



Using Photographs as Historical Evidence

HIS 326 COURSE GUIDE Writing Intensive and Research Intensive Spring 2008

Prof. L. Tolbert
Office: MHRA 2109
Email: lctolber@uncg.edu (this is the best way to reach me)

Office Phone: 334-3987
Hours: by appointment

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

By the end of the semester students should be able to:

- Demonstrate different strategies for “reading” photographs as historical evidence.
- Explain how specific photographs are cultural artifacts that must be critically evaluated in historical context.
- Explain some of the ways that 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 (12-15 pages) using photographs as primary source evidence rather than simple illustrations
- 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

Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2007.

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

Cohen, Lizabeth. “Embellishing a Life of Labor.” In Dell Upton and John Vlach, eds. *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1986. [ereserves]

Curtis, James C. “Dorothea Lange, Migrant Mother, and the Culture of the Great Depression,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 21 (Spring 1986): 1-20. [Use Journal Finder]

Curtis, James C. and Sheila Grannen. “Let Us Now Appraise Famous Photographs: Walker Evans and Documentary Photography,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 1-23. [Use Journal Finder]

Davidson, James West and Mark Hamilton Lytle, “The Mirror with a Memory.” In *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1992, pp. 178-200. [ereserves]

Levine, Lawrence W. “The Historian and the Icon: Photography and the History of the American People in the 1930s and 1940s.” In *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. [ereserves]

Natanson, Nicholas. “The Photo Series: Ben Shahn’s Southern Meditations.” In *The Black Image in the New Deal : The Politics of FSA Photography*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992, pp. 85-112. [ereserves]

Orvell, Miles. *American Photography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. [ereserves]

- Sandweiss, Martha A. “‘Momentoes of the Race’”: Photography and the American Indian.” In *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. [ereserves]
- Seixas, Peter, “Lewis Hine: From Social to Interpretive Photographer.” *American Quarterly* Vol. 39, No. 3 (Autumn, 1987): 381-409. [Use Journal Finder]
- Severa, Joan L. *Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900*. Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1995.
- Trachtenberg, Alan, “Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs.” *Representations* 9 (1985): 1-32. [Use Journal Finder]
- Wajda, Shirley Teresa, “The Artistic Portrait Photograph.” In *The Arts and the American Home, 1890-1930*, ed. by Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994. [ereserves]

Evaluation

Participation	10%
Portrait or Civil War analysis	20%
Social Documentary analysis	20%
Term paper	50%

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. **Late policy:** 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:

- 12 February Portrait or Civil War analysis due
 25 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):

26 February	Preliminary term paper photograph selections due for extra participation credit
27 March	Topic description with photographs and preliminary bibliography due
7 April	Email me your working thesis statement by noon
10 April	Complete term paper draft due with footnotes, bibliography, and photographic evidence
1 May	Final, revised term paper due

Course Schedule

15 January Introductions

Nineteenth Century Photography: Portraits and Civil War

17 January Portraits Before Photography/Daguerreotypes and Other Cased Images
Read: Orvell, Ch. 1. Introduction, pp. 13-18. [ereserves]
Read: Orvell, Ch. 2 Presenting the Self pp. 19-38. [ereserves]

22 January Cartes de Visite and the Artistic Portrait Photograph
Read: Wajda, Shirley Teresa, "The Artistic Portrait Photograph." In *The Arts and the American Home, 1890-1930*, ed. by Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1994. [ereserves]

- 24 January no class
- 29 January Stereographs and Civil War: Marketing vs. Documentation
Read: Orvell, Ch. 4. Seeing and Believing, pp. 61-80. [ereserves]
 Trachtenberg, Alan, “Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs.”
Representations 9 (1985): 1-32. [Use Journal Finder]
- 31 January Photography and Civil War: Facts vs. Interpretations
Read: Trachtenberg, Alan, “Albums of War: On Reading Civil War
 Photographs.” *Representations* 9 (1985): 1-32. [Use Journal Finder]
- Does the Camera Ever Lie?
<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/cwphtml/cwpcam/cwcam1.html> Read both “The
 Case of Confused Identity” and “The Case of the Moved Body”
- 5 February Souvenir vs. Personal Portrait
Read: Sandweiss, Martha A. “‘Momentoes of the Race’”: Photography and the
 American Indian.” In *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West*.
 New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. [ereserves]
- 7 February Family Portraits in the Segregated South
Read: Elizabeth Arnold, “Family Pictures ‘Out of Place’: Race, Resistance, and
 Affirmation in the Pope Family Photograph Collection, 1890-1920” MA Thesis,
 UNCG, 2006.
- 12 February **Research Workshop:** Topic development
Portrait or Civil War Analysis due

Social Documentary and the Twentieth Century

- 14 February Turn of the Century Technology
Read: Orvell, Ch. 6. Photography and Society, pp. 105-140. [ereserves]
 Jacob Riis and the Reformer’s Eye
Read: Lytle, “The Mirror with a Memory.” In *After the Fact: The Art of
 Historical Detection*, pp. 178-200. [ereserves]
- 19 February Using Photos as Evidence of the Immigrants’ Perspective
Read: Cohen, Lizabeth. “Embellishing a Life of Labor.” [ereserves]
- 21 February America and Lewis Hine
- 26 February Lewis Hine and the American Worker

Read: Seixas, Peter, "Lewis Hine: From Social to Interpretive Photographer." *American Quarterly* Vol. 39, No. 3 (Autumn, 1987): 381-409. [Use Journal Finder]

For extra participation credit turn in to me your selected photographs as samples for the workshop

28 February **Research Workshop:** Topic refinement and bibliographic development.

4 March The Great Depression

Read: Levine, Lawrence W. "The Historian and the Icon: Photography and the History of the American People in the 1930s and 1940s." In *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. [ereserves]

6 March Dorothea Lange

Read: Curtis, James C. "Dorothea Lange, Migrant Mother, and the Culture of the Great Depression," *Winterthur Portfolio* 21 (Spring 1986): 1-20. [Use Journal Finder]

11-13 March *****Spring Break*****

18 March Walker Evans

Read: Curtis, James C. and Sheila Grannen. "Let Us Now Appraise Famous Photographs: Walker Evans and Documentary Photography," *Winterthur Portfolio* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1980): 1-23. [Use Journal Finder]

20 March Ben Shahn

Read: Natanson, Nicholas. "The Photo Series: Ben Shahn's Southern Meditations." In *The Black Image in the New Deal : The Politics of FSA Photography*..Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1992, pp. 85-112. [ereserves]

Term Paper

25 March Research Workshop: Topic Revision
Social Documentary analysis due

27 March **Topic description with photographs and preliminary bibliography due**

1 April Pre-writing workshop: Draft development; use of visual evidence, including captions and identification of photos; citation formatting; and other practical stuff

3 April Writing workshop: Thesis statements and other intellectual stuff

- 8 April **Working thesis statements due by noon on 7 April.** Writing workshop: Thesis statements and other intellectual stuff
- 10 April **Complete term paper draft due (all 12-15 pages of it) with footnotes, bibliography, and photographic evidence**
- 15 April Revising workshop: Thesis statements
- 17 April Revising workshop: Paragraph development and organization of argument
- 22 April Revising workshop: Paragraph development and organization of argument
- 24 April Revising workshop: Strategies for footnoting
- 29 April Revising workshop: Use of visual evidence, including captions and identification of photos
- 1 May **Final revised term paper due**