

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS  
University of Virginia, Academic Sponsor

Voyage: Fall 2015  
Discipline: Studio Arts  
ARTS : Documentary Photography (Sections I and II)  
Faculty: Paige Critcher  
Credit Hours: 3

MEETING TIME and LOCATION:

Instructor : Paige Critcher  
E-mail : [pcritcher@gmail.com](mailto:pcritcher@gmail.com)  
Office Hours

E-mail is the best way to communicate with me. If you have a question about a camera or need to acquire one that is appropriate for the class, please contact me, and I will be happy to make recommendations.

I will distribute all of the semester's course materials, including each week's reading, assignment, and presentation, in class via Flash Drive or via the ship's intranet.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course will explore conceptual and practical concerns of documentation through the digital photographic medium as well as the use of photography as a process for cultural exploration. Technical camera operation and best workflow practices with image software will be covered as well.

Through classroom discussions and required readings, students will be introduced to ethical positions that documentary photography may adopt, and the role that the photographer plays in presenting a narrative. Technical and aesthetic instruction will be emphasized in a manner that will allow the student to build an image bank from which a final book style portfolio can be edited. Camera operation, file management, digital imaging, editing, and basic online viewing platforms will be covered, as well as the thematic and sequential aspects of presenting an effective narrative.

Students learn camera operation with regard to DSLR and mirrorless cameras as well as photographic workflow using Adobe Lightroom. Also included is an overview of documentary photographic history with emphasis on some essential practitioners who have influenced the genre.

The objectives of the course are:

To discover your own photographic vision through a series of projects, using a DSLR or mirrorless camera on semi-automatic and manual modes.

Learning Adobe Lightroom to organize and edit photographic images. Specific topics covered during the course include: operating a DSLR or MILC camera, learning Adobe Lightroom for file management and basic adjustment of photographic images, shooting JPEG and RAW image files, and acquiring a basic understanding of color management techniques.

Exploring conceptual approaches and concerns through the discussion of photographic critical theories, and learning to constructively criticize your photographs and the work of others is an important component of the class as well. We will have regular critiques of the portfolios that are being created.

Engaging in a brief overview of the history of documentary photography, and looking at the work of some current practitioners.

Journal entries responding to the readings and the experiences of the photographic process will be due periodically throughout the semester. This will give you the opportunity to analyze what you are thinking and feeling: bring the abstract into the concrete.

#### SUPPLIES / MATERIALS:

All materials must be acquired prior to the voyage. If you have questions about cameras, hard drives, and software, please contact me immediately. Many cameras that are suitable can be purchased used from a reputable source.

**A Digital Camera:** You will need to have regular access to your own camera to use during this class. The camera should have manual and semi-automatic modes and should be capable of shooting RAW files.

**16gb SD/Compact Flash Card:** Whatever your camera needs. The more space, the more you'll be able to shoot.

**Laptop Computer:** Should be able to run Adobe Lightroom 5.0 and have plenty of free space for image processing. Adobe Lightroom 5.0: installed on your laptop.

**Other Digital Storage:** Aside from your camera's memory card, you will need to have at least 16 GB of storage space. I recommend even more storage space, like a good reliable external hard drive. I recommend a bus powered hard drive or USB drive for this class. I highly recommend you back up your photos (and everything else too) and will not accept data loss and an excuse for late work.

#### GRADING:

The course has 100 possible points. Letter grades will be calculated on the fairly standard scale: A 100/92, B 91/ 82, C 81/72, D 71/ 62, and F 61

Class Participation	10 points
Journal	10 points
Weekly Projects	30 points
Final Presentation	50 points

Poor participation or skipping class can result in a negative grade for class participation.

## DEADLINES:

Each day that a project is late, a point will be deducted from your grade. All projects submitted on time may be revised and resubmitted to improve your grade. The written assignments can also be revised and resubmitted.

## ATTENDANCE:

The only excused absences are documented illnesses, family emergencies, and established religious holidays. Please contact me as soon as possible regarding excused (and unexcused) absences. You are allowed one unexcused absence during the semester. Each additional absence will result in 3 points being deducted from your final grade. Missing more than five classes during the semester may result in administrative action and/or failure of the course. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes and handouts from a classmate. You are also responsible for all assignments, regardless of attendance in class.

Being punctual is also important. Three late marks (coming 15 minutes late or more) will count as an absence. If you do come in late, it is your responsibility to make sure that your attendance is noted or you may be counted as absent. If you are more than an hour late, you will be marked as absent.

## CRITIQUES / PARTICIPATION:

Critiques are not only important for the development of your own work; it is also for the development of the work of your classmates. Because of this, your participation is extremely important, so attendance during critiques is crucial and it is vital to your participation grade in the class. You must attend and participate in critiques even if your own project is not complete.

All work that is submitted, both written and visual, must be your own. Plagiarism will be reported and may result in disciplinary action from the college. Appropriating images for the purpose of meaningful commentary is acceptable. If you plan to use appropriated imagery please inform me as early as possible, not the day of a critique. All submitted work must be created during this semester and for this class. Please see me if there is any doubt, if you have a question, or if you have an idea that might constitute a special circumstance.

## CLASSROOM POLICIES:

During lectures I expect your full attention. No phone, IM, or gaming. Eating in class is also prohibited, and I trust you will not be napping either. Breaking policies will result in a deduction of points from your participation grade.

## FIELD LAB:

Attendance is required.

### Section 1: Istanbul: Blue Mosque and the Grand Bazaar

The Blue Mosque is a historical mosque in Istanbul that was built between 1609 and 1616, during the rule of Ahmed I.

The Grand Bazaar in Istanbul is one of the largest and oldest covered markets in the world, with 61 covered streets and over 3,000 shops.

**Academic Objectives:**

1. Using photography to document a sacred space respectfully and within the restrictions imposed by the Religion of Islam. Information about the Mosque and the protocol for a visit will be distributed and discussed prior to the Lab.
2. Practical time with photographic equipment; working both slowly and methodically, and utilizing your camera to work quickly in a rapidly changing market and street atmosphere.

Section 2: Dakar, Senegal: Lake Retba and visits to nearby villages. This is a unique opportunity that demands courtesy and respect of local customs.

**Academic Objectives:**

1. Documenting the Lake, the salt harvesters, and the people/environs of the villages we visit.
2. Learning to construct a visual narrative.

**DISABILITY RESOURCES:**

Students are admitted to Semester at Sea based on their potential for academic success, irrespective of physical or learning disabilities. Administrative staff and faculty work will cooperatively to assist students with disabilities in their educational endeavors and adjustments to the College community. The Associate Provost in the Office of Academic Services works to ensure that all educational programs are equally accessible to qualified students. Students with physical, learning, and other disabilities are encouraged to contact the Office of Academic Services for specific information and assistance regarding potential special needs.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY:**

Proper use of equipment is important. I will teach proper safety protocol for using all the equipment in this class. All students must follow these policies and procedures; failure to do so will result in loss of lab privileges. These policies are in place in accordance with all safety compliance, state and federal, to minimize risk, and reduce harm to themselves and the environment. Use common sense when you are out photographing to minimize the potential risks associated with some foreign travel.

SCHEDULE (Subject to change):

**Sept 13 Port of SOUTHAMPTON**

A1 Sept 15 Introduction to the course goals and objectives.  
Using your Camera: ISO, Light Meter, and Exposure  
RAW capture vs. Jpg

A2 Sept 17 Styles of Documentary Photography  
Using the Viewfinder/Frame

**Sept 21 CIVITAVECCHIA, ITALY** Reading *Italo Calvino – The Adventures of the Photographer*  
Photographing Rome/Italian countryside

**Sept 25 NAPLES, ITALY** Photographing Naples and vicinity

A3 Sept 25 An Introduction to Adobe Lightroom/Download and editing basics.  
Journal response due

A4 September 27 Lecture: Aperture: Depth of Field, Focal Length

**Sept 30 ISTANBUL, TURKEY**

Documentary I Field Lab Blue Mosque and the Grand Bazaar  
Photographing in Istanbul

A5 October 4 Shutter Speed and Motion  
A Point in Time/The Decisive Moment  
*Excerpt from The Photographer's Eye, John Szarkowski*

**October 6 ATHENS, GREECE**

Photographing Athens and vicinity

A6 October 11 Using the Develop Module in Adobe Lightroom  
Light as the Subject

A7 October 13 Critique: Images from Italy, Turkey and Greece  
Discussion: *Images by Eugene Richards vs. Sebastiao Salgado*  
Journal response due

**October 15 VALENCIA/BARCELONA, SPAIN** Photographing in Valencia/Barcelona

A8 October 20 Street Photography

Photographer presentation: *Gary Winogrand, Bruce Gilden*

**Oct 22 CASABLANCA, MOROCCO** Photographing in Morocco

A9 October 27 Techniques for using Camera Flash

A10 October 29 Critique: Images from Spain and Morocco

Journal response due

**October 31 DAKAR, SENEGAL** Documentary II field trip to Lake Retba  
Photographing in Dakar

A11 November 4 Reviewing Images for midterm portfolio review

Photographer presentation: *David Alan Harvey/Burn Magazine*

NOVEMBER 6 Neptune Ceremony/no class

A12 November 7 LAB DAY

A13 November 9 MIDTERM PORTFOLIO PRESENTATION

Journal response due

**November 11 SALVADOR, BRAZIL** Photographing in Brazil

A14 November 17 Ethics and Ethical Positions in Photography

Photographer presentation: *Susan Meiselas, James Nachtwey*

A15 November 19 Sequence and the Visual Narrative

Photographer presentation: *W.Eugene Smith*

A16 November 22 Advanced Lightroom techniques

*Special Discussion Topic: Zong Massacre*

NOVEMBER 21 Olympics/ no class

A17 November 24 Contemporary documentary photographers: Projects and website design

Journal response due

**November 26 TRINIDAD** Photographing in Trinidad

A18 November 28 Book design in Lightroom

A19 November 30 Advanced lighting techniques, use of ND and polarizing filters

DECEMBER 2 Panama Canal/no class

A20 December 3 Critique: Images from Brazil and Trinidad

**December 5 PUNTARENAS, COSTA RICA** Photographing in Costa Rica

A21 December 10 Reading Discussion: *Excerpt from Why People Photograph, Robert Adams*

A22 December 12 Individual consultation about final images

A23 December 14 Lab Time

A24 December 17 Final Project Presentation  
Final Journal response due

**Arrive December 21 SAN DIEGO**

#### HONOR CODE

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."