



## Using Photographs as Historical Evidence

### HIS 326 COURSE GUIDE Writing Intensive and Research Intensive Spring 2009

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### 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 research paper that uses a particular type of photograph as primary source evidence (rather than as simple illustration) for your thesis. This

course satisfies university writing intensive requirements and the research intensive requirement for history majors.

### **Course Learning Objectives**

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

- Demonstrate multiple 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]

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]

Hull, Elizabeth Arnold, “Family Pictures ‘Out of Place’: Race, Resistance, and Affirmation in the Pope Family Photograph Collection, 1890-1920” MA Thesis, UNCG, 2006.

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]

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 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.

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance is mandatory and is counted as part of the overall participation grade. I will take attendance at the beginning of every class. If the University is closed for snow you will not, of course, be counted absent. If it snows and the University is open, class will be held as scheduled and attendance counts. At the end of the semester I tally the percentage of attendance based on the total number of classes you have attended....100%, 80%, etc. That provides a starting point for considering your overall participation grade.

Here's an example of how the participation grade is calculated: a student attended class 87% of the time, asked or answered several questions during the semester, actively participated in research workshops and group discussions, but failed to turn in two ungraded assignments and turned in at least one graded assignment late. Though attendance and participation might suggest a B+ for this student, the late assignments mean that this student cannot make higher than a B- and could even be in the C-range depending on the nature of the missed assignments. Ten percent may seem like a small amount in the overall grade, but it can make a significant difference in the final grade. Skipping classes and ungraded assignments can also have a snowball effect for the results of graded assignments. The course is designed to help you develop your research project in stages and learn skills that build on each other one step at a time. If you skip the smaller steps, the larger research project can seem overwhelming.

### **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 5-7 pages, typed and double-spaced.

Make note of the following due dates:

- 11 February   Portrait analysis due. Post to my digital dropbox by 5:00 p.m.  
1 April        Social Documentary analysis due. Post to my digital dropbox by 5:00 p.m.

### **Term Paper (50%)**

You will develop a final research paper using a historically related group of 3-5 photographs as historical evidence. Your research bibliography should contain at least 10 scholarly books or journal articles. The final paper should be about 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
- Creating an original thesis or argument
- Applying 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):

- 23 February   Preliminary term paper photograph selections and bibliography due by 3:30 p.m. for extra participation credit. Email your assignment directly to [lctolber@uncg.edu](mailto:lctolber@uncg.edu).
- 16 March       Post your topic description, with photographs and preliminary bibliography, to my digital dropbox by 3:30 p.m.. This assignment is worth 10% of your final term paper grade.
- 13 April       Email to [lctolber@uncg.edu](mailto:lctolber@uncg.edu) your working thesis statement by 5:00. Write your thesis statement in the text of your email. Do not attach it as a separate document. This assignment is not optional.
- 20 April       Complete term paper due with footnotes, bibliography, and photographic evidence. Failure to turn in a draft will result in a 5% reduction in the final term paper grade. Post to my digital dropbox by 5:00 p.m.
- 4 May          Final, revised term paper due.

## Course Schedule

21 January Introductions

### Nineteenth Century Portrait Photographs

26 January Portraits Before Photography/Daguerreotypes and Other Cased Images

Read: Orvell, Ch. 1. Introduction, pp. 13-18. [ereserves]

Orvell, Ch. 2 Presenting the Self pp. 19-38. [ereserves]

28 January Interpreting the Meanings of Photographic Portraits

Read: Trachtenberg, *Illustrious Americans* [ereserves]

2 February Photographs as Objects

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—note that due to its length this chapter is divided into two parts in ereserves. Read the entire chapter, or both of the parts posted to ereserves.]

4 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]

9 February Family Portraits in the Segregated South

Read: Hull, Elizabeth Arnold, “Family Pictures ‘Out of Place’: Race, Resistance, and Affirmation in the Pope Family Photograph Collection, 1890-1920” MA Thesis, UNCG, 2006.

11 February NO CLASS. **Portrait Analysis due. Post to my digital dropbox by 5:00 p.m.**

16 February **Research Workshop:** Topic design and bibliographic development

### Social Documentary: From the Civil War to the Great Depression

18 February 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”

23 February 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]

**\*\*Preliminary topic description and photograph selections with bibliography due by 3:30 p.m. for extra participation credit. Email to [lctolber@uncg.edu](mailto:lctolber@uncg.edu)**

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

2 March Turn of the Century Technology  
Read: Orvell, Ch. 6. Photography and Society, pp. 105-140. [ereserves]  
Jacob Riis and the Reformer's Eye  
Lytle, "The Mirror with a Memory." In *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*, pp. 178-200. [ereserves]

4 March Using Photos as Evidence of the Immigrants' Perspective  
Read: Cohen, Lizabeth. "Embellishing a Life of Labor." [ereserves]

9/11 March **\*\*\*\*\*Spring Break\*\*\*\*\***

16 March 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]

**\*\*Topic description with photographs and bibliography. This assignment is worth 10% of your final term paper grade. Post your assignment to my digital dropbox by 3:30 p.m.**

18 March America and Lewis Hine

23 March **Research Workshop:** Topic Revision and Research Design

25 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]

30 March Interpreting the Migrant Mother  
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]

1 April No Class. **Social Documentary analysis due. Post to my digital dropbox by 5:00 p.m.**

### **Term Paper Schedule**

6 April Pre-writing workshop: Thesis statements and other intellectual stuff [Rampolla, pp. 47-51 and 75]

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

13 April Pre-writing workshop: Paragraph development and strategies for footnoting [Rampolla, pp. 52-60, 89-102]

**Working thesis statements due by 5:00. Email your thesis statement to [lctolber@uncg.edu](mailto:lctolber@uncg.edu). Write your thesis statement in the text of your email. Do not attach it as a separate document. This assignment is not optional.**

15 April Writing workshop: Thesis statements and other intellectual stuff

20 April No class. **Complete term paper draft due (all 12-15 pages of it) with footnotes, bibliography, and photographic evidence. Post to my digital dropbox by 5:00 p.m.**

22 April Revising workshop: Thesis revision, paragraph development, and organization of argument

27 April Revising workshop: Strategies for footnoting

29 April Revising workshop: Use of visual evidence, including captions and identification of photos. Addressing your final questions.

4 May Course evaluations. **Final Term Paper** due.