



Pre-Requisites:
Basic Photography or
Equivalent

Instructor:
Lee Bacchus

Photojournalism, Documentary and Fine Art Photography

Course Objectives:

This course will revolve around the practice of photo-reportage – the claims of “truth” and “realism” in imagery, and the attempts at realistic story-telling through photojournalism, documentary, the photo essay, portrait and street photography, as well as some related realms of “art” photography. While much of the class will be discussion based, students will also be required to “put into practice” ideas emerging and evolving from these varied photographic traditions. We will ask for two assignments: The first, a single image with “realistic” or “objective” intent: the second an “environmental portrait.” There will also be more spontaneous in-class “field” assignments to give students a sense of photojournalistic urgency and deadline atmosphere. The emphasis here will be on creativity and industriousness, and less so on strictly technical concerns.

Course Outline:

Class 1 – Overview and definitions. A look at the photojournalistic, documentary and fine art traditions. What distinguishes photography as a medium of expression? We will look at images both historical and contemporary, and discuss. This discussion will revolve around a slideshow demonstrating the historical development of photojournalism and documentary photography. In-class assignment: Students will team and go into the streets where they will shoot selfportraits in a photojournalistic style – as celebrities, politicians, or spot-news figures.

Readings for next class: Martha Rosler – Around, and Afterthoughts (on Documentary Photography).

Class 2 – Practical Concerns. Working for various media. What it takes to get published, image. Guest lecture by a working photojournalist. Also discuss Rosler article and the potentialities and limitations of photojournalism.

Homework – Bring in one newspaper or magazine photo for discussion.

Class 3 – Looking at Seeing. We examine students’ clippings and some contemporary photojournalism, and discuss merits and misfires. Watch two short films on photojournalists – the first about a celebrity photographer for Entertainment Weekly; the second focusing on an Australian shooter covering a major forest fire. In-class assignment: Go out and shoot an “enterprise” image, based on urban themes.

Also discuss photo assignments. The first due in week 5.

Class 4 – Art photography – Part One. Discuss its relation to “realism” and participate in some field work.

Class 5 – The Portrait. We feature a slideshow of acclaimed portrait images and discuss the notion of an “environment portrait. First major assignment due.

Class 6 – War Photography. Photojournalism as “information: vs. “persuasion.” Can images change history? Can an image change anything? Watch film War Photographer, a profile of James Nachtwey. Review and critique student assignments.

Class 7 – Art photography Part Two – A discussion around documentary “photo-artists,” featuring as slide show including Garry Winogrand, Diane Arbus, Jeff Wall, Edward Burtynsky, Robert Adams, Luc Delahaye, Thomas Struth, Stephen Shore, Joel Meyerwitz, and Joel Sternfeld among others.

Field assignment – Go out and shoot an images with a personal “aesthetic” style, but within a “realistic” tradition.

Second major assignment (portraits) due.

Class 8 – Review of portrait assignments.

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