CMM 233G

Photojournalism

**Number of ECTS credits:** 6

**Course Prerequisite**
No course prerequisites

**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.
Course Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

In terms of 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.

In terms of 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.

In terms of attitudes

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

Course Materials

Required Textbook:

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 Assessment

Students’ overall course grade is calculated as follows:

- Class Participation – 10 percent
- Fieldwork/Photographic Assignments – 45 percent
- Essay – 15 percent
- Final Project – 30 percent

Grading Scale of Vesalius College
Vesalius College grading policy follows the American system of letter grades, which correspond to a point scale from 0 – 100. **All assignments (including exams) must be graded on the scale of 0-100.** To comply with the Flemish Educational norms, professors should on request also provide the conversion of the grade on the Flemish scale of 0-20. The conversion table below outlines the grade equivalents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>Scale of 100 (VeCo Grading Scale)</th>
<th>Scale of 20 (Flemish System)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-100</td>
<td>17.0-20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>81-84</td>
<td>16.1-16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>77-80</td>
<td>15.3-16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>14.5-15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>69-72</td>
<td>13.7-14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>66-68</td>
<td>13.1-13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>62-65</td>
<td>12.3-13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>58-61</td>
<td>11.5-12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>54-57</td>
<td>10.7-11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>50-53</td>
<td>10.0-10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>0-9.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Academic Honesty Statement**

Academic dishonesty is NOT tolerated in this course.

Academic honesty is not only an ethical issue but also the foundation of scholarship. Cheating and plagiarism are therefore serious breaches of academic integrity.

Following the College policy, cheating and plagiarism cases will be communicated in writing to the Associate Dean and submitted to the Student Conduct Committee for disciplinary action.

If you refer to someone else’s work, appropriate references and citations must be provided. Grammar, spelling and punctuation count, so use the tools necessary to correct before handing in assignments.

Please consult the Section “Avoiding Plagiarism” in the College Catalogue for further guidance.
**Course Schedule (Summer semester)**

The summer semester comprises 7 weeks  
(6 weeks x 2 sessions of 4 hours, and one exam week)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic and Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Week 1 | Course Introduction  
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. |
| Week 3 | Lighting and Color – exposure and characteristics. Feature news photography. The need to photograph everything...is it ruining our experience? Fieldwork – feature story. |
| Week 4 | Photo analysis and interpretation – the rules. Photo essays and slideshows – how to put together a story with multiple photographs. Final project assignment. |
| Week 5 | 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. |
|       | 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 |
| Week 6 | Final Project Presentations. Final Essay due. |