contain a connection, by association or contradiction, with the theme, dating back to an earlier historical period, covered during the lesson. The purpose of this exercise is to invite the student to reflect on the peculiarities of photographic language and the timelessness of many themes.

Weekly Image analysis (15%): Every week students should write a short analysis (max. 200 words), focusing on structure and context, of one of the photographs/bodies of work/projects used during the lesson and provided by the teacher.

Midterm Exam (25%):

A) Essay (300 words in PDF format) that explores themes discussed in the first part of the course. Each student will select a photographer (from those included in the weekly presentations) and analyze their work in relation to a specific theme studied in class. The essay should include an exploration of 3 to 5 significant photographs by the chosen photographer and an analysis of one image. Students must submit their essays in PDF format by the day before the exam and will present their findings during the midterm review.

B) Midterm project: five images (5 at least) taken by the student, accompanied by a short introductory statement, consistently dealing with a topic chosen by the student and agreed with the lecturer, related to those covered during the course.

The student will present both the essay and the final project during a class critique.

Final Exam (25%):

A) Essay (500 words in PDF format) that explores themes discussed in the second part of the course. Each student will select a photographer (from those included in the weekly presentations) and analyze their work in relation to a specific theme studied in class. The essay should include an exploration of 3 to 5 significant photographs by the chosen photographer and an analysis of one image. Students must submit their essays in PDF format by the day before the exam and will present their findings during the final review.

B) Final project: eight (8 at least) images taken by the student, accompanied by a short introductory statement consistently dealing with a topic chosen by the student and agreed with the lecturer, related to those covered during the course.

The student will present both the essay and the final project during a class critique.

Active Learning

Experiential learning is an essential component of education abroad, and participation in field studies is a required part of coursework. In this course, students explore the city in which they are studying using a variety of methods. This provides the opportunity to gain nuance and perspective on the host context and course content, as well as to collect information and resources for assigned papers, projects, and presentations.

- Site visit & shooting sessions to downtown Florence, San Salvi (the area of the former Florentine asylum), Novoli neighborhood (a suburban district).
- Visits to exhibitions or institutions related to the course (Villa Bardini, currently the best photo museum in Florence) or MAST in Bologna (one of the best photo foundations in Europe) and Museum of the Memory of Ustica (a place, famous for the installation of Christian Boltanski, which, by combining art and historical narration, is crucial for understanding Italy in a particularly complex phase (the 1970s/80s) of its recent history).

Readings and Resources

The below readings and resources are representative of what will be assigned as required in this course, but may vary slightly in the term syllabus.

All students are given access to the online library of the University of New Haven (UNH), accessible [here](#), and are expected to comply with [UNH Policies](#) regarding library usage.

Wherever possible, required readings are made accessible through the online library or Canvas. Students are responsible for obtaining all required readings.

Each course utilizes Canvas as its LMS. Students are expected to check Canvas regularly for updates and deadlines. Canvas is also the primary platform for contacting your instructor in case of questions or concerns about the course.

Required

Calvino, Italo. *The Adventure of a Photographer (excerpt from Difficult Loves and Other Stories)*; Vintage Classics (2018); ISBN-10: 1784874841; ISBN-13: 978-1784874841

- *Invisible Cities (excerpt)*; Vintage (2022); ISBN-10: 1784871885; ISBN-13: 978-1784871888

Cole, Teju. *Blind Spot (excerpts)*; Faber and Faber (2017); ISBN-10: 0571335012; ISBN-13: 978-0571335015

De Sica, Vittorio, *Bicycle Thieves (1948)* - movie

Dickie, John. *Cosa Nostra. A History of the Sicilian Mafia. (excerpts)*; Hodder & Stoughton (2007); ISBN-10: 0340935262

Duggan, Christopher. *The Force of Destiny: A History of Italy Since 1796 (excerpts)*, Penguin 1990, ISBN-10: 9780140124965; ISBN-13: 978-0140124965

Longinotto, Kim, Letizia Battaglia – *Shooting the Mafia (2019)* - documentary

Mack Smith, Denis. *Modern Italy: A Political History (excerpts)*, Univ of Michigan Pr (1997).; ISBN-10 : 0472108956; ISBN-13: 978-0472108954

Ginsborg, Paul, *A History of Contemporary Italy: 1943-80 (excerpts)*; Penguin (2003) ISBN-10: 9780140124965; ISBN-13: 978-0140247947

- *Italy and Its Discontents (1980-2001) (excerpts)*; Penguin (2003); ISBN-10: 0140247947; ISBN-13: 978-0140247947

Pasolini, Pierpaolo, *Love Meetings (1964)* - movie

Rossellini, Roberto, *Paisà (1946)* - movie

Shore, Stephen. *The Nature of Photographs. A Primer (excerpts)*; Phaidon (2010); ISBN-10: 0714859044; ISBN-13: 978-0714859040

Sontag, Susan. *On Photography (excerpts)*; Penguin Classics; (2008); ISBN-10: 9780141035789; ISBN-13: 978-0141035789

Szarkowski, John. *The Photographer's Eye (excerpts)*; The Museum of Modern Art (2006); ISBN-10: 9780870705274; ISBN-13: 978-0870705274

Series titled *Fotografia Italiana*

Course Calendar

Session 1

Topics	<p>Lecture: The Italian Imaginary. That is, how Italy was imagined rather than seen by those who, even with a camera, lived and represented it.</p> <p>Technique: Checking cameras & photo equipment. Introductory instructions on camera functioning</p>
Activity	Analysis of images and projects related to the lesson theme: from Wilhelm Von Gloeden (1856-1931) to Martin Parr. A long-lasting (and evolving) cliché
Readings & Assignments	<p>Homework (due lesson 2):</p> <p>1) Weekly Photo Journal: 3 photos by the student related to our lesson's theme (due session and its concise analysis (max 150 words)</p> <p>2) <i>Ekphrasis</i>: Short written analysis (max. 150 words), focusing on structure and context, of one of the photographs/bodies of work/projects used during the lesson and provided by the teacher.</p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Invisible Cities</i> by Italo Calvino (a town/chapter each day) -John Szarkowski. <i>The Photographer's Eye</i> (PDF of the texts of the whole book) -Walter Benjamin. <i>A Little History of Photography</i> (excerpt from Walter Benjamin, Selected Writings Volume 2. Pages: 508-528. PDF) -Handouts about technique on Canvas

Session 2	
Topics	<p>Lecture: 1861-1870: the birth of a nation, desired and unexpected, at once late and early.</p> <p>What Italy was like at the time of its birth. Its divisions. North and South. The slow modernization of a predominantly agricultural country, north and center. The 'Southern Question'.</p> <p>Technique part 1: the basics of photography: exposure and its variables (ISO, apertures and shutters speeds), file formats and basic settings.</p>
Activity	Analysis of images and projects related to the lesson theme. First fakes: Gioacchino Altobelli and the "Taking of Porta Pia". See the translated article by Michele Smargiassi.
Readings & Assignments	<p>Homework (due session 3):</p> <p>1) Weekly Photo Journal</p> <p>2) <i>Ekphrasis</i></p> <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>Invisible Cities</i> by Italo Calvino (a town/chapter each day) -Excerpt from Stephen Shore, <i>The Nature of Photographs. A Primer</i> -Translated article by Michele Smargiassi. -Christopher Duggan, excerpt from <i>The Force of Destiny</i> (pages: 24-47 & 198-213)

Session 3	
Topics	<p>Lecture: The 20th century. Backwardness, emigration, and the First World War. Italy, in its current borders</p> <p>Technique part 2: depth of field, its variables and creative use.</p> <p>Introduction to Adobe CC:</p>

	Adobe Bridge
Activity	Analysis of images and projects related to the lesson theme: Jacob Rijs and his “How the Other Half Lives” & Lewis Hine and his Ellis Island project
Readings & Assignments	Homework (due session 4): 1) Weekly Photo Journal 2) <i>Ekphrasis</i> Readings: - <i>Invisible Cities</i> by Italo Calvino (a town/chapter each day) - Christopher Duggan, excerpt from <i>The Force of Destiny</i> (pages: 265-272) - Handouts about technique on canvas

Session 4	
Topics	Lecture: Fascism and the Second World War. The use of photography for the creation of a myth and the cult of a dictator Technique: Introduction to Adobe CC: Camera Raw
Activity	Analysis of images and projects related to the lesson theme: from Adolfo Porry-Pastorel, the father of Italian photojournalism, to Robert Capa’s Italian reportage Screening: the Florentine episode of Roberto Rossellini’s “Paisà”
Readings & Assignments	Homework (due session 5): 1) Weekly Photo Journal 2) <i>Ekphrasis</i> Readings: -Christopher Duggan, excerpt (<i>The Advent of fascism</i>) from <i>The Force of Destiny</i> (pages: 405-432) - <i>Invisible Cities</i> by Italo Calvino (a town/chapter each day) - Excerpt titled <i>In Plato’s Cave</i> from <i>On Photography</i> by Susan Sontag (pages: 3-24)

Session 5	
Topics	Site visit: Villa Bardini for photo exhibition TBA or Archivio Alinari
Activity	Analysis of the exhibition. Each student will have to choose a photograph and analyze it.
Readings & Assignments	Homework (due session 6): 1) Weekly Photo Journal: 3 photos taken by the student on the theme of Overtourism and a concise analysis (max 150 words) 2) <i>Ekphrasis</i> Reading: - <i>Invisible Cities</i> by Italo Calvino (a town/chapter each day) - <i>The World in a Selfie. An Inquiry into the Tourist Age</i> by Marco D’Eramo (excerpt. Pages: 77-92)

Session 6	
Topics	Lecture: Post-war, boom, immigration, and emigration Neorealism and its view of Italy and the world. Screening: (if time) “Bicycle Thieves” by Vittorio De Sica
Activity	Analysis of images and projects related to the lesson theme. A pivotal project: Paul Strand’s <i>Un Paese</i> and its revival during the following decades: Gianni Berengo Gardin

	and Stephen Shore.
Readings & Assignments	<p>Homework (due session 7):</p> <p>1) Weekly Photo Journal 2) <i>Ekphrasis</i></p> <p>Reading:</p> <p>-<i>Invisible Cities</i> by Italo Calvino (a town/chapter each day) -Excerpts from Paul Strand and Cesare Zavattini's <i>Un Paese</i> -Excerpt (<i>The Economic Miracle, 1958-75</i>) from Christopher Duggan, <i>The Force of Destiny</i> (pages: 548-567)</p>

Session 7	
Topics	Field trip to San Salvi, the former Florence asylum
Activity	<p>The site visit will be an opportunity for a shooting session and an outdoor lecture on the relationship between photography and psychiatry and on the history of the reform initiated by the Italian psychiatrist and neurologist Franco Basaglia, who collaborated with well-known photographers (Carla Cerati, Gianni Berengo Gardin & Raymond Depardon) to document the living conditions of patients in the old asylums.</p> <p>In case of bad weather conditions: working session in view of the Midterm Exam & Lecture on Photography and Psichiatriy</p>
Readings & Assignments	<p>Homework (due session 8): Weekly Photo Journal: 5 photos from our site visit (due session 9)</p> <p>Reading:</p> <p>-<i>Invisible Cities</i> by Italo Calvino (a town/chapter each day) -Article: PDF of John Foot, <i>Photography and Radical Psychiatry in Italy in the 1960s. The case of the photobook <i>Morire di Classe</i> (1969)</i>. Link: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4361699/</p>

Session 8	
<p>Midterm Exam</p> <p>The student will present both the essay and the Midterm project during a class critique.</p> <p>Important note: the in-class presentation is an essential and mandatory component of the examination and will be assessed as part of the examination itself</p>	

Session 9	
Topics	<p>Lecture: Anni di piombo ("Leaden years" – Piazza Fontana, Bologna, Moro's kidnapping and killing). Civil rights: Feminist movement. Divorce referendum, abortion law. Basaglia law on the abolishment of asylums (1961-1978)</p> <p>If time, view of and excerpt from <i>Love Meetings</i> by Pier Paolo Pasolini</p> <p>Technique: Q&A based on the students' needs</p>
Activity	Analysis of images and projects related to the lesson theme: Uliano Lucas, Tano D'Amico, Paola Agosti, Gianni Berengo Gardin & Carla Cerati (<i>Morire di Classe</i>), Raymond Depardon (<i>Manicomio</i>).
Readings & Assignments	<p>Homework (due session 10):</p> <p>1) Weekly Photo Journal 2) <i>Ekphrasis</i></p>

	<p>Reading: - <i>Invisible Cities</i> by Italo Calvino (a town/chapter each day) - Paul Ginsborg, <i>A History of Contemporary Italy</i>, chapter titled <i>Anni di Piombo 1973-80</i>. Pages: 348-405</p>
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Session 10	
Topics	<p>Lecture: Italy and changes in urban structure. Cities in a nation of villages. The representation of the territory</p> <p>If time, visit to Tethys Gallery</p> <p>Technique: Q&A based on the students' needs</p>
Activity	<p>Analysis of <i>Viaggio in Italia</i>, history of the innovative project (1984), conceived by Luigi Ghirri and curated by Ghirri himself, designed to 're-found' the image of the Italian landscape, with the collaboration of various photographers including Mimmo Jodice, Gabriele Basilico, Guido Guidi, Giovanni Chiaramonte and others</p>
Readings & Assignments	<p>Homework (due session 11):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Weekly Photo Journal 2) <i>Ekphrasis</i> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Invisible Cities</i> by Italo Calvino (a town/chapter each day) - Article: Luigi Ghirri, Journey to Italy narrated by Alice Guareschi (PDF & link: https://www.c41magazine.com/luigi-ghirri-journey-to-italy/) - Luigi Ghirri, <i>Kodachrome</i>, Introduction (PDF on canvas)

Session 11	
Topics	<p>Site visit: Novoli neighbourhood or Cascine & Isolotto district. What remains of the economic boom. A view of a ongoing change in a suburban district far from downtown clichés</p> <p>Note: bring your cameras, batteries charged and the SD loaded</p>
Activity	<p>Exploring and documenting an unexpected Florence</p>
Readings & Assignments	<p>Homework (due session 12):</p> <p>Weekly Photo Journal: short reportage, 5 images from our site visit and a short introductory paper (max 200 words)</p> <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Invisible Cities</i> by Italo Calvino (a town/chapter each day)

Session 12	
Topics	<p>Lecture: Fight against the Mafia (Falcone and Borsellino, victims and symbols). Decline of traditional parties. The 'Mani Pulite' scandal and the Second Republic. The 'Ventennio' of Berlusconi.</p> <p>If time, screening: excerpt from <i>Letizia Battaglia. Shooting the Mafia</i></p> <p>Technique: Q&A based on the students' needs</p>
Activity	<p>Analysis of images and projects related to the lesson theme: Letizia Battaglia and Franco Zecchin. Alessandro Imbriaco and Tommaso Bonaventura, <i>Corpi di Reato</i></p>
Readings & Assignments	<p>Homework (due session 13):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Weekly Photo Journal 2) <i>Ekphrasis</i>

	<p>Reading: - <i>Invisible Cities</i> by Italo Calvino (a town/chapter each day) - Excerpt from John Dickie's <i>Cosa Nostra</i> (Prologue/Introduction. Pages: 1-22)</p>
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Session 13	
Topics	<p>Lecture: Italy today. Covid emergency, the return of the right-wing on the centenary of the fascist March on Rome. The eternal issues of unemployment, brain drain, technological inadequacy, distance between politics and the people, natural disasters, ecology, and the fragility of a nation's foundations 160 years after its birth.</p> <p>Technique: Q&A based on the students' needs</p>
Activity	<p>Analysis of images and projects related to the lesson theme: Michele Borzoni, <i>Workforce</i>; Simone Donati, <i>Hotel Immagine</i>; Marco Rovaldi, <i>Orizzonte in Italia</i>; Terraproject, <i>Quattro</i>; Alex Majoli, <i>The COVID project</i></p> <p>Introduction of the Final Exam</p>
Readings & Assignments	<p>Homework (due session 14): 1) Weekly Photo Journal 2) <i>Ekphrasis</i></p> <p>Reading: - <i>Invisible Cities</i> by Italo Calvino (a town/chapter each day) - Igiaba Scego (article from the magazine <i>Internazionale</i> titled <i>The museum of fascism in Predappio is wrong</i> (PDF on Canvas) - PDF from <i>Corpi di Reato</i> by Alessandro Imbriaco and Tommaso Bonaventura http://www.alessandroimbriaco.com/Corpi_di_reato.html</p>

Session 14	
Topics	<p>Work time: preparatory work in view of the final exam. Individual appointments</p>

Session 15	
<p>Final exam The student will present both the essay and the Midterm project during a class critique. Important note: the in-class presentation is an essential and mandatory component of the examination and will be assessed as part of the examination itself</p>	

Section III: Academic Policies and Standards

Academic Policies

Students are expected to review and understand all CEA CAPA student policies, including our [Academic Policies](#) and [Engagement Policy](#). CEA CAPA reserves the right to change, update, revise, or amend existing policies and/or procedures at any time. Additional requirements that may be associated with a specific course or program are addressed in the term syllabus.

Student Learning & Development Objectives

CEA CAPA has identified [Student Learning and Development Objectives \(SLDOs\)](#) for all programs in all locations: content in context, navigating differences, power and equity, critical thinking and intellectual curiosity, career and professional development, and sustainability and migration. These are meta-level learning objectives that transcend coursework and are infused across all elements of program delivery, beyond specifics of course offerings, addressing student learning holistically and framing it a larger learning context.