

"INTRODUCTION TO PHOTOGRAPHY"
Syllabus Spring 2011

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Course description: The course is programmed on photography as art and photography as communication basis. It includes aspects of history of photography, comparative views on photography, literature and the arts and practical photography education. Importance is laid on students' understanding the photographic picture as a means of expressing an individual artistic attitude towards the world, be it in portraits, still lifes, landscapes etc. Books by e.g. Wm.Flusser – Towards A Philosophy of Photography, and Roland Barthes – Camera Lucida are recommended to students as an important basis for themes discussed in the course.

The technical part of the course with instruction in the dark rooms, studios and elsewhere, will be continually connected to the theory of photography and its overall inclusion in the sphere of interpretation and philosophy. The course ends with a written tests and/or essays based on the history of photography as art and communication, and in their having learned how to master their cameras, develop their b&w films and make b&w prints. During the course, students will support their submitted prints with short explanatory texts. The course will be highlighted by an exhibition of the students' photographs. The whole campus takes part in the opening of the exhibition and the framed photographs adorn the NYU Prague building for the next semester. The lectures on the history and theory of photography are based on CD shows and also on books supplied by the NYU Prague Library and in the aid the students can be getting from the Computer Room. An important aspect is also discussing the different genres of photography. Students majoring and/or studying different subjects at NYU or other universities bring into the debates in the class their different experiences and views based in the subjects they study "at home".

As the course is held in Prague, it inevitably brings into its view the local color – in the themes based in the newcomers' new experiences of daily life, in Czech history, old and recent, in architecture, in the Central European connections and contacts etc. All that becomes part of the students' photographic projects.

Classes are scheduled twice a week, two acad. hours per lecture, plus time spent in photography assignments and the dark rooms/studio time by individual schedules. Guest lecturers are invited to share with students their opinions on photography.

However, the program of one week (or even of two) may overlap depending on the theme. The photographic theory and history program will be lectured on every scheduled day, and also a practical photography part will be on every scheduled day of the course.

Prof.Z.Kirschner and Assist. B.Mrázková will be both present in class on all the scheduled days, unless the program requires a change.

Grading policy

Attendance, class participation / plus student photos & notes/:	30%
Four thematic papers	20%
Mid-term tests /& mid-term photographs	20%
Final tests /& photographs for the exhibition/	30%

Schedule of classes - Section 1 & Section 2

Schedule: **Tues & Thus - Section 1: 1.30- 2.50 pm**

Section 2: 4.30- 5.50 pm

Sections 1 & 2: schedule-plus hours in dark-rooms etc.

Students are divided into two sections on alphabetical basis. Exchanges in sections at the opening of the course only, and on 1:1 basis only.

When the students embark on photography projects, their photographs shall be based on 'local color' and with the following genres:

- 1) Document
- 2) Portrait OR Body
- 3) Landscape OR Still life

Document: a) "Prague subway/trams/buses passengers", or:
b) "Tourists at the Old Town Square / Charles bridge", or:
c) "...they drink interesting local beers here'..."

Portrait: a) "Street vendors and/or musicians in Prague", or:
b) "In my NYU Prague studio", or:
c) "Self-portrait"

Body: a) "The right hand hardly ever knows the left one", or:
b) "The body landscape requires a patient viewer", or:
c) "Details summarize totality"

Landscape: a) "Prague historical urban landscape", or:
b) "Prague suburban landscapes", or:
c) "Trees, flowers and lawns in the city"

Still life: a) "Between reminiscences and avant-garde", or:
b) "Silent discoveries of everyday life items", or:
c) "When exhibited, they look different"

4) Final Project : Free theme

Week 1 – Jan. 25 & 27

Overview of the course

Information on the program of the course.

Information on schedule-plus hours and on dark-rooms equipment and schedules.

For Tue, Jan. 25 students are requested to bring their cameras to this class. Also, those who will be buying analog cameras etc., can do so on Week 1, Thu, Jan. 27 – see scheduled visit to Langhans Gallery/Škoda Photography Shop.

Lecture: Invention of photography. The arts, people and the situation of the image before and at the time of the invention of photography. – Paintings (e.g. Goya, Ingres, Canova, David, Blake, Turner, Degas, Doré, Delacroix), fashion, objects of art, furniture etc., literature (Keats, Shelley, Byron, Poe, Goethe, Schiller, Mácha etc.).

Debate: students on photography: personal aims, projects and views, student photos, made prior

to enlisting in this class, viewed.

Reading: *Photography – A Critical Introduction*, ed. by Liz Wells: pp. 14-24, International Center of Photography – Encyclopedia of Photography, - viz *Reader* pp. 129-132 (Daguerre etc.), 361,362 (Niépce etc.), 505-507 (Talbot etc.) - viz *Reader*

Instruction: Darkroom equipment viewed, student cameras viewed.

Basic principles of photography technology & its creative aspects (analog/digital photography).

Visit to Langhans Gallery/Škoda Photography Shop, Vodičková Str.37, Prague 1.

Week 2 – Febr. 1 & 3

Lecture: Beginnings of photography –J.N.Niépce, L.-J.M.Daguerre, Wm.H.F.Talbot, and in the Czech lands: W.Horn, J.Maloch, J.Bekl etc. Daguerrotypes, talbotypes.

Reading: *Photography – A Critical Introduction*, ed. by Liz Wells: pp. 52 & 53, - viz *Reader*

Students shall bring to class on Tue, Febr. 8 (Week 3) quotations from American (or any other) romantic (1790s to 1840s) literature and/or a list of some historical events in America and/or in Europe of between cca 1830 and 1860, to better understand the world in the period of photography beginnings.

Instruction: How to take a picture. Exposure (film speed, aperture, shutter speed).

Reading: *Photography Six Edition*: pp. - 15- 25, 64- 67 - viz *Reader*

The Step by Step Guide to Photography: pp. 30- 37 - viz *Reader*

Week 3 – Febr. 8 & 10

Lecture: Beginnings of photography. Ideals connected with the invention of photography and the establishment of the camera in human existence. – J.M.Cameron, D.O.Hill & R.Adamson, O.G.Rejlander, T.O’Sullivan, M.B.Brady, A.Gardner, R.Fenton, Nadar, and photographers in the Czech lands: J.Bekl, M.L.Winter, V.Rupp, J.Eckert, J.Mulač, R.Bruner-Dvořák, etc.

Debate: based on student quotations from romantic literature in connection with photography beginnings (viz Week 2), and on historical and/or cultural events in the period between 1830’s and 1860’s.

Paper [1]: J.N.Niépce, L.-J.M.Daguerre & Wm.H.F.Talbot, three different steps in inventing photography –

Paper 1 to be delivered in class on Week 4, Thu, Febr. 17.

Reading: *Photography – A Critical Introduction*, ed. by Liz Wells: pp. 24-26 (chapter on photograph as a document’), - viz *Reader*,

ICP-Encyclopedia of Photography , pp.150-152 (Documentary and Social Documentary Photography), pp. 387-390 (Photojournalism), pp.520-522 (Travel Photography), - viz *Reader*

Instruction: Developing b/w negative, chemistry, enlarger, contrast and density. Developing student negatives in darkroom.

Reading: *Photography Six Edition*: pp. 106- 115, 134- 135, 148- 153- viz *Handbook*

The Step by Step Guide to Photography: pp. 72- 73 - viz *Handbook*

Photography Six Edition: pp. 116- 125 - viz *Reader*

Week 4 – Febr. 15 & 17

Lecture: Arrival of the basic problem of photography – the truthfulness of the images compared with viewers’ experience. Photography entering the realm of the arts world. Pictorialism. –

H.P.Robinson, E.Muybridge, F.M.Sutcliffe, L.W.Hine, G.Käsebier, A.E.Disdéri, P.H.Emerson, E.Atget, F.H.Day, Czech photographers in the early 1900s and after: F.Drtíkol, K.Novák, V.J.Bufka, A.J.Trčka, also e.g. A.Mucha.

Students: Paper 1 (viz Week 3!) to be delivered to class on Thu, Febr. 17.

Debate: On the truthfulness of a photographic image.

Reading: Photography in America, ed. by Robert Doty, pp. 7-13, - viz *Reader*

Photography – A Critical Introduction, ed. by Liz Wells, pp.24-26 (The photograph as document), - viz *Reader*

Photography – A Critical Introduction, ed. by Liz Wells, pp.30-32 (The photograph as testament), - viz *Reader*

Instruction: Contrast, density and photographic papers. Positive b/w processing, basic darkroom work (test prints, contact sheets). Printing student photographs in darkroom.

Reading: Photography Six Edition: pp. 136-137 - viz *Reader*

Photography Six Edition: pp. 138- 147 - viz *Handbook*

The Step by Step Guide to Photography: pp. 78- 83 - viz *Handbook*

Week 5 – Febr. 22 & 24

Program of Week 4 continued in Week 5 on Tue and Thu, Febr. 22 & 24

Week 6 – March 1 & 3

A guided tour: The Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague, 17.listopadu Str., No.2, Praha 1, exhibition on the history of Czech photography. *Lecture* by the Museum Photography Collection curator, Jan Mlčoch.

Lecture: Modernity in the arts at the beginning of the 20th century & photography. – A. Stieglitz, E.J.Steichen, A.L.Coburn.

Paper [2]: Pictorialism, a new definition for photography. Also: authors, period, style.

Paper 2 to be delivered in class on week 7, Thu, March 10.

Reading: Photography, A Critical Introduction, ed. by Liz Wells, pp.42-50 (The essential, Photography reconsidered) - viz *Reader*

Instruction: Printing in darkroom. Apart from scheduled class time.

Reading: Photography Six Edition: pp. 150- 154 - viz *Handbook*

The Step by Step Guide to Photography: pp. 80- 137 - viz *Handbook*

Week 7 – March 8 & 10

Guest speaker: MgA. Filip Láb, PhD.: On creative possibilities of photography in view of its latest technical developments

Lecture: Photography accepted (?) into the arts and creating its own language. — W.Evans, J.-H.Lartigue, Man Ray, A.Kertész, Brassai, M.Munkacs, L.Moholy-Nagy, E.Weston, D.J.Růžička and the Czech modern art scene of the 1920s K.Teige, J.Funke, J.Rössler, magazines, plus a few names briefly mentioned (more on some them at a later lecture).

Reading: ICP – Encyclopedia of Photography, pp. 403-405 (Portrait Lens; Portrait Attachment, Portraiture), pp.454-455 (Self-portrait) - viz *Reader*

Students: Paper 2 to be delivered to class on March 10 – viz Week 6

Instruction: Printing in darkroom. Apart from scheduled class time.

Week 8 – March 15 & 17

Mid-term exam: on March 15:

a) test on photography - historical/theoretical aspects

b) test on technique of photography

(Both tests are based in lectures and instructions held in Weeks 1 – 6, plus readings from the

Readers and the Handbook.)

Lecture: Photography looking at its contemporary world with a critical eye. – B.Brandt, A.Sander, D.Lange, A.Rodchenko, B. Abbott

Reading: John Szarkowski: American Photography and the Frontier Tradition, viz Reader pp. 98 – 107

Paper [3]: Alfred Stieglitz and Edward J.Steichen in American modern art & photography – Paper to be delivered in class on Week 10, March 31.

Instruction: Aperture, shutter speed and depth of field. Focus and depth of field.

Reading: Photography Six Edition: pp. 48-55 - viz Reader The Step by Step Guide to Photography: pp. 28-29 - viz Reader

Week 9 – March 22 & 24

SPRING BREAK – NO CLASSES

Week 10 – March 29 & 31

Lecture: Photography watches and pictures the global economic collapse in the 1930's and the beginnings & results of wars bringing sometimes modern art to collapse.. – P.Strand, R.Capa, M.Bourke-White, Czech photographers & the Central European history of the 1930s – 1940s, M.Hák, E.Wiškovský, J.Ehm.

Reading: Devětsil, Czech Avant-garde Art, Architecture and Design of the 1920s and 30s.

published by Museum of Modern Art Oxford & Design Museum London - viz Reader

Czech Modernism 1900-1945, published by The Museum of Modern Art, Houston, (viz Reader)

Students: Paper 3 to be delivered to class on March 31 (viz Week 8!)

Instruction: Positive b/w processing / advanced darkroom techniques.

Reading: Photography Six Edition: pp. 154- 181 - viz Handbook. The Step by Step Guide to Photography: pp. 86- 137 - viz Handbook

Week 11 – April 5 & 7

Guest Speaker: MgA. Jiří Skála, artist: Photography, its role and position in contemporary art and art reflection

Lecture: Photography in the modern world. – H.Cartier-Bresson, Weegee, L.Model, R.Doisneau, Wm.E.Smith, and Czech artists: J.Rössler, K.Teige, J.Heissler, J.Lukas, J. Štyrský, Z.Tmej

Reading: A Photographic Vision, pp. 195-197 (texts by Ezra Pound and A.L.Coburn) - viz

Reader , Willis Hartshorn: Art/Commerce and the Avant-garde, viz Reader pp.149-151

ICP-Encyclopedia of Photography, pp.375-376 (Painting and Photography, Painting on Photographs), viz 'See also' on page 376! viz Reader

Instruction: Exposure, metering, zone system.

Reading: Photography Six Edition: pp. 90- 102 , pp. 303- 312 - viz Reader

Week 12 – April 12 & 14

Lecture: Photography realized in – and out of – the tradition of the arts of the 1930's. Ansel Adams, R.Frank, E. Erwit, Wm.Klein, R.Vishniac, M.Paar, and Czech photographers: J.Funke, J.Sudek, M.Novotný.

Reading: ICP-Encyclopedia of Photography, pp. 341-342 (Motion Study and Analysis), pp.173-174 (Erotic Photography) - viz Reader

Instruction: The basic camera regimes

Week 13 – April 19 & 21

Lecture: Photography documenting the WW2 and after period. – A.Newman, I.Penn, D.Arbus, R.Avedon, Ph.Halsman, A.Warhol, and Czech photographers: J.Saudek, V.Kolář, E.Fuková, V.Chochola.

Reading: IC-Encyclopedia of Photography, pp. 355-356 (Nature Photography), ICP-Encyclopedia of Photography, p. 292 (Landscape Photography)

Instruction: The major types of cameras.

Reading: Photography Six Edition: pp. 28- 37 - viz *Reader*. The Step by Step Guide to Photography: pp. 16- 27, 204- 207 - viz *Reader*

Week 14 – April 26 & 28

Lecture: Seemingly disinterested photography of great interest. – Nan Goldin, C.Sherman, A.Leibovitz, B.& H.Becher, J.-P.Witkin, H.Newton, and Czech photographers: P.Štecha, B.Kolářová, B.Holomíček, J.Svoboda, J.Štreit, E.Medková, J.Koudelka.

Paper [4]: František Drtikol, Jaromír Funke and Josef Sudek: Czech photographers in the 20th century history of photography.

Paper 4 to be delivered in class on Week 15, on Tue, May 3.

Reading: ICP-Encyclopedia of Photography, p.355 (Nature-Light Photography) - viz *Reader*

Instruction: Lens focal length, lenses.

Reading: Photography Six Edition: pp. 38- 47, 60- 61, 172- 173 - viz *Reader*

The Step by Step Guide to Photography: pp. 92- 97, 102- 103 - viz *Reader*

Week 15 – May 3 & 5

Tue, May 3 - Final lecture and instruction plus overview of student photographs for final exhibition.

Students: Paper 4 to be delivered to class on May 3 – viz Week 14

Thu, May 5 - **Student Photographs Exhibition** –

All (!) Intro to Photo class students:

In the morning and/or in the afternoon: final selecting and mounting of photos, texts etc. at Richterův dům. Each student is responsible for her/his photographs to be mounted and the frame with them to be hanged on the wall by him/her one hour before the opening at the latest. It takes mostly at least two hours (very often more!) for a student plus the instructors to make the final selection, and then to mount the photographs and finally to put the frame on the wall. This estimation is based on long experience. Late-comers are therefore not accepted and “suffer” in grading. The exhibition room has to be cleaned by the students of all the remnants from their preparation works well before the opening.

Opening of the exhibition takes place at Richterův dům at 1800 hours (hour liable to change).

The whole campus is invited to the opening.

Week 16 – May 10 & 12

May 10 – **Intro to Photo Class Final tests** on history, theory and technology of photography.

The tests are based on lectures and instructions, plus information received by the students through reading the Readers and the Handbook. The Final tests cover the whole semester program of the class, i.e. also lectures and instructions of the pre - mid-term period.

May 12 - Final meeting of Intro to Photo class.

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