Course Title
Projects in Digital Photography: Contemporary Art and Photography

Course Number
ART-UE.9380001

Fall 2017

Syllabus last updated on: 31-Jul-2017

Lecturer Contact Information
Christina Dimitriadis
christina.dimitriadis@nyu.edu

Course Details
Wednesdays, 2:30pm-6:00pm
NYU Berlin Art Studio @ St. Agnes, Alexandrinenstr. 118-121

Prerequisites
None

Units earned
4

Course Description
This course covers the theory and practice of photography. In terms of theory, we will examine the technical evolution of the medium: from analogue to digital photography with its rapid development and multiple uses. In terms of practice, we will focus on digital techniques, including Photoshop, Light Room, scanning and printing.

Experimenting with the medium and its changing materials has opened up new horizons and possibilities, which we will study in the work of photographers as well as other visual artists who use this medium. In particular, we will consider how the photographic medium has been used to record history and to make contemporary art history in Germany and globally. Since the course covers the period from the end of WWII to the present, we will take a closer look at the use of photography in the former German Democratic Republic (East Germany) and in the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany & united Germany). The course will then focus on Berlin, a city in constant transformation: from the wall to reunification, from 2000 to the present time with Berlin as a new "metropolis" of contemporary art.

Course Objective
While acquiring knowledge of photographic history, students will develop their own body of work, which will reflect their personal way of seeing through history and identity. By getting to know contemporary photography made in Germany over the past 50 years and by choosing from photographic materials and methods, students will create a new project consisting of 7 to 10 printed photographs.
Assessment Components

- Active class participation: 15%
- One in-class presentation: 10% (10-15 minutes)
- Group presentation: 10% (15 minutes)
- Response papers (2 total) + Artist Statement: 15%
- Final Portfolio consisting of 7 to 10 printed photographs and Open Studio presentation: 50%
- Artist Statement: 1 page, due in Session 11.
- Response papers 1+2: 1-2 pages on artists/photographers introduced to the class. First paper due in Session 8 and second paper due in Session 14.

For the written assignments, a hard copy must be submitted in the class. Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments.

Assessment Expectations

Grade A: The student makes excellent use of empirical and theoretical material and offers well-structured arguments in their work. The student writes comprehensive essays / answers to exam questions and their work shows strong evidence of critical thought and extensive reading.

Grade B: The candidate shows a good understanding of the problem and has demonstrated the ability to formulate and execute a coherent research strategy.

Grade C: The work is acceptable and shows a basic grasp of the research problem. However, the work fails to organize findings coherently and is in need of improvement.

Grade D: The work passes because some relevant points are made. However, there may be a problem of poor definition, lack of critical awareness, poor research.

Grade F: The work shows that the research problem is not understood; there is little or no critical awareness and the research is clearly negligible.

Grade Conversion

Your lecturer may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

- A = 94-100
- B+ = 87-89
- B = 84-86
- C+ = 77-79
- C = 74-76
- D+ = 67-69
- D = 65-66
- F = below 65

Alternatively:

- A= 4.0
- B+ = 3.3
- B = 3.0
- A- = 3.7
- B- = 2.7
C+ = 2.3  C = 2.0  C- = 1.7  
D+ = 1.3  D = 1.0  F = 0.0.

Attendance Policy
Participation in all classes is essential for your academic success, especially in courses that meet only once per week. Your attendance in both content and language courses is required and will be checked at each class meeting. As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies. Your professor or NYU Berlin's administration may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor as proof. Emergencies or other exceptional circumstances must be presented to the Director. Doctor's notes need to be submitted to the Academics Office, who will inform your professors. Doctor's notes need to be from a local doctor and carry a signature and a stamp. If you want the reasons for your absence to be treated confidentially, please approach NYU Berlin's Director or Wellness Counselor.

Unexcused absences affect students' grades: In content courses each unexcused absence (equaling one week's worth of classes) leads to a deduction of 2% of the overall grade and may negatively affect your class participation grade. In German Language classes two or three (consecutive or non-consecutive) unexcused absences (equaling one week's worth of classes) lead to a 2% deduction of the overall grade. Three unexcused absences in one content course and five unexcused absences in your German language course may lead to a Fail in that course. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequent late arrival or late arrival back from in-class breaks. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Please note that for classes involving a field trip, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student's responsibility to arrive in time at the announced meeting point.

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to the Academics Office; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F and no make-up assessment is scheduled. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays
Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer AND NYU Berlin's Academics Office in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also http://www.nyu.edu/about/policies-guidelines-compliance/policies-and-guidelines/university-calendar-policy-on-religious-holidays.html

Late Submission of Work
(1) Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor.
(2) Late work should be submitted in person to the lecturer or to the Academics Office, who will write on the essay or other work the date and time of submission, in the presence of the student. Another member of the administrative staff may also personally accept the work, and will write the date and time of submission on the work, as above.

(3) Work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays), unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of NYU Berlin's administration), in which case the 2 points per day deductions start counting from the day the extended deadline has passed.

(4) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 days (excluding weekends and public or religious holidays) following the submission date receives an F.

(5) End of semester essays must be submitted on time.

(6) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.

(7) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on the university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

Provisions for Students with Disabilities
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see their website (https://www.nyu.edu/students/communities-and-groups/students-with-disabilities.html) for further information.

Plagiarism Policy
The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. Proper referencing of your sources avoids plagiarism (see as one possible help the NYU library guide to referencing styles: http://nyu.libguides.com/citations).

NYU Berlin takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form.

It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you MUST inform your professor.

For a summary of NYU Global's academic policies please see: www.nyu.edu/global/academic-policies
**Required Text(s)**
Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility”. (PDF will be emailed to students).

Walter Benjamin, “Little History of Photography”. (PDF will be emailed to students).

Jennifer Allen, “True Blue or the Work of Images in the Age of Digital Reproduction”. (PDF will be emailed to students).

**NYU Berlin Library Catalogue:** http://guides.nyu.edu/global/berlin or follow the link on NYU Berlin's website (Academics/Facilities & Services).

**Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase)**
Every year we add to the NYU Berlin library catalogues and books from artists, photographers, or exhibitions which will help you to research further about contemporary art and photography in Germany.

**Internet Research Guidelines**
To be discussed in class

**Additional Required Equipment**
Digital or analogue cameras, iPhones or Smart phones are also accepted.

**Session 1 - Wednesday, 30 August 2017**
Student & instructor introduction.
**Discussion:** Introducing the concept and methods of the course.
**Theme:** Structure in Photography, or the Head-On Gaze.
**Presentation:** Bernd & Hilla Becher and their students at the Düsseldorf Academy. Bernd Becher introduced the photography course to the academy and established its central role among students. The Becher Class included artists such as Thomas Ruff, Thomas Struth, Candida Höfer, Axel Hütte and Andreas Gursky.
**Lab:** A review of the cameras that students will use for the class, plus a tour of the NYU facilities, computers, programs, scanner, printers, www.lynda.com.
**Important notice:** Always bring your digital or analogue photographic material to class and be prepared to work on it.
**Assignment:** Shoot the first photo session.

**Session 2 - Wednesday, 6 September 2017**
**Theme:** Experimenting with Old and New Methods.
**Presentation:** Experimenting with the technical aspects of photography in the works of Joseph Beuys, Anselm Kiefer and Katharina Sieverding.
**Discussion:** Consider the results of the first photo session (Group I).
**Lab:** Demo on digital image processing.
**Assignment:** Second photo session.
Session 3 - Wednesday, 13 September 2017
Theme: From Photography to Painting and Vice Versa, or Mixing Media.
Discussion: Consider the results of the first and second photo session (Group II).
Lab: Demo on digital image processing.
Assignment: Third photo session.

Session 4 - Wednesday, 20 September 2017
Theme: Architecture and Photography.
Presentation: Günter Förg, Thomas Demand.
Discussion: Consider the results of the second and third photo session (Group I).
Lab: Demo on digital image processing.
Assignment: Fourth photo session.

Session 5 - Wednesday, 27 September 2017
Theme: From collage to photomontage to digital collage.
Discussion: Consider the results of the third and fourth photo session (Group II).
Studio Visit: Barbara Breitenfellner, Artist, based in Berlin, working with collages and installations. We will visit her studio at 4:30 pm. Departure from St. Agnes at 3:50 pm. The artist will introduce her work and methods. Discussion will follow.
Assignment: Fifth photo session.

Session 6 - Wednesday, 4 October 2017
Presentation: Walter Benjamin “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility”.
Discussion: Consider the results of the fourth and fifth photo session (Group I).
Lab: Demo on papers, printing and scanning. After the demo, students are allowed to use the printers.
Reading: Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility”.
Assignment: Sixth photo session and first printing session.

Session 7 - Wednesday, 11 October 2017
Theme: 1. Unity – The New Germany
Kreuzberg – Amerika
Michael Schmidt the founder of the Werkstatt für Photographie,1976 (Workshop for Photography), the legendary and innovative Berlin-based photographic institute.
Discussion: Consider the results of the fifth and sixth photo session (Group II).
Lab: Individual assistance on digital image processing and printing.
Writing Assignment: Response Paper 1. Choose 3 artists/photographers introduced to the class and write a response paper, 1-2 pages, about their work (due in Session 8).
Assignment: Seventh photo session.

WEDNESDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2017 – FALL BREAK – NO CLASS
Session 8 - Wednesday, 25 October 2017
Theme: Artist Statement & Title.
How to work and write an Artist Statement & how to choose a title.
Presentation: Walter Benjamin “Little History of Photography”.
Individual critiques: Each student will present the portfolio as a work in progress, including digital and printed photos and working title.
Lab: During the Individual critiques, the rest of the students will meanwhile work in the lab.
Writing Assignment: Start working on your Artist Statement, think of a Title. (one page, due in Session 11).
Reading: Walter Benjamin “Little History of Photography”.
Assignment: Eighth photo session.
- Submit Response Paper 1 (3 artists/photographers introduced to the class).

Session 9 - Wednesday, 1 November 2017
Theme: The Other Side of the Wall.
Discussion: Results of the eighth photo session including printed photos (Group I).
Lab: Individual assistance on digital image processing and printing.
Assignment: Ninth photo session.

Session 10 - Wednesday, 8 November 2017
Presentation: Jennifer Allen, “True Blue or the Work of Images in the Age of Digital Reproduction”.
Discussion: Results of the eighth and ninth photo session including printed photos (Group II).
Lab: Individual assistance on digital image processing and printing.
Presentation Assignment: Each group works together on a short presentation (15 minutes) based on Walter Benjamin’s essays “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility” and “Little History of Photography,” as well as Jennifer Allen’s “True Blue or the Work of Images in the Age of Digital Reproduction.” (due in Session 13).
Reading: Jennifer Allen, “True Blue or the Work of Images in the Age of Digital Reproduction”.
Assignment: Tenth photo session.

Session 11 - Wednesday, 15 November 2017
Guest Talk: Övül O. Durmusoglu is a curator and writer. She worked as a curatorial advisor and public program curator for Gulsun Karamustafa’s monograph at Hamburger Bahnhof in summer 2016. In the past, she acted as the curator of the festival Sofia Contemporary 2013 titled “Near, Closer, Together: Exercises for a Common Ground.” She has organised different programs and events as a Goethe Institute fellow at Maybe Education and Public Programs for dOCUMENTA (13). She is currently guest professor at Academy of Fine Arts Nürnberg. After the talk, discussion will follow.
Discussion: Results of the ninth and tenth photo session including printed photos (Group I).
Lab Individual assistance on digital image processing and printing.
Assignment: Work on Final portfolio and exhibition.
- Submit the “Artist Statement,” one page.
Session 12 - Wednesday, 22 November 2017
Theme: Traces.
Discussion: Results of the tenth photo session including printed photos (Group II).
Lab: Printing for the final portfolio and the exhibition.
Writing Assignment: Response Paper 2. Choose 3 artists/photographers introduced to the class and write a response paper, 1-2 pages, about their work (due in Session 14).
Assignment: Work on Final portfolio and exhibition.

Session 13 - Wednesday, 29 November 2017
Presentation: Each group will make a short presentation (15 minutes) based on Walter Benjamin’s essays “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility” and “Little History of Photography,” as well as Jennifer Allen’s “True Blue or the Work of Images in the Age of Digital Reproduction”.
Lab: Printing for the final portfolio and the exhibition.

Session 14 - Wednesday, 6 December 2017
Final Portfolio presentation.
- Submit Response Paper 2 (3 artists/photographers introduced to the class).

Session 15 Wednesday, 13 December 2017
Open Studio Installation
Open Studio Opening, 13 December 2017 St. Agnes, 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Classroom Etiquette
Turn off mobile phones and iPads in class.
Drinks are permitted. Food is not allowed.

Required Co-Curricular Activities
Studio Visit: Barbara Breitenfellner, Artist, Session 5 - Wednesday, 27 September 2017.

Suggested Co-Curricular Activities
To be discussed in class

Your Lecturer
Christina Dimitriadis lives and works in Berlin. She studied at the Parsons School of Design, New York, Bachelor of Fine Arts (1992) and at the Film/Video Arts, New York (1993).
Dimitriadis’ work has been exhibited internationally in venues such as “Technologies of the Self”, Galeria Studio, Warsaw, (2015); "Tempus Ritualis", Galerie im Körnerpark, Berlin & CACT, Contemporary Art Center of Thessaloniki (2014); "A Rock and a Hard Place", 3rd Biennale of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki (2011); "Polyglossia", Onassis Cultural Centre,