

PHOT 10H: HONORS HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2025
Units:	4
Hours:	3 lecture, 3 laboratory per week (72 total per quarter)
Advisory:	One of the following: ENGL 1A or 1AH or ESLL 26 or equivalent; not open to students with credit in PHOT 10.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area 3: Arts & Humanities
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Student will analyze a selected photographer's images and then discuss and present the photographer's life work in terms of how it has both reflected and helped shape our culture.
- Student will assess the contributions made in this field by people from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Description

The history of still photography from the earliest investigations of the camera obscura to late 20th century electronic imaging. Emphasis on the role of photographs as a social and cultural force and on our artistic heritage of camera work. The honors course offers an enriched and challenging experience for the more talented student, including deeper content, more rigorous grading, and more demanding and creative assignments requiring application of higher-level thinking, writing, and communication skills.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Analyze historic images to understand their technological and cultural significance.
2. Evaluate how the photograph as an inexpensive and reproducible picture affected nineteenth and twentieth century culture.
3. Assess how photography influenced historic and modern painting and graphics and how those media, in turn, affected photography.
4. Identify the major photographers through their photographs and philosophies.
5. Compare and contrast the major photographic practitioners and photographic movements.
6. Analyze how contributions of photographers from different cultures and backgrounds contributed to the richness and diversity of modern photography, e.g., cultural relativism.
7. Examine one's own photographic work (if applicable) in relation to the photographers and styles presented during the course.

8. Investigate how the technical evolution of the medium occurred and how techniques and technology affect reportage and vision.
9. Appraise and critique in writing the important qualities of a photograph and compare and contrast one photograph to another.

Course Content

1. Pre-history and inception of photography
 - a. The camera obscura
 - b. Early photochemical and technical experiments
 - c. Daguerre, Fox Talbot, and the early innovators and entrepreneurs
2. Technical evolution in the nineteenth century
 - a. Daguerreotypes, ambrotypes, tintypes, and camera-less processes
 - b. Collodion glass plate process
 - c. Dry plates
 - d. Kodak and the rollfilm camera
3. Technical evolution in the twentieth century
 - a. Advances in optics and film sensitivity
 - b. The 35mm camera
 - c. Color films
 - d. Digital imaging
4. Major photographers and photographic genre
 - a. Landscape photography, portraiture, documentary, and other genres
 - b. The Photo Secession, The West Coast School, Pictorialism, and other photographic movements
 - c. Journalism, documentary photography, and the evolution of war photography
 - d. Censorship, cultural bias, and freedom of expression
 - e. Commerce and photography: the gallery system, magazine, and value
5. Photography as it was used as a means for propaganda, creating cultural stereotypes and also mitigating them
 - a. Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth and their use of photography to mitigate bigoted stereotypes of formerly enslaved people
 - b. The work of Joseph T. Zealy at the behest of Louis Agassiz to use photographic portraits of people who were enslaved as a way to dehumanize and create stereotypes about them
 - c. The work of Jessie Tarbox Beals and Frances Benjamin Johnston who photographed indigenous people at the World's Fair in unflattering surroundings and poses
6. Writing about photography
 - a. Vocabulary of critical writing
 - b. Methods of discussion and comparison in art history

Lab Content

1. Field trips to museums and galleries
2. Emulation of historic images via production of photographs, as applicable
3. Online discussion and critique/feedback to short essay assignments
4. Reading current event topics as they relate to new discoveries or theories and writing a short response

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. Lecture room equipped for motion picture and slide projection, computer projection, and video presentation.
2. When taught via Foothill Global Access: on-going access to computer with email software and capabilities, email address, and access to learning management system.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Objective and subjective quizzes

1. Identification of historic and iconic photographs
2. Identification of photographers
3. Identification of photographic processes and techniques
4. Identification of the major connected trends and movements that occurred between photography and the other visual arts

Written analysis of a significant photographer or a technical development that changed the course of photographic history and practice

Students attend an exhibition and complete an instructor-supplied worksheet filled with prompts as a learning aid

1. How to look at and critique the medium of photography
2. Various approaches and perspectives of photographic practice taken by photographers

Individual responses to online discussion prompts, and personal reflections

Midterm exam

Final exam

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

During periods of lecture and demonstration, students will learn of the historical and technical developments in photography

When delivered on campus, field trip(s) to galleries and museums will present students with the opportunity to see relevant works up close for more intensive study of the images

Online instruction presented via lectures and discussion forums

Quizzes, exams, and short essay responses will help to test students and solidify their knowledge

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Hirsch, Robert. Seizing the Light A Social & Aesthetic History of Photography. 2024.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Longer essay/presentation on a photographer: 3-5 page essay about a photographer or topic in photo history that inspires you. Biographical information and significance in history of photography should be discussed. You should use a minimum of four sources, of which two must be books to research this photographer.
2. Outside readings: Choose a chapter from the list provided of the following books to read and write a short discussion of it. Post this in

the online classroom. Read other students' postings and comment. Return to answer questions on your own posting. Examples of books on list: A Choice of Weapons by Gordon Parks, On Photography by Susan Sontag, Photographers on Photography: A Critical Anthology by Nathan Lyons, Beauty in Photography: Essays in Defense of Traditional Values by Robert Adams.

3. Short essay responses to assignments posted in online forum and feedback to other classmates.
4. Website articles on current event topics.
5. Photography exhibition review, 2 pages.

Discipline(s)

Photography