



Using Photographs as Historical Evidence

HIS 326 COURSE GUIDE* Writing Intensive and Research Intensive Spring 2011

Prof. L. Tolbert
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No Office Phone
Hours: 2:00-3:00, T/Th

**Note that this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Any necessary changes in the syllabus or course schedule will prioritize effectiveness for student learning.*

Scope and Purpose of the Course

This course explores 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. Although the case studies are organized in a generally chronological order, this course is not a chronological survey of the history of photography. Instead, the priority of the course is to go beyond the use of photographs as mere illustrations to interpret the richer meanings of their visual content. We will study photographs as a distinctive type of 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) to develop your own original interpretation. 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:

- Apply 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 considering such factors as format, purpose, audience, the role of the photographer, the role of the subject or sitter, the technology of the image, and social or cultural context important for understanding the visual content of the photograph.
- 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.)*

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]

Hull, Elizabeth Arnold, “Family Pictures ‘Out of Place’: Race, Resistance, and Affirmation in the Pope Family Photograph Collection, 1890-1920” MA Thesis, UNCG, 2006. (Selected Chapters; available online through Jackson Library Catalog)

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. [Selected chapters; ereserves]

- Pegler-Gordon, Anna, *In Sight of America: Photography and the Development of U.S. Immigration Policy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. (Chapters 1, 2, and 4; 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]
- Stapp, William F. "These Terrible Mementoes': Civil War Photography." *Chicago History*, Vol. 9 Issue 4 (Dec1980): 197-211. (Posted to the Assignments section of Bb)
- 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]
- Yochelson, Bonnie. "What Are the Photographs of Jacob Riis?" *Culturefront* 3, no. 3 (August 1994): 28-38. (Posted to the Assignments section of Bb)

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. Attendance is mandatory (see the attendance policy below) and is counted as part of the 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:

3 February Portrait analysis due. Post to my digital dropbox by 5:00 p.m.

24 March 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):

10 February Preliminary term paper photograph selections and bibliography due by 5:00 p.m. for extra participation credit. Email your assignment directly to lctolber@uncg.edu.

25 February Post your topic description, with photographs and preliminary bibliography, to my digital dropbox by 8:00a.m. This assignment is worth 10% of your final term paper grade.

31 March Email to 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.

7 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.

21 April Final, revised term paper due.

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

UNCG considers academic dishonesty to be a serious offense. Dishonest behavior in any form, including cheating, plagiarism, deception of effort, and unauthorized assistance, may result in such sanctions as a failing grade on an assignment or failure in the course depending on the nature of the offense. Students must follow the guidelines of the University Policy on Academic Integrity:

<http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>

Electronic Communication

Students are responsible for checking Blackboard and UNCG email on a regular basis. Students are encouraged to utilize email and other forms of digital communication when interacting with the instructor (lctolber@uncg.edu). When using email, students are to be professional and courteous. Students should also remember email is an asynchronous form of communication. Thus, while a prompt response may be desired, it may not always be possible (especially late at night and on weekends). Students should allow at least 24 hours (48 hours on weekends) for a response. That said, the instructor answers emails in the timeliest fashion possible.

Late Assignment Penalty

Meeting deadlines is an essential element of professional behavior. 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. Students may be absent for 3 classes without penalty. Documentation for absences will not be collected except in cases where an extended absence may be necessary (for example, hospitalization or incarceration). **There will be a 3% reduction of the student's final grade for each absence after the first 3.** Beyond even this penalty, a student who seriously neglects attendance and class preparation risks failing the course. I will take attendance at the beginning of every class. You must attend at least one hour of the class period to be counted for full attendance for the 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. In the event that I am unable to attend class due to unforeseen circumstances I will distribute an email message and post an announcement to Bb at least two hours (if possible) before class is scheduled to begin.

Course Schedule

11 January Introductions

Nineteenth-Century Portrait Photographs

13 January Photographic Technologies and Interpretation of Portraits

Read:

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

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

Elizabeth Hutchinson, Barnard College, Analysis of the Portrait of Sojourner Truth, 1864,

http://picturinghistory.gc.cuny.edu/item.php?item_id=176

18 January Constructing Middle Class Identity: 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]

Hull, Elizabeth Arnold, Chapter 2. "Objects of Value," pp. 25-46. In "Family Pictures 'Out of Place': Race, Resistance, and Affirmation in the Pope Family Photograph Collection, 1890-1920" MA Thesis, UNCG, 2006. (Use Jackson Library Catalog)

20 January Considering Purpose: 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—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.]

25 January Chinese Immigration and the History of Immigration Identity Documentation

Read:

Pegler-Gordon, Anna, Chapter 1. "First Impressions: Chinese Exclusion and the Introduction of Immigration Documentation, 1875-1909," pp. 22-66; and Chapter 2.

"Photographic Paper Sons: Resisting Immigration Identity Documentation, 1893-1943," pp. 67-103. In *In Sight of America: Photography and the Development of U.S. Immigration Policy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. [ereserves]

27 January Picturing Race in the Segregated South

Read:

Hull, Elizabeth Arnold, Chapter 3, "Objects of Power," pp. 47-77. In "Family Pictures 'Out of Place': Race, Resistance, and Affirmation in the Pope Family Photograph Collection, 1890-1920" MA Thesis, UNCG, 2006. (Use Jackson Library Catalog)

1 February Portrait Analysis workshop.

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

Portrait Analysis due. Post to my digital dropbox by 5:00 p.m.

Social Documentary: From the Civil War to the Great Depression

8 February Photography and Civil War: Facts vs. Interpretations

Read:

Orvell, Ch. 4. Seeing and Believing, pp. 61-80. [ereserves]

Stapp, William F. "These Terrible Mementoes': Civil War Photography." *Chicago History*, Vol. 9 Issue 4 (Dec1980): 197-211. (Posted to the Assignments section of Bb.)

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"

10 February Stereographs and Civil War: Marketing vs. Documentation

Read:

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 5:00 p.m. for extra participation credit. Email to ictolber@uncg.edu**

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

17 February Turn of the Century Technology, Jacob Riis, and the Reformer's Eye

Read:

Orvell, Ch. 6. Photography and Society, pp. 105-140. [ereserves]

Lytle, "The Mirror with a Memory." In *After the Fact: The Art of Historical Detection*, pp. 178-200. [ereserves]

Yochelson, "What Are the Photographs of Jacob Riis?" *Culturefront* 3, no. 3 (August 1994): 28-38. (Posted to the Assignments section of Bb.)

22 February Documenting Immigrants

Read:

Pegler-Gordon, Anna, Chapter 4. "Ellis Island as a Photo Studio: The Honorific Ethnographic Image, 1904-1926," pp. 123-173. In *In Sight of America: Photography and the Development of U.S. Immigration Policy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. [ereserves]

24 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]

****25 February****

Topic description with photographs and bibliography due.

This assignment is worth 10% of your final term paper grade.

Post your assignment to my digital dropbox by 8:00 a.m.

1 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]

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

8/10 March *******Spring Break*******

15 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]

17 March Walker Evans: Art vs. Documentary

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]

22 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]

Developing Your Own Interpretation: The Term Paper

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

Social Documentary analysis due. Post to my digital dropbox by 5:00 p.m.

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

31 March 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. Write your thesis statement in the text of your email. Do not attach it as a separate document. This assignment is ungraded but it is not optional.

5 April Writing workshop: Thesis statements and other intellectual stuff

7 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.**

- 12 April Revising workshop: Thesis revision, paragraph development, and organization of argument
- 14 April Revising workshop: Strategies for footnoting
- 19 April Revising workshop: Use of visual evidence, including captions and identification of photos.
Addressing your final questions.
- 21 April Course evaluations. **Final Term Paper due.**