



Santa Reparata International School of Art
Course Syllabus

Semester Course

Course Title: The History of Photography: a hands-on approach

SRISA Course Number: ARTH 3301

Maryville Course Number: ARTH 380

Credit Hours: 3, Contact Hours: 45

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course proposes an examination of photography from its prehistory to the present from a practical point of view. During class there will be theoretical lectures, slide shows, demonstrations, and field trips: including visits to photo exhibitions and the MNAF Museum of Photography. These on-site excursions will address photography's multiple histories and its different technologies through time. Students in the course will also study a variety of classical techniques including hands-on demonstrations of pinhole cameras, stereo photography, solargraphy, cyanotypes, salt prints and Polaroid transfers. Throughout the course, students will become familiar with images and technologies made by important contributors of the history of photography. They will additionally learn the vocabulary and issues of photographic theory, practice, and criticism and will be expected to make an active contribution to class discussions and presentations.

2. CONTENT INTRODUCTION

During class time there will be theoretical lectures, slide shows, critiques, and field trips including visits to photo exhibitions and the MNAF Museum of Photography. Since this is an art course, students are expected to make an active contribution to class discussion.

There will be a mid-term and a final exam; both will include slide identification and essay questions. Slide reviews will be held before each exam. The mid-term and final will be written exams. Students will be asked to identify slides, to name the artist who took the photograph, and — if appropriate — the movement with which he or she is connected. Additionally, students will be expected to answer questions about topics (historical, conceptual, and philosophical) that have been discussed in class. Students must also write a short research paper (8 to 12 pages) and give an oral presentation on a topic discussed with the instructor. Papers and presentations are due at the end of the term; they must be typed and provided with detailed bibliography and illustrations. Grading of exams and papers will be based upon demonstration of accurate historical knowledge, critical thinking, and clear expression.

3. PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this course.

4. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- Create an awareness of the processes and uses of photography.
- Identify the significant events and movements in the history of photography.
- Recognize and critically appraise important photographic images and image makers.
- Become familiar with the technical language for describing photographs and processes.
- Produce images using some of the classical techniques learned during the course.

5. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS

No special materials are required for this course other than a digital camera of at least 8.0 mega pixels. However, it is crucial that students read all assigned texts before coming to class so as to be prepared for class discussions and exams. The reading assignments will be given weekly before each class and will include selections from the books listed in the bibliography.

Cell phones, tape recorders, laptops, food, and drinks are not allowed in class.

Photo Stores and Labs:

Any needed photographic supply can be purchased at:

- **BONGI** ,Via Por Santa Maria, 82-red.

Tel. 055. 239.88.11. Closed on Monday mornings. Open from 9 am to 7 pm.

- **Fontani** ,Viale F. Strozzi 18 red.

Tel. 055.47.09.81. Open from 8:30 am to 1 pm and then 2:30 - 7:30 pm, Mo-Sat.

6. GRADING POLICY AND EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Students will be graded according to their performance in class participation, final paper, presentation, midterm and final exam. Remember that looking at original photographs rather than reproductions in books can make the understanding of assignments easier. Fortunately, Florence has many art galleries devoted to photography besides the National Museum of photography.

General Breakdown of Grading:

Final Grade Breakdown

30%	Final Exam.
20%	Mid-Term Grade.
20%	Final Presentation.
20%	Assignments.
10%	Discussions and class participation.

The following **grading system** will be observed:

A	Excellent 4.0 (grade points awarded) 95% percentage of 100%
A-	3.7, (90% to 94%)
B+	3.3 (87% to 89%)
B	Above Average 3.0 (83% to 86%)
B-	2.7 (80% to 82%)
C+	2.3 (77% to 80%)
C	Average 2.0 (73% to 76%)
C-	1.7(70% to 72%)
D	Below Average 1.0 (60% to 69%)
F	Failure 0.0 (59% and below)
W	Withdrawal 0.0

Final paper:

Students will write a paper comparing and contrasting the life's work of two relevant photographers whose work you admire. They could be contemporaries of one another, or one could have worked in the 19th century and the other one in the 20th. This paper is *not* to be a biographical analysis, detailing the birth and formative years of its subjects. Rather, it should be an interesting synthesis of your ideas about the artists' *photographs* giving full indication that you have examined their work in depth, using specific photographs to prove your point.

Mid-term photographic project:

Students will choose two photographers who have some acknowledged historical significance and imitate their styles as closely as possible in three pictures each, for a total of 6 photographs. This means that students would research each artist in order to discover as much as possible on how they

worked (equipment, subject matter, etc.). Students are expected to turn in the 6 photographs along with a paragraph for each one of them, explaining the work and examining the common threads that link all their pictures.

3. Oral presentation:

Students will be expected to give one presentation. Each presentation should last 10-15 minutes. The aim of this test is to research about the work of one particular photographer. After examining his/her work carefully, students will discuss not only what they see and what the photographs make them think about, but also consider the technical issues regarding the quality of the images and their conceptual and aesthetic relevance for the time.

7. PLAGIARISM AND COPYING

SRISA severally condemns ignorant plagiarism and copying during examinations. Any student that makes use of words or ideas taken from another person's work without properly citing credit for the specific purpose of deceiving their professor will receive an automatic "F" on that assignment or exam. Should the offense be repeated, the student will receive an automatic "F" in the class.

8. EXAMS

There are mid-term and final exams for this course. No make-ups are admitted for the exams and the dates of the exams cannot be changed for any reason. If a student is absent for the mid-term exam the final grade will be lowered by one full letter grade, if a student misses the final exam the final grade will be "F".

9. ATTENDANCE AND BEHAVIOR POLICY

Students are required to attend all classes. If you miss class without an excused absence your grade will be lowered by one letter grade for each unexcused absence. If you are ill you should obtain a doctor's note in order to receive an excused absence. Missing more than four classes will result in an "F" on your transcript.

- Excused absences require a doctor's note or a written note from the Director.
- Tardiness: After 20 minutes into class time, students are considered absent.
- Students who leave 20 minutes before class time ends will be considered absent.
- Arriving in class unprepared to work is considered an unexcused absence.
- The use of cellular phones is prohibited during class time.
- Using your laptop or the computers in the lab is prohibited during class-time, unless it relates to a photography assignment.
- Students are expected to participate in class, act responsibly, and behave properly while on the school premises.
- Classrooms are to be left in order and clean.
- Students must take care of equipment and materials and promptly report any damage and/or loss.

Recommended Bibliography

ADAMS, R. (1981) *Beauty in Photography: Essays in Defense of Traditional Values*, Millerton, NY, Aperture.

BARRETT, T. (2006) *Criticizing Photographs: An Introduction to Understanding Images*, Fourth Edition. McGraw-Hill.

BARTHES, R. (2000) *Camera Lucida*, London, Vintage.

FREUND, G. (1980) *Photography and Society*, Boston, Godine.

JEFFREY, I. (1981) *Photography: A Concise History*, New York, Thames & Hudson.

JUSSIM, E. (1989) *The Eternal Moment: Essays on the Photographic Image*, New York, Aperture.

KOETZLE, H.-M. (2003) *Photo Icons: The history behind the pictures*, Taschen.

LONDON, UPTON, STONE, KOBRE, BRILL (2005) *Photography*, New Jersey, Pearson.

NEWHALL, B. (1964) *The History of Photography*, New York, MOMA.

ROSENBLUM, N. (1984) *A World History of Photography*, New York, Abbeville

Press.

SONTAG, S. (1977) *On Photography*, New York, Picador USA.

SZARKOWSKI, J. (1989) *Photography Until Now*, New York, The Museum of Modern Art.

WARNER MARIEN, M. (1997) *Photography and Its Critics: A Cultural History, 1839-1900*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

WELLS, L. (2000) *Photography: A Critical Introduction*. London, Routledge.

WELLS, L. (2009) *The Photography Reader*. London, Routledge.

FURTHER READINGS

(Books listed below are available at the library).

To be announced.

Internet Resources

www.agencevu.com

www.lalettredelaphotographie.com

www.magnumphotos.com

www.mediastorm.org

www.viipphoto.com

www.whatwesaw.net

10. COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1: Introduction to the course. Syllabus review. Questionnaire. The Invention of Photography. Technology: Nicéphore Niépce and Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre.

Invention of the calotype and the positive/negative process, and publication of *The Pencil of Nature*: William Henry Fox Talbot.

Week 2: Photograms: painting with light.

Portraiture—memories of the self: daguerrotypes and more.
The Photographic Portrait: Nadar.

Week 3: Imitating the old masters of portraiture. Studio and lighting.

Photography and Painting in the Nineteenth Century. Artistic aspirations—painting and photography: Baudelaire and the problem of legitimacy.

Week 4: Art-photography: Henry Peach Robinson, Oscar Rejlander, Julia Margaret Cameron, and the Impressionists.

Imitating the old masters from Impressionism. Cyanotype technique and soft focus.

Week 5: Photography and the New Landscapes: Timothy O'Sullivan.

Explorers, travelers, tourists—topographical views and picturesque tastes: landscape photography—1850-70.

Week 6: The Alinari brothers: **Visit to the Alinari Photographic Archives** in Florence.

Chronophotography in the 1880's: Etienne Jules Marey and Eadweard Muybridge. Impact on Artistic Vision and Industrial Practices.

**PREPARATION OF MID-TERM PROJECT. SLIDE REVIEW AND CRITIQUE
IN VIEW OF MID-TERM EXAM.**

Week 7: MID-TERM EXAM

MID-TERM BREAK

Week 8: Review of Exam. Surrealism and Photography: Man Ray.
The Avant-guards.
The surrealist object. Polaroid transfers.

Week 9: Photography as Indexical Representation.

Photojournalism and War Photography: Henri Cartier-Bresson, Robert Capa,
Eugene Smith and Dorothea Lange.
Photography as Fictional Representation.

Week 10: Contemporary Art Photographers 1

Visit to the Museum of Novecento in Florence.

Week 11: Contemporary Art Photographers 2

Art-photography: The contemporary scene.
The Multiple Readings of Cindy Sherman.
Research Assignment for students presentations.
Choosing a photographer.

Week 12: Re-interpreting a contemporary artist.

SLIDE REVIEW AND CRITIQUE IN VIEW OF FINAL EXAM.

Week 13: **Students presentations.**
FINAL EXAM.

Week 14: **Student Exhibition.**

11. ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

SRISA strives to foster an all-inclusive learning environment that best caters to its students' needs. While faculty frequently work one-on-one with students, there are some situations in which special accommodations are required. Should a student have any academic accommodations regarding test taking or otherwise, they must present an official letter from their home University to the SRISA Director within the first week of class stating the accommodations.

12. DISCLAIMER

This Syllabus may be amended as the course proceeds. You will be notified of any changes.