

# CULTURAL HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

PJ 390  
Online/July 20-August 13

*"The shadow proves the sunshine."*

Jon Foreman - Switchfoot

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*"Photographs have the kind of  
authority over imagination to-  
day, which the printed word had  
yesterday, and the spoken word  
before that.."*

— Walter Lippmann

## OFFICE HOURS

If you have any questions,  
please do not hesitate to con-  
tact me either through  
Blackboard or through the  
email above.

## TEXTBOOK

There is no required text-  
book, but several readings  
will be required from selected  
peer-reviewed journal articles,  
online publications, and texts  
(be prepared to read, analyze,  
write, and discuss!). Also, see  
suggested books to read on  
pages two and three of this  
syllabus.

## Zoom Zoom

Though this class is Black-  
board based, I would like to  
meet via Zoom for at least the  
first and last project, depend-  
ing on schedules. I will survey  
the class to determine if this  
is going to be a possibility. If  
so, keep in mind that during  
the Zoom session you should  
be following regular classroom  
etiquette, that is, having a  
quiet place to meet so you can  
have your mic on and ready to  
participate in class discussion;  
not moving around during the  
session; and not engaging in  
activities outside of the class  
discussion, like preparing food,  
feeding animals, talking with  
family members/roommates,  
checking your text messages,  
cruising the internet, etc. This  
is critical to avoiding distrac-  
tion and maximizing the  
Zoom "classroom" experience.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Students will gain an understanding of the impact of the photographic image in different media, how photography has played a significant role in recording history since the 19th Century, and how the evolution of visual media has changed our perception of the world. Note: This course fulfills the Local to Global requirement in the Connections category of the Colonnade Program, with these requirements: **"Students should complete 21 hours of Foundations & Explorations coursework or have junior status before enrolling. Courses must be from three separate disciplines."** See your iCap audit and advisor for more information.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Examine the art and communication of photography.
- Examine the impact of photography on a diverse society and how historical events influence photographers.
- Examine the technical evolution of the camera, lens, and photographic printing processes.
- Analyze various forms of photographic genres and their similarities and differences.
- Discuss the ethical implications of the visual medium in journalism and other areas of photography.
- Examine the cultural implications of photography.
- Assess the individual's role and responsibility in processing and interpreting visual images.
- Students will conduct research, contribute critical analysis, write papers, and give class presentations, sharing what they have learned in order to reinforce key historical concepts, connecting them to contemporary themes.

## TOPICS

- Historical timeline of photography
- Technical developments in photography
- Photography as art
- Photography as evidence
- The photograph as an icon
- The desire to be seen, remembered (the portrait)
- The democratization of photography
- Photography and war
- Analyzing photographs; determining meaning/motivation
- Photography as a document; photography as a story
- Cultural diversity and photography
- Photography and the environment
- The heyday of the picture magazines
- Photography and social issues/change
- Documenting social movements
- The visual explosion detonated by the Internet
- Propaganda and photography
- Photographs, ethics and ob(sub)jectivity
- Student-generated topics
- Censorship

## PROJECTS ASSIGNMENTS (WITH PERCENTAGE OF GRADE)

- Photography: Historical Timeline) – 17%
- Five assignments that will be based on assigned readings/images requiring reading and writing an analysis – 66% (collectively)
- A Life in Pictures (photography/audio recording) – 17%

Note: Through Blackboard, you will receive an assignment sheet for each project that will detail specific guidelines and deadlines.

You will receive a point grade for each project. Your course grade will be calculated and given on a 100 point scale:

90-100 - A • 80-89 - B  
70-79 - C • 60-69 - D  
59-Below - F

#### GRADING CRITERIA

Though there is a more specific grading criteria outlined in the individual assignments, in general, your performance in this course will be evaluated based on:

- Fulfillment of assignment requirements
- Research quality
- Creativity
- Writing quality, accuracy, clarity, depth and relevance
- Technical skills (usage, grammar, sentence structure, spelling, etc.)
- Meeting the deadline.

#### IMPORTANT DATES

8/5 – Last day to drop a class with a W; last day to switch from audit to credit  
8/13 – Last day of term  
8/18 – Grades posted

#### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, 1074. The phone number is 270.745.5004 [270.745.3030 V/TTY] or email at [sarc@wku.edu](mailto:sarc@wku.edu). Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

#### GRADING

All assignments are expected to be handed in on time via Blackboard. For every 12-hour period of time that the assignment is handed in late, 10 percent of the total points for the assignment will be deducted. For example, if a project is worth 100 points and you hand it in late (the late clock begins once the assignment is due), the highest possible grade you can receive is a 90. Note: All deadlines are based on Central Standard Time.

#### BLACKBOARD

Make sure you are integrated in the university Blackboard system. Though we can also communicate by email, Blackboard is the primary source for information about the class, project requirements, deadlines, posting your assignments, participating in discussion boards, and finding out about any changes that may occur during the term.

#### RESEARCH

Do not use WIKIPEDIA as a source for your research and writing. Depending on the project, I will either provide you with the reading that you will be analyzing and writing about or I will give you specific instructions regarding research materials. All writing should be original.

#### WRITING

There are no tests in this course, but prepared to write! Though the focus of this class is on historical/social content, the technical side of your writing (grammar, usage, sentence structure, spelling, etc.) is critical to communicating this content. Given that this is an upper-division history course, it is expected that you already have these technical skills mastered before entering this class. The university does provide resources to help you with your writing (see below), but this will have to be done before handing in each assignment to insure that technical issues do not affect your grade.

#### THE LEARNING CENTER AND THE WKU WRITING CENTER

The Learning Center and the WKU Writing Center can be valuable resources to help you with academic needs. Due to COVID restrictions, neither center is likely to be open for in-office consultation. For more information about how to access them, see: The Learning Center - <https://www.wku.edu/tlc/>; phone: 270.745.5065; email: [tlc@wku.edu](mailto:tlc@wku.edu). WKU Writing Center - <https://www.wku.edu/writingcenter/>; phone: 270.745.5719; email: [writingcenter@wku.edu](mailto:writingcenter@wku.edu).

#### PLAGIARISM

Keep in mind that it is considered plagiarism to copy more than three successive words in a row from someone else's research/writing. In addition, if you have just changed a word or two out of someone else's writing/research, you are still copying her/his words. Be extremely careful with this; if you do use someone else's words, they need to be in quotes and credited to the author. If plagiarism is discovered, you will receive a failing grade for the assignment and possible further disciplinary action.

#### REQUIRED MATERIALS

- **You need access to a phone or some other kind of recording device** that can record audio and still images, and you need software for putting them together in a package (this is for the Life in Pictures project). I will provide more details about this in the assignment sheet and on Blackboard.
- As noted earlier, no textbook is required, but below are a few excellent resources if you wish to delve deeply into photography and its place in history and culture:

<https://www.amazon.com/Photography-Cultural-Mary-Warner-Marien/dp/0205988946>

**ACADEMIC (Dis)HONESTY**

All work should be yours and should be performed within the time frame outlined in each assignment.

University policies (taken from the student handbook):

“To represent ideas or interpretations taken from another source as one’s own is plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious offense. The academic work of a student must be his or her own. Students must give the author(s) credit for any source material used. To lift content directly from a source without giving credit is a flagrant act. To present a borrowed passage after having changed a few words, even if the source is cited, is also plagiarism.

“Disposition of Offenses: Students who commit any act of academic dishonesty may receive from the instructor a failing grade in that portion of the course work in which the act is detected or a failing grade in the course without possibility of withdrawal.”

**TITLE IX SEXUAL MISCONDUCT/ ASSAULT POLICY**

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU’s Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy: <https://wku.edu/eoo/documents/titleix/wkutitleixpolicyandgrievanceprocedure.pdf>

Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040): <https://www.wku.edu/policies/docs/251.pdf>.

[https://www.amazon.com/Seizing-Light-Aesthetic-History-Photography/dp/1138944254/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?keywords=seizing+the+light&qid=1561907398&s=books&sr=1-1](https://www.amazon.com/Seizing-Light-Aesthetic-History-Photography/dp/1138944254/ref=sr_1_1?keywords=seizing+the+light&qid=1561907398&s=books&sr=1-1)

**AEJMC PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES:**

This class will cover several of the values and competencies outlined in the ACEJMC accreditation guidelines. They are:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.

Please contact me if you have any questions about these values and competencies.

**RESULTS**

I am extremely interested in history of any kind, so naturally, the history about my chosen profession interests me all the more. I realize that not everyone shares my enthusiasm for the past; my hope is that if the interest isn’t already there this class will provide the spark, or at the very least it will bring about an awareness of the critical importance of visual history in our society and culture. Success in this class is dependent on your willingness to fully immerse yourself in the reading material and research over the next four weeks.

Also, this class is not about memorizing names, dates, and events; if you immerse yourselves in the material, carefully analyzing your research and thinking critically about what you read and hear, the names, dates, and events will carry more meaning beyond rote memorization. This will then make your class experience more meaningful, as well as provide more significance in your future endeavors in this academic area.

Since this is an online class, without the structure of a traditional classroom environment, you need to be very self-reliant in terms of pacing yourself as you move through the materials and meet deadlines. Though we won’t have the feature of meeting personally in a classroom (but with the plan to use Zoom), much can be accomplished through the online experience, together with keeping in close touch with me if you need assistance and feedback.

Let’s make it an intellectually meaningful and productive four weeks!



School of Media