

PHOTOJOURNALISM J350

FALL 2009 Thursday 2-4:50pm MZ213

Prof. David Blumenkrantz

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Course Description

This course introduces the student to the basics of photojournalism. Students will aspire to create photographs consistent in quality and content with images taken for the media. The course will cover various aspects of photojournalism, including historical, ethical, legal, and artistic issues. The emphasis will be on digital photography—students who choose to shoot film can develop their own film and then scan their negatives into computers for processing with Adobe Photoshop. Students are required to use Photoshop and PowerPoint, and open a professional account on the Internet site *Flickr*, for the storage and presentation of their work. There will be a mix of field assignments, writings, a field trip to a photo exhibition, class discussions and lectures. The final project will be a photo essay, and students will compile a portfolio of their best work with written reflections on technical, journalistic and artistic growth.

Equipment and Supplies

MANDATORY

* Digital camera, preferably a DSLR, with a minimum of 6 megapixels; a USB mini-drive with at least 512MB, *or*:

* 35mm camera with manual controls, built-in light meter, and 50mm lens, in which case you will still need the USB mini-drive plus:

- Black and white film (Kodak TMAX, ASA 400) You will probably need around 15 rolls of 36 exposures for this class

OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT

Cable release, tripod, flash, lenses of various focal lengths, filters, motor-drive.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

- Photojournalism: The Professional's Approach, by Kenneth Kobre
- Truth Needs No Ally, by Howard Chapnick
- Shaking the Foundations: 200 Years of Investigative Journalism in America. Edited by Bruce Shapiro

PhotoShop CS eBook is available on the lab server: students are responsible for practicing basic skills essential for enhancing and preparing their images for presentations and publication

FLICKR <http://www.flickr.com>

Each student is required to open a professional account, and establish themselves as a contact with the instructor and the rest of the students in class.

Instructor's Flickr site: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/kiokø>

Course Requirements

Final grades will be based on the following (100 possible total points):

- **Assignments:** There will be four graded assignments (10 points each). These assignments have strict deadlines, and must be turned in on a USB drive at the beginning of class on the day they are due. *Late assignments result in a lower grade.*
- **Written paper:** Book review of *Truth Needs No Ally* (20 pts)
- **Final Project:** Photo Essay (20 pts)
- **FINAL EXAM** (20 pts) Includes both essay and multiple-choice questions on photojournalism law and ethics, history, camera operations and Photoshop functions.
- **Attendance:** For each unexcused absence, 3pts will be deducted from your overall class total. For each late arrival, 1pt will be deducted.

FINAL GRADE BREAKDOWN

A 93-100 A- 90-92
B+ 88-89 B 83-87 B- 80-82
C+ 78-79 C 73-77 C- 70-72
D+ 68-69 D 63-67 D- 60-62

PREREQUISITE

Students must earn a 'C' or better in this class in order to enroll in J450. A 'C-' does not count as a 'C.'

ORGANIZATIONAL NOTES:

- Since this class only meets once per week, it is imperative that you attend class as often as possible. Remember, missing one class in this format is the same as missing an entire week of instruction in a daily class
- All finished assignments must be submitted for class critique. Most assignments will be viewed on *Flickr*. Certain assignments will require PowerPoint presentations, transferred to instructor's laptop with your USB mini-drive at the beginning of class.
- This is a laboratory class. Although you will not be expected to adhere to a formal lab schedule, you should treat each assignment as if it came from a

publication, and remember that you have a deadline to meet. The work can be completed at your discretion, though you are advised not to leave your lab work until the last minute. Lab hours for independent work will be posted.

- Although there is a lab tech to assist you in the computer labs and darkroom, all students are expected to clean up after themselves. Common courtesy is expected, and appreciated.
- If you are shooting film, a 35mm manual camera with interchangeable lenses is required. "Point-and-shoot," auto-focus digital cameras are not preferable, but will be permitted. Your lab fees go toward hiring lab techs, but you may incur additional expenses for film, paper and other incidentals.

MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS:

As the semester progresses, your skills should improve, and you might want to re-shoot an assignment for a new grade. Simply turn in the new assignment, along with the original for a re-evaluation. Assignments that were initially turned in late can be re-shot, but any penalties (lowering of grade) still stand.

EXTRA CREDIT

OPTION 1: Shooting an assignment for the *Daily Sundial* or *El Nuevo Sol* earns 5 points. Must be published. Maximum of two (10 pts)

OPTION 2: SPORTS (download instructions from class web page)

Submit two action photos and one portrait of an athlete. (Maximum 10pts)

COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

(pending approval of faculty furlough days)

Aug 27:

Introduction to course; syllabus, class requirements, expectations.

LECTURE: The camera: 35mm vs. digital. Introduction to Photoshop/computer lab, setting up *Flickr* accounts.

PowerPoint: Photojournalism

ASSIGNMENT #1: Random Reflections (*final images and written work due Sept. 17*)

Sept 3: **BRING CAMERAS TO CLASS**

LAB: Photoshop demonstration/practice.

LECTURE: Elements of photography: *Timing, Lighting, Composition, Proximity*. Film speed (ASA); Depth of Field (shutter speed and aperture balance)

PowerPoints: Equivalent Exposures: apertures, shutter speeds and depth of field

READING (KOBRE): Chapter 1, *ASSIGNMENT*

Sept 10:

LECTURE: Composition, Caption Writing; Spot vs. General News

LAB: Demonstration on using PowerPoint.
DVD: *Pulitzer Prize photojournalism*
READING (KOBRE): Chapter 2, *SPOT NEWS*; Chapter 3, *GENERAL NEWS*
ASSIGNMENT #2: General/Spot News (*due Sept.24*)

Sept. 17:
Critique of Random Reflections

Sept 24:
LECTURE: Editing decisions (choosing which negatives/JPEGS to print)
IN-CLASS ACTIVITY: Analyzing photographs for meaning.

Oct. 1: *Critique of Assignment #2*
LECTURE: Features/Wild Art
GUEST SPEAKER (to be announced)
READING (KOBRE): Chapter 4, *FEATURES*

Oct. 8: BRING CAMERAS TO CLASS
ASSIGNMENT #3: The Feature Photo/Wild Art (*in class assignment*)

Oct. 15: *Critique of Assignment #3*
LECTURE: History of Photojournalism
READING (KOBRE) Chapter 17, *HISTORY*

Oct. 22:
LECTURE: Environmental portraits
DVD: *James Natchwey: War Photographer*
ASSIGNMENT #4: The Environmental Portrait (Due Oct. 29)
READING (KOBRE) Chapter 5, *PORTRAITS*

Oct. 29: *Critique of Assignment #4*
LECTURE: The Photo Essay/Story
GUEST SPEAKER (to be announced)
FINAL ASSIGNMENT: THE PHOTO STORY (& PORTFOLIO)
The finished assignment, presented on Flickr, is due Dec. 3.
READING (KOBRE) Chapter 11, *PHOTO STORY*

Nov. 5:
LECTURE: Discussion of ethical and legal issues in photojournalism.
PowerPoint and Class Activity: *Viewing photos of tragedies and atrocities.*
READING (KOBRE) Chapter 15, *ETHICS*; Chapter 16, *LAW*

Nov. 12: BRING CAMERAS TO CLASS
LECTURE: Choosing images for a portfolio; Demonstration of strobe (flash) photography.

Nov. 19:

- *Truth Needs No Ally* book review due today
- Any redone or extra credit assignments are due today

Nov.26: Thanksgiving Holiday

Dec. 3: Photo Essays: students present their own work

Dec. 10: FINAL EXAM

PLAGIARISM: DEPT. OF JOURNALISM STATEMENT

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated, and anyone caught cheating will be reported to the dean of students and will receive a failing grade in the course. For a further explanation of disciplinary procedures, consult pages 522-524 of the 2002-2004 CSUN catalog. Please also remember that much of the information posted on the Internet is protected by U.S. copyright laws. Passing this information off as your own is a violation of CSUN's plagiarism policy, and carries the penalties outlined above.

JOURNALISM DEPT. POLICY STATEMENT ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Students in this course are strongly encouraged to broaden their journalistic experiences, with the instructor's help, by including in their work people and subjects such as ethnic, racial and religious minorities; the elderly, disabled and poor; gay men and lesbians; and other similar groups. The intent is to ensure that student work reflects the diversity of the community.