

## **ART 324 – History of Photography**

Instructor: Leslie Walfish (pronouns: she/her/hers)  
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Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 11:00 am – 12:00 pm  
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### **Course description:**

The history of photography is a history of image making, technology, aesthetics, culture, and modernity. In this course we will examine the medium in its cultural context surveying the history and complexities of photography. We will explore the myriad uses of photography including but not limited to photojournalism, artistic production, and documentation. In lectures, discussions, and through readings and research we will uncover the personalities, movements, technologies, and influences that have contributed to the development of the medium.

### **Course Objectives:**

- To provide an introduction into the developments of photography from its invention to its contemporary uses and styles.
- To follow and examine the trends, movements, ideas and concepts, and important figures of the medium from its inception to the present.
- To provide a social-historical context to photography to better understand contemporary photography practices.

### **Work for this term:**

No assigned text, weekly readings/videos will be posted on Canvas.

### **Course requirements and grades:**

Your final grade for this course will be based on written and artistic homework assignments, a research paper and presentation, presentation analysis of your fellow classmates, a midterm exam, and a final exam. You will be required to rewrite any unacceptable assignments. If you have a question or complaint about your grade, please see me.

Grades will be calculated on these percentages:

- Participation 10%
- Assignments 40%
- Research Paper 15%
- Research Presentation & Presentation Analysis 5%
- Midterm 15%
- Final Exam 15%

Final Grades will be calculated on these percentages:

A	94 – 100%	C	73 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%	C-	70 – 72%
B+	87 – 89%	D+	67 – 69%
B	83 – 86%	D	60 – 66%
B-	80 – 82%	F	0 – 59%
C+	77 – 79%		

### **Participation (10%):**

Attendance is mandatory and participation is expected. You are expected to arrive on time and ready to learn, having done your class reading, and be willing to participate in class discussion that will be based on those readings and previous class lectures. **The most important rule regarding participation is respect for each other as individuals and for the class community as a whole.**

How to maximize your participation grade (and simply be a better class conversationalist):

Remember that “talking” is not the same as “participation.” Effective class participation demonstrates not only that you have thoroughly read and understood (or grappled with) the ideas in the readings, it also engages others, extends our understanding, builds upon what others have said or written, and illustrates critical thinking and personal reflection. Active listening is also an important part of effective class participation. I assume that each member of this class will contribute his or her ideas, questions, and opinions on a daily basis.

Any absences at class meetings or site visits will bring your grade down. **If you have 6 unexcused absence you will automatically receive a 0 for participation, more than 6 and you will fail the class.** If you arrive to classes late or leave the classes early, you will not receive full credit for attendance.

### **Assignments (8% each, total 40%):**

You will have 5 total assignments. Some are art projects and the others are readings and responses. Assignments are posted on Canvas as well as listed below the class schedule. Assignments are to be turned in on Canvas as well as presented in class.

### **Research Paper (15%):**

(5-6 pages)

You will select an artist from the list of supplied photographers and research his/her/their biography, artist statements, interviews, and body of work. More information about the Research Paper will be posted in Canvas.

### **Presentation (5%):**

You will give a five-minute presentation that should include images and information that helps the class understand the relevance of the photographer you researched and connects that photographer to bigger ideas discussed in class.

### **Exams (15% each, 30% total):**

Your exams will consist of image identifications and comparison and contrast essay questions that ask you to put the works seen in class in a broader historical and critical context. You will be expected to be knowledgeable of a variety of historical and contemporary commentaries and critiques of photography, its practitioners, and some of the major works in the field.

### **Deadlines:**

Unless you have an official, documented excuse (with note from the Dean of Students or Doctor’s note), assignments are due at the time and date stated on the assignment sheet. **I grant extensions ONLY in cases of extreme circumstance.** Late work will be marked down a half

letter grade (i.e., from B+ to B, from C to C-) for **each day** it is late. If you miss the midterm or final exams, you will automatically receive a zero unless you have official documentation or until you have been granted an excuse from the Dean of Students office.

**Communicate with me:**

Please do not hesitate to let me know if you're struggling with a certain concept or idea, or if there is anything I can do to make the class more fulfilling for you. I enjoy getting to know students, so please stop by my office hours if you are available and want to chat. If you are unable to visit my office hours, I am happy to make an appointment to meet with you at a separate time.

**Disability Accommodation and Notification:** If you have a learning difference or would benefit from a modification of our space for this class, let me know as soon as possible so I can help. You may also find the Disability Services staff helpful in the Dean of Students Office (Dempsey Hall, 125 • 920-424-3100).

**Academic Integrity at UW-Oshkosh:** The University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is committed to a standard of academic integrity for all students. Students are subject to disciplinary action for academic misconduct, which is defined in UWS 14.03, Wisconsin Administrative Code. While traveling, you are subject to the same expectations as when on campus.

It is the individual *student's responsibility* to familiarize themselves with the standards of academic honesty. The student discipline code can be viewed on the web at:  
<http://www.uwosh.edu/dean/studentdisciplinecode.html>

In this course, violations of academic integrity will result in a grade of zero for the assignment in question; issues are as follows, but are not limited to:

- giving or receiving assistance from another classmate on any quiz or exam
- using books or notes for quizzes or exams unless explicitly requested by me to do so
- misrepresenting attendance
- plagiarism, including improper citation of sources (including the use of AI)
- turning in the same or very similar work done for another class

Students are advised to see the following URL for disclosures about essential consumer protection items required by the Students Right to Know Act of 1990:  
<https://uwosh.edu/financialaid/consumer-information/>.

**Schedule\*:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Suggested Reading</b>	<b>Assignment</b>
September 6	Why Do We Take Photographs?		Bring in a copy of your favorite photo to share with the class
September 11	Invention	Robert Hirsch, <i>Seizing the Light a Social History of Photography</i> , Chapter 1	

September 15	Daguerreotype	Daniel, Malcolm. <i>Daguerre and the Invention of Photography</i> (link in Canvas)	
September 18	Calotype	<a href="#">Videos listed in Assignment 1 below</a>	Assignment 1 due on Canvas and presented in class
September 20	Wet Plate Processes	Manthorne, Katherine. <i>Women in the Dark: Female Photographers in the US, 1850-1900</i> , The Family Album, pp. 66 – 69, A Visit to a Woman’s Portrait Studio, pp. 71 - 86	
September 25	Early Documentation	Selection of reading from Sontag, Susan “Regarding the Pain of Others”	
September 27	Art or Industry	Robert Hirsch, <i>Seizing the Light a Social History of Photography</i> , Chapter 6	
October 2	Travel & Colonialism	<a href="#">Mabry, “Photography, Colonialism and Racism” link found on Canvas.</a>	Assignment 2 due on Canvas
October 4	Western Expansion	Manthorne, Katherine. <i>Women in the Dark: Female Photographers in the US, 1850-1900</i> , Outdoors: pp. 91 – 95 & Riding the Rails, pp. 101-103	
October 9	Visualizing Time & Space	Robert Hirsch, <i>Seizing the Light a Social History of Photography</i> , Chapter 8	
October 11	<a href="#">Assignment 3 Group Presentations</a>	<a href="#">Reading listed in assignment below</a>	Assignment 3 due in class and presented in class
October 16	Naturalism, Pictorialism, & Photo Secession	Robert Hirsch, <i>Seizing the Light a Social History of Photography</i> , Chapter 9	
October 18	Modernism New Objectivity	Nelson, Andrea. <i>The New Woman Behind the Camera</i> , pp. 104 - 114	
October 23			Midterm due
October 25	Social Documents	Boxer, Sarah, “Whitewashing the Great Depression” from <i>The Atlantic</i> , December 2020	
October 30	Capturing the Moment	Robert Hirsch, <i>Seizing the Light a Social History of Photography</i> , Chapter 13	
November 1	Photojournalism	Taylor-Lind, Anastasia. <i>Women Photographers Are Being Written Out of the War Narrative</i>	
November 6	The Atomic Age	Robert Hirsch, <i>Seizing the Light a Social History of Photography</i> , Chapter 15	

November 8	New Frontiers	Samoilova, Gulnara. <i>Women Street Photographers</i> : pp. ii - x	
November 13	New Documents	<a href="#">Reading listed in Assignment 4 below</a>	Assignment 4 due on Canvas and present in class
November 15	Thinking about Photography	Ferrer, Elizabeth. <i>Latinx Photography in the United States: A Visual History</i> , pp. 76 – 77, 107 – 109	
November 20	Photographers Move from the Margins	Hanson, Harry James. <i>Legends of Drag: Queens of a Certain Age</i> : pp. 6 – 14 And Zanele Muholi's <i>Faces &amp; Phases: A conversation with the Johannesburg-based photographer about photography and activism</i> , pp. 165-169	
November 22	No Class!		
November 27		<a href="#">Video listed in Assignment 5 below</a>	Assignment 5 due on Canvas and in class
November 29	Photography in the Digital Age/ the Future of Photography	Ferrer, Elizabeth. <i>Latinx Photography in the United States: A Visual History</i> , pp. 160 – 162 Foster, David William. <i>Picturing the Barrio: Ten Chicano Photographers (Latinx and Latin American Profiles)</i> : pp. 75 - 86	
December 4	One-on-one meetings about papers & presentations		
December 6			Exam 2 due
December 11			Presentations
December 13			Presentations Research Paper due

\*Schedule subject to change

### Assignments:

**Assignment 1: Early Processes Photo Project**  
**Due September 18, 1:50 pm in Canvas and in class**

### Option 1: The Home Camera Obscura

Watch this video about a photographer using the concept of the camera obscura:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WfRiBSEfCFQ>

Now you will create a camera obscura in your own home.

Here is how:

1. All you need is a room with one window, cardboard or black trash bags, tape, a towel or blanket, and a scissors or an X-Acto knife.
2. Block out all the light in the room using your cardboard or trash bag and tape.
3. Cut a small hole (dime-sized or smaller) in the surface.
4. Cover any light coming through the door with your blanket or towel.
5. Turn off lights and let your eyes adjust to the darkness. See what appears on the opposite wall from you window.
6. Photograph what you see.
7. Write a 250 – 400 words statement about what it was like to use this technique of image-making. Then compare your piece with one by a person we have discussed in class who used a similar technique. Please provide an example of a work by that individual in your text.
8. Submit an image from your camera obscura and written statement on Canvas and be prepared to share your image in class.

### Option 2: Anna Atkins Style Cyanotype:

Watch this video about Anna Atkins and the First Photo Book:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkfIJS\\_QLo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkfIJS_QLo)

Now create your own sun print. What you need: Sunprint paper (provided by instructor), objects to expose, sunny day, acrylic sheet or glass sheet (optional).

Here is how:

1. Select an item (it can be anything, some objects have more opacity than others. It can be a key, a cutout piece of paper, objects from nature, a negative, etc.)
2. On a hard surface place your Sunprint paper blue side up, arrange your items on top. I suggest placing an acrylic sheet or glass sheet on top to keep your items in place (but this is not necessarily needed).
3. Expose to the sun until paper turns almost white, from 1 – 5 minutes depending on sunlight. Do not overexpose.
4. Quickly rinse your paper with water for about 1 minute.
5. Dry on a flat surface.
6. Write a 250 – 400 words statement about what it was like to use this technique of image-making. Then compare your piece with one by a person we have discussed in class who used a similar technique. Please provide an example of a work by that individual in your text.
7. Submit an image of your Sunprint and written statement on Canvas and be prepared to share your image in class.

**Assignment 2: Colonialism and Photography**  
**Due October 2, 1:50 pm on Canvas**

Read: Mabry, “Photography, Colonialism and Racism” link found on Canvas.

[https://www.usfca.edu/sites/default/files/arts\\_and\\_sciences/international\\_studies/photography\\_colonialism\\_and\\_racism\\_-\\_university\\_of\\_san\\_francisco\\_usf.pdf](https://www.usfca.edu/sites/default/files/arts_and_sciences/international_studies/photography_colonialism_and_racism_-_university_of_san_francisco_usf.pdf)

Write a 1 – 2 page reading response. Your response should focus on issues you found interesting, confusing, or striking in the reading. Do not summarize what you read. Instead, make connections, analyze ideas, or explore issues brought up. What I want to see in your response is that you can think critically the ideas presented and consider about how they connect to the work being explored in class.

**Assignment 3 (group project):**  
**Due October 11, 1:50 pm in class and on Canvas**

Each group will present on how the sitters used photography to construct their own version of themselves to the public and how this had an impact on public opinion. Presentations should be 5-6 minutes long. You will want to do research on who the sitter is outside of this reading. Each member of the group will turn in a personal evaluation, group evaluation, and bibliography in Canvas.

**Group 1: Hawaiian Nobility**

Read: Strathman, Nicole. *Through a Native Lens: American Indian Photography* (Volume 37).  
Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2020, pp. 13 – 17

**Group 2: Red Cloud, Zitkala-Sa, and Gertrude Bonnin**

Read: Strathman, Nicole. *Through a Native Lens: American Indian Photography* (Volume 37).  
Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2020, pp. 18 – 28

**Group 3: Princess Sarah and Pretty Voice Eagle**

Read: Strathman, Nicole. *Through a Native Lens: American Indian Photography* (Volume 37).  
Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2020, pp. 28 – 32 and pp. 49 – 52

**Group 4: Frederick Douglass**

Read: Stauffer, John, *Why Abolitionist Frederick Douglass Loved the Photograph* by the Smithsonian and the University of Arizona  
<https://www.whatitmeanstobeamerican.org/identities/why-abolitionist-frederick-douglass-loved-the-photograph/>

**Group 5: Sojourner Truth**

Read: Blakemore, Erin, *How Sojourner Truth Used Photography to Help End Slavery* from Smithsonian Magazine: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/how-sojourner-truth-used-photography-help-end-slavery-180959952/>  
and *Sojourner Truth, Photography, and the Fight Against Slavery* selections for exhibition catalogue by UC Berkley : <http://bamlive.s3.amazonaws.com/SojournerTruth-brochure.pdf>

Group 6: Empress Dowager Cixi

Read: Peng, Ying-Chen, *Lingering Between Tradition and Innovation: Photographic Portraits of Empress Dowager Cixi*. *Ars Orientalis*, 2013, Vol. 43 (2013), pp. 157-174

Group 7: Oba Ovonramwen

Read: Kaplan, Flora and Staples, Amy J. *Fragile Legacies: The Photographs of Solomon Osagie Along*, pp. 43, 62 – 64

and Nartga G, Abdersib and Kusa Aronson (Eds.). *African Photographer J. A. Green: Reimagining the Indigenous and the Colonial*, pp. 127 – 129, 164, 348

Your

**Assignment 4: A Photographic Life: Reading Response**

**Due November 13, 1:50 pm in Canvas.**

Read the graphic novel: Mittermeier, Cristina. *Photographic: The Life of Graciela Iturbide*. Los Anglos: Getty, 2018 (available on Canvas)

Write a 1 – 2 page reading response considering the following questions. Don't just answer these questions in a list, create a well-written response which includes the answers to these questions.

What symbolism stands out to you in this reading?

What significant moments in the artist's life changed her path?

What photographers/artists influenced her life?

How does she tell stories in her photographs? Pick an example from the book to illustrate your point.

What would you say is her photographic philosophy?

What can we learn from her story?

What is your favorite photograph from this book and why?

**Assignment 5: Personal Expression Art Project**

**Due November 27, 1:50 pm in Canvas and in class**

Watch video:

**Andre D. Wagner's essay "On Being a Black Photographer"**

<https://www.cbsnews.com/video/photographer-andre-d-wagners-essay-on-being-a-black-photographer/?fbclid=IwAR2egyfZY9JBsAx19Z6R5hO8f64zza9YjyCTX9s2J-ZDcG8ZuLy33ba5QaQ>

Select any one work of art we looked at this semester which you most enjoyed looking at and/or learning about. From this work you will be creating two different images.

For the first image, consider the formal elements of that image: framing, line, texture, tone, angle, focus, etc.



Create an image of your own that incorporates similar formal elements. You are not trying to recreate the image you selected, but you will be using the formal elements of the work to create your own new work of art.

For the second image you create, consider the reason the photographer took that image. What was the artist trying to express? Create a photograph using any technique you want to create a photograph that expresses similar ideas. Again, you are not trying to recreate the image, but make a new image that is uniquely your own that expresses the ideas of your reference image. For example, if your artist was making a statement about the beauty found in nature, or abstracting the world, or making a political statement, then your photograph should try to do so as well. Feel free to also incorporate any information you learned from your class readings. Write a statement that is 1 to 2-pages about the choices you made and why. Make sure to compare your work to ones we have looked at in class. Be specific with your comparisons, bring in examples of work to help prove your argument.

### Research Paper: Photographers

**Due December 13, 1:50 pm in Canvas**

(5-6 pages)

You will select an artist from this list I provide about artists who are using the medium to highlight marginalized populations. You will research his/her/their biography, artist statements, interviews, and body of work. For this paper you will write about the artist's life and work and contextualize that artist for your fellow students. In this paper you may utilize formal, iconographical, and contextual analysis to come to your conclusions. More details about this paper will be provided separately. Your paper will be submitted onto Canvas at 1:50pm on the day it is due.

#### Questions to consider while doing your research:

When did the artist live? What historical context does/did your artist work?

What was the artist's intent in making the work? Make sure to back up your argument with examples from their work and possibly incorporate critical analysis written about that artist and/or include statements the artist made in interviews and their work.

What processes and/or formal elements did the artist use to get that point across? How might the artist's biography help the reader understand why the photographer is working in this way or exploring these issues?

How does your artist connect to artists or works discussed in class? (Make sure to be specific by providing examples.)

How can the artist's work be interpreted today? What makes this artist unique and why should people care about this artist today?

**Always cite your sources. Use Chicago Style footnotes for your citations.**

### Presentation:

**Due December 11, 1:50 in Canvas**

You will give a five-minute presentation that should include images and information that helps the class understand the relevance of that photographer and connects that photographer to bigger ideas discussed in class lectures.

Every student will be doing an analysis of your fellow classmates' presentations. Specific questions regarding the presentation material will be provided on a separate handout (this will not be a personal statement about the presenter).