

Journalism 412

Documentary Photojournalism

Spring 2008

Bruce Berman

Instructor

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Class Meets

Milton Hall 153

Tuesday-Thursday

11:45- – 3:00p.m.

Readings/Text

TBA

Description

This course is an upper division journalism class, which is taught like a graduate level seminar course. Through lectures, visits with professionals and directed readings, we will examine the process of doing documentary work. We will address the subjectivity vs. objectivity argument, establishing viewpoint, formalizing motive and intent, and, the social and personal value -and consequences- of doing documentary photographic work. This is a “high minded,” class and projects will be tilted toward social issues in the great tradition of Documentary Photography.

Course Objectives/Projects

Each student is responsible for three photographic projects, several spot assignments (some written), a midterm essay/research paper. Writing will be required for each photo project. A *weekly* posting on the class blog (www.documentaryshooters.com) will be a strong component of the course. Specific guidelines for each will be provided by the instructor.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Last day to add or change a course	Jan. 20
Deadline for filing degree application	Jan. 16
Last day to withdraw with a W grade	March 10
Last day to withdraw from the university	April 18
Spring Holiday	March 21-31
Final Exam	May 6 / 10:30am-
12:30pm	May 9
Last day of classes	

POLICIES

Students with Disabilities

If you have or believe you have a disability, you may wish to self-identify. You can do so by providing documentation to the Office Of Disabled Students Program located at Garcia Annex (646-6840). Appropriate accommodations may then be provided for you.

If you have a condition, which may affect your ability to exit safely from the premises in an emergency or if you have a condition, which may create an emergency during class, you are encouraged to discuss this in confidence with the instructor and/or the director of the Disabled Student Programs. If you have general questions about the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), call the ADA Coordinator at 646-3333.

Attendance is required. A sign-up sheet is circulated daily and it is the responsibility of each student to sign. Do not sign for another student. Doing so is forgery and constitutes academic misconduct. See Student Code of Conduct in the NMSU Student Handbook.

Absences must be documented. Students with more than two undocumented absences are docked one whole letter grade for the final grade in the course.

Late arrivals to class are annoying, disrespectful and disruptive to your fellow students, as well as your instructor. If a student repeatedly arrives late, the instructor will drop the student from the course.

Late assignments are not accepted. This is a professional course and participants will be treated as adults. They will be expected to perform as adults. Meeting deadlines is nothing more than respecting your classmates and your instructor. To avoid this disaster, please get started on homework and assignments immediately.

Cheating is not tolerated. This includes Photoshop manipulation. Trickery is not valued. Fact, seen acutely, is valued over fiction and cleverness. Any student who turns in non-original work, work "lifted," from resources other than those of their own doing, will receive an F and will be dropped from the course.

S/U option: An S will be assigned if the earned grade is a C- or higher.

Incompletes are given for documented reasons only and the student *must be passing* at the time of the request. Students are responsible for completing all required paperwork.

Grading: The breakdown of how your final grade is determined is listed below. Remember, this is an upper-division course, which requires a mature approach *and* classroom participation.

Three Photographic Assignments: No.1 is 20%, No.2 is 25%, No. 3 is 25%, **Midterm Paper and additional pop writing** is 10% and **Participation/Attitude** is 5%.

Papers: Students are also required to write additional, reflective short essay papers related to directed readings. Each paper should be two pages long and should address major issues presented by the readings. Student are required to produce a 7-10 page (text) Mid Term research paper on the photographer of their choice. A rough draft must be submitted before the final paper follows.

Grades at midterm: A student earning a grade of D or F at mid-term will be notified as such by the professor. If you are concerned about your grade at mid-term, be sure to speak with the professor about it. Any student who has an F at mid-term will be dropped from the class by the professor prior to the October 17 deadline. The student will be notified of the drop. Students dropped from the course will receive a grade of W on their transcript.

Posting of final grades: Final course grades can be accessed via the Web. Grades are no longer posted on the professor's door at the end of the semester. Please do not come by the professor's office and ask for your grade. Grades are posted as quickly as possible on the Web.

Supplies: Realistically, you should budget between 25-40 rolls of film, if you use film. If you work digitally, save your files, you need a **USB flash drive** and some **CDs**. The amount of photographic paper you consume is determined by your printing skills and your project design. If you work digitally *you will need to find a reliable and professional source to do your printing*. Prints are required, whether digital or chemical. Advance photojournalism majors have the option of utilizing digital photo equipment.

Lab Fees: There is a \$35 Lab fee for this course whether you intend to use the darkrooms or the digital lab (for blog posting you will be required to use the Digital Lab). The fee must be paid before Jan. 25 or the student will be asked to drop the course.

The Assignments:

For this independent studies course, the three photographic assignments are as follows:

1. A Sense of Place
2. A Sense of Identity
3. Topic of Choice

Requested readings will be among the following:

1. Learning to See, Barry Lopez
2. Doing Documentary Work, Coles
3. Helen Levitt, James Agee
4. Witness in Our Time, Ken Light

Documentary Photography is the premier pursuit of editorial photography. It is an opportunity for a photographer to pursue photography in a depth and with seriousness of purpose. For the purposes of this class the quality of the photograph should be matched by the quality of the thinking, the depth of the commitment to a project, the willingness of the student to not only advance their own projects but to help their fellow students advance theirs.

As a documentary photographer you act as artist, journalist, storyteller, socially concerned citizen, historian, provocateur and advocate.

In this class, our goal is for you to find your “voice,” and to use it to tell your stories clearly, deeply, skillfully and excitingly (if that is appropriate).

It is my hope that you will have fun and inspiration, along the way.

Definition according to Webster:

Seminar: A group of students studying under a professor with each doing original research and all exchanging results through reports and discussions.