

# Global Long-Form Photography: History and Memory.

*A photograph is always invisible, it is not it, that we see.*

*Roland Barthes*

Instructor: Diana Matar  
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Seminar - 12 pupil limit

Fall 2020 - Wednesdays 11AM- 1:50 PM (EST) (REMOTE) September 9<sup>th</sup> - December 16<sup>th</sup>

## **Special note on the adaptation of this course for a remote experience.**

*All intellectual content of the course will be the same. From a studio perspective where each student creates a photographic project, the course may benefit from the remote experience. It is my hope that students will focus their projects locally and respond to our challenging times from wherever they happen to be living during the semester. The remote nature of the course will allow students to engage with geographically diverse themes and dig deep into their local area. These distinct perspectives will make the collective body of work stronger. In normal times we would have a physical exhibition, however, now we will be doing what museums and galleries are doing: responding remotely with a much larger audience in mind. We will aim to create an intimate online experience for students to engage with each other's works and create a collective body of work which will hopefully reach an international audience. (Diana Matar, July 2020)*

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

How do photographers tell stories? This course will investigate the photographic essay as a unique language. We will examine how photographic artists and photojournalists have used multiple photographs to build narrative and how those narratives can communicate complex ideas pertaining to history and memory.

In weekly seminars, we will engage in the close reading of photographic essays that challenge national narratives and rewrite history. We will explore how photographers from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Middle East have used their contemporary practice to address issues of collective memory as it pertains to dictatorship, state sponsored violence, and contested history. We will investigate how artists have employed photographic practices to explore the inherited legacies and injustices of previous generations, and we will look at how artists have used re-enactment, commemoration, re- imaging, and inclusive archive to explore history and memory within the visual

realm. We will be looking beyond the North American cannon of imagery to engage with works from the following artists: Paula Luttringer; Fazal Sheik; An My Le; Sophie Ristelheber; Kikuje Kawada; Joshua Lutz; Rena Effendi; Chloe Dewey Mathews; Rebecca Norris Webb; Miyako Isiuchi; Marcos Adandia; ML Casteel; Assad J Malik and Martha Rosler. We will look at the critical readings of Alex Danchev, Ulrich Baer, Charles Merewether, Sarah Sentilles and others.

Over the course of the term, students will develop and deliver an in-depth photographic essay on a subject of their choice that has been approved by the instructor. Student photo essays will be workshopped twice during the semester. We will explore subject matter, editing and ways in which testimony and archive can be used to give a more contextual reading to an extended photographic essay. Students will produce an archive of their work for exhibition which will reach a large and diverse audience.

#### WHAT IS EXPECTED OF STUDENTS

- A response paper of 1.5 - 2 pages will be required each week. Students will critically comment on readings **and** photographic essays discussed in class. These will encourage the student to view closely long form photography and develop the critical skills to place photographic essays and books into a larger cannon of critical philosophical work. These are to be sent to the professor each week by Sunday 9pm EST.
- Over the course of the semester students will work on one on-going photographic project. Students will be expected to make photographic work every week. Students do not need a professional camera – an iPhone or any other device is fine. Each student's work will be workshopped by the group twice during the semester.
- Students will keep a work diary.
- Students are expected to take part in all discussions based on readings and lectures.
- Students are expected to engage in discussion and critique of fellow students work in an intellectually engaging and collegial manner.
- Students are expected to attend all classes.
- Student are expected to both participate and listen attentively to their fellows during seminar and critique.

#### STUDENTS WILL BE EVALUATED ON THE FOLLOWING

- Final Photographic Project 25%
- Class Participation – discussion and critique including attendance 25%
- Weekly Response Papers 25%
- Workshops and artist's diary 25%

## COURSE GOALS

- To develop an understanding of how image-makers and curators are using contemporary photography to address complex issues of history and memory.
- To acquire knowledge of a broad range of global long form image-makers not usually studied within the North American cannon.
- To create a photographic body of work that develops a student's photographic practice.

## STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Understand and articulate how global long form photography fits into the history of arts and ideas.
- Understand and articulate how contemporary global photographers use long form photography to explore issues of collective and personal memory in their work.
- Discuss how photographers from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Middle East have used their contemporary practice to address issues of collective memory as it pertains to dictatorship, state sponsored violence, exile, and contested history.
- Critically assess their own, and others, photographic works in terms of aesthetic quality and the successful communication of an idea.
- Discuss how ideas of the self and the psyche relate to memory and how those can successfully be articulated through the medium of long form photography.
- Take, edit and contextualize a body of photographic work that engages with issues of personal, social, national, environmental or collective memory. An intersection of work on memory and current events will also be encouraged.
- Apply the skills they have learned to augment their own photographs with testimony, and archival imagery in order to give a more complex reading of their subject matter.

## CLASS FORMAT

Class meets once a week and is taught in a seminar/studio format. Seminar discussions will be based on the photographic works and readings. From week five onwards the second half of class will be devoted to workshopping student work.

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

The schedule in this course will be dynamic and elastic in response to issues students are investigating in their own photographic work. The ordering of the lectures may change accordingly. Please note, we will be looking at numerous issues that students might find disturbing. The specific aim of the course, however, is to look at how artists have responded to these difficult circumstances and we will endeavor to create a safe space in which students might discuss them. Themes include mental illness, colonialism, war, adoption, political disappearance and incarceration, environmental degradation as well as racial and ethnic injustice.

- **Week 1 - Sept 9.** Overview, introductions and questions.  
Assignment: Read *Rings of Saturn* by *W. G. Sebald* and write response paper for week 2.
- **Week 2 - Sept 16.** Response Paper due on Sunday 9PM. In class discussion on *Rings of Saturn*.  
Lecture: *Photography Time and Memory* including the work of Paula Luttringer.
- **Week 3 - Sept 23** Response paper due Sunday at 9pm EST. In class discussion on Paula Luttringer's work. Lecture: *Photography Memory and Self*. Joshua Lutz and Rebecca Norris Webb.
- **Week 4 - Sept 30** Response paper due Sunday at 9pm EST. In class discussion on the work of Joshua Lutz and Rebecca Norris Webb. Student photography project proposals due. Lecture *Authentic Revelation - Myako Isiuchi, and Evidence*.
- **Week 5 - Oct 7** Response paper due Sunday at 9pm EST. In class discussion: on the work of Myako Isiuchi, and Evidence. Lecture: *Moral Witness - Kikuji Kawada and Chloe Dewe Mathews*. Read: *Our Brother's Keeper* by Alex Danchev. Student workshop 1- Group A.
- **Week 6 - October 14** Response paper due Sunday at 9pm. Discussion: *Moral Witness - Kikuji Kawada and Chloe Dewe Mathews and Our Borthers's Keeper*. Lecture *Evidential Memory: Faces and Documents - Marcos Adandia, Giancarlo Cerauda*. Student workshop 1- Group B.
- **Week 7 - Oct 28** Response paper due Sunday at 9pm. Discussion: Marcos Adandia, Giancarlo Cerauda. Lecture: *Ways of Editing*. Read Sarah Sentilles. *Draw Your Weapons*. Student workshop 1- Group C.
- **Week 8 - Nov 4** Response paper due Sunday at 9pm on *Draw Your Weapons*. Discussion: Sarah Sentilles *Draw Your Weapons*. Lecture *Traces of War. Landscape and non- civilian Combatants - Sophie Ristelheber and ML Casteel*. Student workshop 1 Group D
- **Week 9 - Nov 11** Response paper due Sunday at 9pm. Discussion: Sophie Ristelheber and ML Casteel. Lecture *Past and Present Rene Efendi*. Student workshop 2 - Group A

- **Week 10 - Nov 18** Response paper due Sunday at 9pm. Discussion: Dictatorship and Environment - Past and Present Rene Efendi. *Lecture. Word and Image Fazal Sheik. Artist Statement and text.*  
Student workshop 2 - Group B
- **Week 10 - Nov 25 Thanksgiving** no class
- **Week 11 - Dec 2** Statement due Sunday at 9pm. Response Paper Due Sunday 9pm. Discussion: Word and image - editing and information. *Lecture Photographs as Fiction responding to war Martha Rosler, An My Le, Asad J Malik.*  
Student workshop 2 - Group C
- **Week 12 - Dec 9** Statement due Sunday at 9pm. Discussion *Photographs as Fiction responding to war Martha Rosler, An My Le, Asad J Malik.*  
Student workshop 2 - Group D
- **Week 13 -Dec 16 -** **Final Exhibition - online opening and delivery by student artists. (exact date and time to be established)**

STUDENTS SHOULD BUY THE FOLLOWING BOOKS

- Sentilles, Sarah, *Draw Your Weapons*. Penguin Random House. 2016
- Sebald, WG, *Rings of Saturn*. New Directions Press. 2016
- All Photographic essays and monographs will be provided to students by the instructor electronically.
- All additional readings will be provided to the students by the instructor.

A selection of the following additional readings will be provided by the instructor if assigned.

- Akram Zaatari, *Photographic Documents / Excavation as Art* 2006. In ARCHIVE, Documents of Contemporary Art, pg. 181 - 184 Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press
- Baer, Ulrich, *Toward a Democratic Gaze* pg. 8-20 and *To Give Memory a Place: Contemporary Holocaust Photography and the Landscape Tradition* pg. 79-88 in *Spectral Evidence*, The MIT Press Cambridge Massachusetts. 2002.
- Baker, Simon, *Conflict Time Photography*, pg. 194 -227. Tate Publishing. 2014.
- Blanchot, Maurice, *The Writing of the Disaster*, pg. 37 – 45. University of Nebraska Press. 1986.
- Boltanski, Christian in *Press Play Contemporary Artists in Conversation*, pg. 128 – 135 Phaidon. 2005.
- Durden, Mark *The Poetics of Absence* in *Hidden* by Paul Seawright. pg. 12- 21 Imperial War Museum Press. 2003.
- Gibbons, Joan, *Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance* II.B. Taurus Press. 2008. Various essays.

- Iturbide, Graciela, *Graciela Iturbide Speaks with Fabienne Bradu*, in *Conversations with Photographers*. Pg. 106 – 114. Umbrage Editions, New York. 2005.
- Mann, Sally, *Deep South*, Bulfinch Press, New York. 2005. Various pages of photographic diaries.
- Mann, Sally, *What Remains: The Life and Work of Sally Mann*. Film. 2006
- Margaret Sundell, Uta Barth 2000, in *Memory Documents of Contemporary Art* pg. 104 – 105. MIT Press. Edited by Ian Farr.
- Matar, Diana, *Evidence*, Schilt Publishing. 2015. Various pages of photographic diaries.
- Merewether, Charles, *A language to Come: Japanese Photography After the Event* pg. 121- 138 in ARCHIVE, Documents of Contemporary Art, Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press.
- Millar, Jeremy, *Speak You Also* in *The Clearing* pg. 10- 22 Film and Video Umbrella. 2005
- Norfolk, Simon, *For Most of it I Have No Words*, Dewi Lewis Publishing, 1998. Various pages of photographic diaries.
- Meiselas, Susan, *Pictures from a Revolution*. Film. (1991)
- Merleau – Ponty, Maurice, *The Primacy of Perception*. pg. 17 – 28. Northwestern University Press. 1964.
- Reuter, Laurel, *Los Desaparecidos*, pg. 14-26 and 42-63. North Dakota Museum of Art, Edizioni Charta, Milano. 2006.
- Seawrite, Paul, *Invisible Cities*, pg. 12-24. Ffotogallery Wales Limited. 2007
- Shibli, Ahlam, *Lost Time*, Ikon Gallery Press, 2003. Introduction
- The Atlas Group Archive – Secret Files ARCHIVE, Documents of Contemporary Art, pg. 177- 180. Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press.
- Eisenstein, Sergei, *October 1927: Ten Days That Shook the World*.
- Sontag, Susan *On Regarding the Pain of others*, pg. 47 – 60. Penguin. 2004.
- Sontag Susan, *On Photography*, pg. 115- 207. Dell Publishing.
- Tarkovsky, Andrey, *Instant Light Tarkovsky Polaroids*, pg. 7-59. Thames and Hudson. 2004

#### SPECIFIC NOTES

- If you have mobility issues – we will discuss how you might use photography in a way that will consider those issues.
- Heath and Well Being. You will be going out and making photographs so please follow all local health guidelines in keeping yourself and others safe. Always err on the side of caution and keep in mind the vulnerability of anyone with which you may come in contact. Keep social distancing at all times.
- Triggers – We will be looking at numerous issues that students might find disturbing. The aim of the course, however, is to look at how artists have responded to these difficult circumstances and we will endeavor to create a safe space in which students might discuss them.

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Students will abide by the honor code of the college. Stated below.

Approved by the student body in 1912 and updated in 2016, the Code states:

We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by engaging with integrity in all our academic pursuits. We affirm that academic integrity is the honorable creation and presentation of our own work. We acknowledge that it is our responsibility to seek clarification of proper forms of collaboration and use of academic resources in all assignments or exams. We consider academic integrity to include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources. We will respect the rights of others to engage in pursuit of learning in order to uphold our commitment to honor. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor for its own sake.

It is important for undergraduates to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. We as a community urge you to make yourself--your own health, sanity, and wellness--your priority throughout this term and your career here. Sleep, exercise, and eating well can all be a part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you in several sectors of your life, and we encourage you to make use of them. The following resources are available to you here at Barnard.

- <http://barnard.edu/primarycare>
- <http://barnard.edu/counseling>
- <http://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about>

If you are a student with a documented disability and require academic accommodations in this course, you must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) for assistance. Students requesting accommodations will need to first meet with an ODS staff member. Once registered, students are required to request accommodation letters each semester to notify faculty. Accommodations are not retroactive, so it is best to contact ODS early each semester to access your accommodations. If you are registered with ODS, please see me to schedule a meeting outside of class in which you can bring me your faculty notification letter and we can discuss your accommodations for this course. Students are not eligible to use their accommodations in this course until they have met with me. ODS is located in Milbank Hall, Room 009."