Fall 2018: August 30th--December 13th, 2018
Course Name: Painting With Light: Intro to Photojournalism U49 JRN 330 01/ U79 ART 330 01
Instructor: Wendi Fitzgerald: 314 302 3130  email: wfitzger@wustl.edu
Number of Credits: 3
Class Meeting Schedule: Thursday, 6:00-8:30 p.m.  Eads Hall, Room 14

"Teaser of texture, molder of form, bearer of color, instigator of sight, light makes photography. Embrace light. Admire it. Love it. But above all, study it. Glory in the fists of light exploding from a cloud covering the sun. Swing through the amber light of morning. Glide through the blue strata of twilight. Soar through the crystalline sky after a thunderstorm. See how one moment's light chisels lines clean and the next moment's light buries detail in shadow. Know light. Know it for all you are worth, and you will know the key to photography."

--Derek Doellinger, The Art of Seeing

(Photo by Paul Hausknecht)
Course Description

This course will challenge you to explore the concept of visual literacy and will teach you to use your camera as a tool of communication. The approach we’ll take is multilayered, yet fluid and uncomplicated. We’ll study the work of the masters, embrace the technology, and shoot lots of photos. These three areas will merge continually throughout the course.

We will recall significant moments when photography was the primary tool used to record historical events, and we’ll study the work of photojournalists who created indelible images. We’ll check the visual record of September 11th and review the portfolios of photojournalists who were there to document the event. Then we’ll examine the historical body of work left by the photographers of the 1930s. Dedicated photojournalists like Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, and Gordon Parks worked for the Farm Security Administration (a government bureau) to record the changing face of America during the Great Depression. We’ll examine how these pioneers influenced contemporary expectations. We will contextualize iconic images, and learn about the photographers who made the images, their techniques, and the stories behind the images. We will embrace the work of the innovators in photojournalism, and examine the way photographers challenge traditional formats.

There will be single photo assignments on a regular basis. Each shooting assignment will be accompanied with a written explanation as well as class lecture and discussion. To improve your shooting skills, you should have your camera with you a lot, ready from the first day. We will use class time to critique each other’s work. We’ll discuss technical aspects as well as content, ethics, philosophy and aesthetics. We’ll explore in depth what makes a good photo and how to get there.

We’ll delve into the mechanics of your cameras (digital or film), and we’ll demystify the jargon of photography: F-stops, shutter speeds, ISO, pixels, dpi, and depth of field. We will discover how systems work together to create good photos. However, we won’t get technologically bogged down. The purpose is to get you in control of your camera and its capabilities, not intimidated by it. You will learn how to control your camera manually and you will want to take your camera out of the “automatic” setting. We’ll spend some time learning Photoshop software, the equivalent of the electronic darkroom. We’ll cover the basics, like cropping, toning, and other useful tools. We will also discuss workflow, software and storage.

This course adheres to the fundamentals of what defines photojournalism: Caption writing, the basic storytelling, fact-gathering approach, deadlines, content and context, editing and sequencing. We’ll look at the classic categories of still photography—spot and breaking news, environmental
portraits, sports, features, fashion, and ultimately, the photo story and documenting social issues. We'll also discuss ethics, law, conduct and truth in photojournalism and their importance. We strive to "show truth with the camera."

You will learn by taking lots of photos and making lots of mistakes.

Requirements For Credit

You will need your own camera, digital or film. Photos taken with cell phone cameras are acceptable. Digital single lens reflex (DSLR) would be optimum. You will be responsible for getting your photos prepared in time for weekly critique sessions. Most cameras are acceptable. Your camera should have fully adjustable settings (manual as opposed to automatic). Nonadjustable settings will restrict your learning, but we will work with what you've got. You should have a normal lens (50 mm) at a minimum. A second lens of 135mm or 200mm would be great, and so would a wide-angle lens (16-28 mm). Maybe you have a digital camera that has one lens with all these zooming, focal length capabilities. Your camera should also have a flash, preferably one that can detach with an adjustable, tilting head. If your flash is built in you can learn new techniques regardless. You can also use your cell phone camera but must demonstrate proficiency. You should be prepared to install an application to allow manual control over your cell phone camera.

There will be weekly shooting assignments geared toward learning specific techniques and concepts discussed in class, with examples shown. Through the shooting assignments, you will gain technical control and confidence in your photo gear. You will be expected to have your work at our sessions, ready to participate in critique from your peers. Your grade will falter if you are consistently late with work or if you are absent more than twice in the semester. Each student will be required to research the work of a chosen photojournalist, and prepare a 10-15 minute presentation to the class, with visual examples of the chosen photographer’s work. You will also be required to choose a single photo you find compelling, and share with the class the story behind the photo. There will be readings and examples from websites on Blackboard/Canvas to correspond with class discussion and assignments. The class presentation will incorporate a written element and there will also be one written proposal.
Flexibility is key. There will be no right or wrong cameras or methodology. We will adopt standards as we progress. Flexibility will also allow our schedule to include guest speakers, computer time and field trips. The course outline is subject to change to allow for the above. Please let the instructor know as soon as possible if you have special needs. This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor and the class.

Disability Statement: Washington University is committed to providing accommodations and/or services to students with documented disabilities. Students who are seeking support for a disability or a suspected disability should contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 314-935-4062, located in Cornerstone, Gregg Hall (http://disability.wustl.edu).

Academic Integrity: It is extremely unprofessional and unethical to plagiarize or copy published or written work. If any student is unprofessional or unethical they risk hurting the final grade or failing the course.


You will also need to be looking at websites for examples of good photojournalism. You can expect regular links to web sites and readings to help you learn about specific techniques. We'll also view multimedia presentations in class.

Evaluation and Grading

The grading system for this course is based upon the care and attention you bring to your work in the class. Your work will be judged for technical quality, aesthetics and originality. There are nine shooting assignments that consist of most of your grade (5 percent each assignment). There is one writing assignment (10 percent), two oral presentations (15 percent each) and the final photo assignment: Social Issue (15 percent). Each shooting assignment can include a thoughtful self-evaluation: Nothing huge, just a couple of thoughts on what went right, what went wrong, what obstacles you overcame, and how you made your photo and caption information.
Course Outline and Assignments—Fall 2018


**Week 2 (September 6th):** Critique first assignment. Reading assignment: Chapters 1-4, pp. 8-84. A look at the past and the present. Background on the Farm Security Administration and documentary photography. The photographs and photographers of 9-11. Cameras, lenses and hardware. Presentations discussion.


**Week 10 (November 1st):** Critique sixth and seventh shooting assignments. More on cell phonography, derivedography. Reading assignment: Chapter 10 Covering the Issues and Chapter 11 Photo Story, pp. 343-316. More on ethics and law. Possible guest speaker/field trip.


**Week 13 (November 22nd):** Thanksgiving Break. No Class!


**Week 15 (December 6th):** Critique eighth and ninth shooting assignment. More on social documentary photography. Presentations. Possible field trip/guest speaker.

**Week 16 (December 13th):** Round up of the best photos of the semester. Discussion of class exhibit of work. Selections for exhibit of body of work. More critique and presentations if necessary. Selections of final work for exhibit. Final shooting assignment due: Documenting a social issue.