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Syllabus.

ARS 495 + DCS 490 // STORIES FROM THE LINE: DOCUMENTING POVERTY

M/W: 2:00 - 4:30, AEIVA 260

COURSE MISSION + DESCRIPTION

"Incidentally, part of a photographer's gift should be with people. You can do some wonderful work if you know how to make people understand what you're doing and feel all right about it, and you can do terrible work if you put them on the defense, which they all are at the beginning. You've got to take them off their defensive attitude and make them participate." - Walker Evans

"Privilege, if you're very strict, is an immoral and unjust thing to have, but if you've got it you didn't choose to get it and you might as well use it. You're privileged to be at Yale, but you know you're under an obligation to repay what's been put into you." - Walker Evans

STORIES FROM THE LINE: DOCUMENTING POVERTY is committed to scholarly engagement, creative collaboration, and compassionate conversation through documentary practices and interdisciplinary study and will connect students with learning opportunities inside the classroom and across the greater Birmingham community.

This course will focus on the taking, making, presenting, criticizing, and understanding the visual story, particularly photographic images and documentary films focused on poverty and poverty-related issues. Students will refine their camera and editing skills and be challenged to develop and articulate their personal voice and vision through the making of photographs, documentary films and multimedia presentations and investigation of historical antecedents, contemporary practices, and strategies of critical interpretation. Specifically, students will be introduced to photographic projects and documentary films made in response to issues of poverty and be assigned long-term projects in which they will learn to make, edit, sequence, and present professional-quality works. Short-term assignments will also be given. Course progress will be documented via a class website. Final projects will be presented for a one-night only exhibition at UAB's Project Space on Wednesday, December 9.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course will follow a combination of lecture, workshop, seminar and studio class styles. It will include a combination of lectures, visiting artist and scholar engagements, reading and writing exercises, projects, group discussions, one-on-one conversations with the instructors, and group critiques. Participation in all aspects is imperative to your success in the course and will be an integral part of your final grade. Course content and assignments will be delivered in class and online via Canvas and the class blog. **Students will be required to complete a significant amount of work outside of regular class time.**

DURING THE COURSE OF STUDY WE WILL EXPLORE:

- the craft of photography and filmmaking through the production of photographic and video projects;
- various photographic and filmmaking processes, elements of visual storytelling, topical socio-economic concerns, and their respective terminologies;
- sequencing and editing photographs and film for presentation;
- the relationship and role of photography and filmmaking to larger social, economic, political and cultural contexts of poverty;
- historical references and contemporary trends in photography and filmmaking;
- how to create conceptually driven, smart, thoughtful photographs and films.

CRITIQUE

You are required to actively engage with and critique your work as well as the work of your classmates. Critique allows students the opportunity to learn how to speak about their own work and the work of others. In critique, it is imperative that you speak formally about the work and employ an educated, critical vocabulary. It is insufficient to say you like or don't like as aspect

of a visual work; instead, consider how and why certain decisions are successful. The ability to verbalize both the formal and conceptual sides of visual storytelling will strengthen your own understanding of photographic processes and its history.

PREPAREDNESS

It is imperative that you are ready for each class, at the beginning of class. You are expected to have covered assigned materials before coming to class. **The required readings and screenings are listed on the class date when they are due.** You will receive full participation points if you are consistently prepared for class and actively participate in discussions and critiques. **Being prepared matters.** Lack of preparation on your part does not obligate your professors to offer instruction outside of class times.

CLASSROOM RULES

The AEIVA is only open during normal business hours, 10am - 6pm. You will not be able to work after hours in AEIVA studios.

The computer, studio and darkroom facilities in the Humanities Building (HB 106, 109, 104E) are open 24 hours a day except during scheduled class times. You will be given door codes to access these studios after hours. Do not give your room combination to anyone. The door lock logs combinations and times of entry. You are responsible for any activity that might occur through the use of your room combination. To maintain lab security, make sure that the door closes behind you.

Report any computer problems immediately to the instructor via e-mail, detailing the problem, station used, time/date of problem and your contact information. The number one rule when trouble-shooting the iMacs is to restart the computer, twice if needed.

Cell phones must be turned off before entering the classroom. Text messaging, reading e-mail or instant messaging during class is prohibited.

Food and drink in the AEIVA studios is strictly forbidden.

Cleanliness, safety, and respect for equipment and studios is of the utmost importance. Clean up after yourself.

Please use headphones when listening to music or editing projects in studio areas.

SCHEDULE

All deadlines and due-dates will be announced in class and posted here and in handouts. It is your responsibility to be aware of these dates and any changes to the schedule. If you have any questions please ask your professors. Late work is lowered one letter grade for each day it is late. The course schedule reflects expected class progress in course subject matter and is considered tentative.

Week 1

Mon. Aug 24: Course Introduction

Drawing the Line: What is Poverty? (The Line, Dir. Linda Midgett, 2012)

Wed. Aug 26: Discuss Film & Readings

1st shooting assignment handed out (Due Mon. Aug 31)

Readings & Screenings: Weld Poverty Series 1 & 2

Poverty in America excerpt

Viewing Questions

Week 2

Mon. Aug 31

Look at images– 1st shooting assignment

Wed. Sept 2

Ethics of documentary

IRB and releases

Readings & Screenings: *True Meaning of Pictures* (Dir. Jennifer Baichwal, 2002) available for viewing via Dropbox link

Two Days in Appalachia by Bruce Gilden; *Taking Liberties*, *Taking Shortcuts*, and *Taking Advantage of People* by Roger May,

response precis due

Case Study: Gilden vs. Kranitz vs. May

Week 3

Mon. Sept 7: No class–Labor Day

Wed. Sept 9
RECAP lessons from shooting (tech and ethical)
Pitch Assignment handed out (due Oct 5)
Readings: Weld Poverty Series 3, 4 & 5 and *Poverty in America* Ch. 5, response precis due
Virtual Visiting Artist: Roger May

Week 4

Mon. Sept 14
Picturing Poverty–FSA photography case study
Readings & Screenings: *Picturing Poverty* and *Cotton Tenants*
(Michele out for Rosh Hashanah)

Wed. Sept 16
Technique–Photography and Film Technical lectures (Camera, FCP Editing I, File Management, Notetaking, and How to be Invisible)
2nd Assignment handed out: Environmental portrait of someone working/working minimum wage job
Readings & Screenings: Weld Poverty Series 6, 7, & 8, response precis due

Week 5

Mon. Sept 21
Seeing Class in America: Discussion
Visiting Scholar: Mark Kelly
Readings & Screenings: *Park Avenue: Money, Power, and the American Dream* (Dir. Alex Gibney, 2012) available for viewing via
Dropbox link, viewing questions due
(Michele out for Yom Kippur)

Wed. Sept 23
Studio Day: Pitches Prep

Week 6

Mon. Sept 28
Photographing Work: From Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine, Sebastiao Salgado to Humans of NY
Readings & Screenings: **Humans of NY**; **How the Other Half Lives**; Studs Terkel *Working* excerpt
Environmental Portrait critique

Wed. Sept 30
Environmental Portrait critique (cont.)
Pitches: Choosing Your Story / Bring in Research and Synopsis

Week 7

Mon. Oct 5
Qualitative Interview: Portraits and Interview Set-up

Wed. Oct 7
In-class studio assignment

Week 8

Mon. Oct 12 and Wed. Oct. 14
Working critique for longterm project

Week 9

Mon. Oct 19
Observational Shooting
Visiting Artist: Chris Hilleke

Wed. Oct 21
Caption Writing and Color Correction

Last day to withdraw Oct 23

Week 10

Mon. Oct 26

Photo Sequencing and FCP Editing II, meet one-on-one with professors

Wed. Oct 28

Print Workshop, one-on-one meetings continued

Week 11

Mon. Nov 2 + Wed. Nov 4

Working Critique for longterm project

Week 12

Mon. Nov 9: Hashtag Journalism

Visiting Artist Matt Black

(Michele Out–NCHC Film Master Class)

Wed. Nov 11

Workshopping edits

Week 13

Mon. Nov 16 + Wed Nov 18

Rough Cuts and Rough Edits Due

Meet one-on-one with professors

Week 14

Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15

Mon. Nov 30 + Wed. Dec 2

Fine Cuts and Final Edits Due

Service Learning Expo Dec 4

Final Exam: Mon. Dec 7, 1:30-4pm

Public Exhibition and Screening: Wed. Dec 9, 6-8pm

DIGITAL DOCUMENTATION

Documentation of all still photographic work is required for each project assignment and will be due at the same time as the project critique. All photographic work should be produced/scanned at high resolution (300dpi), Adobe 98 colorspace, saved in TIFF format and sent to the instructors via UAB Drop Box (<http://www.uab.edu/it/dropbox>).

DOCUMENT FORMATTING

All written materials and assignments must be typed and utilize the following format. NO handwritten papers will be accepted.

- 1-inch margins
- Times New Roman, size 12
- Double spaced
- Heading: your full name, the date, and the assignment title at the top of the first page
- Correct use of citations, if applicable
- Included illustrations, if any, must be located at the end of the document (not in line with text), accompanied by correct citations, and DO NOT count towards total page length of the assignment.

EVERYTHING that is not your own work, words, or ideas must be CITED using APA or MLA format. If you include any images in your written work, lessons, or presentations, you must cite them.

APA format for citing works of art: Artist (last name, first name), artist's role (in parentheses i.e. Artist, Architect), title, the work type, in brackets [Painting, Cathedral, Chair], country of origin or city, and state, and repository. Include URL or other identifying material about source, if needed.

Example: Cattelan, Maurizio. (Artist). (1997). Novecento (Twentieth Century). [mixed media]. Sydney: Museum of Contemporary Art. Retrieved May 2, 2009 from <http://www.bos2008.com/app/biennale/artist/61>

To find the correct way of citing materials, see the Purdue OWL (<https://owl.english.purdue.edu>) or consult the UAB Writing Center. Wikipedia is NOT an acceptable source in scholarly research or writing. Do not use it.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance and involvement in class and critique is mandatory for success in this class. Group and individual critiques will be part of the ongoing process of this class. Students not presenting work for scheduled critique will be counted absent and receive an F on the assignment.

- After three absences your entire final grade will drop one letter grade per additional absence.
- Three tardies, leaving early, excessive breaks will count as one absence.
- Any student that misses more than 5 classes for either personal or medical reasons will be encouraged to drop the course.
- If you miss more than six class meetings, you will fail the course.
- If you miss role call, it is your responsibility to see that the record is corrected from an absence to a tardy if you are late.
- If you miss a class, please ask another classmate for information on the material covered.

EARLY ALERT SYSTEM (EAS):

The EAS is designed to help students be more successful academically at UAB. If you receive an e-mail with EAS in the title, please open it, read it, and take advantage of the support that UAB offers to all students. UAB is committed to ensuring that students receive academic support and that students are aware of the resources available that will assist them in successfully completing their degree program.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:

UAB Faculty expects all members of its academic community to function according to the highest ethical and professional standards. Academic dishonesty and misconduct includes, but is not limited to, acts of abetting, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and misrepresentation. Students are expected to honor the UAB Academic Code of Conduct as detailed in the most current UAB Student Catalog. Please consult this resource for additional information regarding the specific procedures to be undertaken when a student violates the UAB Academic Code of Conduct.

<http://main.uab.edu/Sites/undergraduate-programs/general-studies/academic-success/67537/>

- **ABETTING** is helping another student commit an act of academic dishonesty. Allowing someone to copy your quiz answers or use your work as their own are examples of abetting.
- **CHEATING** is the unauthorized use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, study aids, the work of others, or computer-related information.
- **PLAGIARISM** means claiming as your own the ideas, words, data, computer programs, creative compositions, artwork, etc., done by someone else. Examples include improper citation of referenced works, the use of commercially available scholarly papers, failure to cite sourced, or copying another person's ideas.
- **FABRICATION** means presenting falsified data, citations, or quotations as genuine.
- **MISREPRESENTATION** is falsification, alteration, or the misstatement of the contents of documents, academic work, or other materials related to academic matters, including work substantially done for one class as work done for another without receiving prior approval from the instructor.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND DISABILITIES

If you are registered with Disability Support Services (DSS), please make an appointment with your instructor to discuss accommodations that may be necessary. If you have a disability but have not contacted DSS, please go to <http://www.uab.edu/students/services/disability-support-services>. Students with disabilities must be registered with DSS and provide an accommodation request letter before receiving accommodations in this class.

WEATHER OR OTHER EMERGENCIES

During any actual emergency or severe weather situation, www.uab.edu/emergency will be the official source of UAB information. In addition, the UAB Emergency Management Team will use B-ALERT, the university's emergency notification system, to communicate through voice calls, SMS text messages and e-mails to the entire campus all at the same time. B-ALERT also integrates with Facebook and Twitter. To register for B-ALERT or update your existing information in the system, go to www.uab.edu/balert. All registration is connected to your BlazerID.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Students are required to follow the Department of Art & Art History Health and Safety guidelines and are required to complete training for each studio course. The goal of the Department of Art and Art History Health and Safety Program is to protect the health and welfare of all faculty, staff, and students and to cooperate with the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Office of Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S). Please visit the website for details and the departmental handbook: <http://www.uab.edu/cas/art/resources/health-and-safety-program>

PROJECTS: (Subject to change)

It is expected that you create and execute your own works, and that the technical and conceptual elements discussed in class will be executed in each assignment. Assignments are subject to change based on instructors' evaluation on class need and schedule. Details for each assignment will be given under separate cover.

LONGTERM PROJECT

3-min video and/or still photo-based work (approximately 15-20 exhibition-ready images)

1. Choose a social/economic/cultural issue, subject, cause, or organization related to poverty (or propose an alternative idea) to photograph. The course will not be addressing homelessness; projects made strictly about the homeless is not allowed.

2. Research. Learn as much as you can about your chosen subject (the history, ideology, politics, economics, environment, landscape, industry, cultural identity, etc.) Keep this research and your notes for your project in a single notebook. You will be required to report on your research and research methods during critique.

3. Ask questions. Make decisions.

- What is your story? your angle? your goal?
- What's the tone: satirical? conceptual? poetic? straightforward?
- Is the project personal or objective? expressive or documentary?
- What is your relationship to the subject/topic, and how does that relationship affect your approach and your audience's reading of your work?
- How will you approach the project aesthetically and conceptually?

4. If the answers don't initially come, shoot first and ask questions later.

Organize your gear, get to shooting, and PAY ATTENTION to your surroundings. Sometimes a project will evolve on its own.

Working critiques will be scheduled consistently throughout the semester. You are expected to have new images and/or footage for each working critique. See the course schedule for working and final critique dates.

READINGS

Throughout the semester you will be given reading and response assignments. These will come in the form of handouts, reserved library books, or online articles. In response to each reading and/or screening you will be responsible for writing a 1-2 page précis paper. Use the précis to critically engage with the ideas presented in the readings and formulate how it might inform your documentary practice. These assignments are meant to help you think creatively and develop your critical and philosophical voice as a documentarian. Examples of successful précis will be shared in class.

WEBSITE

Class projects, progress, conversations, and research will be shared via a blog, www.storiesfromtheline.org/blog. You will be required to post course-relevant, critical content per instructors' prompts. Rules and instructions for the class blog will be delivered under separate cover.

GRADING, EVALUATION & COURSE RUBRIC

As you have learned, photography and filmmaking are labors of love - the rewards are great, but each are intensive and time consuming processes.

Photography and filmmaking requires dedicated practice, patience, and experimentation. To succeed in this course your work must exemplify these characteristics while you also: fully complete all assignments; actively participate in class discussions, demonstrations, critiques, and projects; practice good studio habits and cleanliness; and five précis papers in response to reading assignments.

Your final grade is based on your understanding of the information and ideas discussed, formal and conceptual progress, amount of work, evidence of risk-taking and exploration, and display of participation and professionalism. It will be drawn from an average of each of your project grades, précis grades, and your class participation grades.

Grading Breakdown: Assignment 1 Exploring the Line (10%); Assignment 2 Environmental Portrait (15%); Longterm Project (40%); IRB & Research Methods (15%); Class Participation (10%); Website and Précis Papers (10%)

Your work will be graded based on the following rubrics:

	EXCELLENT A	GOOD B	FAIR C	POOR D	UNSATISFACTORY F
CONCEPTUAL EXECUTION	DEMONSTRATES SUPERIOR CONCEPTUAL AND ARTISTIC SKILLS	DEMONSTRATES COMPETENCE IN CONCEPTUAL AND ARTISTIC SKILLS	PARTIALLY DEMONSTRATES COMPETENCE IN CONCEPTUAL AND ARTISTIC SKILLS	DOES NOT DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCY. LACK OF ARTISTIC QUALITY	NO ATTEMPT MADE AT AN ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION. INADEQUATE QUALITY ACHIEVED
TECHNICAL EXECUTION	DEMONSTRATES TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE - NO IDENTIFIABLE FLAWS	DEMONSTRATES TECHNICAL COMPETENCE - FEW IDENTIFIABLE FLAWS	TECHNICAL COMPETENCE IS FLAWED, INTERFERES WITH FINAL OUTCOME.	TECHNICAL EXECUTION FLAWED TO THE POINT OF DEGRADING QUALITY OF WORK.	NO TECHNICAL EXECUTION. FLAWED TO THE POINT OF UNSUITABILITY
ASSIGNED CRITERIA	ALL ASSIGNMENT CRITERIA MET WITHOUT EXCEPTION	MOST ASSIGNMENT CRITERIA MET. EXCEPTIONS DO NOT INTERFERE WITH QUALITY	SOME ASSIGNMENT CRITERIA NOT MET. EXCEPTIONS IMPACT PROJECT QUALITY.	MANY CRITERIA ARE NOT MET. SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTS THE FINAL PROJECT	LESS THAN HALF OF THE CRITERIA MET.
PARTICIPATION/ PROCESS	PERFECT RECORD ON-TIME, ALL WORK READY, PREPARED AND PARTICIPATED IN CRITIQUES	MOSTLY ON-TIME, EXCEPTIONS DID NOT INTERFERE WITH QUALITY OF PROCESS	INADEQUATE PARTICIPATION. PROCESS IMPACTS THE QUALITY OF FINAL PROJECT	VERY LITTLE PARTICIPATION OR PROCESS. IMPACTS THE QUALITY OF THE FINAL PROJECT	NO PARTICIPATION. NO PROCESS.

PHOTOGRAPHIC WORK

An 'A' photograph is one that is fully realized conceptually, skillfully composed, and shows technical proficiency; it is imaginative, compelling, and demonstrates planning, careful execution, experimentation and sensitivity toward process; it can display an innovative use of the camera, darkroom processes, and/or the print.

A 'B' photograph is one that is ambitious in meeting the requirements of the assignment but may ultimately be unresolved. A 'B' photograph: reveals an understanding of what a realized photograph for the assignment could be, but narrowly misses the goal; is marked by solid craftsmanship and/or a willingness to experiment with the camera/print, though not completely successful; embraces expressive ideas but isn't fully unified or complete.

A 'C' photograph is one that meets the requirements of the assignment but displays a loose grasp of composition, skill, planning, and/or technical execution. A 'C' photograph: may show signs of technical or conceptual weakness; may show some willingness to experiment, but may have a tendency to rely on a conventional idea or conservative approach.

A 'D' photograph is one that is finished but displays little planning or thoughtful approach to the assignment. A 'D' photograph underutilizes the necessary elements of creativity, composition, skill, planning, and/or technical execution, and displays a lack of effort, investigation, and/or experimentation.

An 'F' photograph does not fulfill the assignment and/or shows no evidence of effort, skill, planning, and/or technical execution. An 'F' photograph is unfinished and/or not turned in on time for critique.

FILM WORK

An 'A' film is one that is fully realized conceptually, skillfully composed, the subjects sensitively represented, and the narrative

thoughtfully structured and edited with technical proficiency; it is imaginative, compelling, and demonstrates planning, careful execution, experimentation and sensitivity toward the documentary process; it can display an innovative use of the camera, editing, and/or the audio design.

A 'B' film is one that is ambitious in meeting the requirements of the assignment but may ultimately be unresolved. A 'B' film reveals an understanding of what a realized film for the assignment could be, but narrowly misses the goal; is marked by solid craftsmanship and/or rapport with subject, though not completely successful; embraces expressive ideas but isn't fully unified or complete.

A 'C' film is one that meets the requirements of the assignment but displays a loose grasp of rapport with the subject, composition, field recording, editing rhythm, skill, planning, and/or technical execution. A 'C' film may show signs of technical or conceptual weakness; may show some willingness to experiment, but may have a tendency to rely on a conventional idea or conservative approach.

A 'D' film is one that is finished but displays little planning or thoughtful approach to the assignment. A 'D' film underutilizes the necessary elements of documentary process, creativity, composition, skill, planning, and/or technical execution, and displays a lack of effort, investigation, and/or experimentation.

An 'F' film does not fulfill the assignment and/or shows no evidence of effort, skill, planning, and/or technical execution. An 'F' film is unfinished and/or not turned in on time for critique.

COURSE OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

OUTCOMES	OBJECTIVES
Understand the history, current issues and future direction of photography and filmmaking in context of poverty and poverty-related issues.	Gain an advanced, specialized understanding of photography and documentary filmmaking and their histories, theories, and criticisms; understand the curatorial process, image research, presentation, and critical writing about fine art and documentary photography, photojournalism, documentary filmmaking, and video.
Place your work in the historical, cultural, and stylistic contexts of visual storytelling, particularly with poverty and poverty-related issues.	
Use the technology and equipment of the photographic and documentary film disciplines.	
SKILLS	
Practice darkroom and digital skills to make exhibition-quality photographs.	Produce photographs and films demonstrating advanced knowledge of composition, aesthetic principles, and technical skill, including work in experimental and manipulative techniques, candid and contrived imagery, documentary content, archival processing, and interpretive studies.
Create digital files for production in various media.	
Analyze and evaluate work in the photographic discipline, particularly works made in/of the South.	Develop skill in applying knowledge of photographic and documentary filmmaking theory and skill to analyze, evaluate, and critically discuss photographs.
SYNTHESIS	
Produce photographic and documentary film work demonstrating advanced technical skill and specialized disciplinary knowledge.	Working in a mode that conforms to contemporary photographic and documentary filmmaking methodologies.
Use knowledge of photography and filmmaking and disciplinary vocabulary to analyze work.	Understand and apply disciplinary knowledge and vocabulary in criticism.
Participate in critiques of own work and work of others	Apply knowledge of photographic and filmmaking criticism and theory in critique of student work.

EQUIPMENT & SUPPLY LIST

1. Students must have and maintain their UAB email address, and check that email on a daily basis. This is the only way we can contact you in case of changes in the schedule or to receive additional course information.
2. You must have a working, reliable camera. It may be a 35mm, medium format or large format film camera, or a DSLR capable of shooting RAW files.
3. You must have reliable transportation to/from your subject.
4. What you will need on the course required items list is contingent upon whether you use a still or video camera. This is a very basic collection of tools and supplies you may need during the semester and is an integral part of any photographer's tool kit. Photographic gear - as well as inkjet papers - can be costly, and they are not readily available in the Birmingham area. Plan accordingly and consider cost-sharing with your classmates. Digital cameras and video equipment are available for checkout from the Digital Media Commons on a first-come, first-serve basis.

REQUIRED ITEMS:

Inkjet paper
Portable harddrive, plus a backup harddrive or cloud service
Flashdrive
SD or CF cards
Spare camera batteries
Notebook
Sound recorder and microphone (smartphone is ok)

PURCHASE AT:

B&H Photo & Video - bhphotovideo.com
Freestyle - freestylephoto.biz
Adorama - adorama.com
Calumet Photographic - calumetphoto.com
Light Impressions - lightimpressionsdirect.com
Ebay
Some equipment may be purchased locally at Perry Computer at Brookwood Mall

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

By continuing to participate in this course you acknowledge that you have read and understand this syllabus and the attendance and grading policies outlined here. You acknowledge and accept the terms of this syllabus as one of the factors that will determine your final grade in this course.