

Getting the Picture: Photojournalism in the U.S. and Russia



This course explores the history, aesthetics, and theory of photojournalism in America, Russia, and beyond. With a focus on building the skills of visual analysis, students will pore over the photo-essays which once filled the pages of illustrated magazines and daily newspapers. Just as the Internet does today, the picture press of the last century significantly defined global visual knowledge of the world. The vast majority of photographs printed and consumed around the world appeared on the pages of magazines and newspapers. These pictures they almost always heavily edited, presented in carefully devised sequences, and printed alongside text. The picture press was as expansive as it was appealing, as informative as it was propagandistic, regularly delivered to newsstands and doorsteps for the everyday consumer of news, goods, celebrity, and politics. Through firsthand visual analysis of the picture presses of yesteryear, this course will consider the ongoing meaning, circulation, and power of images as they shape a worldview. In so doing we will both explore the relationship between photojournalistic practice of the past with that of our present, from the printed page to digital media, as well as the ethical quandaries posed by the camera's intervention into/shaping of modern history.

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Required Texts (at Labyrinth):

Jason Hill and Vanessa R. Schwartz, eds., *Getting the Picture: The Visual Culture of the News*

John Steinbeck and Robert Capa, *A Russian Journal*

All other readings will be available on **Blackboard**

Requirements/Grading:

Participation and Attendance	25%
Museum Visit Write-up	10%
In class presentation and write-up	25%
Short paper (newspaper event)	15%
Final Project	25%

Assignments:

Participation: You are expected to be an active and present participant. You must always have a copy of text in front of you to receive full participation credit. You are expected to be an engaged listener for your classmates' presentations, and should be ready to respond with questions and observations.

Museum Visit Write-up: Students will take a self-guided trip to “Then They Came for Me: Incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II” at the International Center of Photography in New York sometime during the first half of our course. By the midterm week, you should have submitted a write-up response to your experience of the exhibition. Please see the guidelines for this paper in the Assignments folder on Blackboard.

In Class Presentation and Write-ups: For roughly each class, one class member will bring a photograph (and possibly headline) to open our discussion. This image should be drawn from contemporary press sources (today), be it digital or print (but likely digital). Whenever possible, the choice should highlight one or more issues raised in the day's readings. These 5-10 minute presentations should open further lines of discussion with the class (1-3 questions). The presenter will have one week from the time of the presentation to formalize their findings in a short paper (850 words).

Newspaper paper: For this short paper (800-1000 words), each student will seek out a photo-illustrated news story from an archived newspaper (pre-1945) and provide a detailed visual and textual analysis of the coverage.

Final Project: This final project (roughly 10 pages) will build on the skills students have developed over the course of the semester, including close image analysis and media literacy. Suggestions for final paper topics and the overall frames of the project will be available in the Assignments folder. Students will also present a 3-5 minute overview of this project (in development) in our last class meeting.

Course Policies:

Attendance: As our course will be based primarily on in-class discussion, it will be essential that you attend all class sessions. One absence will be allowed without penalty. Each subsequent absence will lower your attendance and class participation grade by one third of a letter grade (A- would become B+ and so on). Only emergency situations will be considered excused absences. Arriving late to class habitually will also lower your attendance grade.

Readings: Required readings should be completed in advance of the class session for which they are assigned. Please read the texts and watch films attentively and critically, and come prepared to discuss. **Bring the assigned reading to class (required).**

Written assignments: A full letter grade will be deducted for each day the assignment is late. Assignments more than 1 week late will not be accepted. All documents should be WORD docs, 12- point font. They should be uploaded to Blackboard (not emailed!) by the assigned deadline.

Technology: Laptops are **discouraged** in class as a distraction both to yourself and those around you. Should you choose to use a laptop, be sure that you are an engaged member of the class. You will lose participation credit as you lose yourself in your computer. Do not use your cell phone in class. Please leave if you must text, call, or email. Use of your phone in class will lead to loss of participation credit.

Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty: To quote Princeton's statements on Academic Integrity: "Trust is the central ethic of such an intellectual community, in several respects. You should be able to trust that your ideas, no matter how new or unusual, will be respected and not ridiculed; to trust that your ideas will be seriously considered and evaluated; and to trust that you can express your own ideas without fear that someone else will take credit for them." (<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/pages/intro/>). Remember that plagiarism does a disservice to you, your education at Princeton, and our academic community. Please review Princeton's policy's regarding Academic Honesty and pay careful attention to the requirements of each assignment in our course. We are interested only in your careful close reading and synthesis of the works, texts, images in light of our lectures.

SYLLABUS:

Week 1: Introductions

Tu 2/6: Introduction: Where do we get the news? How do we see and read the news?

- (in class) Sontag, "Photography, A Little Summa," *At the Same Time: Essays and Speeches*

Th 2/8: What is photojournalism?

- A.J. Ezickson, "The Train, Plane, Pigeon, Wire, and Radio Carry the Picture" *Get That Picture! The Story of the News Cameraman*
 - Wilson Hicks, "What is Photojournalism?: The Guiding Principles," in R. Schuneman, ed., *Photographic Communication*, 19-35
- Sign up for presentation days**

Week 2: Keywords and Celebrity

Tu 2/13: Introduction continued

- Jason E. Hill and Vanessa R. Schwartz, "General Introduction," *Getting the Picture: The Visual Culture of the News (GTP hereafter)*
- Raymond Williams, "Communication," "Image," "Media," "Subjective" from *Keywords*

Th 2/15: Tolstoy and Celebrity ([Zhi-Shui's presentation](#))

- Ryan Linkof, "Celebrity Photos and Stolen Moments," *GTP*
- Tolstoy as media sensation: selections from *NYT*(1910)
- optional: William Nickell, "The Family Crisis as Public Event"

Week 3: Documentary

Mo 2/19 FILM SCREENING – 4:30, East Pyne 010

Tu 2/20: Pussy Riot -- Documentary discussion

- See Week 3 folder for readings (view ahead of documentary screening)

Th 2/22: National Geographic ([Tomi's presentation](#))

- Gilbert H. Grosvenor, "Young Russia: The Land of Unlimited Possibilities" (1914)
- Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins, "The Photograph as an Intersection of Gazes: The Example of National Geographic"

Week 4: War and Revolution

Tu 2/27: WWI ([Christian's presentation](#))

- Caitlin Patrick, "Photographer on the Western Front," *GTP*
- Ulrich Keller, "Pictorial Press Reportage and Censorship in the First World War," *GTP*
- select front pages of war

Tu 2/27: talk by Ariella Azoulay, "Unlearning the Archive and the Case for Reparations (4:30-6pm, 010 East Pyne)

Th 3/1: Revolution and the storming of the Winter Palace ([Claire's presentation](#))

- John Reed, "The Soviets Take Power" and Louise Bryant, "Smolny and the Winter Palace," *Eyewitnesses to the Russian Revolution*
- Maria Gough, "Press," in Matthew S. Witkovsky and Devin Fore, eds., *Revoliutsiia! Demonstratsiia!*
- optional: view (through Blackboard) Sergei Eisenstein's *October*

Th 3/1: Panel on the Refugee Crisis: Reporting on the Front Lines in Greece and Canada (4:30–5:30pm, 144 Simpson International Building)

Week 5: Social Documentary, Socialist Documents

Tu 3/6: Social documentary ([Jonathan's presentation](#))

- Martha Rosler, "in, around, and afterthoughts (on documentary photography)," in *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, ed. Richard Bolton
- Leah Bendavid-Val, "Photographing the 1930s: Differences in Focus," *Propaganda and Dreams: Photographing the 1930s in the USSR and the US*
- "Ragged, Hungry, Broke, Harvest Workers Live in Squaller." *San Francisco News* (March 10, 1936)
- "What Does the 'New Deal' Mean to This Mother and Her Children?" *San Francisco News* (March 11, 1936).
- "Dust Bowl Update." *Life* (Aug. 1979): 9.

Th 3/8: Socialist realist photography; The Filippov Family + ([Tiger's presentation](#))

- Sergei Tret'iakov, "The Writer and the Socialist Village," "The New Leo Tolstoy" (optional: "From the Photo-Series to the Extended Photo-observation")
- Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer"

Week 6: Illustrated Magazines

Tu 3/13: *USSR in Construction*

- David King, from *The Commissar Vanishes*
- Erika Wolf, "When Photographs Speak, To Whom Do They Talk: The Origins and Audience of *USSR in Construction*"
- Mia Fineman, "Politics and Persuasion," *Faking It: Manipulated Photography before Photoshop*

Th 3/15: *Life, Fortune*

- Wilson Hicks, from "The Editor," *Words and Pictures: An Introduction to Photojournalism* (excerpts)
- "Speaking of Pictures... This is How A Halftone Is Made," *LIFE* (July 19, 1937)
- Erika Doss, "Introduction" from *Looking at LIFE Magazine*
- Zeynep Gursel, "A Short History of Wirephoto," **GTP**
- Nadya Bair, "Never Alone: Photo Editing and Collaboration," **GTP**

Spring Break

Week 7: Beyond the Home Front

Tu 3/27: Russians in America, Americans in Russia ([Anna's Presentation](#))

- excerpts from Margaret Bourke-White's *Eyes on Russia*; short pieces from the NYTimes
- excerpts from Ilf and Petrov's *American Road Trip* (optional and highly recommended: "Columbus Reaches the Shore")

Th 3/29: WWII ([Emely's presentation](#))

- David Shneer, "Picturing Grief: Soviet Holocaust Photography at the Intersection of History and Memory," *American Historical Review*, 115, no. 1: 28-52
- Georges Didi-Huberman, *Images in Spite of All*, 1-17
- Newspaper coverage of WWII (selections)

NYC Museum write-up due by 11:59 pm on Friday, 3/30

Week 8: Family of Man

Tu 4/3: Family of Man ([Audrey's presentation](#))

- Roland Barthes, "The Great Family of Man," *Mythologies*
- Fred Turner, "The Family of Man and the Politics of Attention during the Cold War," *Public Culture* 24.1 (2012): 55-84

Th 4/5: A Russian Journal ([John's presentation](#))

- Steinbeck and Capa, *A Russian Journal*

Week 9: The Cold War and the World Stage

Tu 4/10: Global Cold War ([George's presentation](#))

- Jordan Bear, "Magnum Orbis: Photographs from the End(s) of the Earth," *Visual Studies* 25.2 (2010): 111-23
- "America and Russia: To Equal the Communist Talent for Persuasion We Must Develop Persuasiveness of Our Own," *Life* (July 30, 1945)
- Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "The U.S. Communist Party," *Life* (July 29, 1947)
- Magazines: *Soviet Life* and *Soviet Culture*, selections

Th 4/12: **In PUAM –1960s** -- Race relations in US ([Kateryn's presentation](#))

- Gordon Parks, "How It Feels To Be Black", *LIFE* (August 16, 1963)
- Gordon Parks, "The Long Search for Pride" *LIFE* (August 16, 1963)
- Erika Doss, "Visualizing Black America: Gordon Parks at Life, 1948-1971," in *Looking at Life*, ed. Erika Doss

Newspaper paper due by 5pm Friday

Week 10: Journalism Above and Below Ground

Tu 4/17: Samizdat ([Becca's presentation](#))

- Albert Parry, "Samizdat is Russia's Underground Press" (*NYT*, 1970)
- Excerpts from Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago* (*NYT*, 1973)

Th 4/19: Abu Ghraib ([Nate's presentation](#))

- Errol Morris, "Will the Real Hooded Man Please Stand Up?" *Believing is Seeing (Observations on the Mysteries of Photography)*
- John Berger, "Photographs of Agony," *About Looking*
- Azoulay, "The Ethic of the Spectator: The Citizenry of Photography," *Afterimage* 33.2 (2005): 38-44

Week 11: Regarding the Pain of Others

Tu 4/24: Burhan Ozbilici and the 2017 World Press Photo of the Year ([Jackie's presentation](#))

- TBD (Guardian, LA Times, NY Times coverage)

Tu 4/24 BURHAN OZBILICI LECTURE 4:30pm, McCormick 101

Th 4/26: Regarding the Pain of Others ([David's presentation](#))

- Susan Sontag, "Looking at War," *New Yorker*
- Judith Butler, "Torture and the Ethics of Photography: Thinking with Sontag," *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?*

Week 12: Digital Conclusions

Tu 5/1: Photojournalism in the Digital Age ([Alice's presentation](#))

- Fred Ritchin, "Of Pixels and Paradox," *After Photography*
- Sam Gregory, "Human Rights Made Visible: New Dimensions to Anonymity, Consent, and Intentionality" in *Sensible Politics: The Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism* ed. Meg McLagan and Yates McKee
- Liam Kennedy, "The Situation Room, Washington, DC, 2011," *GTP*

Th 5/3: Presentations TBD

Final Project due on Dean's Date by 5pm