

SOCI 5373

Visual Sociology

Spring 2003

LaFountain

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homepage: westga.edu/~marcl/
Hours: M 9:30-12, 1:30-3:30; T & R 9:30-11, W 9:30-12 & 5-5:30; other times

Texts *Ways of Seeing* - Berger
Sociology and Visual Representation - Chaplin

Additional required readings are available in a coursepack that you can purchase at *Ditto's*. Additional readings will be distributed for graduate students that are not in the coursepack. Resources will also be placed on reserve in the library.

Equipment You'll need a camera. It need not be expensive and you do not need technical expertise. You are responsible for developing your own photos. All images used must be prints (vs slides or video). If digital format is used, be sure that prints are available for in-class presentations. All images used must be prepared for this course; you cannot use photos previously taken (except for the "Opening Exercise). Photos presented should be matted (you'll all use the same basic format – to be discussed at beginning of course).

Email You'll need email and access to the internet. Send me your address ASAP (please include your name). I will create a list that we'll use for discussions, sharing information and resources, distributing assignments, etc. You are responsible for any assignments distributed via email, so please read yours regularly. As soon as possible, familiarize yourself with the International Visual Sociology Association. Visit their website (www.visualsociology.org) and subscribe to their listserve (IVSA listserv). To subscribe to IVSA, send a message to listserv@pdomain.uwindsor.ca - do not write anything in the subject box – in the message box write: SUB IVSA yourfirstname yoursurname. Familiarize yourself with online journals.

Attendance and Participation Required. Unexcused absences will negatively impact your final grade (see grading below). Particular situations will be considered on an individual basis. This is a combined seminar and workshop. Your **active, informed** participation in discussions, presentations, and critiques is essential. An important part of his course is becoming involved in discussions of the readings and each other' s photographic presentations.

IMAGE-BASED RESEARCH PROJECTS

(all dates below, except April 24, are tentative and subject to adjustment)

OPENING EXERCISE: From a magazine, newspaper, or other publication that you own, or from a photograph you shot previously, present one matted image, with caption, that highlights an aspect of the social world. Be specific about the particular sociological idea you are focussing on and indicate what sociological concept you are using to develop your focus. To be presented in class. **Due Thurs, Jan 16**

SHORT PROJECTS: The following 2 projects are designed to develop procedures and ideas for the visual analysis of social reality. All are to be presented in class on the due date. You will be expected to discuss each of the photographs and the project as a whole. Our main concern is content and composition of photos, especially their sociological significance. There should be 4 prints/project. Prints should have neatly typed captions numbered in the order you want them to be read. This system of captions and numbering should be used in the Final Project also. 1) visually present one of the following

sociological concepts: disability, ethnicity, social inequality, power, domination, equality, and 2) visually present a symbolic landscape These will be presented in class. **Due Thurs, Jan 30**

CRITICAL ANALYSIS: Present one matted photograph, with caption, plus a 4 pg. sociologically-informed critical commentary (sociologically-informed means you must utilize/apply the ideas of at least one sociologist whose name and work should be identified in the body of your paper). These will be presented in class. **Due Tues, March 4**

FINAL PROJECT: Complete a visual sociology research project (either empirical or critical). It should include a minimum of 10 photos and at least 15 pages of text - typed, double-spaced, with appropriate bibliography in ASA style (see handout). Your project can be on any topic relevant to this course's subject matter. I encourage you to discuss your topic with me. It should include a minimum of 7-8 current sociological references.

The first version of your paper is due in class, Thurs April 10. This version is NOT a rough draft. Think of it as a final, completed paper – well organized and well argued, title page, page numbering, bibliography, carefully edited and proofread, etc. I will grade the first paper and return it with comments. **Submit the rewritten paper on the last day of class for this course, April 24 @ 11 am.** The grade on the final paper will be based on how well you address the comments on the first version. The two grades will be averaged to arrive at the final project grade. When you submit the final version, attach the first version so I can see how you dealt with the initial set of comments. Failure to include the first paper with my comments will cost you 25 points off the final average, so please don't forget. Unless arrangements are made in advance, papers turned in later than the specified times will suffer a grade loss of 10% per day until it is received.

Midterm Exam There will be a mid-term exam (**approx. March 13**) dealing with selected issues and problems in visual sociological research and analysis. You'll choose from a list of discussion questions. This will be given as an overnight take-home exam (due the following day, not the following class period).

Class Presentations You will make in-class presentations on two of the reading that you are doing. We will discuss the details of your presentation at the beginning of the course.

Grading	Opening Exercise	5 pts
	Short projects	20 pts (2 projects/10 pts each)
	Critical analysis	15 pts
	Midterm exam	20 pts
	Class presentations	20 pts (2 presentations/10 pts each)
	Final Project	60 pts

A=126-140 B=112-125 C=98-111 F=below 111

Each unexcused absence will result in loss of 3 points from the final grade average.

Course learning outcomes:

- 1) to learn the approach of visual sociology as a type of qualitative sociology that produces and interprets visual images, here specifically photographic images. to learn ways of doing and **applying** visual sociological analysis to concrete situations and issues

- 2) to learn compositional and critical skills related to the analysis of the images produced by others **and** those produced by **you**, the visual sociologist. technical camera skills will not be taught, though you will be encouraged to learn them
- 3) to develop *visual literacy* as a skill necessary for understanding and critiquing contemporary social life in a media oriented culture by understanding how photographs and similar images organize, structure and transform social and personal life. to identify the social forces which produce, distribute, and utilize images
- 5) to produce a research project worthy of submission to a conference for presentation and/or for review by a sociology journal

The above course learning outcomes are directly to the following Sociology Masters program learning outcomes: to understand and apply qualitative methodology, to understand and apply sociological theory, to think critically about sociology and issues of social inequality, and to communicate effectively orally and in writing.

Tentative topics and readings: * = in your coursepack

- #1 qualitative methodology and visual sociology
an example of visual sociology research: *"Tattoo Narratives: The Intersection of the Body, Self-Identity and Society" - Kosut
"Seeing Beyond Belief: Cultural Studies as an Approach to Analysing the Visual" – Lister & Wells
- #2 what do photographs tell us?
*"Photographs within the Sociological Research Process" – Prosser & Schwartz
*"Talking about pictures: a case for photo elicitation" - Harper
"Introduction" - Chaplin
chapter 1-2 in Tagg (*The Burden of Representation* – book on reserve)
"Discourse Analysis: text, intertextuality and content" - Rose
- #3 empirical and critical visual sociology: the photo as resource and/or topic
* "Visual evidence: *A Seventh Man*, the specified generalization, and the work of the reader" - Becker
*"In Our Glory: Photography and Black Life" - hooks
Essay #7 in *Ways of Seeing* - Berger
chaps 4 & 5 – Chaplin
- #4 a critical visual methodology
*"Pedagogy and the Critical Practice of Photography" - Giroux
"Visualizing histories: experiences of space and place in photographs by Greg Staats and Jeffrey Thomas" – Walsh
*"Facing Difference" & *"Representing the Black Male Body" – hooks
essay #1 in *Ways of Seeing* - Berger
chaps 1-2 - Chaplin
- #5 chap 3 - Chaplin (grad students)
Essay #3 in *Ways of Seeing* - Berger