COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course will offer a history of photography in the United States and Europe from 1839 to the present. We will look at photography in relation to aesthetics, cultural contexts and to theories about the function of images. Some of the major issues we will explore are: photography's effects on portraiture, high art, popular culture, pornography and social documentation; the uses to which photography has been put by professional and amateur anthropologists, explorers, politicians and scientists; and the rise of photojournalism and advertising. We will consider photography in the context of continuing debates concerning the nature of reality and truth, photography's status as art or document, subjectivity versus objectivity, and issues regarding originality, authenticity and power.

PLEASE NOTE: Some of the photographs we will look at are sexually explicit (dealing with hetero-, homo-, and auto-eroticism), graphically violent or politically provocative. Some individuals may find these images disturbing or even offensive. Such works are included because they were significant in the history of photography. They presented important challenges to artistic traditions and conventions, to social mores, to standards of beauty and taste, and ultimately, to definitions of photography itself. Students will not be required to subscribe to any particular theory of the purpose and meaning of photography, nor will they be required to like all of the images shown. However, if you choose to take this course, you will be expected to understand the issues involved and why they are important. If you have any special concerns, please discuss them with me.

CLASS TEXTS: Available at the Pennsylvania Book Center, 130 south 34th St. These books are also available at Fisher Fine Arts Reserve; purchase is not required.

Naomi Rosenblum, A World History of Photography
Alan Trachtenberg, ed. Classic Essays in Photography
Alan Trachtenberg, Reading American Photographs

Additional readings will be available on the blackboard site (BB) for this course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Each of the requirements below will constitute 20% of a student's grade. EACH REQUIREMENT MUST BE FULFILLED IN ORDER TO PASS THE COURSE
1. **Textual Analysis Paper.** Each student will write one paper on one of the assigned readings for the course (1 to 2 pages, double-spaced, one inch margins on all sides); students will choose their reading on the first day of class. This paper is designed to help you think critically and creatively about the reading assignments. The papers will serve as the basis for in-class discussions. Instead of presenting me with a paper copy, your essay should be posted to the Discussion Board section of Blackboard. Each student is required to read each posting and to respond, on blackboard, to at least 2 of their peers’ papers over the course of the semester. Further information will be available on the Course Assignments section of blackboard.

2. **Image Analysis Paper.** Each student will choose one photograph or one series of photos to analyze in light of one of the required course readings (4-5 page paper, double-spaced, one inch margins on all sides). The photo or photo series must be one you have gone to see in a gallery or museum, in Philadelphia or elsewhere. The purpose is threefold: to analyze how images convey meanings, to assess the viability of a particular critical approach to photography via the selected reading, and to evaluate the museum or gallery’s presentation. In addition to the paper copy given to me, students will post their papers on blackboard. Each student is required to read and respond, on blackboard, to at least ONE of their peers’ Image Analysis Papers before the last class. Further information will be available on the Course Assignments section of blackboard.

3. **Class Attendance and Participation.** Class attendance is required. Participation in class discussions constitutes 20% of the course grade. Depending on the availability of relevant exhibitions in local galleries or museums, we may have one field trip. This would take place on a Saturday or Sunday and would be a one hour session.

4. **Midterm Exam.** One hour exam on Monday, February 26. This will be an essay exam. I will show 3 or 4 sets of two slides for which I will provide the identifications. For each comparison, you will be asked to write a well-organized essay explaining the significant similarities and differences. Your essay will explain the cultural and aesthetic significance of this comparison and support your argument through the visual qualities of the photographs and reference to specific assigned class readings.

5. **Final Exam.** Two hours. This will be an essay exam like the midterm, but with more questions. In addition, I may show a photograph that we have not seen in class and ask you to use your newly acquired visual analysis skills to place this image within a particular aesthetic, cultural and/or historical context. Again, your essays should always be well-organized and refer, when applicable, to specific course readings.

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

1/8

**INVENTION & EARLY HISTORY**

**Readings:**
- Daguerre, “Daguerreotype,” in Classic Essays
- Poe, “The Daguerreotype,” in Classic Essays
- Niepce, “Memoire on the Heliograph,” in Classic Essays
- Talbot, “A Brief Historical Sketch of the Invention of the Art,” in Classic Essays
- Rosenblum, pp. 14-54.
1/15  Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—No Class

1/22  **PICTURING SOCIETY**
Readings:
- Trachtenberg, “Illustrious Americans,” in *Reading American Photographs*
- Oliver Wendell Holms, “The Stereoscope and the Stereograph,” in *Classic Essays*
Recommended: Sontag, “In Plato’s Cave,” in *On Photography* BB

1/29  **PHOTOGRAPHY AT WAR; PHOTOGRAPHY & SCIENCE**
Readings:
- Barthes, “The Rhetoric of the Image,” in *Classic Essays*
- Trachtenberg, “Albums of War,” in *Reading American Photographs*
- Rosenblum, pp. 178-191; 200-207; 244-257

2/5  **LANDSCAPES OF EXPLORATION**
Readings:
- Rosenblum, pp. 94-153
  - Berger, “Understanding a Photograph” in *Classic Essays*
- Buerger, “Ultima Thule: American Myth, Frontier, and the Artist-Priest in Early American Photography,” BB
Recommended: Trachtenberg, “Naming the View,” in *Reading American Photographs*
  - Solomon-Godeau, “Calotypomania,” BB

2/12  **PHOTOGRAPHING THE “OTHER” AT HOME AND ABROAD**
Readings:
- Wallis, “Black Bodies, White Science” BB
- Sekula, “The Body and the Archive” BB
Recommended: Solomon-Godeau, “Reconsidering Erotic Photography” BB

2/19  **BUT IS IT ART? EARLY ART PHOTOGRAPHY**
Readings:
- Lady Eastlake, “Photography,” in *Classic Essays*
- Baudelaire, “The Modern Public and Photography,” in *Classic Essays*
- Stieglitz, “Pictorial Photography,” in *Classic Essays*
- Strand, “Photography” & “Photography and the New God,” in *Classic Essays*
  - Rosenblum, pp. 208-243; 296-339

2/26  **MIDTERM EXAM** There will be no lecture this evening. There will be time at the beginning of the class to answer any last-minute questions before starting the test.

3/5  **SPRING BREAK!!**

3/12  **ART, PHOTOGRAPHY, & MODERNISM**
Readings:
- Rosenblum, pp. 392-453.
Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” BB
Kracauer, “Photography” in Classic Essays

3/19
SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY
Readings: Solomon-Godeau, “Who Is Speaking Thus?” BB
Hine, “Social Photography” in Classic Essays
Rosenblum, pp. 340-383

3/26
PHOTOJOURNALISM & ADVERTISING
Readings: Orvell, “Weegee’s Voyeurism and the Mastery of Urban Disorder” BB
Rosenblum, pp. 462-515
Lavin, “Heartfield in Context” BB
IMAGE ANALYSIS PAPER DUE!

4/2
CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY:
NATURAL/CULTURAL LANDSCAPES
Readings: Rosenblum, pp. 516-567
Bolton, “In the American East: Richard Avedon Incorporated” BB
Sontag, “America, Seen Through Photographs, Darkly” BB

4/9
CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY: THE BODY/BODY POLITIC
Readings: Philips, “Cindy Sherman’s Cindy Shermans” BB
Tannenbaum, “Robert Mapplethorpe: The Philadelphia Story” BB
Rosenblum, pp. 568-610

4/16
VIRTUAL REALITIES: DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY
Readings: Baudrillard, “The Precession of Simulacra” BB
Rosenblum, pp. 611-623

TBA FINAL EXAM