

# ARTH 0134 - HISTORY OF PHOTOGRAPHY

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## Catalog Description

Formerly known as ARHI 0134

Also known as PHOT 0010

Hours: 54 lecture

Description: Historical survey of photography as an art form and communication tool from its invention to the present. Explores various perspectives including photography as an art form and a technology, influential themes, periods, and photographers. Investigates technical considerations, photography's role in mass culture, and other societal influences. (CSU, UC)

## Course Student Learning Outcomes

- CSLO #1: Correlate the content and purpose of photographs to the available technology in historic and contemporary images.
- CSLO #2: Distinguish the characteristics of different themes, genres, movements, and applications of historic and contemporary photography.
- CSLO #3: Appraise the social, legal, political, and ethical influence of photographic images in both historic and contemporary practice.

## Effective Term

Fall 2026

## Course Type

Credit - Degree-applicable

## Contact Hours

54

## Outside of Class Hours

108

## Total Student Learning Hours

162

## Course Objectives

Through oral and written tests and projects, the student will:

1. Trace the historical and technical circumstances leading to photography's invention;
2. Identify fundamental technical components of traditional and digital photography;
3. Examine the aesthetic, historical, technical, cultural, ethical and critical components of photographs;
4. Compare and contrast various themes and schools of photography as fine art and as a functional communication tool;
5. Examine the concept of photographic "truth;"
6. Distinguish the characteristics of various types of photographs and schools of photography; and
7. Review the influence of photography on art, communication, society, social justice, medicine, and science.

## General Education Information

- Approved College Associate Degree GE Applicability
  - AA/AS - Arts and Humanities
  - AA/AS - Fine Arts
- CSU GE Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU approval)
  - CSUGE - C1 Arts
- Cal-GETC Applicability (Recommended - Requires External Approval)
  - Cal-GETC 3A - Arts
- IGETC Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU/UC approval)
  - IGETC - 3A Arts

## Articulation Information

- CSU Transferable
- UC Transferable

## Methods of Evaluation

- Classroom Discussions
  - Example: A classroom discussion will take place on the limitations of wet-plate collodion photography and the content of Civil War photographs of battle scenes. This discussion will take place in small groups. The small groups will report out on their discussions. Students are evaluated on participation and their ability to actively engage in the discussion.
- Essay Examinations
  - Example: Students will be shown an image from a photographer previously discussed and will write an in-class essay in which they discuss whether that image is "truthful" and defend their assertion. A rubric will be provided in advance of the examination detailing the expectations for the essay and their relative weight.
- Objective Examinations
  - Example: Students will take a multiple choice test on projected images to identify the photographer, genre, and/or techniques used. The tests will be scored, assigned a grade on a traditional grading scale, and reviewed in class. Study guides will be provided prior to the exam.
- Projects
  - Example: Students will be assigned a project which includes researching the history and use of the camera obscura, writing a paper on their findings and then building a functional one. A rubric will be provided outlining the point value of the research paper as well as the construction of the actual camera obscura.
- Reports
  - Example: Students will review a photography exhibit and write a summary examination of the work, in addition to an overall description of the show and subject matter. An outline of expected points to be covered will be included in a rubric provided to the student. All papers are returned to students with comments and grades from the instructor.

## Repeatable

No

## Methods of Instruction

- Lecture/Discussion
- Distance Learning

Lecture:

1. Instructor presents a lecture on the critical perspective of "The Other" in photography as subject using ethnographic images from the American frontier, photographs of mental patients in the 19th century, news images from major disasters, travel photography in popular magazines such as National Geographic, depiction of enemies, etc.. Students will participate in an instructor led discussion of additional images focusing on intention, reaction, persuasion, and empathetic responses.

#### Distance Learning

1. Instructor will assign readings examining the concept of photographic "truth." Instructor will write and post Discussion Board questions that require students to utilize a critical framework for image analysis. Students will apply this critical framework to individual images and discuss their perceived truthfulness.

## Typical Out of Class Assignments

### Reading Assignments

1. Read textbook chapter on Pictorialism in preparation for selecting a specific photographer for further study and a written report.

### Writing, Problem Solving or Performance

1. Drawing upon research of an assigned contemporary photographer and after selecting visual examples of their work, prepare an oral report supported by a digital slide show detailing the photographers style, motivation, significance and accomplishments.

## Other (Term projects, research papers, portfolios, etc.)

### Required Materials

- Photography: A Cultural History
  - Author: Marien
  - Publisher: Lawrence King Publishing
  - Publication Date: 2021
  - Text Edition: 5th
  - Classic Textbook?: Yes
  - OER Link:
  - OER:
- Seizing the Light
  - Author: Hirsch
  - Publisher: McGraw Hill
  - Publication Date: 2017
  - Text Edition: 3rd
  - Classic Textbook?: Yes
  - OER Link:
  - OER:
- Photography: The Whole Story
  - Author: Hacking
  - Publisher: Prestel
  - Publication Date: 2012
  - Text Edition: 1st
  - Classic Textbook?: Yes
  - OER Link:
  - OER:

- Photography: The Definitive Visual History
  - Author: Ang
  - Publisher: DK
  - Publication Date: 2022
  - Text Edition: 2nd
  - Classic Textbook?: Yes
  - OER Link:
  - OER:

**Other materials and-or supplies required of students that contribute to the cost of the course.**