Course Title

Projects in Digital Photography: Contemporary Art and Photography

Course Number
ART-UE.9380002

Instructor Contact Information
Christina Dimitriadis
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Course Details
Mondays, 3:00pm to 6:30pm
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: 20%

Completion of assignments, photo sessions + papers: 20%
This includes the completion of 10 photo sessions, an “Artist Statement” of 400 to 600 words (due in Session 13) and writing a one- to two-page paper on “The Past, Present and Future of Photography” (due in Session 14) which considers Walter Benjamin’s essays “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility” and “A Little History of Photography”, as well as Jennifer Allen’s “True Blue or the Work of Images in the Age of Digital Reproduction”.

Final Portfolio consisting of 7 to 10 printed photographs: 60%

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 his/her work. The student writes comprehensive essays / answers to exam questions and his/her 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 instructor may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

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\begin{align*}
B+ &= 87-89 & C+ &= 77-79 & D+ &= 67-69 & F &= \text{below 65} \\
A &= 94-100 & B &= 84-86 & C &= 74-76 & D &= 65-66 \\
A- &= 90-93 & B- &= 80-83 & C- &= 70-73
\end{align*}
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Alternatively:

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\begin{align*}
A &= 4.0 & A- &= 3.7 \\
B+ &= 3.3 & B &= 3.0 & B- &= 2.7 \\
C+ &= 2.3 & C &= 2.0 & C- &= 1.7 \\
D+ &= 1.3 & D &= 1.0 & F &= 0.0.
\end{align*}
\]
**Attendance Policy**
Participation in all classes is essential for your academic success, especially in NYU Berlin’s content courses that, unlike most courses at NYU NY, meet only once a week for three hours. 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. Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, religious observance or emergencies. If you want the reasons for your absence to be treated confidentially and not shared with your professor, please approach NYUB’s Director or Wellness Counselor. Your professor may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from the Director or Wellness Counselor.

Unexcused absences affect students' grades: each unexcused absence leads to a deduction of 2% of the overall grade and may negatively affect your class participation grade. Faculty is also entitled to deduct points for frequent late arrival to class or late arrival back from in-class breaks. Being more than 15 minutes late for class counts as an unexcused absence. Please note that for classes involving a field trip or other external visit, transportation difficulties are never grounds for an excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to arrive at the announced meeting point in a punctual and timely fashion.

Exams, tests, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class. **Three unexcused absences in one course may lead to a Fail in that course.**

**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 because of any religious observance should notify the Director or Assistant Director for Academics in advance of the anticipated absence. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Director or Assistant Director will reschedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments.

**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 instructor or to the Assistant Director for Academics, 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) Unless an extension has been approved, work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late.

(4) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 weekdays following the session date fails and is given a zero.

(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.

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).

NYUB takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. All your written work must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form to the instructor. Your instructor 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.

Required Text(s)

Books can be bought at Saint Georges in Wörther Straße 27 near NYUB.

Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase)
See course bibliography.

Internet Research Guidelines
To be discussed in class.

Additional Required Equipment
Digital Cameras, iPhone, Smart phone. Analogue cameras are also accepted.

Session 1 - Monday, 31 Aug 2015
Theme: Student Introduction.
**Presentation:** About the instructor, a selection of the instructor’s artwork.

**Discussion:** Introducing the concept and methods of the course.

**Expectations of the course:** Final Portfolio consisting of 7 to 10 printed photographs, Open Studio participation, Artist Statement.

**Lab:** A review of the cameras that students will use for the class, plus a tour of the NYU facilities, computers, programs, scanner, printers.

**Assignment:** Shoot the first photo session.

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**Session 2 - Monday, 7 Sep 2015**

**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 like Thomas Ruff, Thomas Struth, Candida Höfer, Axel Hütte and Andreas Gursky.

**Discussion:** Consider the results of the first photo session.

**Lab:** First demo on digital image processing.

**Reading:** Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility” in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, pp. 19 – 25, Chapter I, II, III, IV, V.

**Assignment:** Second photo session.

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*** Make-up Session 3 – Friday, 11 Sep 2015, 10:00 am to 13:30 pm, at St.Agnes***

**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 second session.

**Lab:** Second demo on digital image processing.

**Reading:** Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility” in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, pp. 25 – 31, Chapter VI, VII, VIII, IX, X.

**Assignment:** Third photo session, think of a working title.

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**Session 3 - Monday, 14 Sep 2015**

**Theme:** From Painting to Photography and Vice Versa, or Mixing Media.

**Presentation:** Gerhard Richter’s *Atlas* (1962-97) and *October 18, 1977* (1988).

**Discussion:** Consider the results of the third session and proposals for the working title.

**Lab:** Third demo on digital image processing.

**Reading:** Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility” in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media*, pp. 30 – 36, Chapter XI, XII, XIII, XIV, XV.

**Assignment:** Fourth photo session.

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**Session 4 - Monday, 21 Sep 2015**

**Theme:** Architecture and Photography.

**Presentation:** Günter Förg and Thomas Demand.

**Discussion:** Consider the results of the fourth photo session.

**Lab:** Demo on scanning.
Assignment: Fifth photo session.

Session 5 - Monday, 28 Sep 2015
Theme: The Other Side of the Wall.
Discussion: Consider the results of the fifth photo session.
Lab: Demo on papers and printing. After the demo, students are allowed to use the printers.
Assignment: Sixth photo session and first printing session.

***NO CLASS - Monday, 5 Oct 2015 - Make-up Session on Friday, 11 Sept 2015***

Session 7 - Monday, 12 Oct 2015
Theme: Unity – The New Germany.
Discussion: Result of the sixth photo session and first prints.
Lab: Individual photo processing: Three students will process their images and present their working methods to the rest of the class.
Assignment: Seventh photo session, think of a final title.

MONDAY, 19 OCT 2015 – FALL BREAK – NO CLASS

Session 8 - Monday, 26 Oct 2015
Theme: Traces.
Discussion: Results of the seventh photo session, and proposals for the final title.
Lab: Individual photo processing: Three students will process their images and present their working methods to the rest of the class.
Assignment: Eighth photo session.

Session 9 - Monday, 2 Nov 2015
Exchanging visits between Udk - Universität der Kunste, Berlin (The University of the Arts, Berlin) and NYUB - New York University, Berlin.
Udk: Class of Pr. Nina Fischer, "Experimental Film / Media Arts" Department.
3:00 p.m. Meeting in our class
4:00 p.m. Visiting Pr. Nina Fischer's class.
Pr. Nina Fischer, an introduction to her work, the department and teaching methods.
Student introduction to the studio, facilities and works.
Open discussion between all participating students and instructors.

**Reading:** Jennifer Allen, “True Blue or the Work of Images in the Age of Digital Reproduction” in *Mousse* magazine (Milan), Spring 2014.

**Assignment:** Ninth photo session, work on the synthesis of your portfolio.

**Writing Assignment:** Start working on your “Artist Statement”, 400 to 600 words, due in Session 13.

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**Session 10** - Monday, 9 Nov 2015

**Theme:** A Fictional Dialogue between Artists.

**Presentation:** Heidi Specker and Germaine Krull, Bangkok.

**Discussion:** Results of the eighth and ninth photo sessions.

**Lab:** Individual photo processing: Three students will process their images and present their working methods to the rest of the class.

**Assignment:** Tenth photo session.


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**Session 11** - Monday, 16 Nov 2015

**Theme:** A Fictional Dialogue between a Writer and an Artist.


**Discussion:** Results of tenth photo session.

**Lab:** Processing images individually with instructor consultation.

**Assignment:** Working and printing for your exhibition project and portfolio.

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**Session 12** - Monday, 23 Nov 2015

Work on the Open Studio project and presentation with individual critiques.

**Lab:** Printing for the Open Studio project and final portfolio.

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**Session 13** - Monday, 30 Nov 2015

Exchanging visits between UdK - Universität der Kunste, Berlin (The University of the Arts, Berlin) and NYU - New York University, Berlin.

UdK: Class of Pr. Nina Fischer, "Experimental Film / Media Arts" Department

3:00 p.m. Final preparation for UdK guests.

4:00 p.m. The class of Pr. Nina Fischer and her students visit our class and the studios in the NYU Berlin Art Studio at St. Agnes.

Instructor Christina Dimitriadis will introduce the department and teaching methods.

Student introduction to the studio, facilities and works.

Open discussion between all participant students and instructors.

- Submission of Artist Statement -

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**Session 14** - Monday, 7 Dec 2015

**Finalize the Portfolio Project**

Work on the project with individual critiques.
- Submission of the one- to two-page paper on “The Past, Present and Future of Photography”

OPEN STUDIO: 11 DEC 2015

Session 15 - Monday, 14 Dec 2015
Portfolio presentation and discussion, farewell celebration.

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

Required Co-curricular Activities
To be discussed in class

Suggested Co-curricular Activities
To be discussed in class

Your Instructor
Greek-German artist Christina Dimitriadis lives and works in Berlin.
“Christina Dimitriadis uses photography as a medium to express an autobiographical stance based on human relationships in terms of the concept of identity. In the artist's strictly structured photographs an almost architectural tone prevails, an absolute minimal mise-en-scène where the lack of any arbitrary haphazard occurrence is clear. In this respect Dimitriadis photos have a compelling character, almost monumental,” Sotirios Bahtsetzis.
In April 2015, Galeria Studio in Warsaw presented the first retrospective exhibition of Christina Dimitriadis' work.