



PG 230

DISCOVERING PARIS THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY

IES Abroad Paris

DESCRIPTION:

Discovering Paris Through Photography immerses students in the rich tradition and practice of photography, with the city of Paris as their backdrop. Through the works of renowned photographers like Atget, Brassai, and Cartier-Bresson, students will explore Parisian history and culture while developing their own photographic skills. The course combines readings on the city's history with hands-on experiences, allowing students to capture the essence of Paris through urban landscapes, street photography, portraiture, and historical photographic techniques such as Cyanotype and Pinhole photography.

The course emphasizes both technical mastery and critical analysis, encouraging students to produce striking, expressive images that engage with their surroundings. Through field trips, photo exhibits, and image editing sessions, students will deepen their understanding of photography as an art form. Assignments will prompt them to go beyond simple documentation, using photography to reflect on their personal experiences and interactions with Paris, ultimately creating powerful visual narratives that intertwine history, emotion, and self-expression.

CREDITS: 3

CONTENT HOURS: 45 hours

COURSE FREQUENCY: Once per week

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: none

SUPPLEMENTARY COSTS: 70 euros (lab fee)

REQUIRED/HIGHLY RECOMMENDED SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT:

- Digital camera capable of capturing at least 10 megapixels, also allowing for manual adjustments of aperture and shutter speed settings. A telephone camera can be an option for students who do not currently own a digital camera and have budget limits. It is important, however, that the telephone allows adjustments to at least the ISO setting as well as aperture or shutter speeds to be able to work in semi-automatic or fully manual mode.
- Subscription to Adobe Photoshop & Lightroom editing software (typically \$10-20 /month depending on subscription length)
- Laptop computer for editing and storing images. (8 Gb of computer memory is the minimum to run Photoshop, 16 Gb is recommended.)
- Access to cloud storage or an external hard drive (250 Gb or larger) to allow for backup of photo images, especially on computers with more limited storage space.



METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

Lectures and discussions, slide presentations, photographic excursions in Paris, visits to photography exhibitions, experimentation with photographic equipment, student presentations of photographic projects, group discussions and critical analysis of required readings.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Participation – 10%
- Group critiques – 5%
- Homework Written Responses – 10%
- Photo Exercises – 5%
- Quiz – 10%
- First Photo Project (Environment & Color) – 15%
- Group Oral Presentation – 10%
- Second Photo Project (Human Presence & Juxtaposition) – 15%
- Final Series Photo Project – 20%

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Students should be prepared for each class—having completed photo projects as well as any readings or written assignments in advance of the class for which they were assigned. Students are expected to be attentive and to participate actively and meaningfully in class discussions. Computers are only permitted to be used when approved by professor for image editing or printing while in class. **Notes should be taken manually in a notebook.**

GROUP CRITIQUES OF 3 PHOTO PROJECTS

These critiques will have each student present their photos to the larger group. The critiques will focus on what they see the photos expressing (rather than, simply, whether they like or don't like a photo). By focusing more on the questions of meaning and how it may be created through choices of lighting, composition, angle of view, relationships within the frame, *etc.*, students are exposed to all the requisite tools for creating meaningful images and examining visual art.

HOMEWORK WRITTEN RESPONSES

Short handwritten assignments for students to complete in reaction to critical photography essays, as well as to at least one photography exhibition.

PHOTO EXERCISES (Digital, Cyanotype and/or Pinhole)

Digital photo exercises to familiarize students with their cameras and traditional photo exercise using either cyanotype or pinhole photo images to explore some of the earliest photographic techniques and processes.

QUIZ

Short answer and/or multiple-choice questions focusing on technical issues related to photographic equipment, settings and usage as well as one photo analysis question.

FIRST PHOTO PROJECT (Environment & Color)

Investigation of the notion of "Environment" in Paris (4-6 photos and digital contact sheets for 120-160 images).



GROUP ORAL PRESENTATION

Students will work in pairs to present a history and analysis of the work of a photographer (from a list provided by the professor) to the class.

SECOND PHOTO PROJECT (Human Presence & Juxtaposition)

Production of a series of photographs concentrating on the “Human Presence” in all its diversity (portraits, street photography, etc.) (6-8 photos and digital contact sheets for 140-180 images).

FINAL PHOTO PROJECT

Final student-designed, thematic photo project (8-12 final printed images and digital contact sheets for 160-240 images), including final written assignment: “Artist’s statement.”

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Successfully navigate essential digital camera functions to produce correctly exposed photographic images.
- Effectively modify color and tone of photographs using Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom software.
- Produce aesthetic photographs that display improving understanding of composition, quality of light and contrast.
- Identify important fine art photographers and art movements from the 20th century
- Engage in critical analysis of photographic images by speaking of how photographic elements such as lighting, perspective, angle of view, composition and organization of elements in space contributes to our understanding of an image’s meaning.
- Produce analog photographic images using historic cyanotype or pinhole techniques.
- Identify historical context of numerous neighborhoods throughout Paris
- Apply theories and practice to their own work in a way that demonstrates mastery of key concepts and individual imagination.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Your academics are a priority, and regular class attendance class is mandatory, respectful, and essential to academic success. Being absent from class will prevent you from maximizing your learning and will negatively affect your participation grade.

Lateness

Please arrive on time for each class meeting. Arriving late for class is disruptive for faculty members and students alike and will prevent you from maximizing your learning.

- 0 to 15 minutes = late
- Over 15 minutes = 1 absence

If you arrive late 3 times, it will be counted as an absence.

Absences

If you must be absent, please email both your professor and the academic team as soon as possible (mfedon@iesabroad.org) and (emaines@iesabroad.org). Absences for medical reasons and/or emergencies will be considered excused, but justification will be required. In this case, we will need:

- a *certificat médical*,
- from a French doctor,
- must be submitted within 24 hours of the absence,
- or proof of upcoming medical appointment.



If you are absent for an exam, presentation, or other graded in-class assignment, you must provide justification for the absence, or you will receive an automatic F.

Our attendance policy allows each student to miss one 3h course and two 1.5h class sessions without it affecting the final grade of the class. Above that, your final grade will be lowered. The following example is for a 1.5h class:

Final grade: A-

1 unexcused absence: A-

2 unexcused absences: A-

3 unexcused absences: B+

4 unexcused absences: B

And so on...

Lastly, an important reminder!

For any and all absences students are required to fill out the **ABSENCE FORM**, which can be found using the following link:

<https://airtable.com/appwRSChoi8XeQUhz/shrkeAL2VXGdy1RH5>

Any documentation FOR AN EXCUSED ABSENCE must be uploaded to this platform.

CONTENT:

Session	Theme & Class Activities	Assignments & Homework Activities
Week 1 Sept 10	- General Class introduction - Discussion: Camera types, lenses, Camera shooting modes (P (program mode) and A or AV (aperture priority mode), light meter explanations, color theory, white balance settings - Introduction to photo project #1: "Environment" - Slide Presentation of professional images related to project #1 (Atget, Brassai, Kertesz, Cartier-Bresson) Field Trip: Shoot photos in park near to school for Depth of Field photo exercise	
Week 2 Sept 17	- Discussion: Exposure triangle and making proper settings for correct camera exposures, more camera shooting modes (S or TV (shutter speed priority mode) and M (manual mode)), depth of field, JPEG vs. RAW file formats, bit depth, screen vs. image resolution - Discussion: Human seeing and the non-neutral quality of photographs in the John Berger reading	Reading: - Berger, John. <i>Ways of Seeing</i>, Chapter 1, pg 7-33 (27 pp.) pdf in "Readings" folder online <i>Writing an Art History Essay</i> (4 pp.) in "Readings" folder <i>Basics of Digital Photo</i>, sections 1, 3 and 4. Link to website: https://www.thedigitalprocess.com/level-1-photography-basics/ Homework Activities:

	Field Trip: Shoot photos for Shutter Speed exercise	- Short written response (75-150 words) to Berger reading - Shoot additional photos to explore depth of field
Week 3 Sept 24	- Discussion of Graham Clarke reading and how we can begin to decrypt the photographic image from its component parts (photographer's perspective, angle of view, quality of light, relationship between various objects or subjects within frame, the overall composition, quality of light, etc.) - Discussion: Explanation of different camera meter modes (multi, centered and spot meter), hyperfocal distance, auto-focus modes - Introduction to Photoshop basics (Image tonal and color corrections, adjustment layers, tools, creation of contact sheets, etc.) - How to print photos with Epson printer - Work time to begin editing photos for Photo Project #1	Reading: - Graham Clarke, <i>The Photograph</i>, "How Do We Read a Photograph?" pg 27-39 (12 pp.) in <u>"Readings" folder</u> <i>Basics of Digital Photo</i>, sections 5, 6 and 7. Link to website: https://www.thedigitalprocess.com/level-1-photography-basics/ Homework Activities: - Short written response (75-150 words on Clarke reading) - Upload four photos to Moodle exploring different settings for depth of field and shutter speed while exploring the semi-automatic modes of aperture priority (A or AV mode) and shutter speed priority (S or TV mode)
Week 4 Oct 1	Quiz covering technical questions related to camera and one photo image analysis - Discussion of Charlotte Cotton reading and how we find meaning in random objects and the way they are presented in space. - Work time to print Photo Project #1 (Environment & Color) photos	Reading: - Cotton, Charlotte. <i>The Photograph as Contemporary Art</i>, "Something and Nothing," pg 115-135 (21 pp.) in <u>"Readings" folder</u> - Short written response (75-150 words on Cotton reading) - Hazan, Eric. <i>The Invention of Paris: A History in Footsteps</i>, Introduction, pg 3-16 (13 pp.) <u>ebook purchase required</u> Homework Activities: - Prepare for quiz on photo technical questions and image analysis. Be sure to look at <i>Basics of Digital Photo</i> website for review of technical settings - Shoot photos for Project #1 (Environment & Color)

Week 5 Oct 8	Photo Project #1 Group Critique (Environment & Color) - Discussion of Grundberg reading and the evolution of the camera from “booster of industrialism” to critical observer of the negative effects of industrialization. - Introduction: Project #2 (Human Presence & Juxtaposition) - Slide Presentation of professional images related to Project #2 (Atget, Man Ray, Ronis, Weiss, Doisneau, Depardon, Moon, Rheims) - Writing & Discussion: What is a portrait?	Reading: - Grundberg, Andy. <i>Crisis of the Real</i>, “The Machine and the Garden,” pg 50-65 (16 pp.) in “Readings” folder - Short written response (75-150 words) to Grundberg reading - Hazan, Eric. <i>The Invention of Paris: A History in Footsteps</i>, “Latin Quarter,” 91-97 (7 pp.) Homework Activities: - Finish printing 4-6 photos for in-class Photo Project #1 Group Critique - Upload 3-4 digital contact sheets (120-160 images) to Moodle for Project #1
Week 6 Oct 15	- Demonstration: making Cyanotype photograms (meet off campus? Location TBD) - Introduction: Group Oral Presentation Project (group member assignments, discussion of list of possible photographers) - Discussion: Final Photo Project & Proposal requirements	Reading: - Hazan, Eric. <i>The Invention of Paris: A History in Footsteps</i>, “Les Halles,” 40-47, “Marais” pg. 55-65 (19 pp.) Homework Activities: - Bring materials (leaves and other flat objects) for making cyanotype photograms - Begin shooting images for Photo Project #2 (Human Presence)
Week 7 Oct 22	- Discuss Hazan reading on Marais district - Visit 1-2 photo galleries - Explore Marais district while shooting photos Field Trip: Marais district to visit 1-2 photo exhibitions and shoot portraits and street photos for Photo Project #2	Homework Activities: Submit chosen photographer for Group Oral Presentation project. - Continue shooting images for Photo Project #2 (Human Presence)
Week 8 Nov 5	- Discussion: Final Project proposals - Discussion: Advanced Photoshop techniques (black/white, duotone images, spot removal, etc.) Work time to finalize editing and printing of Photo Project #2	Reading: - Hazan, Eric. <i>The Invention of Paris: A History in Footsteps</i>, “Montmartre” pg. 139-143, “Nouvelle Athenes,” pg. 144-145 (5 pp.) Homework Activities: Submit short exhibition analysis from gallery visits in the Marais Complete Final Photo Project proposal

Week 9 Nov 12	• Photo Project #2 Group Critique (Human Presence & Juxtaposition) • Slide Presentation for Final Photo Project • Discussion: How the camera transforms and deforms our relationship with the world from the Susan Sontag reading	Reading: • Susan Sontag's <i>On Photography</i>, "In Plato's Cave," pg 3-24 (21 pp.) in "Readings" folder Homework Activities: • Write short 75–150-word response paper to Sontag chapter • Upload digital contact sheets for 140-180 digital images to Moodle for Project #2 • Edit and print 6 to 8 photos for Photo Project #2 (Human Presence & Juxtaposition) Group Critique
Week 10 Nov 19	• Field Trip: Pere Lachaise Cemetery/Buttes Chaumont/Mouzaia Neighborhood • Discussion: The arrival of Post-Modernism in photography from the Andy Grundberg reading	Reading: • Andy Grundberg, <i>Crisis of the Real</i>, Ch 1, pg 2-18 (16 pp.) in "Readings" folder • Hazan, Eric. <i>The Invention of Paris: A History in Footsteps</i>, "Buttes Chaumont," pg. 205-209, "Belleville and Menilmontant," pg 210-216, "Père Lachaise and Charonne," pg 217-219 (15 pp.) Homework Activities: • Short written response (75-150 words on Grundberg reading) • Begin shooting Final Project photos • Work on preparations for Group Oral Presentations
Week 11 Nov 26	• Group Oral Presentations • Work time for editing and printing of photos for final critique • Individual meetings with students looking at contact sheets for final project to help with final image selection • Discussion: Nighttime photography	Homework Activities: • Continued shooting for final photo project • Prepare/upload Group Oral Presentations to Moodle • Shoot at least 80-100 images for Final Photo Project to show as contact sheets in individual meetings with professor
Week 12 Dec 3	Final Photo Project Work Session • Discussion: HDR (high dynamic range) Photography • Students work in small groups or pairs to discuss composition, influences, applied theory and artist's statement.	Homework Activities: • Make final preparations for final photo project • Begin printing images for final critique

	Work time for editing, printing or to shoot some final images for the final project	
Week 13 Dec 10	Final Photo Project Group Critique	Homework Activities: - Finish printing 8 to 12 photos and upload digital contact sheets to Moodle for remainder of 180-240 images for Final Project - Complete “artist’s statement” (1-2 paragraphs) offering an introduction and explanation of a student’s final project

COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:

Excursions will be organized with the class and according to the students’ interests (photography exhibitions, Paris neighborhood visits, etc.)

REQUIRED READING:

Readings will be provided as downloadable PDF files and will include a selection of critical essays and articles related to the practice and analysis of photography by several different authors.

The readings will include selections from:

- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida*. Hill & Wang Publ., 1981.
- Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London and New York: Penguin Books, 2008 [1972].
- Clarke, Graham. *The Photograph*. Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Cotton, Charlotte. *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*. Thames & Hudson, 2004.
- Grundberg, Andy. *Crisis of the Real: Writings on Photography, 1974-1989*. Aperture, 1990.
- Hazan, Eric. *The Invention of Paris: A History in Footsteps*. London: Verso Books, 2011.
- Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. St. Martin’s Press, 2001.

RECOMMENDED READING:

- Barrett, Terry. *Criticizing Photographs*. McGraw-Hill, 2005.
- Black, Jeremy. *Paris: A Short History*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2024.
- Bolton, Richard, ed. *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992.
- Frosh, Paul. *The Image Factory: Consumer Culture, Photography, and the Visual Content Industry*. Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003.
- Evans, Jessica, and Stuart Hall, eds. *Visual Culture: The Reader*. London, Thousand Oaks, and New York: Sage Publications, 2001.
- Horne, Alistair. *Seven Ages of Paris*. New York: Vintage Books, 2004.
- Hussey, Andrew. *Paris: The Secret History*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2006.
- Kaplan, Alice. *Dreaming in French: The Paris Years of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, Susan Sontag, and Angela Davis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Kemp, Martin. *The Science of Art: Optical Themes in Western Art from Brunelleschi to Seurat*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992.
- Levi Strauss, David. *Between the Eyes: Essays on Photography and Politics*. New York: Aperture, 2003.



- Newton, Julianne. *The Burden of Visual Truth: The Role of Photojournalism in Mediating Reality*. Mahwah and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001.
- Pitt, Leonard. *Walks Through Lost Paris: A Journey into the Heart of Historic Paris*. London: Shoemaker & Hoad, 2006.

PROFESSOR BIOGRAPHY:

Michael McCarthy has a Master of Fine Arts in photography from the Tyler School of Art at Temple University. He has been creating photographs for some three decades and regularly exhibiting them in art galleries in the United States, as well as in numerous European countries. While continuing to practice his craft, he has also established himself as an educator in the domain, teaching photography, art, and art and photo history classes within a wide range of university and art school settings.