The most transitory of things, a shadow, the proverbial emblem of all that is fleeting and momentary, may be fettered by the spells of our “natural magic,” and may be fixed forever in the position which it seemed only destined for a single instant to occupy.

-Henry Talbot, “Some Account of the Art of Photogenic Drawing”

The lens, the so-called impartial eye, actually permits every possible distortion of reality...The importance of photography does not rest primarily in its potential as an art form, but rather in its ability to shape our ideas, to influence our behavior, and to define society.

-Gisele Freund, Photography and Society

The nineteenth century began by believing that what was reasonable was true and would end up by believing that what it saw a photograph of was true.

-William Ivins, Jr., Prints and Visual Communication

Photography...is a logic that continually returns to haunt itself.

-Geoffrey Batchen, “Ectoplasm: Photography in the Digital Age”

Course Description

This course is a one-semester survey of the history of photography from its prehistory to the present. Course readings, lectures, and demonstrations will address photography’s multiple histories: as artistic medium, as social text, as technological adventure, and as cultural practice. We will view images made by important contributors to photography’s histories, as well as images that are important less for who made them than for their power within the discourses of mass culture. We will also learn about various technical processes in their creative and historical contexts and about the camera’s evolution, and become familiar with the vocabulary and the issues of photographic theory and criticism.

Course Objectives

By actively participating in this course, students will be able to:

- Know the outlines of the histories of photography as art, technology, and cultural force
- Describe the profound changes that photography has brought to culture and to the histories of other art forms
- Recognize and critically appraise important photographic images and image makers
- Become familiar with the terms of art for describing photographs and processes, and with major milestones in the development of image-making techniques, materials, and technologies
Course Texts

Required
The following required course text is available at the George Mason University bookstore:


According to the George Mason University Bookstore, this book will cost $114.80 if purchased new, $86.10 if purchased used, and $51.65 if rented. Online sellers offer the book new or used at substantially lower costs than the bookstore’s price.

We will use this textbook as a compendium of knowledge. You will, over the course of the term, be required to read all of it. I will address it in lectures, drawing your attention to fuller discussions of matters I refer to, and I will look for evidence that you have read along in it on exams. It forms the basis for our slide sheets (although my images are not limited to those in the text). In the beginning of each class I will give you the opportunity to ask questions about the assigned chapters, although my lectures may range around the text. I will also post self-check sheets that you can complete online to check your recall of key facts.

Assignments from this text are listed in the schedule of assignments later in this syllabus. Other required readings will also be listed in the syllabus, indicated with a (B); these readings will be linked or otherwise made available to you for download on the ARTH 350 course site on Blackboard. All files distributed in this way are password protected—I will provide you with the password in class, and it is also provided as a permanent announcement on our Blackboard site.

From time to time, I may substitute or supplement the assignments on the schedule with other materials (articles, websites, etc.). If and when I do so, you will receive instructions for accessing the material both in class and by e-mail.

Recommended
There are thousands of books on photography, thousands of books of photographic images, and thousands more on the history, theory, and criticism of photographs. I have made a small selection of resources that you will find helpful and reliable. As for finding interesting photographers, I recommend hunting around among the books in the Fenwick Library stacks, and online via the resources listed later in this syllabus.

Any of the following resources are readily available from online booksellers; many are also available in the George Mason University Library.

**Photo Technology and Processes**


**Photo Terminology and Movements**

Important Collections of Writing on Photography

• Liz Heron and Val Williams, eds. *Illuminations: Women Writing on Photography From the 1850s to the Present*. Duke University Press, 1996.

Five Books You Must Read if You Love to Think About Photography


Although this resource is dated in some of its examples (and certainly in its clothing and hairstyles!), it is one of the best and most lucid introductions to the role of photography in visual culture. There are four 30-minute videos that were first broadcast on the BBC (and that occasioned the book); they can be readily found in short segments on YouTube, on the website Ubu at http://www.ubu.com/film/berger_seeing.html (although Ubu streams episodes 1-3 in black and white instead of their original color) or viewed in all their scratchy VHS glory in the Johnson Center Library.


Just perusing this extraordinary history and collection of images will make you understand how constructed any history of photography is. It will remind you that any history should prompt your questions: Who is in, and who is out? And why is that? Note that Professor Willis will be here on February 16 to talk about “Progeny,” the exhibition of work by Willis and her son, Hank Willis Thomas that is in the Fine Art Gallery Feb. 1-29.

Art Photography Now: Three Views

(note: Cotton is a relatively easy read, but the other two will take some patience!)


Websites

*Public and private organizations, museums and universities that have websites containing samples of their collections and exhibits online:*

http://www.creativephotography.org/
The Center for Creative Photography, Tucson, Arizona.

http://www.geh.org
George Eastman House, Rochester NY. Has a timeline of photography and is constantly enriched with new material.

http://www.getty.edu
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, has a wonderful collection of optical devices and an archive of its 2002 exhibition called *Devices of Wonder*. Another important collection accessible from the website is the museum’s Orientalist photography collection.

http://www.icp.org
The International Center for Photography, New York NY.

http://americanart.si.edu/research/programs/archive/
The Photograph Archives at the Smithsonian American Art Museum

http://www.loc.gov
The United States Library of Congress has a rich assortment of photographs displayed in its American Memory section, and frequently directs viewers to other themed sites where photographs can be found.

http://www.metmuseum.org/works_of_art/photographs
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York NY, has a rich collection of photographs, including a unique collection of Walker Evans’s personal papers and other work.

http://www.mocp.org/
The Museum of Contemporary Photography at Columbia College, Chicago.

http://www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk/
Britain’s National Media Museum.

http://www.nypl.org/research/chss/spe/art/photo/photo.html
The New York Public Library photography collection.

http://www.photographymuseum.com/
The American Museum of Photography, a museum without walls.

http://photography.si.edu/
The Photography Initiative at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC. Be sure to look at the online exhibition “Click! Photography Changes Everything,” other archived exhibitions, and the initiative’s blog.

http://www.cla.purdue.edu/WAAW/Palmquist/
The Women in Photography International Archive.

http://lal.tulane.edu/collections/imagearchive
The Latin American photographic archive at Tulane University contains more than 55,000 images from every country in the region.

http://www.luminouslint.com
A website with wide-ranging information on historic and contemporary photography and useful timelines.

**Websites concerning historical photographic techniques:**

http://www.alternativephotography.com/wp/
A website for those interested in contemporary and former uses of the cyanotype and other early photographic processes.
http://www.daguerre.org/
The Daguerrean Society at Craig’s Daguerreian Registry is primarily a source for collectors but also supports a list of daguerreotypists.

http://www.stereoscopicsociety.org.uk/
The Stereoscopic Association.

http://www.photohistory-sussex.co.uk/dagprocess.htm
The Daguerreotype Process (on Sussex photo history site)

Course Requirements

Communication: You will be expected to check your George Mason University e-mail and the Blackboard site for this course frequently during the term. Updates to the syllabus and other vital course information will be sent to you at your George Mason University e-mail address and via the Blackboard site. You will be responsible for having read whatever I send you via these means. Please note that because of university policies, I can only communicate with you via your Mason e-mail address.

Absolute Ban on Electronic Communication During Class Time: You will NOT be permitted to use the Internet, text messaging, instant messaging, e-mail or even mental telepathy during class time. Our Zen motto will be, “Be here now.” I should not see cell phones, smart phones, or computers at all once class has begun. Please do not make me embarrass you into compliance. One violation will result in shame; more than one violation will affect your grade—I will treat a violation as if you were not present in class that day. If you have a genuine academic reason to use a computer during class for note taking or accessibility, please discuss this with me at the beginning of the semester.

Attendance: Attendance is expected and is essential as material will be presented that cannot be replicated outside of class. Visual materials presented in class are usually not available in the library. Attendance will be taken, and both absence and lateness (including early departure) will count against your final grade, as provided for in the university catalog. More than 3 absences will certainly reduce your final grade; two late arrivals or early departures will count as one absence. Please note that it is your responsibility to find out from a classmate what happened during any class from which you were absent.

Prepared Participation: I will expect you to have read the assignments and to participate in discussions and other class activities every time. I will also expect courteous behavior in discussions; that is, respectful exchanges (even in heated disagreements) and enough self-awareness to keep yourself from monopolizing the discussion.

Moving-Image Materials Assigned Outside of Class: Any moving-image materials assigned for viewing outside of class either will be made available on reserve in the Media Services area of the Johnson Center Library or will be provided to you as a link to a download or a streaming site.

Statement on Materials of a Potentially Objectionable Nature: We may from time to time be viewing or reading materials that some students may find distressing or objectionable for religious, cultural, or personal reasons. These materials are presented as objects of study and analysis and as part of the educational process, without any intent to cause offense or distress. If you are concerned that your religious or cultural beliefs would make it impossible for you to participate in part or in whole in this class, please see me at the beginning of the term so that we can discuss ways to manage your concerns.
Assignments
Students will demonstrate their mastery of the course learning objectives by completing the following assignments:

1) Two mid-course exams, administered 2/27 and 4/2 during class
2) Final examination, held on 5/9 (the scheduled exam time for this class)
3) Two short critical writings based on exhibition visits, due 3/5 and 4/11
4) Occasional quizzes, in-class writing assignments, and other in-class learning activities

All three exams may include typical art history question types: slide identifications, slide comparisons, short answer questions, and essay questions. They will require your familiarity with the photograph’s maker, imaging technology, approximate period of making, and cultural context. Each exam will concentrate on specific sections of the Marien text (as noted in the syllabus); the final exam will also include comprehensive slide comparison and essay questions. I will provide you with a slide list so you will know which images I will expect you to be able to identify and write about. You will also have access to the images I show in class via our Blackboard site; I will demonstrate how to find and use these images.

Please note that success in this class requires ongoing image study and memorization. The wisdom of past students suggests that you begin committing image information to memory immediately and continue consistently. I suggest making study sheets for the images I identify on the slide sheets.

An assignment sheet describing the required critical papers is posted on Blackboard.

Evaluation of Writing and Projects
Please note that, regardless of grades earned in individual activities, no one can pass this class unless they sit for all three exams and turn in both critical writing assignments.

Projects, papers, and other assignments turned in after the beginning of class on the due date will be marked down one letter grade per day. No work that is more than one week late will be accepted without a valid written medical excuse or notice of death in the family; late work accepted with an excuse will still be subject to lateness penalties.

Weighting of Assignments
Grades for the course will be determined as follows:

- Exams #1 and 2: 20% each – total 40%
- Final examination: 25%
- Critical writing assignment: 10% each – total 20%
- Prepared participation (including attendance, quizzes, contributions to class discussion): 15%

Note that excessive absence or failure to turn in the required assignments may result in failure of the course regardless of these weightings.

Grades
Grades reflect how well you accomplish the objectives of the course. Possible grades for this class are A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D, F

Grading Standards
What makes a paper or other assignment an “A”? (B, C, D, F)
Score of A: Superior
Meets most or all of the following criteria:
• Finds an interesting approach to the assigned topic and looks at it from multiple angles
• Goes beyond what was covered in class and shows serious thought
• Uses examples and details to make points clearly and vividly
• Is written with concern for style and for a personal voice
• Follows the important rules of writing and has no distracting errors in mechanics

Score of B: Strong
Meets most or all of the following criteria:
• Clearly addresses the topic as assigned and explores it thoroughly
• Shows a mastery of what was covered in class and may pull in some facts from beyond class
• Is effectively organized; easy to follow and understand; is well developed, with supporting detail.
• Has no more than a few mechanical errors, and nothing too serious

Score of C: Competent
Meets most or all of the following criteria:
• Adequately addresses the topic and covers the major points required
• Sticks with ideas covered in class and does so accurately
• Can be followed, but with a fair amount of work from the reader
• Shows competent writing, but may have many small flaws and/or a few major flaws in syntax and grammar.

Score of D: Weak
Shows any of the following problems:
• Doesn't cover all of the topic as assigned
• Doesn't show an adequate understanding of what was covered in class
• Serious problems in organization/logic; generalizations without supporting detail/detail without generalizations
• Patterns of flaws in language, syntax or mechanics.

Score of F: Inadequate
Shows any of the following problems:
• Doesn't address the topic as assigned and/or doesn't show an understanding of what was covered in class
• Illogical. Wanders off-topic. Extremely difficult to follow.
• Is severely flawed mechanically

Academic Enrichment Opportunities

ArtsBus
The dates for this spring’s ArtsBus trips are February 25, March 31, and April 21.

The ArtsBus is an all-day trip to New York City’s art districts via chartered buses. School of Art faculty members accompany the trip and offer 2-hour guided tours of various museums and galleries when you arrive. If you choose to join one of the tours, you will have several hours of free time on your own afterwards (typically starting at about 1 p.m.) to have lunch, to visit additional art venues or to explore the city. If you would like to accompany me on a tour of several free Chelsea galleries, I will be traveling on the February 25 ArtsBus trip.
Tickets for the ArtsBus are available for purchase at the box office of the Center for the Arts, or by registering for AVT 300 to take advantage of preferred pricing and ticketing. AVT 300 is a 0-credit course open to students in any major; the course has no tuition charge but does have a course fee ($55). The course fee covers the cost of your seat on the bus, plus the administrative costs of running the ArtsBus program. The fee is less than the cost of a single ticket purchased by people not enrolled in AVT 300. Please go to the ArtsBus website: http://artsbus.gmu.edu "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding ArtsBus policy.

Visual Voices Lecture Series
Visual Voices is a yearlong series of lectures by artists, art historians and others about contemporary art and art practice. Visual Voices lectures are held on Thursday evenings from 7:30-9:00 p.m. in Harris Theater. The fall schedule includes five lectures:

- February 2, 2012  Tom Sherman  "Messages that Stick"
- February 16, 2012 Joel Snyder  "The Visual Made Verbal"
- April 12, 2012  Sangram Majumdar  "Recent Works"
- April 26, 2012  Monica Amor  "Gego Weaving the Space in Between"

Academic Policies
As a courtesy to others in the class, and in accordance with George Mason University policy, please turn off all cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class. The instructor of the class will keep her cell phone active to assure receipt of any Mason Alerts in a timely fashion.

Commitment to Diversity
This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity and expression, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran’s status, or physical ability.

University Policies
The University Catalog, http://catalog.gmu.edu, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university affairs. Other policies are available at http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

Important Deadlines
- Last Day to Add (Full-Semester Course)  January 31
- Last Day to Drop (Full-Semester Course)  February 24
- Selective Withdrawal Period (Full-Semester Course)  February 27 – March 30
- Incomplete work from Fall 2011 due to instructor  March 30
Once the add-and-drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Requests for late adds (up until the last day of classes) must be made by the student in the School of Art or New Century College office (or the office of the department offering the course), and generally are only approved in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid being processed). Requests for non-selective withdrawals and retroactive adds (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the academic dean of the college in which the student’s major is located. For ARTH majors, that is the CHSS Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs. For AVT/School of Art majors, that is the CVPA Office of Academic Affairs, Performing Arts Building A407.

**Official Communications via Mason E-Mail**
Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

**Statement on Ethics in Teaching and Practicing Art and Design**
As professionals responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the School of Art adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

**Academic Integrity**
Mason is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind), please ask for guidance and clarification.

No grade is important enough to justify Honor Code violations, for which there are serious consequences that will follow you for the rest of your life. If you feel unusual pressure about your grade in this or any other course, please talk to me or to a member of the Mason Counseling Center staff.

**Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences**
If you have a diagnosed disability or learning difference and you need academic accommodations, please inform me at the beginning of the semester and contact the Office of Disability Services (703-993-2474). You must provide me with a faculty contact sheet from that office outlining the accommodations needed for your disability or learning difference. All academic accommodations must be arranged in advance through ODS. http://ods.gmu.edu

**Other Useful Campus Resources**
*Writing Center*: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; http://writingcenter.gmu.edu
*University Libraries “Ask a Librarian”:* http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html
*Counseling And Psychological Services (CAPS)*: (703) 993-2380; http://caps.gmu.edu
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<th>Reading Assignment Due</th>
<th>Written Assignment Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1/23: No assignment</td>
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<td>1/23-1/25</td>
<td>-Photographs on my mind</td>
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<td>-Reading photographs</td>
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<td>-The camera and the eye</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Photography’s Origins: shapers of photographic history</td>
<td>1/30: Ossip Brik, “What the Eye Does Not See,” (B) and László Moholy-Nagy, “A New Instrument of Vision” (B)</td>
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<td>1/30-2/1</td>
<td>-photographic technology</td>
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<td>-“reality” and the photograph</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Photography and painting; the photographic portrait</td>
<td>2/6: Marien, Chapter 2</td>
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<td>2/6-2/8</td>
<td>NOTE: I will be at an artist’s residency this week; you will have guest speakers covering this material</td>
<td>2/8: Marien, Chapter 3</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Constructing Visual Knowledge: -Photography and war</td>
<td>2/13: Marien, Chapter 4; Lutz and Collins, “The Photograph as an Intersection of Gazes” (B)</td>
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<td>2/13-2/15</td>
<td>-Photography and the Other</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Photography’s social impact: -The photograph as an instrument of social control</td>
<td>2/20: First exam</td>
<td>2/20: Exam during class time</td>
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<td>2/20-2/22</td>
<td>-The photograph as an instrument of social liberation: women in photography</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Modernity: Inventing an Artistic Vocabulary, Exploring a World</td>
<td>2/27: Marien, Chapter 6</td>
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<td>2/27-2/29</td>
<td>Stieglitz and the Photo Secession</td>
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## ARTH 350:001
### History of Photography
#### Schedule of Topics and Assignments
#### Spring 2012

Note: Schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced and new assignments made in class and via email.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Written Assignment Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Reconfiguring Space and Time: Muybridge, Marey, and the moving image</td>
<td>3/5: Marien: Chapter 8</td>
<td>3/5: Critical analysis 1 due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/5-3/7</td>
<td>-Place, travel and the exotic</td>
<td>3/7: Selection from <em>River of Shadows</em>, by Rebecca Solnit (B)</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
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<td>3/12-3/14</td>
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<td><strong>NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK</strong></td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>Can Images Change the World?: Photography as social document</td>
<td>3/19: Marien, Chapter 9</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Photography and the Avant Garde</td>
<td>3/26: Man Ray, “The Age of Light” and “Self Portrait 1963” (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11</td>
<td>New Understandings of the Photographic Image</td>
<td>4/2: Second exam</td>
<td>4/2: Exam during class</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/2-4/4</td>
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<td>4/4: Szarkowski, readings (B) Marien, Chapter 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Visual Culture</td>
<td>4/9: Walter Benjamin, excerpts from “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (B)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 13</td>
<td>New Anxieties, New Questions, New Directions</td>
<td>4/16: Marien, Chapter 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/16-4/18</td>
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<td>4/18: Marien, Chapter 13</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>To Reclaim the Object, or</td>
<td>4/23: Marien, Chapter 14</td>
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</table>
# ARTH 350:001
## History of Photography
### Schedule of Topics and Assignments
#### Spring 2012

Note: Schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced and new assignments made in class and via email.

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<tr>
<td>4/23-4/25</td>
<td>Re-Map an Expanded Field? (or, back to the future!)</td>
<td>4/23: Marien, Chapter 14</td>
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<td>4/25: George Baker: “Photography’s Expanded Field” (B)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Pulling Our Thoughts Together (III): Wrap-Up and Exam Preparation</td>
<td>4/30: Wrap up Parts Five and Six; no new reading assignment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/30-5/2</td>
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<td>5/2: Wrap up course; review for final exam; no new reading assignment</td>
<td>5/2: Review your notes and bring your questions. Today is the last day that any late assignments can be accepted for a grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 16</td>
<td><strong>FINAL EXAM WEDNESDAY, 5/9, 10:30 A.M. - 1:15 P.M., IN OUR REGULAR CLASSROOM</strong></td>
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