

COURSE SYLLABUS

Documentary Photography

Course code: Documentary Photography, ART 251

Semester and year: Summer School 2021

Day and time: Monday, May 31st – Thursday, June 16th // 9:00 - 12:45

Instructor: MA Björn Steinz

Instructor contact: bjorn.steinz@aauni.edu

Consultation hours: By appointment and/or after the lectures.

Credits US/ECTS	3/6	Level	Intermediate
Length	3 weeks	Pre-requisite	None
Contact hours	42 hours	Course type	JC Required; HSC, PS Elective

1. Course Description

This course aims to introduce students to documentary photography. Students will become familiar with international documentary photography, both historical and contemporary. The course places special emphasis on personal documentary projects, with the goal of practical application of theoretical knowledge. Students will gain hands-on experience by creating a documentary photography series and presenting their images on the web themselves. We will use Flickr for presenting the work in progress and will showcase the development of the individual projects via “The Ballad Of Quarantine” Instagram project: (@theballadofquarantine)

Those who complete the course will have significantly improved their understanding of photography as both a means of documenting events, and as a form of fine art. By the end of the course students will have improved their practical skills to the point of being able to pursue more advanced work in documentary photography covering a wider range of subjects.

2. Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will gain a full understanding of what documentary photography represents
- Students will gain a historical perspective on the development of documentary photography
- Students will explore the connection between documentary and fine art photography
- Students will have a good understanding of the various platforms that can be used to promote documentary photography
- Students will have a good base in the fundamentals of telling a story through documentary photography
- Students will learn to combine photography and writing to reinforce their documentary project and communication skills
- Students will learn and practice the steps involved in defining, preparing and presenting a documentary photography project through hands on experience

3. Reading Material

Throughout the semester, excerpts from selected books, topical articles, links to videos and other materials will be posted on the course web site. Below a list of books related to the course structure :

"After Photography" / Fred Ritchin

"Ways of Seeing" / John Berger

"Looking at Photographs" / John Szarkowski

"Friedlander" / Lee Friedlander

"The Americans" / Robert Frank

"Gypsies" / Josef Koudelka

"The Decisive Moment" / Henri Cartier-Bresson

"A monograph" / Diane Arbus

"The Photobook: A History 1-3" / Martin Parr and Gerry Badger

"Ray's A Laugh" / Richard Billingham

"The Ballad of Sexual Dependency" / Nan Goldin

"Believing Is Seeing: Observations on the Mysteries of Photography" / Errol Morris

"The New York School: Photographs, 1936-1963" / Jane Livingston

"Naked city" / Weegee

Videos:

Much of this course involves "visual" learning experience. Several videos of related topics will be either posted on the web site (links) or on reserve at Library. When noted as such, these videos are considered required "watching" for the course.

Of particular interest is the BBC series, The Genius of Photography which will give students a clear and concise overview of the history of photography and how we have come to the "digital age". The series also examines the work of influential photographers both documentary style and others.

Gallery Visits:

Throughout the semester we will be visiting one current online exhibition. Students will

write a short "report" and critique of the exhibit.

Recommended Materials

- A real camera (that has Manual functions), NO MOBILE PHONES with a camera, NO COMPACT CAMERAS without Manual functions for this course.
- A small flash drive to store and transfer images
- Access to and use of a computer and internet outside of class
- Manual for your camera (either printed or electronic format)
- Journal for ideas, thoughts, gallery notes etc.

4. Teaching methodology

Lectures, Readings, Discussion, Presentations, Exercises and Workshop style instruction followed by fieldwork. The course is highly interactive with weekly assignments and ongoing project work. Assignments and classroom critique will supplement the technical and theoretical instruction of the course. Through this course, the students will get the opportunity to develop their photographic techniques and critical thinking while getting continuous feedback from their instructor and classmates.

Each student is expected to attend all class sessions and participate in discussions and any group activities. Some material will only be available in class so it will be difficult to make up the material you miss when absent. Additional support is offered to students through prearranged meetings with the instructor. More than 2 absences during the course will negatively influence your final grade.

Late assignments are **NOT** accepted and will be just graded with a reasonable explanation such as illness or anything similar.

5. Course Schedule

Date	Class Agenda
Class 1, Monday, May 31st	<p>Topic: Introduction lecture</p> <p>Description: What to expect ? What is the goal of the course ? Presentation of my own photography. Personal Documentary Project introduction and overview. Discussion of resources needed for course.</p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: For next class: 1. Set up your personal flickr account 2. Please bring - if possible - a selection of your best 10 favourites photographs and upload them to your flickr accounts 3. Think of three ideas for your personal documentary project</p>
Class 2, Tuesday, June 1st	<p>Topic: Introduction to the history of documentary photography.</p> <p>Description: What is documentary photography, where it comes from and how it differs in compare to other areas of photography ? Introduction of key figures, images and movements from the beginning up to 1945.</p> <p>Workshop: Who are you ? Students introducing themselves and their images.</p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: 1. Finalize the subject matter and concept for the Personal Documentary Project. 2. Write a short summary of your idea, ready for short presentation in class. 3. Post at least 20 project related sample images/ideas to flickr</p>
Class 3, Wednesday, June 2nd	<p>Topic: Ethics and manipulation</p> <p>Description: Ethics in the field of Documentary Photography and the endless fight against manipulated/faked photographs from the history up to our digital age. Workshop: 1. Review of students photographs in class. Analyzing and refining individual project ideas. 2. "Storytelling With Pictures". <i>"Telling a story with pictures is just like writing with words. Something is seen, or thought of, or imagined and visually expressed."</i></p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: Post not more than 8 storytelling (not less than 5) images to your flickr account. Final Written Project Statement and Storyboard for the Personal Documentary Project.</p>

<p>Class 4, Thursday, June 3rd</p>	<p>Topic: Robert Frank "The Americans"</p> <p>Description: Robert Frank's "The Americans" changed the course of twentieth-century photography. In eighty-three photographs, Frank looked beneath the surface of American life. Film projection: "Don't Blink". Workshop: 1. Presentation and discussion of the individual project ideas and concepts for the Personal Documentary Project. Review and feedback.</p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: Start working on your personal documentary project and post at least 20 project related images to flickr</p>
<p>Class 5, Monday, June 7th</p>	<p>Topic: The New York School</p> <p>Description: Weegee // Diane Arbus // William Klein - photographers who stretched the boundaries of their medium in their personal work as street and documentary photographers. Workshop: 1. Review and feedback to the "Prague Towers" assignment. 2. Film Projection "Everybody Street".</p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: Choose one photographer/photograph of the artists presented in class and analyze his/her work. Post at least 20 project related images to flickr</p>
<p>Class 7, Tuesday, June 8th</p>	<p>Topic: Subjective Documentary Photography</p> <p>Description: Different approaches in subjective documentary photography : Nan Goldin and Richard Billingham. Workshop: 1. Review and feedback students photographs in class.</p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: Analyze the "photographic expression" of one of the introduced photographers in form of an opinion paper. Post at least 20 project related images to flickr</p>
<p>Class 8, Wednesday, June 9th</p>	<p>Topic: Different ways to document</p> <p>Description: Projects crossing the line in between Documentary and Fine Art photography from 4 different contemporary photographers with an extended look at the extraordinary work of German photographer Michael Wolf. Workshop: 1. Review of students photographs in class. 2. Street portraiture intro</p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: Post at least 20 project related images to flickr</p>

<p>Class 9, Monday, June 14th</p>	<p>Topic: Unpredictable: Documentary ideas</p> <p>Description: The field of Documentary Photography is much wider than just reproducing reality - it can be an interpretation of our lives and the human condition in general. Duane Michals, Michael Wolf and others which found a new way in contemporary documentary photography. Workshop: Individual feedback to the images selected, edited and uploaded to Instagram</p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: Post at least 20 project related images to flickr Topic: Self-portrait</p>
<p>Class 10, Tuesday, June 15th</p>	<p>Topic: Editing</p> <p>Description: How to find and choose the right final 10 images which are working in a sequence and telling a personal story about your quarantine ? Final editing and post production, individual advice and feedback to the edits in an online session.</p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: Upload the 10 final post produced image edits till Wednesday to your Flickr account in a separate exhibition gallery and forward the images via WeTransfer to me.</p>
<p>Class 11, Wednesday, June 16th</p>	<p>Topic: Final online exhibition & Final exam</p> <p>Description: Preparation and installation of the final online exhibition !!! Opening of the exhibition during the afternoon. Testing the knowledge gained during the course.</p> <p>Assignments/deadlines: End of the course</p>

6. Course Requirements and Assessment (with estimated workloads)

Assignment	Workload (average)	Weight in Final Grade	Evaluated Course Specific Learning Outcomes	Evaluated Institutional Learning Outcomes*
Attendance and Class Participation	42	20%	Daily contribution to class and preparation based on reading assignments, videos, websites, etc., Ability to explain the studied topic to peers and identify key issues.	1/2/3
Documentary Project for Flickr and Instagram	70	50 %	Personal documentary project on Flickr plus selected assignments for Instagram consistent with students images plus 3 related photographic assignments	1/2/3
Writings	19	15 %	Essays, Analysis, Critique, Concepts etc. Constructive feedback on your peers' work.	1/2/3
Final Exam	19	15 %	Testing all knowledge attained throughout the semester.	1/2/3
TOTAL	150	100%		

*1 = Critical Thinking; 2 = Effective Communication; 3 = Effective and Responsible Action

7. Detailed description of the assignments

Assessment breakdown

Assessed area	Percentage
Assignment Nr. 1 - Proposal for the personal Documentary Project	Not graded
Assignment Nr. 2 - "Storytelling With Pictures" shooting assignment	9 %
Assignment Nr. 3 - Presentation and discussion of the individual project ideas and concepts for the Personal Documentary Project.	9 %
Assignment Nr. 4 - Essay about the work of a New York School photographer	5 %
Assignment Nr. 5 - Analysis of the photographic expression of Goldin/ Billingham	5 %
Assignment Nr. 6 - "Flickr"/Edit for Instagram-10/15 images upload.	9 %
Assignment Nr. 7 - "Flickr"/Edit for Instagram-10/15 images upload.	9 %

Assignment Nr. 13 - "Flickr"/Edit for Instagram-10/15 images upload.	9 %
Assignment Nr. 14 - Review about an online exhibition or portfolio	5 %
Assignment Nr. 15 - Preselection of the final exhibition images, post production	Not graded
Assignment Nr. 16 - Prepare a written statement about the personal documentary project, Exhibition installation	Participation
Final exhibition	40 %

Assessed area	Percentage
Participation: Corporation during class such as discussion and analysis of the material introduced during the lectures which will give the students a deeper understanding about the theoretical and practical aspects of documentary photography.	20 %
Documentary Project plus practical assignments: The Personal Documentary Project is the main practical part during the semester and students will work continuously under individual guidance on the thematic portfolio which will be exhibited on Instagram and Flickr during and in the end of the course. Each class student will present their work in progress for discussing the individual theme and the improvement which will be combined with 5 shooting assignments. Further on it is of high importance to learn how to built and sequence a visual story.	50 %
Writings: Students will analyze in essays the work of historical and contemporary photographers and movements introduced during class. Critical thinking and a personal opinion is of high importance in those writings.	15 %
Final Exam: All theoretical knowledge introduced during the semester will be part of the final exam. Technical and compositional principles have the same importance as introduced photographers/movements and their work.	15 %

8. General Requirements and School Policies

General requirements

All coursework is governed by AAU's academic rules. Students are expected to be familiar with the academic rules available in the Codex and Student Handbook and to maintain the highest standards of honesty and academic integrity in their work.

Electronic communication and submission

The university and instructors shall only use students' university email address for communication. It is strongly recommended that any email communication between students and instructors take place in NEO LMS.

Each e-mail sent to an instructor that is about a new topic (meaning not a reply to an original email) shall have a new and clearly stated subject and shall have the course code in the subject, for example: "COM101-1 Mid-term Exam. Question".

All electronic submissions are carried out through NEO LMS. No substantial pieces of writing (especially take home exams and essays) can be submitted outside of NEO LMS.

Attendance

Attendance is required. Students who are absent 35 percent of classes will be failed (or administratively withdrawn from the course if most absences are excused). Students might also be marked absent if they miss a significant part of a class (by arriving late or leaving early) as specified in the syllabus.

Absence excuse and make-up options

Should a student be absent from classes for relevant reasons (illness, serious family matters), s/he must submit to the Assistant Dean an Absence Excuse Form supplemented with documents providing reasons for the absence. The form and documents must be submitted within one week of the absence. If possible, it is recommended the instructor be informed of the absence in advance. Should a student be absent during the add/drop period due to a change in registration this will be an excused absence if s/he submits an Absence Excuse Form along with the finalized add/drop form.

Assignments missed due to unexcused absences cannot be made up which may result in a decreased or failing grade as specified in the syllabus.

Students whose absence has been excused by the Dean are entitled to make up assignments and exams provided their nature allows for a make-up. Students are responsible for contacting their instructor within one week of the date the absence was excused to arrange for make-up options.

Late work: No late submissions will be accepted – please follow the deadlines.

Electronic devices

Electronic devices (phones, tablets, laptops...) may be used only for class-related activities (taking notes, looking up related information, etc.). Any other use will result in the student being marked absent and/or being expelled from the class. No electronic devices may be used during tests or exams.

Eating is not allowed during classes.

Cheating and disruptive behavior

If a student engages in disruptive or other conduct unsuitable for a classroom environment of an institution of learning, the instructor may require the student to withdraw from the room for the duration of the activity or for the day and shall report the behavior to the Dean.

Students engaging in behavior which is suggestive of cheating (e.g. whispering or passing notes) will, at a minimum, be warned. In the case of continued misbehavior the student will be expelled from the exam and the exam will be marked as failed.

Plagiarism and Academic Tutoring Center

Plagiarism is “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work.” (Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd Edition, Random House, New York, 1993)

Turnitin’s White Paper ‘The Plagiarism Spectrum’ (available at <http://go.turnitin.com/paper/plagiarism-spectrum>) identifies 10 types of plagiarism ordered from most to least severe:

1. CLONE: An act of submitting another’s work, word-for-word, as one’s own.
2. CTRL-C: A written piece that contains significant portions of text from a single source without alterations.
3. FIND-REPLACE: The act of changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the source in a paper.
4. REMIX: An act of paraphrasing from other sources and making the content fit together seamlessly.
5. RECYCLE: The act of borrowing generously from one’s own previous work without citation; To self-plagiarize.
6. HYBRID: The act of combining perfectly cited sources with copied passages—without citation—in one paper.
7. MASHUP: A paper that represents a mix of copied material from several different sources without proper citation.
8. 404 ERROR: A written piece that includes citations to non-existent or inaccurate information about sources
9. AGGREGATOR: The “Aggregator” includes proper citation, but the paper contains almost no original work.
10. RE-TWEET: This paper includes proper citation, but relies too closely on the text’s original wording and/or structure.

As the minimum policy the types of plagiarism from 1 through 8 results in the failing grade from the assignment and must be reported to the Dean. The Dean may initiate a disciplinary procedure pursuant to the Academic Codex. Allegations of bought papers and intentional or consistent plagiarism always entail disciplinary hearing and may result in expulsion from AAU.

If unsure about technical aspects of writing, students are encouraged to consult their papers with the tutors of the AAU Academic Tutoring Center. For more information and/or to book a tutor, please contact the ATC at: <http://atc.simplybook.me/sheduler/manage/event/1/>.

Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities are asked to contact their instructor as soon as possible to discuss reasonable accommodation.

9. Grading Scale

Letter Grade	Percentage*	Description
A	95 – 100	Excellent performance. The student has shown originality and displayed an exceptional grasp of the material and a deep analytical understanding of the subject.
A-	90 – 94	
B+	87 – 89	Good performance. The student has mastered the material, understands the subject well and has shown some originality of thought and/or considerable effort.
B	83 – 86	
B-	80 – 82	
C+	77 – 79	Fair performance. The student has acquired an acceptable understanding of the material and essential subject matter of the course, but has not succeeded in translating this understanding into consistently creative or original work.
C	73 – 76	
C-	70 – 72	
D+	65 – 69	Poor. The student has shown some understanding of the material and subject matter covered during the course. The student's work, however, has not shown enough effort or understanding to allow for a passing grade in School Required Courses. It does qualify as a passing mark for the General College Courses and Electives.
D	60 – 64	
F	0 – 59	Fail. The student has not succeeded in mastering the subject matter covered in the course.

10.

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* Decimals should be rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prepared by and when: Björn Steinz, 2021.

Approved by and when: