Art 255: B&W Film and Darkroom Photography, 4 units
Helen Kim, Instr.
Spring 2023
Tu/Th 12 – 2:40pm
helenk@usc.edu
hlnkim@alum.calarts.edu
Location: Harris 211 & Darkroom

Course Description: This analog photography course is an introduction to 35mm camera mechanics and basic black and white darkroom skills within a fine arts context. Classes and coursework will include viewing historical and contemporary photographic works, readings, technical assignments, in-depth project work, discussions and critiques, and a field trip. There is no prerequisite for this class.

Learning Objectives: While becoming technically proficient in camera operation and darkroom printing (RC or fiber up to 16x20”), students will get the hang of producing bodies of work in which images relate to each other formally and conceptually. Students will learn to value experimentation and the taking of risks in order to form an individual practice.

A photograph... is not a picture of something, but is an object about something.
Robert Heineckenn

Week 1
Tue, Jan 10
Introduction to class, materials list, etc.
Handout: Graham Clarke's What is a Photograph? (1997)
Susan Sontag’s In Plato’s Cave (1973) & On Photography (the short course)
Assignment: 3 responses* due on Tue, Jan 17
Technical discussion: controlling light in the darkroom, f-stops & exposure times
Lecture – Moholy-Nagy, James Welling
Intro to the Darkroom: Photograms

Thu, Jan 12
Lecture – Abelardo Morrell, Zoe Leonard, Yves Klein
History of Photography, part I
Handout: “Media Study: Robert Irwin” (Artforum, 2012)
Darkroom: Pinhole Cameras – negatives... and positives, solarization
For next class, bring unopened photo paper and objects for photograms

Week 2
Tue, Jan 17
Lecture – Materials and methods: collage, transparencies, zines
Hannah Hoch, John Heartfield, Robert Rauschenberg,
Doug & Mike Starn, John Baldessari, Robert Heinecken
Assignment: 7 images – photograms, pinholes, xeroxes, scans, miscellany
Images and 2 page write-up due on Thu, Jan 19
Due: Clarke/Sontag responses
For next class, bring camera (and manual if necessary) and film

Thu, Jan 19
Technical discussion on camera operation
Lecture – Shutter speed, f-stop, composition
Handout: Henri Cartier-Bresson’s Composition
Assignment: Shoot one roll of 36 exposure film by Tue, Jan 31
Darkroom
Week 3
Tue, Jan 24
Lecture – History of Photography, part II
Darkroom

Thu, Jan 26
Class presentation of 7-image assignment
Film-loading practice
For next class, bring exposed roll of film + 2 negative sleeves

Week 4
Tue, Jan 31
Technical discussion on film developing
Darkroom: Film developing
For next class, bring sleeved negatives and photo paper

Thu, Feb 2
Technical discussion on negative quality, filters
Handout: Graham Clarke’s How Do We Read a Photograph? (1997)
Assignment: 3 responses due on Thu, Feb 9
Darkroom: Contact sheets
For next class, select 1 well-exposed negative
Shoot 2nd roll over the weekend (portraiture or not)

Week 5
Tue, Feb 7
Technical discussion on printing
Assignment: 3 prints (1 good, 1 low contrast, 1 high contrast) due on Tue, Feb 14
Darkroom: Printing
Quiz – Camera Operation

Thu, Feb 9
Project #1: 4 (minimum) prints plus statement of intent due on Tue, Mar 7
Lecture – Portraiture
  Julia Margaret Cameron, James Van Der Zee, August Sander,
  Harry Callahan, Seydou Keita, Richard Avedon, Jim Goldberg,
  Graciela Iturbide, Esko Manniko, Philip-Lorca DiCocria,
  Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Uta Barth, Khmer Rouge, Cindy Sherman,
  John Coplans, Cathie Opie, Sang Taek Oh, Nikki Lee, Andres Serrano
Due: Clarke responses
Darkroom
SHOOT 1 ROLL EVERY WEEK

Week 6
Tue, Feb 14
1st print presentation
Demo: Burning & Dodging
Handout: Graham Clarke’s The Portrait in Photography (1997)
  Leo Rubinfien’s Investigations of a Dog (1999)
Assignment: 3 responses due on Tue, Feb 21
Lecture – Portraiture, part II

Thu, Feb 16
Field trip – Getty Museum, Uta Barth – Peripheral Vision
**Week 7**

**Tue, Feb 21**
Lecture – Portraiture, part III
Demo: Tripods, Lights, Seamless, Handheld metering
Handout: Terry Barrett’s *About Art Criticism* (1999)
Assignment: 3 responses due on Tue, Feb 28
Due: Clarke/Rubinfien responses
Darkroom
Demo: Spot-toning

**Thu, Feb 23**
Lecture – Sequencing
    Duane Michals, Nicholas Nixon, Christian Marclay’s *Clock*, Robbert Flick,
    Anna & Bernhard Blume
    – The Body
    Robert Mapplethorpe, Chris Burden, Marina Abramovic, Bas Jan Ader,
    Orlan, John Divola
Quiz – Printing
Darkroom

**Week 8**

**Tue, Feb 28**
Discussion of Artist Presentations (Mar 23 + 28), signup
Due: Barrett responses
Darkroom
Meetings: 2 contact sheets + 2 work prints required

**Thu, Mar 2**
Darkroom

**Week 9**

**Tue, Mar 7**
*CRIT, PROJECT 1*

**Thu, Mar 9**
*CRIT, PROJECT 1*
**SHOOT ONE ROLL EVERY WEEK**

**Week 10**

**Tue, Mar 14**
SPRING BREAK

**Thu, Mar 16**
SPRING BREAK

**Week 11**

**Tue, Mar 21**
Project #2: 7 (minimum) prints + revised statement due on Tue, Apr 25
    Initial statement of intent due on Tue, Apr 11
Lecture – Documentary
    Matthew Brady, Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine, Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans,
    Brassai, Helen Levitt, Robert Frank, William Klein, New Topographics
Handout: Graham Clarke’s *Documentary Photography* (1997)
    Thilo Koenig’s *The Other Half* (1998)
Assignment: 3 responses due on Tue, Apr 4
**SHOOT ONE ROLL EVERY WEEK**

**Thu, Mar 23**
Artist Presentations
**Week 12**
Tue, Mar 28  Artist presentations
Thu, Mar 30  A talk about scale
            Darkroom

**Week 13**
Tue, Apr 4  Fiber Demo
            Assignment: 1 Large-scale fiber print + 3 page write-up due on Thu, Apr 13
            Due: Clarke/Koenig responses
Thu, Apr 6  Darkroom
            Meetings: 2 contact sheets required

**Week 14**
Tue, Apr 11  Lecture – Surveillance/Evidence, and the Scene of the Crime
              Luc Sante, Walker Evans, Weegee, Joel Sternfeld, Ken Gonzalez Day,
              Merry Alpern, Sophie Calle
            Due: Project Statement of Intent
            Darkroom
Thu, Apr 13  Class presentation of Large-scale Fiber work
            Darkroom
            Meetings: 3 contact sheets + 5 work prints required

**Week 15**
Tue, Apr 18  Darkroom
Thu, Apr 20  Darkroom

**Week 16**
Tue, Apr 25  FINAL CRIT, PROJECT 2
Thu, Apr 27  FINAL CRIT, PROJECT 2

**Week 17**
Tue, May 2  Work return

You’ll likely find it necessary to work in the lab outside of scheduled class time.
Check the lab calendar for access.

* All readings are on Blackboard and Google Drive.
  Completed papers should be dropped into the appropriate class Google Drive folder:
  https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/0AGKLhi7-ED7QUK9PVA
  All work (write-ups or photographs) is expected at the beginning of the class period on
  respective due dates. Hardcopies are totally welcome, and handwritten work will be accepted
  only in cases of emergency.

Plan on shooting 10+ rolls of film (36 exp.) – approximately 4-5 rolls per project
Attendance and participation is crucial to your success in this class. Your presence for the duration of each class is expected – i.e. showing up for just half of a class period will be recorded as an absence. Ditto for being in the darkroom while we are in the classroom.

If you miss more than three classes, it will affect your grade. Each subsequent absence will result in the lowering of your final course grade by one full letter grade. Athletics participation is not an exception. 7 absences = a failing grade, regardless of coursework.

More on absences – it is your responsibility to catch up on any missed material.

Late work will be marked down one letter grade for each delinquent class.

Being absent on the day of a critique can result in a “0” for that project.

Coursework will not be accepted beyond the last class meeting of the semester – no exceptions.

Except for taking notes, the use of electronic devices in class IS NOT AT ALL ALLOWED.

It is both a bummer and cold reality that we’re (still) living with Covid-19. Especially in the lab where we’re working in such close quarters, you are strongly advised to wear a mask.

On grading:

B: Regular attendance + participation in critiques, discussions, lab
   Work reflects a handle on materials/methods + development of ideas/concepts
A: All of the above with exceptional work
   Work consistently exhibits intellectual risk and rigor
C: Average work, infrequent participation, attendance problems
D: Poor work, very infrequent participation, serious attendance problems
F: Little or no work

All coursework is evaluated on a 10-point scale.

9-10 represents the ‘A’ range, 8-8.99 the ‘B’ range, 7-7.99 the ‘C’ range, etc.

Course grade breakdown: Papers 10%, Quizzes 10%, Photograms/Pinholes 5%, 1st Print 10%,
   1st Project 20%, Artist Presentation 10%, Large-scale Fiber 5%, 2nd Project 30%.

You are expected to shoot, develop, and print all your own work. Doing otherwise will result in a “0.” There is no extra credit.

(Optional) Text: Photography: The Concise Guide by Bruce Warren

Materials:

35 mm camera with manual controls
35 mm black and white film – 400 speed, 36 exposures
   Kodak TX or TMY, Ilford HP5 or Delta, Arista
8x10” RC multigrade photographic paper
   Ilford, Arista
Negative sleeves (7 strips of 5)
Notebook/binder for your negatives, contact sheets, prints
SMALL TOWEL
( Optional) Anti-static cloth or canned air

Camera Stores: Freestyle Photo
   www.freestylephoto.biz
   5401 W. Sunset Blvd, (323)660-3460
Samy's Camera
   www.samys.com
   431 S. Fairfax Ave, (323)938-2420

Harris Darkroom: (213)740-3389
Academic accommodations – Students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed, and this letter should be delivered to me early in the semester. DSP info: (213)740-0776, Student Union 301, Mon-Fri, 8:30 am - 5:30 pm.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:
Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words, is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct

Support Systems:
Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255
Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center
Information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources. sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs
Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC
Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information
Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.
Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu

Roski admissions information (Not required for MFA or PAS graduate courses)
For information about becoming a Fine Arts minor, please visit http://roski.usc.edu/minors/ or call 213-740-7567. To become a Fine Arts major, please visit http://roski.usc.edu/undergraduate_programs/
Applications are due October 1st and March 1st every year.