



**CMN 396-5: Photography & Public Life
Fall 2014**

Tuesday-Thursday 2:00-3:20 pm, 1027 Lincoln Hall

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Office Hours: Mon. 3-4 pm, Thurs. 3:30-4:30 pm & by appointment

Moodle site: <https://learn.illinois.edu/course/view.php?id=7385> (login with your netid, pw)

Pinterest site: [pinterest.com/cmn396](https://www.pinterest.com/cmn396)

What is this course about?

Photographs are powerful forms of communication: they visualize social issues, make visible those who are often invisible, and foster or limit bonds of identification. This course examines the role of photography in public contexts, i.e., those complex spaces in which citizens engage matters of common concern. As the course unfolds we will engage such questions as: How do photographs participate in public deliberation about social and political issues? How does photographic rhetoric shape who we imagine ourselves to be as citizens? In what ways has photography historically been used to intervene in public debate? How does the contemporary public engage photography today? Throughout the course, students will be expected to use both written communication and visual communication to share ideas, prompt class discussion, and demonstrate their learning. Specific topics include war, civil rights, labor, documentary, environment, portraiture, trauma/violence, and politics. We will also explore the

history of photography and spend time discussing the changing nature of photography in the digital age (e.g., cell phone photography and social media).

When you have completed this course, you should be able to do the following:

- know key elements of the history of photography;
- compare/contrast aspects of the history of photography with the present;
- read, understand, and write about key ideas in scholarly research about photography;
- analyze photographs in terms of their production and composition;
- situate photographs in the cultural and historical contexts from which they were produced and circulated;
- construct clear, persuasive arguments about photography in writing;
- communicate ideas about photography visually;
- appreciate and recognize the complex roles that photography has played in public life, both in the past and in the present.

What will we read and view?

Reading is a BIG part of this course. If you aren't prepared to read about 50-60 pages per week, and ready to discuss what you have read in each class period, then this is not the course for you.

The following materials are required for this course:

Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History from Mathew Brady to Walker Evans*. You can find this book at IUB and elsewhere. There is also a copy of the textbook on reserve at all times at the Undergraduate Library.

New York Times LENS blog. The official photography blog of the *New York Times*. You should read this blog a few times per week during the semester. This will be our primary source for discussions of issues in contemporary photography. Available at <http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/> or follow on Twitter (<https://twitter.com/nytimesphoto>) or Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/nytimesphoto>).

Pinterest. We will collaborate as a class on curating a Pinterest site (<https://www.pinterest.com/> - login info to come later). Students will curate Pinterest boards designated for the various topics we will study. Using Pinterest will allow us to think about what it means to communicate visually about what we are learning.

Additional required readings and viewing materials for the course are at our Moodle site. See the reading and assignment schedule for specifics.

What assignments will you do?

Assignments in the course add up to a total of 500 points. Those points are designated in the following manner. (I will hand out more detailed assignment sheets in class.)

Reading Response Papers. 125 points. In order to help you make sense of the course readings, throughout the term you will write ten 2-paged, double-spaced response essays. Your papers should explain what you see as the key ideas from that day's readings, pose any questions the readings leave you with, and, where appropriate, make connections to related ideas we've discussed in class. Essays are evaluated on their evidence that you have read well, as well as on the clarity, accuracy, and academic integrity of your writing. Papers have no specific due dates, but they may be turned in at the beginning of any class period for which there was assigned reading (e.g., not a day where there is no class, or an exam, etc.). You must turn in at least 5 response papers before Oct. 2. All remaining papers must be turned in by the last class period for which there is assigned reading: Dec. 4. Because response papers are designed to share your impressions of the reading BEFORE we discuss it in class, I will not accept papers turned in after the class period for which they were written. You may not write more than one paper for a class period.

Midterm Exam (100 points) and Final Exam (125 points). 225 points. You will take two in-class essay exams. Questions will draw heavily on course readings and will invite you to draw connections between historical and contemporary aspects of the topics we discussed in class. You will be given all potential questions ahead of time, and I will select from among those for the exam. See also "Exam Policy" below.

Curating the Class Pinterest Site. 100 points. You and two partners will sign up for a specific week for which you will curate or "pin" a board on the class Pinterest site. Curating the board means that you and your partners read that week's readings ahead of time, identify their main themes, and then "pin" images, quotations, discussion questions, and other relevant content to the board before Tuesday's class. (A more detailed assignment sheet will be handed out separately.) Your board will then serve as a launch pad for our class discussions. Boards will be evaluated for the quality of their connections to that week's reading, their creative use of images to illustrate or interpret ideas from the reading, and for the extent to which they invite good class discussion. One grade will be assigned to all members of the group.

Engagement. 50 points. Your engagement grade will reflect (1) my assessment of your overall engagement with the course both in class and outside of class (25 points) and (2) your specific participation on the class Pinterest site via relevant comments on each week's student-curated board and/or pinning images and links to other class boards (e.g., Photographer of the Week) (25 points). Note also that excessive absences will lower your engagement grade; see "Attendance" below.

What are my responsibilities as a student in this course?

Engagement

Each course I teach offers an opportunity to participate as a member of an intellectual community. The more engaged we all are, the better that community will be. What does it mean to be "engaged"? Engaged students stay on top of what's happening in class from day to day. They come to class having read, viewed, and thought about the materials. During class, they participate in discussions, ask questions, and offer their ideas. They are prepared to be called on even if their hand is not raised. Outside of class, engaged students keep up with the reading, make contributions to Pinterest, and take advantage of opportunities for feedback on their work. Engaged students also use campus resources to help them improve their performance in class

(e.g., the library, the Writer's Workshop). They use my office hours. They ask friends for notes if they happen to miss a class. Engagement in this course is graded; see above for details.

Attendance

You are expected to attend all class meetings and to be on time for class. You are allowed 2 "free" absences during the semester (i.e., you may miss up to a week of class without penalty). Apart from University-sanctioned absences (University-recognized religious holidays, authorized participation in athletic events or other official University activities), I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. Anything over 2 absences will be considered "excessive absence." *Every absence beyond the second absence will result in the reduction of your final engagement grade by 5 points.* Make sure you keep track of your absences; I will. For more serious issues related to attendance, see the "Family and Medical Emergencies" policy below.

Exam Policy

All students will take exams on the day and time they are to be administered and *only* on that day and time. As noted above in the description of assignments, there will be no exceptions to this policy except in cases of severe emergency (e.g., loss of life or limb) or, in the case of the final, demonstrated conflict with another final exam time.

Late Work Policy

You are expected to complete all assignments (exams, curating Pinterest) on the day that they are due. Reading Response Papers may not be turned in after the class period for which they were written (see above). For more serious issues related to late work, see the "Family and Medical Emergencies" policy below.

Technical problems (including but not limited to power outages, erased/lost thumb drives, viruses, inability to print, etc.) *do not in themselves constitute legitimate excuses for late or missing work.* Develop good habits now, like saving frequently, backing up your work on a hard drive or in the cloud, and keeping paper copies in a safe place. Save and print out early drafts of your work so that if you lose it you will be able to reconstruct what you have lost.

IMPORTANT NOTE: I do not accept so-called "insurance" emails in which you attach a paper that you have not had the time to print so that it will count as "turned in." Even if your printer runs out of paper, ink, etc., there are plenty of public printers available to you on this campus. Your tuition dollars support the public labs on campus, so use them in the event that you have trouble with your own computer, Internet connections, printers, etc. Unless specified otherwise in an assignment, I will read, evaluate, and grade only paper copies of your work.

Family/Medical Emergencies Policy

I recognize that in rare cases an extended illness or family emergency may inhibit a student's ability to attend to normal student responsibilities and deadlines. Students with such emergencies should let me know immediately. In addition, in such cases it is to your benefit to contact the Emergency Dean; the Emergency Dean will in turn contact your instructors. If I receive confirmation from the Emergency Dean about your situation, I will make suitable

accommodations for making up late work. Otherwise, all normal course policies apply (see “attendance” and “late work” above).

Accommodation Policy

If you feel that you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, feel free to contact me to discuss your specific needs.

Emergency Response Policy

During the first week of the semester, please take the time to learn the locations of different exits from the building in case there is an emergency. Evacuations are mandatory for fire alarms and when directed by authorities. If there is ever a time when we need to evacuate the classroom to protect our personal safety, take only critical personal items with you and leave immediately. Review the university’s emergency response materials here: <http://police.illinois.edu/emergencyplanning/general/>.

Academic Integrity and Matters of Citation and Documentation

As a student at the University of Illinois you are obligated to uphold the University’s Academic Integrity policies as outlined in the *Student Code*. My ethical and professional obligations as a faculty member require me to investigate apparent violations of academic integrity when I encounter them. I assume that students taking advanced (300-level) courses are familiar with the skills of summarizing, paraphrasing, quotation, and source documentation taught in Composition I and II courses at this university. Similarly, work you post to Pinterest must be properly documented to give credit to those whose work you are reproducing. If you are unsure of the quality of your citation and documentation skills, I encourage you to work with a consultant at the Writer’s Workshop to brush up. In addition, I recommend that you check out the copy of Gordon Harvey’s *Writing With Sources* that I have put on reserve for this course at the Undergraduate Library. It is extremely useful on all matters of citation and documentation.

Cheating will not be tolerated. Plagiarism, *the intentional or unintentional misrepresentation of someone else’s work as your own*, will not be tolerated. Students found to have plagiarized all or parts of assignments will receive severe penalties, ranging from (at minimum) a zero for the assignment to failure of the course. Please note that this policy applies whether the assignment is graded or ungraded.

Be warned: plagiarism is *not* only copying someone else’s work word for word. There are actually two types of plagiarism: *cheating* and *source misrepresentation*. You are not only cheating when you pass off someone else’s work as your own (whether that “someone else” is a classmate, friend, web site, or published author), but also when you collaborate with others on assignments meant to be completed alone. You are engaging in source misrepresentation when you fail to cite a paraphrased source, fail to use quotation marks around exact quotations, or fail to turn in a list of sources cited.

A special warning about online sources: Although resources found in the library’s databases and on the web are helpful and I encourage you to consult them, be aware of the pitfalls of using such sources. It can be tempting to cut and paste information you locate in an online source directly into your own work; however, without proper documentation this

constitutes plagiarism. The moral of the story? Be meticulous and careful about your use of sources.

If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, see me and consult the University's Academic Integrity policy (Part Four of the *Student Code*) at:

http://studentcode.illinois.edu/article1_part4_1-401.html

Ignorance of these policies is not an excuse for committing an act of academic dishonesty.

Technology Policy

Research shows that when people attempt to perform two tasks at once (e.g., following what's happening in class while checking text messages), the brain literally *cannot do it*. The brain has got to abandon one of the tasks in order to accomplish the other. Thus most of our attempts at multitasking make us slower and dumber. This is a good enough reason to avoid the temptation of the distractions provided by phones, laptops, and other devices. Another reason is that it disrupts my work and that of your fellow students. Unless we are using them for a specific class activity (which is rare, even in this class), phones should always be put completely away (not on your lap, not in your hand underneath your desk, not visible on the floor at your feet). You are welcome to bring laptops or tablets to class if you are using them to take notes, access readings or images we're discussing, and the like. You are *not* welcome to use these devices to do social networking, check email, or otherwise perform non-class-related activities during class. I reserve the right to declare "screens down" at any time during class, and I deputize each student in the class with the authority to ask any other student engaging in distracting technology use to cease. And if *you* are the disruptive student? Your presence in the class implies that you accept the terms of this syllabus, which means that you are obligated to assent to that student's request.

What are MY responsibilities in this course?

You can expect that I will:

- make class worth attending;
- be prepared for every class meeting;
- evaluate your work fairly and offer clear suggestions for improvement;
- return your work promptly;
- create conditions in the classroom through which you and your peers may learn from one another as well as from me;
- acknowledge the diversity of human experience and foster a climate of respect in the classroom;
- provide reasonable accommodations for qualified students in accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act;
- be accessible outside of class for questions and feedback.

How do I best read/study for this course?

This semester you will encounter a wide variety of materials, including scholarly books and research articles, popularly circulated texts (e.g., web sites, articles from magazines and newspapers), social media content, and lots and lots of photographs. Of these, it's likely that you are least familiar with published scholarly research. Here are a few things to keep in mind as you read the assigned scholarly essays for each week and write about them:

Take your time and read carefully. Scholars typically do not write for a popular general audience, but for an audience of experts in a specific field and experts-in-training (that's you!). While the best scholarly writing is both complex and clear, it will not read as fast and easy as a newspaper article written at a sixth-grade reading level. Therefore, you will need to make time to read carefully. Don't rush. I can't emphasize this enough.

Follow the structure and organization of the reading closely. While there is no cut-and-dried template for the scholarly research we will read this semester, most scholarly articles contain these five parts:

- an introduction that presents the topic of the essay, justifies the need for this research, and offers a preview of the writer's argument/thesis;
- a "literature review" that notes what other scholars have said on the subject and introduces concepts, terms, or theories that inform the essay;
- a "context" or "history" section that introduces the topic/visual artifacts in question and situates them in historical, social, and cultural context;
- an interpretation/analysis section, where the writer proves her/his argument or thesis using evidence;
- and a conclusion section that wraps up the piece and explains what the study tells us about photography more generally.

A book like Trachtenberg will make a broader argument stretched out over multiple chapters, but ultimately the structure of it is similar. And not all essays will contain these materials in precisely this order. In some cases you might have to infer some of these parts from your reading, but if you look out for these parts you're guaranteed to get a good overall grasp of the reading.

State-Situate-Prove (SSP). For each reading, make sure that you can identify the SSP: the specific places in the article where the author *STATES* (presents) the thesis or argument; *SITUATES* (places) the argument in terms of concepts s/he's using and other research on the topic; and, most importantly, how the author *PROVES* the argument. Note especially how evidence is used. Being able to identify these elements in the reading will help you when you write your reading response papers.

Vocabulary. As you read each essay, pay special attention to vocabulary and definitions. One of our goals this semester is to develop a lexicon, or vocabulary, for talking about photography. For example, terms like *rephotography* or *depth of field* may initially be unfamiliar to you; you will be expected to understand what these and other terms mean and asked to apply them. Be sure to note any new or recurring vocabulary terms or concepts introduced in the readings.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

Key: AT = Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs* book
MOO = reading or activity on Moodle

T 8.26	<u>Introduction to the Course</u> For next time: Log on to Moodle site, log on to Pinterest and look at week one board, read through syllabus, view MOO "The History of Photography, Animated"
R 8.28	<u>A Short History of Photography</u> For next time: Read AT prologue, MOO Goldberg, "Under the Influence"
T 9.2	<u>Reading Photography's Past and Present</u> For next time: Read MOO early accounts of daguerreotypes; "Photographs are No Longer Things"; MOO view "Making a Daguerreotype" video
R 9.4	<u>Reading Photography's Past and Present</u> For next time: Read AT ch 1
T 9.9	<u>Portraiture</u> (curated Pinterest boards begin this week) For next time: Read MOO Aguayo & Calvert; selfie links
R 9.11	<u>Portraiture</u> For next time: Read AT ch 2
T 9.16	<u>War Photography</u> For next time: Read MOO Apel
R 9.18	<u>War Photography</u> For next time: Read MOO Finnegan, "Social Engineering"
T 9.23	<u>Documenting Social Conditions</u> For next time: Read MOO Facing Change's "An American Place," "Migrant Workers in IL & NC"
R 9.25	<u>Documenting Social Conditions</u> For next time: Read AT ch 3
T 9.30	<u>Environmental Photography</u> For next time: Read MOO Peeples
R 10.2	<u>Environmental Photography</u> FIRST 5 READING RESPONSE PAPERS SHOULD HAVE BEEN COMPLETED BY TODAY For next time: Review potential midterm exam questions
T 10.7	<u>Midterm Exam review</u> For next time: study for exam
R 10.9	<u>Midterm Exam</u> For next time: Read MOO Raiford
T 10.14	<u>Social Movement Photography</u> For next time: Watch MOO video "Danny Lyon on Covering the Civil Rights Movement"; listen to oral history interview of Flip Schulke; view "Unseen, Unforgotten" exhibit
R 10.16	No class; CF lecturing off-campus (you may turn in response papers to videos/audio material via Moodle for the days I am away)
T 10.21	No class; CF lecturing off-campus (you may turn in response papers to videos/audio material via Moodle for the days I am away); Read MOO DeLuca et.al.
R 10.23	<u>Social Movement Photography</u> For next time: Read MOO Zelizer

T 10.28	<u>Photos of Trauma and Violence</u> For next time: Read MOO Ohl & Potter
R 10.30	<u>Photos of Trauma and Violence</u> For next time: Read MOO Meyer
T 11.4	<u>Photos of Work and Labor</u> For next time: Read/view MOO "Lean In" materials
R 11.6	<u>Photos of Work and Labor</u> For next time: Read MOO Finnegan, "Recognizing Lincoln"
T 11.11	<u>Presidential Photography</u> For next time: Read MOO Finnegan, "Picturing the Presidents"
R 11.13	<u>Presidential Photography</u> For next time: View MOO "The President's Photographer: 50 Yrs in Oval Office"
T 11.18	<u>Presidential Photography</u> For next time: Read MOO Peck
R 11.20	No class: CF at National Communication Association convention
T 11.25	No class: Thanksgiving Break
R 11.27	No class: Thanksgiving Break
T 12.2	<u>Photography and Social Media</u> For next time: Read MOO Kalin
R 12.4	<u>Photography and Social Media</u> For next time: Review exam questions
T 12.9	<u>Final Exam review</u> For next time: Study for exam
M 12.15	FINAL EXAM 1:30-4:30 pm