

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History
FALL 2015

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Office Hours: Thursday and Friday, 4:30 pm -5:30 pm
(In case you cannot make it to my OH, send me an email so we can make an appointment)

History 201-4: WAYS OF SEEING
Mo. We. 4:00-5:15 pm, Van Vleck B 231

A large part of the documents used by historians and writers comes in the form of visual archives. Yet few among us have been trained to analyze and use images effectively to compose powerful narratives. Images are not just things of the past of course: graphic incidents and visual strategies increasingly contribute to changing our world (think, for instance, about the Abu Ghraib prison pictures released in 2004, the recent release of beheading videos by Al Qaida, or the 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* crisis in France). Yet again, we are often at loss to engage critically with such visual events. This course will help you to address these two goals: it will strive to teach you to better utilize images to compose critical narratives, and it will provide you with tools to understand and analyze the complex visual reality we live in.

This course has a sizable historical methods component: it offers an opportunity to experience the excitement and rewards of doing original historical research and conveying the results of that work to others. Students will gain hands-on experience doing archival research and will share their research findings with the class in oral presentations. At the end of the semester each student will submit a 10-12-page research paper on a topic relating to the course theme. (A number of the shorter course papers are designed to help students develop a research proposal, a research plan, and ultimately the paper itself.)

NB: No prerequisites are required for the course.



Learning outcomes

- 1/ You will learn how and why images “work.”
- 2/ You will approach images as relational media that connect creators, audiences and represented subjects.
- 3/ You will write deep analyses of visual documents, and you will be able to better use images in your course assignments at UW.
- 4/ You will learn how to do original historical research and communicate your findings in a paper.

Readings:

The following books are available at the University Book Store, and available on reserve at the College Library. The first is required for all students, the second is only required for history majors.

John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*. New York, Penguin Book, [1972] 1990 [abbreviated in readings as Berger]

Mary Ann Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012 [abbreviated in readings as Rampolla]

The other readings are available online at Learn@UW. Each student should be prepared to discuss assigned readings in class.

Grades: Course grades will be determined as follows: short writing assignments (including the research proposal, annotated bibliography, and outline) 40%; participation in weekly discussions in class 25%; formal oral presentation 10%; final research paper 25%. Short assignments, otherwise noted, should be single-spaced. The final paper is double-spaced.

Consultations: Students are expected to come to office hours throughout the semester to discuss the progress that are making on their papers. I will schedule extra office hours during week 5 and 12 and ask everyone to sign up for one-on-one consultations.

The History Lab: New this semester, the History Lab is a resource center where experts (PhD students) will assist you with your history papers. No matter your stage in the writing process—choosing a topic, conducting research, composing a thesis, outlining your argument, revising your drafts—the History Lab staff is here, along with your professors and teaching assistants, to help you sharpen your skills and become a more successful writer. Sign up for a one-on-one consultation online: <http://go.wisc.edu/hlab>

Where: The History Lab is located in 4255 Humanities (the former History Department Computer Lab), just around the corner from the TA offices.

When: This fall, the Lab is open Sundays-Thursdays, usually in the evenings. The lab is closed on Fridays and Saturdays. Students are welcome to drop in, but we strongly encouraged them to make an appointment, either by visiting <http://go.wisc.edu/hlab> or calling (608) 890W 3309.

Week 1- Historians and Images

Mo. 09/02: Introduction. Meet your classmates.

Readings:

1. Berger, 7-34.
2. Video: "Focus on Alfredo Jaar, Chilean artist" (31 min, shown in class).

Theme:

This week we'll be talking in general terms about how historians, journalists, and politicians use images to put together narratives about current and past events. How do images make us think?

Assignment:

Read the current week issues of the *New York Times* and choose one article with a picture or a cartoon. Reflect on the relations between the text and the image. Bring a copy of the article and the picture to class, and be prepared to discuss it.

Week 2- A Singular Portrait

Mo. 09/07: LABOR DAY- No class

We. 09/09: Studying Jan Van Eyck's *Arnolfini* Painting (1434)

Readings:

Readings A:

- 1/ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/you/article-2036955/The-Arnolfini-portrait-Jan-van-Eyck-The-mystery-National-Gallery-masterpiece.html>
- 2/ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnolfini_Portrait

Readings B:

- 3/ E. Panofski, "Jan Van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait," in *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, Vol. 64, No. 372 (1934), pp. 117-127.
- 4/ E. Gombrich, *The Story of Art* ([1950]1995), pp. 176-181 [you may skim pp. 176-177].

Theme:

This week, we'll learn to analyze an image by looking at its content, and the historical context in which it was made, including its author(s) and intended audience. We will also reflect on historical sources more generally. What is a primary source? How to use secondary sources? How can we find books and academic articles to help us with our research?

Assignments for 09/09:

- 1/ Look at your notes from 09/02 on the video (Alfredo Jaar) and come prepared to discuss it in class.
- 2/ Read #1 and #2 (Readings A) to familiarize yourself with Jan Van Eyck's painting. Compare the information provided by Readings A with the information provided by Readings B (#3 and #4): the two scholarly articles. Take notes on your findings. Write one paragraph on Readings A and one paragraph on Readings B that summarize the information provided by each group of readings. Then write a third, synthetic paragraph summarizing the main differences between the A and B readings. The paper

should be no longer than a page (single spaced). Be prepared to explain your thoughts in class.

Week 3- A Singular Portrait (continued)

Mo. 09/14: Visit to the Wisconsin Historical Society

We. 09/16: Understanding what is a thesis. We will discuss your assignment for week 2 in class.

Readings:

1. Berger, 83-112
2. [Rampolla, 6-21 & 29-39]

Theme:

What is a thesis? How can we design a research question?

Assignment for 09/14:

Read Berger and try to apply some of his ideas to the *Arnolfini Portrait*. Be prepared to discuss your ideas in class.

Assignment for 09/16: [bring to class]

Re-read the academic articles (#3 and #4) and your notes. For each article, write a short paragraph explaining the author's main thesis in your own words (two paragraphs total), briefly indicating what evidence the author relies on to support his or her thesis. Then write a synthetic paragraph that compares how each article argues a different thesis. Make sure you provide precise references to the readings. The total paper should be no longer than one page.

Week 4- Print Capitalism and Mass-Produced Images

Mo. 09/21: The Diffusion of Texts and Images

We. 09/23: Visit to Memorial Library

Readings:

1. B. Anderson: "The Origins of National Consciousness," in *Imagined Communities* (1991), pp. 37-46.
2. Berger, Chapter 7, 129-155.
3. [Rampolla, 77-97]

Theme:

This week, we'll discuss how to determine which topic or historical question you want to research about.

Assignments:

1/ Choose a primary source that belongs to you or your family and bring it to class on **09/21**. Be prepared to talk about it. You can get ideas on the following website: www.library.illinois.edu/village/primarysource/mod1/index.htm.

Week 5- Cartoons and Stereotypes

Mo. 09/28 & We. 09/30: Caricature, Cartoons, Commercials

Readings:

1. L. Perry Curtis, "Victorian Comic Art," & "Simianizing the Irish Celt," in *Apes and Angels* (1997), pp. 29-57.
2. D. Ciarlo, *Advertising Empire* (2011), pp. 1-21 [you may skip crossed-out sections].

Theme:

This week we'll talk about contextualizing ideas and cross-reading sources. You also need to start working on your research proposal.

Assignment for 09/28:

Read a newspaper or magazine of your choice and find an advertisement that uses the techniques of stereotyping and/or caricaturing. Write a paragraph explaining how the ad works. Write another paragraph reflecting on potential unintended effects on the audience. In a final paragraph, reflect on what additional sources you would need in order to further contextualize and analyze the ad. The paper should be no longer than one page. Attach a copy to your paper and bring it to class on Wednesday **09/28**.

[INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS ON YOUR RESEARCH WITH PROF. BERNAULT]**Week 6- Photography I****Mo. 10/05: The Beginning of Photography****We. 10/07: Surrealism and Visual Play****Readings:**

1. S. Sontag, "In Plato's Cave," *On Photography* (1977), pp. 3-24.
2. G. Wood, *The Surreal Body: Fetish and Fashion* (2007), pp. 10-17 & 56-60.
3. [Rampolla, 77-97]

Theme:

This week we'll start talking about photos and moving images as sources, and reflect on their use by historians.

Assignment:

Write a one-page research proposal and bring it to class on **10/05** (This is a draft. You will have the opportunity to revise it in a couple of weeks). Be sure to clearly state your research question(s) and to attach a short list of primary and secondary sources. On **10/07**, you will read and discuss one another's proposals. You will also talk about the process of revising.

Week 7- Photography II: Investigative Photography, Mid-Century US**Mo. 10/12 & We. 10/14: Dorothea Lange, Robert Frank, Diane Arbus****Readings:**

1. S. Sontag: *Regarding the Pain of Others*, pp. 3-84
2. Browse through *Diane Arbus. An Aperture Monograph* (1972) [book on reserve; most pictures can also be found online]
3. Quotes from Diane Arbus, in *Diane Arbus. An Aperture Monograph* (1972), pp. 1-15.

Theme:

This week, we'll continue to talk about the research process and how to organize an outline and a research proposal.

Assignments:

- 1/ On **10/12** bring in one of the primary sources that you have identified for your research paper. Be prepared to tell your classmates about this source and to explain how you might use it in your research paper.
- 2/ On **10/14** be prepared to discuss one photography of your choice from Arbus, Frank or Lange.

Week 8- War and Moving Images

Mo. 10/19: Reading and Discussing Proposals

We. 10/21: Documenting Wars, and the Politics of Images

Readings:

1. Sontag: *Regarding the Pain of Others*, pp. 85-113
2. [Rampolla: 59-76]

Theme:

This week we will work on revising proposals. We'll also spend some time talking about footnotes and bibliographies.

Assignment for 10/19:

Submit a revised one-page research proposal and a short list of primary and secondary sources.

Assignment for 10/21

Choose one of the one-page papers that you wrote during weeks 2, 3, and 4 and revise it based on the comments that you received. Bring your original paper and your revised paper.

Week 9- Vernacular Images

Mo. 10/26 & We. 10/28: Folk Art, Vernacular Portraits and Family Albums

Readings:

1. S. M. Smith, *Photography on the Color Line* (2004), pp. 1-22 and illus.
2. [Rampolla, 111-145]

Theme:

This week we'll continue to talk about sources and how to construct an archive. We will also work on bibliographies.

Assignments:

Submit two copies of a four-page annotated bibliography for your research paper on **10/26**. It should include at least four primary sources and four secondary sources. On **10/28** you will discuss your writing partner's bibliography.

Week 10- Architectures & Social Constraint

Mo. 11/02 & We. 11/04: Plantation Architecture, Panopticism

Readings:

1. J. M. Vlach, *Back of the Big House. The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (1993), pp. 228-236, & 204-209 [illus.].
2. M. Foucault: "Panopticism," in *Discipline & Punish* (1995 [1977]) pp. 195-228.
3. [Rampolla, 59-62]

Theme:

This week we'll talk about writing. How do you tell an engaging story and make a historical intervention at the same time?

Assignment for 11/02:

Write a two-page paper introducing the reader to the most interesting idea, image, character or event in your research paper. This paper might ultimately serve as part of

the introduction to your research paper. You will spend time in class reading and discussing one another's papers.

Week 11- Collecting, Exhibiting, Consuming

Mo. 11/09: Visual Culture, Consumerism, Museums

We. 11/11: Writing Day: work on your research paper outline.

Readings:

1. R. Barthes, "Toys," *Mythologies* [1957] in *The Object Reader*, edited by F. Candlin and R. Guins (2009), pp. 39-40.
2. N. Harris, "Museums, Merchandising, and Popular Taste: The Struggle for Influence" in *Cultural Excursions: Marketing Appetites and Cultural Tastes in Modern America* (1990), pp. 56-81.
3. [Rampolla, 96]

Theme:

This week we'll continue to talk about writing. How do you write a compelling introduction and organize your ideas?

Assignment for 11/11

Write a one to two-page outline for your essay. Start with a good title and a short paragraph explaining your thesis and its historical significance. Then list two to four main sections for the paper. Each should have a sub-heading (title), and a sentence or two explaining the main idea of the section and the sources you use. Do not include footnotes. Only quote scholarly works briefly (Bernault 1999) if your thesis challenges or complements them. You will bring your outline to class on **11/16**.

Week 12- Social Media and Body Image

Mo. 11/16 & We. 11/18:

Readings:

1. A. Balsamo: On the Cutting Edge: Cosmetic Surgery and Technological Production of the Gendered Body," *camera obscura* 22 (1992), [pp. 207-214]: 685-695
2. [Rampolla, 98-111]

Theme:

This week we'll continue to talk about writing. How do you quote sources? When is it best to paraphrase?

Assignments:

1/Bring your two-page outline to class on **11/16**.

2/Choose a short TV News, or a newspaper. Select an interesting quote from the source. Write it down verbatim and explain in one paragraph why it is compelling. Then paraphrase the quote—taking it out of the quotation marks and restating it (capturing its essence) in your own words. Bring both the verbatim quotation and your paraphrase to class on **11/18**.

[INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS ON YOUR RESEARCH WITH PROF. BERNAULT]

Week 13- Communicating Your Research

Mo. 11/23: Public Speaking

We. 11/25: Study Day. Work on your writing partner's marked draft.

Theme:

This week we'll spend some time talking about public speaking and communicating our research findings through formal oral presentations.

Assignment 11/23

Submit a four-page draft of part of your research paper. Be sure to indicate where the draft fits into your outline. Bring two copies to class, one for the instructor and one for your writing partner. If you wish, you can also attach a revised two-page outline for your paper. You will get these drafts back on week 14.

Week 14- Research and Results

Mo. 11/30: Writing partner's marked draft due back. Be prepared to talk about the draft you've marked.

We. 12/02: Student Presentations

Theme:

Memorial Library and WHS: Wrap-up loose ends in your research

Week 15 Research and Results

Mo. 12/07 and Th. 12/09: Student Presentations

Assignment:

Final Essay Due (Date TBA)

