

ARTH-180: HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

Effective Term

Fall 2026

CC Approval

11/07/2025

AS Approval

11/13/2025

BOT Approval

11/20/2025

COCI Approval

12/12/2025

SECTION A - Course Data Elements
CB04 Credit Status

Credit - Degree Applicable

Discipline

Minimum Qualifications	And/Or
Art History (Master's Degree)	Or
Photography (Master's Degree)	

Subject Code

ARTH - Art History

Course Number

180

Department

Art History

Division

Arts and Humanities (ARAH)

Double Coded With

PHOT-180

Department

Photography

Division

Arts and Humanities (ARAH)

Full Course Title

History of Photography

Short Title

History of Photography

CB03 TOP Code

1002.00 - Art

CB08 Basic Skills Status

NBS - Not Basic Skills

CB09 SAM Code

E - Non-Occupational

Rationale

Updates to COR elements for better alignment with how the course is taught, including equity-driven content/pedagogy.

SECTION B - Course Description

Catalog Course Description

This course examines the history of photography from its beginnings to the present. Emphasized will be the medium's technical, artistic and social impact.

SECTION C - Conditions on Enrollment

Open Entry/Open Exit

No

Repeatability

Not Repeatable

Grading Options

Letter Grade or Pass/No Pass

Allow Audit

Yes

Requisites

Advisory Prerequisite(s)

Completion of ENGL-C1000 or ENGL-120B with a minimum grade of C or appropriate placement.

SECTION D - Course Standards

Is this course variable unit?

No

Units

3.00

Lecture Hours

54

Outside of Class Hours

108

Total Contact Hours

54

Total Student Hours

162

Distance Education Approval

Is this course offered through Distance Education?

Yes

Online Delivery Methods

DE Modalities	Permanent or Emergency Only?
Hybrid	Permanent
Entirely Online	Permanent
Online with Proctored Exams	Permanent

SECTION E - Course Content

Student Learning Outcomes

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1. | Identify the work of key figures and movements in the history of photography. |
| 2. | Situate photographs and their functions within specific historic and cultural contexts. |

Course Objectives

- | Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to: | |
|---|--|
| 1. | Discern the development of photographic technologies, the images they produced, and the audiences they created. |
| 2. | Locate the production of photography within the context of industrial Europe and North America and medium's spread worldwide. |
| 3. | Recognize the visual characteristics of photographs as part of a photographer's output, a movement or particular style. |
| 4. | Delineate the different functions of the photograph, including the fine art photograph, the scientific photograph, and the photograph in journalism. |
| 5. | Analyze, interpret, compare and contrast, and evaluate photographic images both orally and in writing. |

Course Content

1. Early experiments in photography
 - a. Early photochemical experiments
 - b. Daguerre, Fox-Talbot
 - c. Photography as output of industrialization and capitalism
2. Early 19th-century technologies and subjects
 - a. Photographs as accessible images to most social classes
 - b. Daguerreotypes, ambrotypes and tintypes
 - i. Portraiture
 - ii. Scientific and anthropological uses of photography
 - iii. Early photojournalism
 - c. Calotypes
 - d. Collodion/wet plate process
 - i. Early war photography
 - ii. Travel photography
 - iii. Composite photographs
 - e. Platinum Prints, Photogravure
 - i. Photography and Art
 1. Stieglitz and Camera Work
 2. Pictorialism
 - f. Photographic practice as accessible to women/men of color
 - i. Augustus Washington
 - ii. Julia Margaret Cameron
 - iii. Frances Benjamin
3. 20th-century photography
 - a. Documentary photography
 - i. Progressive Era
 - ii. New Deal and FSA
 - b. Photography and Modern Art
 - i. European Experimentation
 1. Constructivism
 2. Dada
 3. Surrealism
 - ii. American Modernism
 1. f/64 Group
 - c. Photography and Print
 - i. Rise of image-centered publications
 - ii. Functions of photographs

1. Photojournalism
2. Advertisements
3. Fashion
- d. Postwar Photography
 - i. Family of Man and Frank's Americans
 - ii. New Documents
- e. Color Photography
- f. Photography and Art, 1960s 1970s
 - i. Photorealism
 - ii. Conceptual Art
- g. Digital Photography
4. 21st-century Photography
 - a. Digital imaging technologies and rethinking the "real"
 - b. Changing ideas of authorship, audience, photographer
5. Vocabulary for analyzing photographs
 - a. Elements of composition, light/dark, etc.
 - b. Principles of design
6. Ongoing discourse regarding photography as "truth," as a tool and/or as a medium of art

Methods of Instruction

Methods of Instruction

Types	Examples of learning activities
Field Trips	Students will explore examples of photography in a professional setting such as a gallery or museum as well as a commercial venue.
Lecture	Image-based lectures which promote all-class and small group discussion of content.
Other	Collaborative Learning: small groups explore and assess in-depth a topic covered in lecture. Groups present their findings to peers for further analysis and critique.

Online Adaptation

Types	Examples of learning activities
Lecture	Slide-based video lectures + text (with instructor voiceover) to introduce a photographer or movement.
Discussion	Course Discussions based on posted video or article. Students asked to connect content to previously covered material.
Activity	In connection with a theme or subject, students provide their own photographs "in dialogue" with known photographers
Individualized Instruction	Instructor meets with students individually on Zoom to clarify assignments, provide support.

Instructor-Initiated Online Contact Types

Announcements/Bulletin Boards
 Chat Rooms
 Discussion Boards
 E-mail Communication
 Telephone Conversations
 Video or Teleconferencing

Student-Initiated Online Contact Types

Chat Rooms
 Discussions
 Group Work

Course design is accessible

Yes

Methods of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation

Types	Examples of classroom assessments
Exams/Tests	Objective questions, attribution of unknown images, and essays. For example: In an essay, compare and contrast the portraits of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Frances Benjamin Johnston as the New Woman. Consider how each subject is presented to us, use of props, lighting, space. What does each image communicate about these women?
Quizzes	Short, periodic assessments in objective format to evaluate understanding of course content. For example: matching exercise connecting early photographic methods with materials.
Essays/Papers	Paper on an individual photographer or movement. Work will be graded on a 50-point rubric that evaluates format; development of the body of the text including a thesis, relevant examples, integration of research, conclusion and merit of original premise, punctuation, grammar; bibliography; citations and use of images.
Homework	Canvas quizzes to ensure understanding of content in articles and videos.
Class Participation	In pairs or groups, students analyze an unknown photograph and deduce when the image was made and then report out to the class.

Assignments

Reading Assignments

Selected readings from Smarthistory, Met Museum website, Tate Modern website, or discipline-specific texts.

1. Students read "*A Century of Japanese Photography: Historical Reckoning and the Birth of a New Movement*" and discuss the rise of photography after the devastation of WWII.
2. Students read "The Latina Curators and Writers Remaking the American Photography Canon" and connect these changes to the earlier discussions of displaying photography at Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Writing Assignments

Weekly written assignments that ask students to describe and analyze photographs and extrapolate meaning.

1. In 250 words, connect the ongoing discourse related to historic daguerreotypes of enslaved Africans and the appropriation of these images by contemporary artist Carrie Mae Weems.
2. In a 4-page essay, connect the similarities between contemporary travel photography and 19c precedents, with ongoing practice of creating "Other" and the context of colonialism.
3. Write a research paper (6-pages) on changing views of Diane Arbus' work, incorporating the early premise of Susan Sontag and tracing the re-evaluation of Arbus' more controversial images.

Outside-of-Class Assignments

Creative assignments that address similar methods or themes of photographers and movements studied in class.

1. In the style of Dada artist Hannah Hoch, create a photomontage addressing conflicting notions of female beauty from contemporary advertisements.
2. Drawing on similar themes as Pedro Meyer create your own Magic Realist photograph using your phone and filters of your choice.

SECTION F - Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Material Type

Textbook

Author

Mary Warner Merrien

Title

Photography: A Cultural History

Edition/Version

5th

Publisher

Laurence King

Year

2021

ISBN #

1786277859

Material Type

Textbook

Author

Charlotte Cotton

Title

The Photograph as Contemporary Art

Edition/Version

4th

Publisher

Thames & Hudson

Year

2020

ISBN #

0500204489

Material Type

Open Educational Resource (OER)

Author

Smarthistory website

Title

Articles/Videos vetted by scholars

SECTION G - Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity

How does your course and/or course outline of record reflect strategies for accommodating and engaging diverse student populations, advancing equitable outcomes, and fostering inclusion for all students?

Content: in addition to well-known (typically male) photographers, included are women photographers, photographers of color. International photographers are included to de-colonize typical narrative of photography as expression of western values.

Themes: Photography as a more accessible medium than fine arts, the practice as unfettered by academic requirements. Photography as documenting "truth" historically used to support Eugenics, racist practices such as slavery, ableism by law enforcement and the larger culture.

Pedagogy: OER replaces previously expensive to buy or rent, textbooks.

Replace previous timed slide-id tests with lower-stakes assignments that ask students to connect unknown images with creators we have studied.

Creative projects are offered as alternative to a cumulative final test.

Students are asked to share photographs of importance to them or as reflective of themes in the class.

Course Codes (Admin Only)**CB00 State ID**

CCC000522790

CB10 Cooperative Work Experience Status

N - Is Not Part of a Cooperative Work Experience Education Program

CB11 Course Classification Status

Y - Credit Course

CB13 Special Class Status

N - The Course is Not an Approved Special Class

CB23 Funding Agency Category

Y - Not Applicable (Funding Not Used)

CB24 Program Course Status

Program Applicable

Allow Pass/No Pass

Yes

Only Pass/No Pass

No