Using Photographs as Historical Evidence

HIS 326 COURSE GUIDE
Writing Intensive and Research Intensive
Spring 2006

Scope of the Course

This course takes a case study approach to evaluating the content and history of photographs as historical evidence. We will explore the history of photography by focusing on different types of photographs in particular social contexts from the evolution of portrait photography, to compelling images of the American Civil War, one of the earliest wars ever to be photographed, to the history of social documentary from the turn of the twentieth century through the Great Depression. Overall, we will strive to go beyond the use of photographs as mere illustrations to understand the richer meanings of their visual content as primary source evidence that must be critically evaluated in historical context. You will put these methods and perspectives into practice by developing a term paper that uses a particular type of photograph as primary source evidence (rather than as simple illustration) for your thesis.
Course Learning Objectives

- Learn strategies for “reading” photographs as historical evidence.
- Understand that photographs are cultural artifacts that must be critically evaluated in historical context.
- Evaluate how technological change affected the results and meanings of photographic evidence.
- Analyze the visual content of two different types/genres of photographs.
- Develop a research paper using photographs as primary source evidence rather than simple illustrations (12-15 pages).
- Practice such research skills as defining an interesting and focused topic, creating a meaningful research bibliography, and using primary source evidence to defend and explain a thesis statement.

Required Readings

Journal Articles and Book Chapters: (available as indicated on ereserves or electronic journal databases.)


**Evaluation**

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<tr>
<th>Participation</th>
<th>10%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portrait or Civil War analysis</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Documentary analysis</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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**Participation (10%)**

You will have a variety of opportunities to participate in class discussion and workshops throughout the semester, and active participation in the course will improve your learning significantly. Active participation includes doing the assigned reading before class, taking notes on class discussion and lectures, making substantive contributions to class discussion, turning work in on time, and active engagement in research and writing workshops. Please note that unless arrangements have been made well in advance of due dates, late assignments will be penalized by a 3% reduction in the final grade for every day the assignment is late. Assignments later than one week will not be accepted for credit without an extremely impressive explanation.

**Photographic Analyses (40%)**

You will complete an analysis of two different types or genres of photographic evidence. These assignments will entail selecting an appropriate photograph and using assigned readings to evaluate its visual content in historical context. You will receive a more specific set of questions for analysis and instructions for finding an appropriate photograph well in advance of the due date. Each analysis will be the equivalent of about 5 pages, typed and double-spaced.

Make note of the following due dates:

- 6 February Portrait or Civil War analysis due
- 3 March Social Documentary analysis due
Term Paper (50%)
You will develop a final research paper using a particular type or genre of photograph as historical evidence. Your research bibliography should contain at least 5 scholarly books or journal articles and about 3-5 photos. The final paper should be about 12-15 pages typed and double spaced, with Turabian-style footnotes and bibliography. We will be developing this assignment throughout the semester. This assignment will be the exclusive focus of the course during the month of April, which is organized as a series of workshops devoted to specific term paper revision issues.

Research skills this assignment will teach you include the following:
- Constructing an interesting and clearly focused research topic
- Using photographs as primary source evidence
- Developing a meaningful research bibliography
- Synthesizing scholarly arguments
- Developing an original thesis or argument
- Practicing scholarly citation methods
- Effective strategies for revising and improving your written analysis of evidence and thesis development

Due dates (see course schedule for writing workshops related to term paper development and revision):
- 17 February Preliminary term paper photograph selections due for extra participation credit
- 13 March Topic description with photographs and preliminary bibliography due
- 29 March Email me your working thesis statement by noon
- 5 April Complete term paper draft due with footnotes, bibliography, and photographic evidence
- 1 May Final, revised term paper due

Course Schedule

9 January Introductions

Nineteenth Century Photography: Portraits and Civil War

11 January Portraits Before Photography
Read: Orvell, Ch. 1. Introduction, pp. 13-18. [ereserves]

13 January Daguerreotypes and Other Cased Images
Read: Orvell, Ch. 2 Presenting the Self pp. 19-38. [ereserves]

16 January MLK Holiday
18 January Cartes de Visite and Other Photos on Paper

20 January Stereographs and Civil War: Marketing vs. Documentation
Read: Orvell, Ch. 4. Seeing and Believing, pp. 61-80. [ereserves]

23 January Photography and Civil War: Facts vs. Interpretations

25 January Research Workshop: Topic development

27 January Souvenir vs. Personal Portrait

30 January Constructing “Indians”

1 February Family Portraits in the Segregated South

3 February Family Portraits in the Segregated South

6 February Portrait or Civil War Analysis due.

Social Documentary and the Twentieth Century

8 February Turn of the Century Technology
Read: Orvell, Ch. 6. Photography and Society, pp. 105-140. [ereserves]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Read</th>
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<tr>
<td>10 February</td>
<td>Jacob Riis and the Reformer’s Eye</td>
<td>Lytle, “The Mirror with a Memory.” In <em>After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection</em>, pp. 178-200. [ereserves]</td>
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<td>15 February</td>
<td>America and Lewis Hine</td>
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<td>For extra participation credit turn in to me your selected photographs as samples for the workshop</td>
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<td>20 February</td>
<td><strong>Research Workshop:</strong> Topic refinement and bibliographic development.</td>
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<td>3 March</td>
<td><strong>Social Documentary analysis due</strong></td>
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<td>6-10 March</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
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Term Paper

13 March  Topic description with photographs and preliminary bibliography due
15 March  TBA
17 March  Research Workshop: Topic Revision
20 March  Research Workshop: Topic Revision
22 March  Research Workshop: Topic Revision
24 March  Pre-writing workshop: Draft development; use of visual evidence, including captions and identification of photos; citation formatting; and other practical stuff
27 March  Pre-writing workshop: Draft development; use of visual evidence, including captions and identification of photos; citation formatting; and other practical stuff
29 March  Working thesis statements due.
31 March  Writing workshop: Thesis statements and other intellectual stuff
3 April  Writing workshop: Thesis statements and other intellectual stuff
5 April  Complete term paper draft due (all 12-15 pages of it) with footnotes, bibliography, and photographic evidence
7 April  Revising workshop: Thesis statements
10 April  Revising workshop: Paragraph development and organization of argument
12 April  Revising workshop: Paragraph development and organization of argument
14 April  Holiday
17 April  Revising workshop: Strategies for footnoting
19 April  Revising workshop: Use of visual evidence, including captions and identification of photos
21 April  Revising workshop: TBA
24 April  Revising workshop: TBA
26 April  Revising workshop: TBA
28 April  Revising workshop: TBA
1 May  Final term paper due.