

PGY 2101 - Visual Literacy

Spring 2020 / 3 credits

SAAH University of Florida

This course is comprised of two sections. Section A consists in a lecture series by the instructor of record. Section B consists in studio practice instructed by Teaching Assistants.

Section A (lecture)

Instructor: Sergio Vega
e-mail: veryvega@ufl.edu
Wednesday Period 9-10 (4:05pm - 6pm)
Classroom: TUR 2342
Office: FAD 229 T 3pm-4pm (by appointment)

Section B (studio)

Classroom: NRNA 056F

Course Goals and Objectives

This an introductory course to photography that focuses on the critical processes by which visual imagery acquires meaning. The objective is to provide students with a comprehensive overview of the history of the medium that will facilitate their understanding of the critical issues involved in the production, distribution and reception of photographic images. In addition to thinking about *why* we make photographs, the goal is for students to learn *how* to make photographs by learning basic camera techniques, composition, processing digital files, and printing images.

Course Outline / Methods of the Course

Section A is conducted by the main instructor and consists in lectures, class discussions of the assigned readings, screenings and presentations. It is mandatory to complete the assigned readings every week. Slide lectures and screenings will feature an introduction to the work of some of the main photographers in the history of the medium. Class discussions will address the evolution of theoretical ideas that influenced the production and reception of photographs at different key historical moments. There will be an exam on Wednesday April 8th. The content of the exam will summarize the slide lectures, readings and content of class discussions. For this reason it is crucial to take notes during lectures and discussions in a notebook.

Topical outline for section A

Since Louis Daguerre in 1838 invented the photographic process known as Daguerreotype, the multiple uses and meanings ascribed to photographic images became a field of endless contestations. Most people agreed that photographs provided objective reproductions of reality that could be used to identify people and things. Following that interpretation of the medium some sustained that its primary purpose should be to use them in the courts of law as evidence, by the police in archives of criminals (or potential criminals) and to provide proof or documentation for scientific research on a vast array of fields. Others believed it would best replace paintings at depicting large social and historical events, and portray people and their families in order to preserve their memories. Others thought it would be the ideal tool to replace painting at representing the imaginary, the world of mythology, fantasy, and past history.

The lecture series will explore various still contested interpretations of photographic images to arrive at the perspective on photography provided by semiotic studies. Semiotic interpretations of photography distinguish two simultaneous operations of signification: 1) as presence or embodied meaning (a message without a code) that derives its *denotation* 2) as linguistic-literary message or the manner in which society to a certain extent communicates what it thinks of it, or its *connotation*.

1) Introduction to nineteenth century photography

- 2) Socially Engaged Photography
- 3) Photography and Modernism
- 4) Photography in the Soviet Avant-garde
- 5) Photography during the Great Depression
- 6) Surrealism
- 7) Photography during and after World War II: Humanism and Neorealism

Textbooks

Sontag Susan, *On Photography* 1990 edition, Anchor Books. ISBN 0-385-26706-1 (required)

Horenstein Henry, *Black and White Photography* Little, Brown and Company (multiple editions) ISBN978-0316373050

Methods of the Course (Section B)

Section B is conducted by the Teaching Assistants and is where students discuss, conceptualize and produce their assignments in close collaboration with their instructors. In this section, students will have the opportunity to flesh out their ideas, learn techniques, show their work, and receive feedback from classmates and instructors on regular basis. There will be three main assignments that will culminate in a twenty-image portfolio due on Friday December 8th. In addition, there will be several technical and research based assignments throughout the semester.

Section B (studio)

Classroom: NRNA 056F

Topical Outline

This section of the course focuses on the study of the basic principles of photography: 1) Handling Equipment Functions of the camera. Aperture and time of exposure, equivalence charts. ISO sensibility. Depth of field and focusing. Optics, functions of different lenses. Using tripods. 2) Exposure Composition. Portraiture. Landscape. Figure and ground. Bracketing your exposure. 3) Processing of digital images Overview of Adobe Photoshop software. Tools. Levels and exposure correction. Lightness and contrast. Working with layers. Filters. 4) Printing Functions of the printer demonstration. Kinds of paper.

Assignments

There will three assignments:

1) The Nuts and Bolts

Gaining control over the camera is an imperative for any photographer. The relatively simple mechanical operations provide us an endless array of possible combinations for recording, interpreting and abstracting the world around us. More than just a tool for inscribing on film or digital sensor the world as it is, the camera allows us to project our personal vision, to record the world as we see it. The tools for the creation of photographic subjectivity are many, but in this class we will begin with the basic mechanisms of the camera: shutter, aperture, ISO, lens. The objectives for project 1 are as follows:

1. Complete 10 fully edited images, converted to black & white.
2. 3-4 images focusing on aperture control, at least two images each, showing shallow depth of field and deep depth of field.
4. 3-4 images focusing on shutter control, at least two images each showing stopped motion, blurred motion and panning.
5. 3-4 images focusing on exposure control featuring images made a various times of day and lighting conditions, ie; morning/noon/night and indoor/outdoor

Grading Criteria:

25pts Complete list and number of images

25pts Originality/Creativity

25pts Craftsmanship/Technical Proficiency

25pts Formal Elements of Design and Composition

2) Framing

Now that you have an understanding of the basic mechanisms of the camera and how to control the technical quality and character of your images, it's time to focus on composition. Many of the same strategies employed in design, drawing and sculpture can be employed within the photographic frame. Strategies such as symmetry, rule of thirds, figure ground, contrast (tonal and content), balance, leading lines, visual weight, etc. can be employed to add dynamism to your images. For this project, challenge yourself to use the frame as the space to express how you visualize the world around you. Question the way things are supposed to look and highlight the unique way the photographic apparatus mediates our perceptions. Remember, as useful as understanding the elements of good composition can be, using a formula for making photos will only render formulaic images.

1. Complete 10 fully edited images, converted to black & white.
2. Produce at least one interpretation of each of the compositional elements discussed in class.

Grading Criteria:

25pts Complete list and number of images

25pts Originality/Creativity

25pts Craftsmanship/Technical Proficiency

25pts Formal Elements of Design and Composition

3) Floridian Stories (Final Portfolio due Monday April 20th)

For this assignment you will have to produce a portfolio of at least 20 final images. There will be work in progress critiques of this project throughout the semester in order to arrive at the final selection, conceptualization, and complete processing of these images.

Think about aspects of Florida that may be unknown to most people, but are relevant to you. Look at your surroundings in a critical way. Dig into your past or that of your family and town. Explore stories you may have heard. Think that Florida is perhaps the quintessential site where surrealism found its final incarnation. Explore the paradigmatic character of Florida as a scenario where contradictory forces coexist in various layers of the social and cultural strata.

Get out with your camera on regular basis and explore, look for sites, situations, things, people and anecdotes. Plan on taking at least 20 photographs per day. This assignment entails the production of a photo portfolio that presents a cohesive personal and critical vision of Florida both technically and conceptually.

Grading Criteria:

25pts Complete list and number of images

25pts Originality/Creativity

25pts Craftsmanship/Technical Proficiency

25pts Formal Elements of Design and Composition

Critical Dates (Sections A&B)

Assignment due dates

- 1) Monday February 14th
- 2) Monday March 13th
- 3) Final portfolio due on Monday April 20th

Exam: Wednesday April 8th

Required Equipment and Supplies

1) Every student should have access to a DSLR camera. Bellow is a list of the most affordable ones in the market. Acquire one with full manual operation above 10 mega pixels with interchangeable lenses capacity (not point and shoot). See bellow some of the least expensive cameras in the market that can be recommended for this class (these are also available refurbished by the manufacturer). If you are a photo major please consult with the instructor because you may be better off getting a different camera from the start. You can also check cameras from "the cage". Be mindful that if you wait until the last minute most probably there will be no cameras available for you to check out!

Cameras recommended:

Nikon D5600 DSLR with 18-55 mm and 70-300mm lens \$599.95

https://www.nikonusa.com/en/Nikon-Store/camera-deals.page?cid=img_en_us:SEM:EC:ELVT:120319:Google:P:Winter_BrandeD5600:Low:Phrase&gclid=Cj0KCQiAxbwBRCoARIsABEc9siCMQSVqjCbzPHn8ZkNTOXmb4tuACN5Tveu9vXxX_-bVZ5V133C-9caAm3zEALw_wcB

(big camera, Full HD video only)

Canon EOS M50 mirrorless with 15-45mm lens \$599 with extra 55-200 lens \$829.00

https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/1411829-REG/canon_eos_m50_with_15_45mm.html

(small camera, 4K video)

2) Software: It is recommended that you have Adobe Photoshop or Photoshop elements installed in your laptop.

3) Printing paper

Every student will be required to purchase:

Epson Professional Inkjet Luster Paper (16"x100') B&H # EPPL16100Q

https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/464034-REG/Epson_S042079_Premium_Luster_Photo_Paper.html Online

Sources for Equipment: order ONLY far in advance:

B&H Photo and video <http://www.bhphotovideo.com>

Adorama Camera <http://www.adorama.com>

KEH Camera (great for used equipment) <http://www.keh.com>

Freestyle Photo (great for B+W) <http://www.freestylephoto.biz>
Lexjet (often the fastest delivery) www.lexjet.com/

GRADING

Lecture = 50%
Lab = 50%
100%

Lab

- Class Participation 20%
- Blogging Assignments 10%
- Critiques (Projects 1-3) 45%
- Final Portfolio 25%

Lecture

- Class Participation 50%
- Final Exam 50%

Grading Criteria

Percentage Points/ Letter Grades (*):

100-93 A: Present at all class/ lab meetings-Significant engagement with course material and excellent results-both technical and conceptual. Significant contribution to group discussions and presentations.

92-90 A- : Present at all class/ lab meetings-Significant engagement with course material. Good technical development. Significant contribution to group discussions and presentations.

89-88 B+ : Present at all class/ lab meetings-Very good engagement with the course material and group discussions.

87-80 B: Present at all class lab meetings-Good engagement with the course materials and group discussions.

79-78 C+: Present at most or all of class/lab meetings-Good engagement with the course materials and group discussions.

77-70 C: Present at most or all of class/lab meetings-Satisfactory engagement with the course materials and group discussions.

69-60 D: Student has missed class/ lab meetings and has not engaged the course material in a satisfactory manner. Student's engagement with discussions is minimal. Additionally, this mark may reflect excessive absence from class and lab meetings.

59-0 E: Student has not satisfactorily engaged nor met the class criteria. Additionally, this mark may reflect excessive absence from class and lab meetings. (*)This course follows University of Florida grading regulations and guidelines: UF grading policy website: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

Counseling

University Counseling Services/ Counseling Center 301 Peabody Hall P.O. Box 114100, University of Florida
Gainesville, FL 32611-4100

Phone: 352-392-1575 Web: www.counsel.ufl.edu If you are experiencing problems or difficulties with the academic requirements of this course you may also contact the Departmental Advisor in Fine Arts: +1 (352) 392-0207. Further, the Dean of Students Office can assist you with a range of support services. <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/supportservices/>

Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Academic Honesty

University policies regarding academic honesty, the honor code, and student conduct related to the honor code will be strictly enforced. Full information regarding these policies is available at the following links: - Academic Honesty: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html#honesty> - Honor Code: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php> - Student Conduct: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/conductcode.php>

Health and Safety

1) The link below includes information and policies regarding health and safety in the School of Art and Art History at UF. <http://www.arts.ufl.edu/art/healthandsafety>

Class Attendance

Participation in class is necessary to achieve the course objectives. Students are expected to arrive on time and be prepared to participate in all activities. Please mute cell phones prior to class.

Attendance is taken at the beginning of class. Students are considered tardy if they arrive after roll is taken. Students are permitted two absences without penalty; additional absences will reduce the final grade by one letter grade per occurrence. Three "tardies" will equal one absence.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Online Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.