

# There is nothing worse than a brilliant image of a fuzzy concept

— ANSEL ADAMS

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Photographs are made, not taken. Commit this to memory. Like a painting, drawing, or print, you are responsible for every subject represented within the frame of a photographic image. Whether you are setting up scenes to photograph, documenting on a street, shooting still lifes or landscapes, you edit everything into a single frame of a photograph.

What is the purpose of making a photographic image? What is the function of that representation for an individual? For a group? Can images convey complex ideas, visually? If so, how? Artists make images to convey ideas. Whether it is to relay beauty or social injustice, or irony, all photographs are political. In this class we will be exploring your motivations for making images, alongside learning the techniques required to making images.

We will be asking many questions in this course about the function and importance of photographic representation. I will introduce basic elements of photography, darkroom (printing), and issues of contemporary art and popular imagery.

## HOW TO GET AN A:

Grades are earned and a reflection of your progress and commitment to your work. "A" work is well above and beyond average, a piece which is technically perfect and also conveys a complex and focused argument, in it you have considered your viewer. "C" work is average, the piece looks ok, is mildly interesting and in between the two is "B" work, above average, but not well above and beyond. Turn in your work on time, give over one hundred percent of your effort for each assignment, be an active participant in class, work diligently during class, be on time and present for all classes, and you will earn an A.

Each assignment will be graded on:

- /attendance and work habits in class
- /the quality of the work (dustfree prints, no scratches, proper highlight and shadows, even prints)
- /your willingness to challenge yourself
- /your concepts (are they focused, interesting to a viewer,  
NO BROAD CONCEPTS --man vs. nature, war, peace, love, etc.)

Late assignments will not be accepted, unless an emergency warrants it. Emergencies are the major things; death in the family, serious illness, or another situation of that magnitude. It is your responsibility to inform me of any extenuating circumstances which may impede your work at the beginning of each assignment or as soon as a situation arises.

Attendance is mandatory. You may miss 2 unexcused absences before I will drop you one letter grade for each subsequent one. Three excessive tardies are equivalent of one unexcused absence. Other courses or extracurricular activities do not justify an absence. Your careful reading has been rewarded. If on the sixth day of class, you come dressed as Elvis you will earn extra credit. Studio days are as important as critique days. Use me as a resource. Show me work, talk to me about ideas.

This is the best way to gauge your work, improve technical skills, and to further your concepts.

Grading will be based on the following scale: A = <93%, B = <84%, C = <76%, D = <69% Incompletes will only be granted per university policy. Grade disputes or questions about policies will only be discussed in person. GRADES OR POLICIES WILL NOT BE DISCUSSED VIA EMAIL

Out of a possible 1000 points, your grade will be broken down as follows::

Pinhole Cameras	/50
Assignment 1	/200
Assignment 2	/200
Assignment 3	/200
FINAL	/350

You may be given the opportunity to redo any project for the full point value if you and I determine that over 100 percent effort was given in the assignment, but expectations were still not met. You must talk to me no later than two days after grades are returned, and it must be turned in before the next assignment. Late assignments or partially finished projects are not allowed to be redone.

Readings:

Susan Sontag, On Photography. 153 -180.

Scott McCloud, Understanding Comics, 24-59

Scott McCloud, Understanding Comics, 60-73

Liz Wells, Photography: A Critical Introduction, 35 -45, "Case Study: Image Analysis"

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Introductory Photography

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## RECLAIMING ICONS

Many artists utilize objects, actions, as icons. They begin to use objects and formulate their own language with these icons. These artists reclaim or reassign the meanings of these objects or actions. They tell their own story, and do not rely on conventional knowledge. This is where visual language begins.

For this assignment, you are to appropriate an object or style and remove its “normal” meaning. You are to reassign it meaning through your images, claim it as your own metaphor. For instance, wings have a fairly universal meaning: flight, fantasy, escape, freedom. If you were to use wings, how could you claim them as your own, and separate them from their static meaning? Photographs shouldn’t tell us what we already know.

You are to make a series of 15 images, which use the same object or style of photographing. I want your images to be a consistent size and print quality. Do not be afraid to make your images big, or to make them very small. It will be advantageous for you to photograph more than once, try 2 or 3 shoots.

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SA 141 Introductory Photography

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HERE/ THERE / ABSENCE/ PRESENCE

Sometimes things are more obvious when they are absent. An eery feeling of "What is missing?" comes into focus. For this assignment you are to specifically have an arguement, a point to get across to an audience, and you are to center it on something being absent. Make it a slow process of understanding what is missing in the images, not an obvious one. This absence does not have to be a physical one, but it could be missing actions, parts which impair vision, etc. Make this assignment your own, really push the idea.

Turn in 10-15 prints (you only have 2 weeks for this assignment)