

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE

Visual Anthropology in Practice

This is a preliminary syllabus.
Critical information will be posted and updated on Canvas

ANT F325J (78544) - Location: Your Quarantine Cave

Seminar: Weekdays. 2:30PM-4:00PM

Instructor: Craig Campbell

Office hours: Tuesdays 4-5pm in my Zoom office



Photo: Mary Ellen Mark

Reality is always extraordinary.

Mary Ellen Mark

THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE

Course Description

"The Photographic Image" applies concepts and practices from visual ethnography to the study of culture and everyday life. The course aims at developing approaches to practices of looking and techniques of representation within an ethical and historical framework. Whereas photographs are often taken to be archival and documentary technologies, we will invert this idea and explore how images are also transient and ephemeral by focusing on sites of encounter and codes of engagement. In our critical approach we consider both the production and reception of photographs.

The class is planned around a series of photo-based projects that foregrounds experiential learning. You will be required to read for these projects and undertake original photography assignments. At all points in the course you will be drawn into the use of image-making as an interpretive and critical engagement with course readings. Writing is an essential element in visual ethnography; sometimes it is foregrounded, sometimes it is subordinated to the photographs. Regardless, you will have an opportunity to fine-tune your writing in relation to your photographic practice. We will begin with techniques of visual inquiry established by visual anthropologists and documentarians as well as artists working within or on the margins of documentary traditions. You are expected to engage fully in both individual and group activities.

You will be expected to have at your disposal a camera (digital or analogue).

Required Readings

All assigned readings will be posted on Canvas. There are no books to purchase in this class.

Learning Goals

In general, there are a number of critical things that I think you should learn in this course. As the title suggests the idea and practice of photography are central. This is not a photography course that you would take in a Fine Arts or Journalism program; understanding the differences in these disciplines is a key learning goal. You will be using your camera in a form of practice-based and experiential learning. As we study photography you will be using your own photographs and camera to extend your inquiry and hone your critical eye. You will also learn about how and why ethics matter in anthropology, ethnography, and especially in visual anthropological work.

Ethics in research practice with a focus on the ethics of qualitative research and visual representation is fundamental to and pervasive through this course. You will learn how ethics matters not only in and to the discipline of Anthropology, but as a general humanist approach to research. More specifically, you will learn the nuances of 'informed consent' through practice-based exercises.

Finally, you will develop a flexible and extensible skill set that will allow you to create powerful visual narratives. You will learn to look at and think about photographs as a historically grounded form of visual culture, and think about the ways that photographs are apprehended by people in the everyday.

Class expectations:

Attendance in this course is of utmost importance. You are expected to attend all classes. It is your job to notify me if you must miss a class and to provide legitimate excuses.

Readings provided are limited. You are expected to read them carefully, take notes, and come to class prepared to discuss them.

Participation is essential. There are many ways to participate and I will work with you if you feel challenged to participate in a group environment. This is a small class setting so you will need to come prepared to share your ideas, you will also need to come ready to listen and engage fully with one another. At times you will disagree with others and it is important to me that you feel safe to share your ideas and opinions and that you do so in a way that does not intimidate or silence others.

Asynchronous Mondays

1. Check-in on Canvas for updates. I will have a pre-recorded video that introduces the upcoming week.
2. Be prepared to do additional work or activities (such as self-paced training, watching a video, group work, etc.).

Grades & Assignments:

Participation = 20%

Presentations = 20%

Ethics Quiz = 10%

Photo Assignments = 50%

Reading Notes

For all classes with assigned readings you are required to upload reading notes at least two hours before class. These should be around a page in length (but a maximum of two page). This is part of your participation grade. Reading notes must include:

- Your name, ID#, Date
- Formatted reference to that week's readings (MLA style)
- Quotes from the text that you find interesting, challenging, or problematic.
- A few questions or ideas you'd like to discuss in class
- Other notes
- Save as a pdf and upload to Canvas.
- Consult Canvas for an example.

Participation

Attendance and participation in labs and seminars is mandatory. If you need to miss a day contact me in advance. Unapproved absences, late arrivals, early departures can count against you in your participation grade, they disrupt class, and ultimately undermine your capacity to succeed in this class. Participation includes other forms of interaction as well. We will try some group activities (including peer review) and those interactions will play in to my evaluation of your participation.

Presentations

Both formal and informal presentations are an important component of this course. You will be evaluated on your preparation and your presentation. The presentations should be *polished*, intelligent, and coherent.

Photo Assignment requirements.

All photo assignments require you to take photographs. They also require you to read assigned materials and undertake (usually abbreviated) research projects. There will be multiple assignments throughout the course of the semester that will help to develop and set the foundations for your final project.

In most of our labs we will be doing critiques (crits) of your work. Even if the assignment is not due on that day, you are required to come prepared with work to share. Typically, half of your

grade for any given assignment will be based on what you have brought and prepared for the crit. Assignments will be graded by percentage and then averaged at the end.

Final Project

The final project for this class is an independent ethnographic photo-essay. It is a major multi-part project which will be introduced to you towards the end of September.

Schedule Summary

Part 1: History, theory, and practice

WEEK 1 – June 4-5: Introduction to the course

WEEK 2 – June 8-12: Everyday Life: routines and rituals

Part 2: Developing skills

WEEK 3 – June 15-19: Material Culture

WEEK 4 - June 22-26: Mobile Phone & Selfies

Part 3: Self-directed, major project

WEEK 5 – June 29 to July 3: Domestic Space Project

WEEK 6 – July 6-9: TBA

Statement of Support

As the instructor I am committed to ensuring our classroom is an inclusive and safe place for you to meet over the course of the semester. I strive for a compassionate form of education and training that balances the rigorous and challenging conditions of university education with the vagaries of life and differential experience we all share. I strive to make our class and my office a safe space for LGBTQ identifying folk and people of color – even when we cannot meet in person. Please talk to me or email me if you ever have any concerns or questions.

For this class I've adopted the "***shit happens rule***" from my friend Yoke Sum Wong. You can invoke this once in this course. The Shit Happens rule is when you cannot hand in your paper on time and you will get an automatic multi-day extension – no matter what. You do not have to explain anything to me. Life can be messy and things do not always turn out the way we expect them to turn out. Just let me know when you wish to invoke your 'shit happens' coupon (before or after it happens).



Please be sure to read the small type below as there are important resources documented there. Take advantage of university resources.

University Notices and Policies

Documented Disability Statement

- Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd> .

Notice regarding academic dishonesty

- Honor Code or statement of ethics.
 - University of Texas Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.
- Explanation or example of what constitutes plagiarism
- Web site for more information:
<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism>

Religious Holy Days

- By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

- If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>

Resources for Learning & Life at UT Austin

- The University of Texas has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning.
 - Sanger Learning and Career Center: <http://lifelearning.utexas.edu/>
 - Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>
 - Counseling & Mental Health Center: <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>
 - Career Exploration Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/careercenter/>
 - Student Emergency Services: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>