

Theories of the Photographic M-W 10-11:50 / Haines A25

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Office hours: M/W 1-3 and by appointment
<http://www.u.arizona.edu/~ehayot/1.htm>

Texts:

Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*
Terry Barrett, *Criticizing Photographs*, 4th edition
Naomi Rosenblum, *World History of Photography*, 3rd edition

It's crucial for the Barrett and Rosenblum books that you have the latest edition, since some of your exam questions will be coming out of those books.

In addition to these books we will be reading a number of essays. They will be available online at <http://www.u.arizona.edu/~ehayot/pdfs.htm> (login space password elevator), and are marked in the syllabus below as (PDF). You will need to access these and print them out so that you can bring them to class.

Course description:

This course is not about photography so much as it is about the history of understandings of photographs, about the ways in which photographs reacted to and filled a set of cultural needs, reshaped another set of cultural understandings, and reflected developments in both broad cultural fields of vision and in technology. We'll cover a general history of photography since its inception with the Rosenblum book, which will ground the rest of our investigations.

Our goal will be twofold: to learn how to read individual photographs, to grasp how they produce their particular meaning within the broader mediatic and cultural field within which they appear, and also to begin to work towards a general historical theory of "the photographic," that is, of the material-mediatic form that sustains and expresses itself through all photographs and indeed through the fact of photography itself.

In order to help you reach these goals, you will complete three shorter paper assignments, a mid-term exam and a final.

Grading:

Your grade will be determined as follows:

Three short assignments (3-5 pages each):	15 percent each
Mid-term exam:	25 percent
Final exam:	30 percent

Failure to complete any of these assignments will prevent you from passing the course. On top of this will be your class participation grade, which can either hurt you or help you (up to 1/3 a grade either way). It will be determined by the degree to which you help the class learn, or keep it from learning. I do not

penalize students who do not talk in class.

In exceptional circumstances I will consider the granting of a grade of incomplete, but only when all but a minor portion of the course work has been successfully completed.

Lateness and absences:

You get two classes off free. Every absence beginning with your third absence will seriously hurt your final grade. There are no excused absences unless you need to represent the university in some official way (as an athlete, for instance) or it is a religious holiday for you. Don't be late to class.

I don't accept late work unless you talk about it with me in advance. Unexcused late work will receive a grade of 0. If you are not in class when something is due (or when we take an exam), you will receive a grade of 0.

Plagiarism and academic honesty:

If you use someone else's sentences or ideas, whether through direct quotation or paraphrase, you need to say so. Use parenthetical references and a works cited list (as explained in the *MLA Style Guide*, available in the library or at the bookstore) to credit your sources. I expect you to abide by the university's code of academic integrity.

I assert my right to ownership over the content of my course lectures and other statements in class. Any recording of my remarks for uses other than your own personal study requires my written permission.

Daily syllabus. Have everything read before coming to class.

1. April 5 /

W: Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (PDF)
Rosenblum, chapter 1

2. April 10, 12 / what are photographs?

M: Barrett, chapter 7
Selections from early writing about photography (PDF)
Benjamin, "A Short History of Photography" (PDF)
W: Bazin, "The Ontology of the Photographic Image" (PDF)
Gunning. "What's the Point of an Index?" (PDF)
Sontag, from *On Photography* (PDF)

3. April 17, 19 / describing and documenting

M: Barrett, chapters 2 and 4
Rosenblum, chapters 2 and 3
W: Short assignment 1 due
Rosenblum, chapters 4 and 5

4. April 24, 26 / the time of death, the death of time

M: Mary Ann Doane, from *The Emergence of Cinematic Time* (PDF)
Rosenblum chapter 6
W: Eduardo Cadava, from *Words of Light* (PDF)
Ann Banfield, "L'imparfait de l'objectif" (PDF)

Tuesday evening, April 25: class visit to the Hammer Museum to see the John Swope exhibition, 6pm. Admission is free. Kaja Silverman lecture follows at 7pm (extra credit for mid-term).

April 28 is the last day to drop this class without a transcript notation

5. May 1, 3 / the twentieth century

M: Rosenblum, chapters 9, 11, 12

W: Short assignment 2 due

Preparation for the mid-term

Thursday, May 4, 7pm at the Hammer Museum: Anne Wilkes Tucker on John Swope (extra credit for mid-term).

6. May 8, 10

M: Mid-term exam

W: Rosenblum chapter 10

Mid-term review

7. May 15, 17 / words and pictures

M: W.J.T. Mitchell, from *Picture Theory* (PDF)

James Agee and Walker Evans, from *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* (PDF)

W: / the person and the critic

Gallop, from *Living With His Camera* (PDF)

8. May 22, 24

M: Barthes, *Camera Lucida*

W: / photographs of violence

Sontag, from *On Regarding the Pain of Others* (PDF)

Barrett, chapter 6

9. May 29, 31 / photographs of violence

M: Memorial Day

W: Short assignment 3 due

Bataille, from *Tears of Eros*

Liu, "Chen Chieh-jen's Gaze of Revolt" (online; see PDF page for URL)

10. June 5, 7 / the digital context

M: Abu Ghraib images (online; URL tba)

Selected writings about the Abu Ghraib photos (PDF)

Holsbach, "Photo/Byte" (online; see PDF page for URL)

W: Final exam preparation and debriefing

Final exam sometime between June 12 and June 16