

J498 TUTORIAL

PHOTOGRAPHY AS ACTIVISM

Prof. David Blumenkrantz
Spring 2014 Monday 12-12:50 MZ 212
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This tutorial examines the complexity of activist photography: philosophically, historically, and as it is currently practiced. In this sense, the word *activism* is interchangeable with *advocacy*. Students will explore the characteristics of this genre of visual reportage, which while less constrained by traditional concerns of subjectivity, has always played an important role in exposing social and political injustices, and in agitating for social change. We will also cover the manner in which advocacy photojournalism is used by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to raise public awareness and funds for their causes.

READINGS

Required:

Photography as Activism: Images for Social Change, by Michelle Bogre

Photographic Memories: the undue influence of the camera on perceptions of Africa, by David Blumenkrantz (PDF file available on Moodle)

Recommended:

Witness in Our Time: Working Lives of Documentary Photographers, 2nd Ed., by Ken Light

FORMAT

Discussions/lectures will be based on the Bogre book. Each member of the tutorial will be responsible for being an active participant in the group, and will be required to lead a discussion while making a visual presentation on an organization or individual involved in advocacy photojournalism.

PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION ESSAY

Please read the chapter "Photographic Memories: the undue influence of the camera on perceptions of Africa." Synthesizing mainly the information on pages 9-21 (*African Renaissance and Afro-Pessimism*) write an essay of anywhere from 500-1000 words in which you form and express your own views on the matters you deem most interesting and relevant. I would prefer brutal honesty, swathed in the respectability of tolerance. It is a very broad section in the chapter, but comes closest to calling into question the veracity of photographs, and the role that perception and intent have in their usage. Kindly cite all sources, MLA style.

Deadline: April 14 (To be entered into Moodle)

GRADING

200 points possible. Grading will be affected by these factors:

- Leading a 30-40 minute discussion on an organization or individual involved in activist photography, accompanied by a visual presentation featuring and combination of websites, a *PowerPoint* or a *Quicktime* video. (50pts)
- Participation in class discussions is very important; it will be up to the instructor to determine the grade for this, based on contributions made in class. (100pts)
- Photographic Representation essay (50pts)
- Three absences or tardies will result in a lowering of the final grade.

COURSE OUTLINE

Jan 27	Course objectives. Defining Advocacy Photojournalism; Presentation/discussion assignments given.
Feb 3	Visit from Documentarist/Activist Ed Kashi (104-107)
Feb 10	Introduction (xii-xvi); <i>Fifty Crows</i> (139); Darcy Padilla
Feb 17	Activism: Practice and Process. <i>Philosophy and Psychology</i> (1-9); Marcus Bleasdale (81-89)
Feb 24	Modern History (46); W. Eugene Smith (47-48)
Mar 3	Donna Ferrato (56-59)
Mar 10	SocialDocumentary.net; Tom Stoddard's <i>iWitness</i> (90-98)
Mar 17	Constructing a Better World (71-72); Brent Stirton (108-115); <i>Blue Earth Alliance</i> (138)
Mar 24	Walter Astrada (124-132); <i>FotoEvidence</i> (139)
Mar 31	Sebastiao Salgado & UNICEF (64-67)
Apr 7	SPRING BREAK
Apr 14	Save the Children (141); Essays on Photographic Representation due today
Apr 21	Human Rights Watch (141); Susan Meisalas (52-55)
Apr 28	FSA: Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans and others (34-38)
May 5	Social Reform and Progressive Era: Jacob Riis & Lewis Hine (27-34)

Student Learning Outcomes of the Undergraduate and Graduate Programs

The Department of Journalism strives to prepare its students to become well-educated, principled citizens who are capable of initiating careers as skilled journalists, public relations practitioners and other related communication professionals. The department will help students to achieve the following objectives by the end of their program of study:

1. Students will be able to write for a diverse audience, using proper grammar and punctuation, word usage and spelling, sentence and storytelling structures across multiple journalistic formats.
2. Students will be able to gather and analyze information, including basic numerical concepts, using journalistic storytelling techniques, such as interviewing, observation, and researching primary and secondary sources.
3. Students will be able to think critically, creatively and independently.
4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness, and diversity.
5. Students will apply tools and technologies appropriate for the news media professions in which they work to communicate for and with diverse audiences.
6. Students will be able to understand and apply the historical, theoretical, legal and societal contexts for producing news media for consumers, ranging from local to global.

PLAGIARISM DEPT OF JOURNALISM STATEMENT

The Journalism Department is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity. 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 647-648 of the 2012-2014 CSUN catalog, also available online. 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.