

**NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

THE HISTORIAN AND THE VISUAL RECORD

G57.2021/G65.2026

Fall 2009

Tuesdays – 4:55-7:35 p.m.

KJCC #607

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Office Hours: By Appointment

Purpose

This course is designed to familiarize students with recent scholarship addressing visual sources, with increasingly prevalent digital collections of visual materials, and with the variety of visual records found in archival and museum collections. The structure of the course will follow a chronology of American history from the colonial period to the 20th century.

Students will build visual literacy and gain an understanding of various visual media, including portrait paintings, prints, daguerreotypes, photographs, and advertisements, in order to explore how visual sources enrich historical scholarship. We will address archival techniques for cataloguing and preserving visual records. Throughout this course, students will evaluate how visual sources alter and augment historical interpretation of the American past.

Classroom and Grading Policy

- **Attendance:** Attendance is required. You are expected to arrive to class on time and prepared. If absence is unavoidable, you must contact me at least 48 hours in advance of the missed class session. If you are absent for more than one class, you will be expected to write an additional 3 page response paper on that week's material which will be due the following week in class.
- **Reading:** You are expected to complete all required reading with care and to review the digital collections each week in order to be able to participate actively in class discussion.
- **Assignments:** Assignments are due according to the deadlines. There are no extensions on assignments. No incompletes will be given in this course.
- **Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism is grounds for failing the course. It is imperative that you cite sources accurately and that you do not copy or paraphrase without proper attribution. Please see NYU policy at <http://cas.nyu.edu/object/bulletin0810.ug.academicpolicies>

Assignments

- **Handout** (2 pages) on the history of one visual format selected from the syllabus. You must answer the following questions about the visual format: 1) What is it? 2) How is it made? 3) When did this format begin? 4) What is the historical context? 5) What impact did it have? 6) Include an annotated bibliography (15-20 sources) on the format.
DUE: In class on the same day dedicated to chosen format. 10%
- **Timed ten minute presentation** on the history of your visual format based on the handout.
DUE: In class on the same day dedicated to chosen format. 10%
- Weekly **email** to me of three sentence response to the readings. Summarize the main argument, state why you think we read this for class, and indicate issues raised by the reading which you would like to address in class. **Select main reading or one reading, if there are several chapters and articles.**
DUE: By 5 p.m. each Monday night 10%
- **In-class participation 20%**
- **Short essay** (3 pages) on three photographs from the NYU University Archive that you find iconic of a selected year. Scan photos, handle metadata, create captions for photos, state rationale for selection, and provide historical context for photos. Essay must include three photographs and three pages of text.
DUE: October 20 10%
- **Final paper OR On-line exhibit:**
 - a. Longer **essay** (10 -15 pages) on one of the following topics:
 - i. Take one topic from the syllabus (i.e. reform photography) and expand on it. Develop a historical research paper based on visual materials. **Timed ten minute presentation on this paper.**
 - ii. Explore the theory of visual culture in depth. Include both a historiographical review of the literature and an original and thoughtful critical analysis of the state of the scholarship. **Timed ten minute presentation on this paper.**
 - b. **On-line exhibit** using photos and visual images on a topic from the syllabus. Curate the exhibit and write didactics for images. Include an introductory essay. Ten minute presentation on this project.

Paper/exhibit topic selected by October 13

Presentation due December 8 10%

Papers/exhibits due December 15 30%

Week 1 -- September 8

Introduction to the Course

In this first class, students will select a visual format from those listed on the syllabus for the handout and the presentation.

* indicates readings which are not available on the blackboard site. These two books can be borrowed from the library or purchased used online.

Week 2 -- September 15

Theory& Practice: Analyzing Approaches

Meet at the Grey Art Gallery, 100 Washington Square East at 5 p.m.

Return to classroom by 6 p.m.

Required Reading:

Jonathan Prude, "Pictures and History," Emory University Department of History Newsletter, No. 49, August 2004

<http://www.history.emory.edu/newsletter01/news104/prude04.htm>

Susan Sontag, *On Photography*. New York: Picador, 2001. **Chapter 1.**

Michael L. Wilson, "Visual Culture: A Useful Category of Analysis?" in Schwartz and Przyblyski, eds., *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Week 3 -- September 22

Consumer Revolution to American Revolution

1730-1776

Visual Format of the Week: Portrait Painting

Required Reading:

Margaretta M. Lovell, *Art in a Season of Revolution: Painters, Artisans, and Patrons in Early America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. **Introduction, Chapter 1.**

Justin Paton, *How to Look at a Painting*. Wellington: Awa Press, 2005. **P. 107-112.**

Digital Collection:

Portraits! Worcester Portraits in the American Antiquarian Society

<http://www.americanantiquarian.org/Exhibitions/Portraits/>

Week 4 -- September 29

American Revolution to French Revolution

1776-1799

**Visual Format of the Week: Prints
etching, lithograph, woodblock, engraving**

Required Reading:

Lynn Hunt. *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984. **Chapter 3**.

William Iving, Jr. *How Prints Look*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1943, and Boston: Beacon Press, 1987. **Selections (will be provided)**.

Catherine E Kelly. "Face Value: George Washington and Portrait Prints." *Common-place*, Vol 7, no. 3. <http://www.common-place.org/vol-07/no-03/>

Digital Collection:

Imaging the French Revolution

<http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/imaging/home.html>

Week 5 -- October 6

Antebellum Society/Slavery

1820-1860/ 1620-1865

Meet at the University Archives, Bobst, 10th floor at 5 p.m.

Return to classroom by 6 p.m.

Visual Format of the Week: Photography 1
daguerreotypes, ambrotypes

Required Reading:

Gregory Fried, "True Pictures," *Common-Place*, Vol 2, no. 2.

<http://www.common-place.org/vol-02/no-02/fried/index.shtml>

*Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History: Mathew Brady to Walker Evans*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1989. **Prologue and Chapter 1**.

Colin L. Westerbeck, "Frederick Douglass Chooses His Moment," in *African Americans in Art: Selections from the Art Institute of Chicago*, ed. Susan F. Rosen. Chicago, 1999, 9-25. www.artic.edu/webspaces/museumstudies/ms242/westerbeck.shtml

Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780-1865*. New York: Routledge, 2000. **Chapter 2**.

Digital Collections:

The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Americas: A Visual Record

<http://hitchcock.itc.virginia.edu/Slavery/index.php>

Secrets of the Dark Chamber: Art of the American Daguerreotype

<http://nmaa-ryder.si.edu/collections/exhibits/secrets>

Week 6 -- October 13

Archiving and Digitizing Photographs and Objects

Panel Discussion

DUE: An email to me with the topic for your paper OR online exhibit.

Required Reading:

“Common and Useful Information Elements for Cataloging Pictorial Materials.” Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, 2004.

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/tp/Common%20Information%20Elements.pdf>

University Archive – Photograph Finding Aid and Scanning Manual

Guests

Melitte Buchman, NYU Digital Library

Lisa Darms, NYU Fales Library and Special Collections

Janet Murray, NYPL Digital Gallery

Digital Collections:

<http://maass.nyu.edu/>

http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/tamwag/randall_photo.html

<http://hidvl.nyu.edu/>

<http://dlib.nyu.edu/findingaids/html/fales/woj.html>

(see Wojnarowicz, Series 13 subseries B)

<http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/index.cfm>

Week 7 -- October 20

Civil War and Reconstruction

1861-1865, 1863-1877

Visual Format of the Week:
cartes de visite, memorials

Photography 2, Monuments & Memorials

DUE: NYU archives photographs essay.

Required Reading:

William A. Frassanito, *Antietam: The Photographic Legacy of America's Bloodiest Day*. Philadelphia: Thomas Publications, 1978. **Part 1.**

*Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History: Mathew Brady to Walker Evans*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1989. **Chapter 2.**

Deborah Willis, *Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers 1840 to the Present*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002. **Part 1.**

*Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in 19th Century America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997. **Selections.**

Digital Collections:

Beyond Face Value: Depictions of Slavery in Confederate Currency
<http://www.cwc.lsu.edu/BeyondFaceValue/beyondfacevalue.htm>

America's Reconstruction: People and Politics After the Civil War
<http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/reconstruction/index.html>

Week 8 -- October 27

How to Care for Ephemera

Visit to Columbia University Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Week 9 -- November 3

**Gilded Age
1876-1890**

Visual Format of the Week: Ephemera, Scrapbooks

Required Reading:

Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded Age America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. **Chapters 1 and 2.**

Ellen Gruber Garvey, "Imitation is the Sincerest Form of Appropriation: Scrapbooks and extra-illustration." *Common-place*, Vol 7, no. 3. <http://www.common-place.org/vol-07/no-03/>

Digital Collection:

Ephemera at the American Antiquarian Society
<http://www.americanantiquarian.org/ephemera.htm>

Week 10 -- November 10 The West, Progressivism , Imperialism, World War

1870-1920

Visual Format of the Week: Photography 3, Reform Photography

Required Reading:

Neil Harris, "Iconography and Intellectual History: The Halftone Effect," in *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. **Pages 304-17.**

Martha Sandweiss, *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002. **Chapter 5.**

Peter Hale, *Silver Cities: the Photography of American Urbanization, 1839-1915*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984. **Chapter 5.**

*Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History: Mathew Brady to Walker Evans*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1989. **Chapter 4.**

Digital Collections:

A War in Perspective: Public Appeals, Memory, and the Spanish-American Conflict
<http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/epo/spanexhib/>

Women Artists of the American West
<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/WAAW/Palmquist>

Week 11 -- November 17

Maps as Visual Records

Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City Eric W. Sanderson discusses his book on the natural history of New York since 1609.

Elebash Recital Hall, 6:30 p.m.

Meet at the Graduate Center , 365 Fifth Avenue (5th Avenue at 34th Street)

Week 12 -- November 24

Great Depression to New Deal

1920-1940

Visual Format of the Week: Reform Photography 2/Advertisements
Newspapers advertisements, Magazine advertisements

Required Reading:

Linda Gordon, "[Dorothea Lange: The Photographer as Agricultural Sociologist,](http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jah/93.3/gordon.html)" *Journal of American History*, 93:3 (December 2006): 698-727.

<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jah/93.3/gordon.html>

Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986. **Chapter 5.**

Digital Collection:

America from the Great Depression to World War II: Photographs from the FSA-OWI, 1935-1945

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsowhome.html>

Week 13 -- December 1

Hot War/Cold War/Civil Rights

1940-1989

Visual Format of the Week: Cartoons

Required Reading:

Thomas Milton Kemnitz. "[The Cartoon as a Historical Source,](http://www.jstor.org/stable/202359)" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 4:1 (Summer 1973): 81-93. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/202359>

George H. Roeder, Jr., *The Censored War: American Visual Experience during World War Two* (New Haven, 1993). **P.67-80, P. 105-120.**

Penny von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997. **Chapter 2.**

Digital Collection:

Hiroshima Archive

<http://www.lclark.edu/~history/HIROSHIMA/>

Week 14 -- December 8

Presentations

DUE: Presentations on Papers or Exhibits

Week 15 -- December 15

Papers /Exhibits

DUE: Papers/Exhibits

December 15th is a Tuesday that runs on a Thursday class schedule. We will most likely not be able to meet this week. Papers will be due December 15th submitted by email/blackboard by 5 p.m.