

DEPARTMENT OF ART EDUCATION AND ART HISTORY  
FALL 2010

AEA4843: HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Dr. Denise Amy Baxter

Course Meets: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 3:30-4:50 in Art 223

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30- 3:30, and by appointment in Art 224

Email through Blackboard

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** Survey of the history of photography, including developments in photographic technologies, practices, theory and analysis. Prerequisite(s): ART 2350 and 2360.

**COURSE CONTENT:** This course will introduce you to technological, aesthetic, contextual, and ideological aspects of the history of photography.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- To learn a body of photographic works
- To learn about the historical period of the technology of photography
- To learn about the debates within the discourse of the history of photography
- To learn a set of skills: looking, analyzing, writing
- To learn to engage critically with art historical, historical, and cultural studies texts
- To make and support original and methodologically sound arguments regarding one or several photographs and one or several texts

**COURSE TEXTS:**

**Required Texts:**

- ❖ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981).
- ❖ Robert Hirsch, *Seizing the Light: A Social History of Photography*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2008). This is abbreviated as *StL* in the syllabus.

There will also be significant numbers of readings posted as pdfs on Blackboard. Please note that this is a reading and writing intensive class.

**Recommended Texts:**

Other photographic survey textbooks, with varied approaches, are listed below. Any of the following would also make great additional texts for the course.

- ❖ Richard Bolton, ed., *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1992).
- ❖ Mary Warner Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History* (New York: Prentice Hall, 2006).
- ❖ Beaumont Newhall, *History of Photography from 1839 to the Present* (London: Bulfinch, 1982). ISBN-10: 0870703811
- ❖ Liz Wells, ed., *Photography: A Critical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2004).

While we will not be doing significant readings from these books, an art history writing guide such as one the following may be of assistance in this and all of your art history courses:

- ❖ Sylvan Barnet, *A Short Guide to Writing About Art*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: Prentice Hall, 2007).
- ❖ Henry M. Sayre, *Writing About Art*, 5<sup>th</sup> edition (New York: Prentice Hall, 2005).

If you are continuing studies in photography, you might be interested in a photography specific reference book such as:

- ❖ Gordon Baldwin, *Looking at Photographs: A Guide to Technical Terms* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum in association with British Museum Press, 1991).

## STUDENT EVALUATION:

<b>Class Attendance and Participation</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Pop Quizzes</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Midterm Exam</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Response Paper #1</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Response Paper #2</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Criticism Assignment</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>American Modern at the Amon Carter Paper</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>Roland Barthes Paper</b>	<b>20%</b>

**Class Attendance and Participation:** Class attendance is mandatory and roll will be taken at each class. One unexcused absence will be tolerated. Any further unexcused absence will result in a 5% drop in the attendance and participation grade, with each subsequent absence resulting in an additional 5% drop, up until and including four absences. Any absence after the 4<sup>th</sup> will result in a grade drop of one letter grade per absence. Any excused absence must be verified with appropriate written documentation to be scanned and submitted via ECampus. Please note that simply showing up to class is not sufficient. Students should have read required materials and be able to participate meaningfully in class discussion. Yes, we will be having class discussion! For the purpose of various assignments, the class will be divided into groups, which will be posted online.

**Pop Quizzes:** From time to time throughout the semester there will be pop quizzes. These will take place at the start of class and are cumulative. By this I mean that you are not simply responsible for the reading or course content for the day, but for keeping up with the entirety of the course. There are no make-ups for quizzes. In the event of an excused absence, however, the missed quiz grade will not be counted against the student. The lowest quiz grade of the semester will be dropped.

**Midterm and Final Exam:** The format may include: objective questions, slide identifications (artist, title, date), slide comparisons, and short essays. You will receive the exact format in advance.

**Writing Assignments:** You will receive separate assignment sheets for these.

**Late Work Policy:** Late work loses 20% per day including weekends; the clock begins as soon as the deadline passes and continues until the work is handed in. Late work will only be accepted without this penalty for university-sanctioned excuses (documented illness, death, or university event). You must contact the instructor as soon as you realize that your work will be late; this means *before* the deadline. You must then provide the instructor with the written documentation immediately upon returning to class, as you hand in the late work.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The College of Visual Arts and Design is committed to full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. In keeping with this commitment and in order to facilitate equality of educational access, faculty members in the College will make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with a disability, such as appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methodologies when doing so does not fundamentally alter the course.

If you have a disability, it is your responsibility to obtain verifying information from the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) and to inform me of your need for an accommodation. Requests for accommodation must be given to me no later than the first week of classes for students registered with the ODA as of the beginning of the current semester. If you register with the ODA after the first week of classes, your accommodation requests will be considered after this deadline.

Grades assigned before an accommodation is provided will not be changed. Information about how to obtain academic accommodations can be found in UNT Policy 18.114, at [www.unt.edu/oda](http://www.unt.edu/oda), and by visiting the ODA in Room 321 of the University Union. You also may call the ODA at 940.565.4323.

**COURSE RISK FACTOR:** According University Policy, this course is classified as a Category 1 course. Students enrolled in this course will not be exposed to any significant hazards and are not likely to suffer any bodily injury. Students in this class will be informed of any potential health hazards or potential bodily injury connected with the use of any materials and/or processes and will be instructed how to proceed without danger to themselves or others.

**CENTER FOR STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:** Each University of North Texas student is entitled to certain rights associated with higher education institutions, available at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr). BY TAKING THIS COURSE, YOU AGREE NOT TO COMMIT ACADEMIC DISHONETY.

**ACCEPTABLE STUDENT BEHAVIOR:** Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY:** (alarm will sound), please follow the building evacuation plans posted on each floor of your building and proceed to the nearest parking lot. In case of tornado (campus sirens will sound) or other weather related threat, please go to the nearest hallway or room on your floor without exterior windows and remain there until an all clear signal is sounded. Follow the instructions of your Professor and act accordingly.

**NOTE:** The instructor reserves the right to alter this syllabus at her discretion.

## SYLLABUS AGREEMENT AEAH4843 FALL 2010

I have read this syllabus. I agree to comply with all of the provisions it describes. I understand that this class includes a substantial amount of reading and discussion. I understand the attendance and late policies and I am aware that absences and late work will result in a lowered final grade.

By taking this course, I agree not to commit acts of academic dishonesty including plagiarism, cheating, and failing to cite sources. I understand that, at a minimum, any act of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of "F" for the assignment. I further understand that Dr. Baxter will pursue disciplinary actions against me with the University of North Texas should I commit any act of academic dishonesty. These disciplinary actions may range from all the way from an "F" for the assignment to an "F" for the course, to suspension or expulsion from the University.

I acknowledge that Dr. Baxter reserves the right to alter her syllabus.

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Signature

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Please print your name

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Date

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Student ID Number

Return of this syllabus agreement is required for continued enrollment in the course.

# SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

## Week One

26 August    **Class:** Introduction to the course

## Week Two

31 August    **Class:** Early Photographic Technologies in Context  
**Read:** *Seizing the Light* (subsequently *StL*), 1-56.

2 September    **Class:** Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"  
**Read:** Excerpt from Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," translated by Harry Zohn in Vicki Goldberg, ed., *Photography in Print* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1981 [1936]): 319-334. (This and all required and recommended readings, with the exception of those not in *StL* and Barthes' book, are available for you on ECampus).  
 If this essay interests you and you would like to read the full version by the same translator, it has also been scanned and is available as: Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Hannah Arendt, ed., *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968): 217-251.  
 For an easy-to-read essay that forthrightly borrows from the Benjamin essay, and in many ways explicates it, see: John Berger, Chapter One of *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC and Penguin Books, 1972): 7-34.

## Week Three

7 September    **Class:** Criticizing Photographs with Dr. Terry Barrett  
**Read:** Chapters 3 and 6 of Terry Barrett, *Criticizing Photographs: An Introduction to Understanding Images*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2005).

9 September    **Class:** Criticizing Photographs

## Week Four

14 September    **Class:** Personal Portrait Proclivities  
**Read:** *StL*, 57-76  
**Due:** Photo Criticism Assignment

16 September    **Read:** Susan Sontag, "In Plato's Cave" in *On Photography* (New York: Picador, 1973): 3-24. See also the obituaries of Sontag from *Slate* and *The New York Times* as well as a review of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's tribute exhibition, Barbara Ching, "High Regard: Words and Pictures in Tribute to Susan Sontag," *American Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (March 2007): 157-164.  
 Also, make sure that you know what the story of Plato's cave is before meeting for group discussion.  
**Class:** Groups 1 & 2 meet to discuss the text: If your group isn't meeting, you have plenty of other work to prepare for this course! See ECampus for group assignments.

## Week Five

21 September    **Class:** Groups 2 & 3 meet to discuss the text: If your group isn't meeting, you have plenty of other work to prepare for this course!

23 September    **Class:** Photographic Portraiture and Power  
**Read:** *StL*, 91-106.  
 and  
 Excerpt from Sander L. Gilman, ed., *The Face of Madness: Hugh W. Diamond and the Origin of Psychiatric Photography* (Secaucus, NJ: The Citadel Press, 1976).  
 and  
 Sharrona Pearl, "Through a Mediated Mirror: The Photographic Physiognomy Of Dr. Hugh Welch Diamond," *History of Photography* 33, no. 3 (June 2009): 288-305.

<b>Week Six</b>	
<b>28 September</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> Another Question of Photographic Truth  <b>Read:</b> <i>StL</i>, 107-130  and  Julia Peck, "Performing Aboriginality: Desiring Pre-Contact Aboriginality in Victoria, 1886-1901," <i>History of Photography</i> 34, 3 (August 2010): 214-233.</p>
<b>30 September</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> Landscape and Photography  <b>Read:</b> Deborah Bright, "Of Mother Nature and Marlboro Men: An Inquiry into the Cultural Meanings of Landscape Photography" in Richard Bolton, ed., <i>The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography</i> (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1989 [1985]): 124-142.  <b>Due:</b> Reading Response Paper #1</p>
<b>Week Seven</b>	
<b>5 October</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> Pictorialism  <b>Read:</b> <i>StL</i>, 147-169  and  Patricia J. Fanning, "F. Holland Day and 'the Beautiful Boy': The Story of Thomas Langryl Harris and Day's Nude Study," <i>History of Photography</i> 33, no. 3 (June 2009): 249-261.</p>
<b>7 October</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> Modernism's Innovations and Social Documentary  <b>Read:</b> <i>StL</i>, 170-190; <i>StL</i>, 218-247.</p>
<b>Week Eight</b>	
<b>12 October</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> What's the Social in Social Documentary?  <b>Read:</b> Martha Rosler, "In, around, and afterthoughts (on documentary photography)," in Richard Bolton, ed., <i>The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography</i> (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1989): 303-341.</p>
<b>14 October</b>	<b>MIDTERM EXAMINATION</b>
<b>Week Nine</b>	
<b>19 October</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> <i>American Modern</i> at the Amon Carter, Pt. 1  <b>Read:</b> Selections TBD from Sharon Corwin, Jessica May, and Terri Weissman, <i>American Modern: Documentary Photography by Abbott, Evans, and Bourke-White</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010). This book has yet to be published, so we'll be getting it hot off the presses!</p>
<b>21 October</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> <i>American Modern</i> at the Amon Carter, Pt. 2  <b>Read:</b> Selections TBD from Sharon Corwin, Jessica May, and Terri Weissman, <i>American Modern: Documentary Photography by Abbott, Evans, and Bourke-White</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).</p>
<b>Week Ten</b>	
<b>26 October</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> Art Photography/Artists  <b>Read:</b> Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Photography After Art Photography" in <i>Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices</i> (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991): 103-123.  And  Skim <i>StL</i>, 341-372  <b>Due:</b> Reading Response Paper #2</p>
<b>28 October</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> Photography and Commodity Culture, Pt. 1  <b>Read:</b> Anandi Ramamurthy, "Spectacles and Illusions: Photography and Commodity Culture," in Liz Wells, ed., <i>Photography: A Critical Introduction</i>, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (London and New York: Routledge): 206-232.</p>

<b>Week Eleven</b>	
<b>2 November</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> Photography and Commodity Culture, Pt. 1  <b>Read:</b> Anandi Ramamurthy, "Spectacles and Illusions: Photography and Commodity Culture," in Liz Wells, ed., <i>Photography: A Critical Introduction</i>, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2009): 232-256.</p>
<b>4 November</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> You, yes you!  <b>Read:</b> Patricia Holland, "How Sweet it is to Scan...": Personal Photographs and Popular Photography," in Liz Wells, ed., <i>Photography: A Critical Introduction</i>, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2004): 103-150.  <b>Due:</b> American Modern at the Amon Carter Paper  <b>Do:</b> Find a personal photograph, bring a hard copy of it to class with you, and be prepared to talk about it in light of the readings for the course.</p>
<b>Week Twelve</b>	
<b>9 November</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> Guest speaker  <b>Read:</b> TBA  <b>Do:</b> Opening reception for Recuerdos: Nostalgia on the Periphery at the UNT Art Gallery, 4:30-6:30</p>
<b>11 November</b>	<p><b>NO CLASS MEETING</b>  Dr. Baxter will be at the Texas Art Education Association Conference  This time is release time in consideration of your travel/time at the Amon Carter Museum that was necessary for the American Modern paper assignment.</p>
<b>Week Thirteen</b>	
<b>16 November</b>	<p><b>Read:</b> Roland Barthes, <i>Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography</i>—yes, the whole book.  <b>Class:</b> Groups 3 &amp; 4 meet to discuss the text: If your group isn't meeting, work on your essay.</p>
<b>18 November</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> Groups 1 &amp; 2 meet to discuss the text: If your group isn't meeting, work on your essay.</p>
<b>Week Fourteen</b>	
<b>23 November</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> <i>Camera Lucida</i> lives on...  <b>Read:</b> A dialogue on <i>Camera Lucida</i>:  Michael Fried, "Barthes's <i>Punctum</i>"  and  James Elkins, "What Do We Want Photography To Be?: A Response to Michael Fried"  and  Rosalind E. Krauss, "Notes on the <i>Punctum</i>"  in Geoffrey Batchen, ed., <i>Photography Degree Zero: Reflections on Roland Barthes's Camera Lucida</i> (Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2009): 141-192.</p>
<b>25 November</b>	<p><b>HOLIDAY: Happy Thanksgiving!</b></p>
<b>Week Fifteen</b>	
<b>30 November</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> Peer Review Explained and Paper Discussed  <b>Read:</b> Peer Review Sheet  <b>Due:</b> Roland Barthes Paper Rough Draft</p>
<b>2 December</b>	<p><b>Class:</b> After Photography: The Possibilities of Photography in a Digital Age, Pt. I  <b>Skim:</b> <i>SiL</i>, 373-426  <b>Read:</b> Corey Dzenko, "Analog to Digital: The Indexical Function of Photographic Images," <i>Afterimage</i> 37, no. 2 (September/October 2009): 19-23.  <b>Due:</b> Roland Barthes Paper Peer Review</p>

**Week Sixteen**

<b>7 December</b>	<b>Class:</b> After Photography: The Possibilities of Photography in a Digital Age, Pt. II <b>Read:</b> Fred Ritchin, "Of Pixels and Paradox," in <i>After Photography</i> , (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009): 24-51. and Geoffrey Batchen, "Ectoplasm: Photography in the Digital Age," in Carol Squiers, ed., <i>Over-Exposed: Essays on Contemporary Photography</i> (New York: The New Press, 1999): 9-23. <b>Due:</b> Roland Barthes Paper
<b>9 December</b>	<b>Class:</b> Course review
<b>FINAL EXAM</b> <b>Thursday, 16 December</b> <b>1:30-3:30</b>	