

Course Syllabus
COURSE CODE - CMM 233G
Photojournalism

PROFESSOR

Rosamaria Mancini

roseymancini@gmail.com

Class Hours: Tuesday, Thursday 14:00 - 18:00

Office Hours: by appointment Tuesday, Thursday 13:00 -14:00

COURSE PREREQUISITES

No course prerequisite

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class is designed for communication students seeking to get acquainted with photography. The course will involve exploring Brussels and telling news stories through the medium of photography.

There will be both classroom sessions and classes held off campus, on location in Brussels. The classes on location include practical field work where students can apply the photography theory they have learned in the classroom and put it into practice, shooting individually and as a group on specific assignments and topics including news, people, travel, architecture, food, landscape and nature.

The classroom sessions focus on theoretical concepts in photograph, such as the concept of the “decisive moment” in the world of photojournalism, the idea that photographs turn the world into a set of collectible objects we own and the human desire to see the truth in photographs however troubling it may be. In addition, the history of photojournalism as an interconnected story, composition/design, ethics and photojournalism in the digital age will also be studied.

Taking photographs, and improving your picture-taking skills, are an integral part of this course. This means you'll need a camera. A 35mm DSLR camera. Phone cameras will not work. If you do not have a 35mm DSLR camera you cannot take this course.

You must also be a trooper. To successfully complete this course, you must be willing to walk places, you must be willing to work on your own, you must be willing to improvise and change course at a moment's notice. The news business requires flexibility and this course requires that as well.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course's learning objectives are in line with the following Discipline Learning Outcomes for the Bachelor in Communications Sciences as ratified by NVAO (Accreditation Organization of the Netherlands and Flanders): DLO 1, DLO 2, DLO 5, DLO 6, DLO 11.

By the end of this course students will have gained the following knowledge, skills and attitudes:

Knowledge

1. Understand and explain key concepts of photography theory;
2. Understand how photographs communicate visually in a story and individually;
3. Understand the rights and responsibilities of a photojournalist;
4. Understand key theories of photography a grasp of the literature surrounding photography theory and be able to put it into practice;
5. Learn about the history of photojournalism and the impact photographs have in society.

Skills

1. Tell news and feature stories with photographs;
2. Learn how to write captions and text that accompany photographs;
3. Develop creativity, critical thinking and problem solving skills;
4. Learn to analyze and critique photographs;
5. Gain a better understanding of camera techniques.

Attitudes

1. Be attentive and sensitive to the ethical issues related to making visual images.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Textbook:

Photography; Barbara London, Jim Stone and John Upton; Pearson 11th Edition.

Reserved Readings:

The Ongoing Moment; Dyer, Geoff; Vintage 2007

Photographs of Agony, Berger, John; New Society Magazine, 1972

The Decisive Moment, Cartier-Bresson, Henri; 1952

On Photography; Sontag, Susan; 1977

Ethics reading packet – prepared/distributed by Prof. Mancini.

COURSE CALENDAR AND READINGS

WEEK 1, 23/25 MAY: Course introduction. Syllabus review. What is photojournalism, how do you do the job, what makes something news worthy? Getting to know the camera. Taking photographs, where/how to start.

Readings:

Photography, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2

WEEK 2, 30 MAY/1 JUNE: Composition – content, framing, backgrounds. Understanding your lens. Captions – how these short sentences can help tell your story. Hard news photography, being ready and reactive. Fieldwork – hard news story.

Readings:

Photography, Chapter 3 and Chapter 12

The Decisive Moment, Henri Cartier-Bresson

WEEK 3, 6/8 JUNE: Lighting and Color – exposure and characteristics. Feature news photography. The need to photograph everything...is it ruining our experience? Fieldwork – feature story.

Readings:

Photography, Chapter 5

On Photography, Susan Sontag

WEEK 4, 13/15 JUNE: Photo analysis and interpretation – the rules. Photo essays and slideshows – how to put together a story with multiple photographs. Final project assignment.

Fieldwork – food story.

Readings:

Photography, Chapter 12

WEEK 5, 20/22 JUNE: History of photojournalism - the first players and their impact. The development of photography as a conversation.

Going macro – learning to get close. Field work – nature story.

Readings:

Photography, Chapter 13

The Ongoing Moment, Geoff Dyer

WEEK 6, 27/29 JUNE: Ethics – what you should/should not do and the organizations governing your work. Photographing difficult situations. What is this type of photography good for? Making us feel bad about ourselves and despairing in humanity? Fieldwork – poverty story

Readings:

Ethics Packet

Photographs of Agony, John Berger.

WEEK 7, 4/6 JULY: Final Project Presentations. Final essay due.

COURSE ASSESSMENT:

Class Participation	15 percent
Fieldwork/Photographic Assignments	40 percent
Essay	15 percent
Final Project	30 percent
TOTAL =	100 percent

GRADING SCALE OF VESALIUS COLLEGE

Vesalius College grading policy, in line with the Flemish Educational norms, is now as follows:

Letter grade	Scale of 20	Scale of 100
A	17.0-20.0	85-100
A-	16.1-16.9	81-84
B+	15.3-16.0	77-80
B	14.5-15.2	73-76
B-	13.7-14.4	69-72
C+	13.1-13.6	66-68
C	12.3-13.0	62-65
C-	11.5-12.2	58-61
D+	10.7-11.4	54-57
D	10.0-10.6	50-53
F	0-9.9	0-49

Additional Course Policies

Teaching and Learning Methods

Interactive Professor Lectures, Videos, Class Discussions and Peer Analysis.

Class Participation

You are to come to class on time with materials and equipment needed. The camera must be brought to EVERY class. You expected to actively participate in class and with imagination and creativity. You should also feel free to ask questions, as this enhances learning. At the end of the course, your overall participation grade is determined based

on your involvement in class discussions, demonstration of preparation/knowledge of case or reading facts, your interpretation/analysis of the material and your response to other student's work/analysis.

If you cannot attend class or a field trip for any reason, you are responsible for obtaining notes on information covered during the time missed and make up assignments (if still possible). The ability to meet deadlines is a crucial skill for all communications professionals, especially journalists, and therefore NO late assignments will be accepted.

Fieldwork/Photographic Assignments

Each week you will go out on location in a different part of the city and take photographs using the skills learned in-class. The assignment, once completed, will be presented to your classmates the following class in the PPT format.

Subjects: Hard News Story – Feature Story – Food Story – Poverty Story – Nature Story.

Each of these assignments is graded according to the criteria outlined in the grading rubric (see below).

Essay

Prepare an 5/6 single page single spaced essay based on one of the photographic theories discussed in class and explain how you implemented that theory into your photographic assignments this semester. For example, according to photojournalist Henri Cartier-Bresson there is an almost magical split-second in which the events in the world, such as interactions between people, movement, light and form, combine in perfect visual harmony, and that is when you should take your shot. Explain how this concept impacted your hard news or feature photography. See rubric below.

Final Project Assignment Details

Prepare a 12-14 photograph slide show. The slideshow will be a story about what "Brussels means to me...". Just like any good story, it will have a structure – a beginning, a middle and an end. You can use a few photographs from the field work you participated in during this course, but the slide show must include photos that you take on your own. You are to write captions for each of your photographs that not only help to tell your story but also create smooth transitions from one photo to the next. This final project will be presented to your colleagues in class.

RUBRICS

FIELDWORK/PHOTO ASSIGNMENTS RUBRIC	Photo content	Communication of news/topic/theme	Caption/Writing	Presentation/Technology
<p>21-25 points</p>	<p>Composition is very engaging, interesting and expressive. Extensive thought went into subject and treatment choices. Experimentation led to very creative and imaginative perspectives.</p>	<p>Representation is genuine, insightful, in depth and meaningful. Photo(s) expression is meaningful and poignant.</p>	<p>Extremely thoughtful, written in complete sentences, and descriptive. Grammatically correct 100 percent.</p>	<p>Presented in a professional, non-distracting manner. Student follows all tech expectations, uploads files correctly, and saves files in the correct file format.</p>
<p>16-20 points</p>	<p>Composition benefits and emphasizes the meaning and message of the photo. Expression is emphasized and genuine. Subjects are well chosen. Lighting, location choices and perspectives are interesting and creative.</p>	<p>Representation shows some good insight and meaningful consideration. Good expression and depth. Photo(s) are very expressive.</p>	<p>Very thoughtful, written in complete sentences, and descriptive. Grammatically correct 80%.</p>	<p>Presented appropriately. Student follows most of the tech expectations, uploads files correctly, and saves files in the correct file format.</p>

<p>11-15 points</p>	<p>Some composition conventions are used to benefit the meaning and message of the photo. Photo explores expression. Subjects, lighting, locations, posing and perspectives show somewhat limited thought.</p>	<p>Fundamental representation and insight is shown. Some care and attention to detail is shown, but authenticity is lacking. Photo(s) are somewhat expressive.</p>	<p>Somewhat thoughtful, written in complete sentences, and descriptive. Grammatically correct 70%.</p>	<p>Not presented according to specifications outlined. Student follows some of the tech expectations, uploads files correctly, and saves files in the correct file format.</p>
<p>0-10 points</p>	<p>Elements of composition are weak. Subject matter, lighting, locations and perspectives are bland and unremarkable, resulting in a last-minute appearance.</p>	<p>Representation shows limited personal perspective and lacks depth of personal thought and necessary detail. Limited care shown. Photo(s) do not express ideas effectively.</p>	<p>Does not meet any of the above criteria.</p>	<p>Student does not follow presentation specification and does not follow the tech expectations correctly.</p>

ESSAY RUBRIC	16-20 Points	11-15 points	6-10 points	0-5 points
Main Idea/Organization	Clearly presents a main idea and supports it throughout the paper. Well-planned and well-thought out. Includes title, introduction, statement of main idea, transitions and conclusion.	There is a main idea supported throughout most of the paper. Good overall organization, includes the main organizational tools.	Vague sense of a main idea, weakly supported throughout the paper. There is a sense of organization, although some of the organizational tools are used weakly or missing	No main idea. No sense of organization
Organization: Paragraphs	All paragraphs have clear ideas, are supported with examples and have smooth transitions.	Most paragraphs have clear ideas, are supported with some examples and have transitions.	Some paragraphs have clear ideas, support from examples may be missing and transitions are weak.	Paragraphs lack clear ideas.
Content	Exceptionally well-presented and argued; ideas are detailed, well-developed, supported with specific evidence & facts, as well as examples and specific details.	Well-presented and argued; ideas are detailed, developed and supported with evidence and details, mostly specific.	Content is sound and solid; ideas are present but not particularly developed or supported; some evidence, but usually of a generalized nature.	Content is not sound.
Style: Sentence Structure/Word Choice/Tone	Sentences are clear and varied in pattern, from simple to complex, with excellent use of punctuation. There is clear use of a	Sentences are clear but may lack variation; and there may be a few punctuation errors. There is an attempt at a personal style	Sentences are generally clear but may have awkward structure or unclear content. There is little attempt at style; reads as flat and	Sentences aren't clear. No attempt at style.

	<p>personal and unique style of writing, suited to audience and purpose; the paper holds the reader's interest with ease.</p>	<p>but style of writing may be awkward or unsuited to audience and purpose; the reader may lose interest in some sections of the paper.</p>	<p>perhaps uninteresting in content, which is usually generalized and clichéd.</p>	
<p>Style: Details and Examples</p>	<p>Large amounts of specific examples and detailed descriptions.</p>	<p>Some use of specific examples and detailed descriptions. May have extended examples that go on for too long.</p>	<p>Little use of specific examples and details; mostly generalized examples and little description.</p>	<p>No use of examples</p>