



ASPH 3306: Photography in Taos

Photography as History, Photography as Art

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This course addresses the medium of photography as creative expression, historical record and fine art. Students learn basic camera operation (exposure, focal length, depth of field), software manipulation (Photoshop) and photographic design principles (framing strategies, lighting). Through the study of the rich history of photography in the Southwest students locate their own creative response to the perennial quest to understand man's relationship to the natural and social world.

Course material is divided into four topics: land, Native American culture, Hispanos culture, and Anglo culture. These are explored and linked through field trips, readings, primary historical source material, history of photography, and photographs made by the students.

The key moments in photographic history of the area are: the U.S. Geological and Geographical Surveys of the American West, 1860-1879; early ethnographic photographic studies of Native Americans, 1875-1905; the Modernists, 1930-1960; and contemporary artist/photographers. Many of these photographs, considered primary historical sources, are available for viewing and analysis in area art and history museums. Secondary sources for research are historic interpretation and analysis, and art criticism and theory, which are available in the Fort Burgwin Library and online websites.

Working alone or in groups, students choose one of the four topics and produce a body of photographs that builds upon earlier historical and artistic record. The final project is a carefully scripted, narrated and visually engaging PowerPoint presentation of text, image and spoken word that offers a fresh, insightful and in-depth analysis of closely focused aspect of the topic. The student first defines the context for their exploration by reviewing relevant photographic precedents. This is followed by a coherent, edited sequence of twenty photographs made by the student, each demonstrating appropriate and creative photographic technique, thoughtful design and conceptual strength.

I. The Land in the Southwest

What are the social uses of land and how are they reflected in landscape photography? The US Geological Surveys fostered the development of the intercontinental railroads. Modernists depicted a mythic American West, while contemporary photographers often address environmental concerns.

Fieldtrips

1. Ghost Ranch, trails and Museum of Paleontology and Museum of Anthropology
2. Rio Grande Gorge Bridge
3. Earthships

Primary Source Material

1. Photographs of Timothy O'Sullivan, William Henry Jackson are available for viewing at Andrew Smith Gallery, Santa Fe

Readings

1. *Taos, A Topical History*, Formative Epochs: The Origins and Evolution of the Taos Landscape, by Paul W. Bauer, p.19-30
2. *Taos, A Topical History*, Archaeology and the Pre-European History of the Taos Valley, By Jeffrey L. Boyer, p 31-43
3. *A Great Aridness: Climate Change and the Future of the American West*, William DeBuys, Oxford University Press, 2011 Introduction: The Tracks at Cedar Spring, p. 3-16
4. *Perpetual Mirage, Second View: A Search for the West that exists only in Photographs*,

Photographic Artists

1. Timothy O'Sullivan, early
2. William Henry Jackson, early
3. Andrew J. Russell, early
4. Ansel Adams, modernist
5. Elliot Porter, modernist
6. Laura Gilpin, modernist
7. Paul Strand, modernist
8. Richard Misrach, contemporary
9. Mark Klett and Byron Wolfe, contemporary
10. Jamie Stillings, contemporary

II. Native American Culture in the Southwest

Early photographs of pueblo architecture, activities and portraits produced an ethnographic record. The Modernists emphasized formal and aesthetic value in their subject matter. Contemporary artists address cultural identity,

Fieldtrips

1. Taos Pueblo, January 6, Buffalo and Dear Dance
2. Bandelier National Monument

Primary Source Material

1. *Taos Pueblo*, 1930, rare book by Ansel Adams and Mary Hunter Austin, available for view at the Harwood Museum. The DeGolyer also owns one of this very rare book.

Readings

1. *Taos, A Topical History*, Defiant Taos, Robert Torrez, p 115-122
2. *Taos, A Topical History*, 1847: Revolt or Resistance, Alberto Vidaurre, 123-136
3. *Taos, A Topical History*, A Mutiny in Taos, 1855, by John B. Ramsay, 153-164.
4. *Taos, A Topical History*, Taos Pueblos, Past and Recent by John J. Bodine, 177-188
5. Sandweiss, Surviving an Unfamiliar Land, 1840-1880, p 41-76
6. Sandweiss, Mementoes of the Race: Photography and the American Indian, p 208-273.

Photographic Artists

1. Timothy O'Sullivan, early
2. Edward Curtis, early
3. Adam Clark Vroman, early
4. John Hillars, early
5. Ansel Adams, modernist
6. Laura Gilpin, modernist
7. Skeet McAuley, contemporary Anglo
8. Matika Wilbur, contemporary Native American
9. Zig Jackson, contemporary Native American

10. Wendy Red Star, contemporary Native American
11. Will Wilson, contemporary Native American
12. Andrea Robbins and Ma Becher, contemporary German

III. Hispanos Culture in the Southwest

There is scarce photographic record of early Hispanos presence. However, many Modernists found beauty in the surfaces and forms in Hispanos architecture. Why is it difficult to find many examples of fine art photography made about or by Hispanos photographers?

Fieldtrips

1. Martinez Hacienda, Taos
2. San Francisco de Assis Church in Ranchos de Taos
3. Acequia
4. Talpa Cemetery

Primary Source Material

1. UNM Taos, Southwest Research Center, many examples of photographs, church and municipal records

Readings

1. *Taos, A Topical History*, "Sin agua, no hay vida": Acequia Culture", By John Nichols, p. 201-211.
2. *Taos, A Topical History*, Sacred Places, Michael Miller, p 127-243.
3. *A Sense of Place, A Sense of Time*, J.B. Jackson, The Mobile Home on the Range, p. 52-67.

Photographic Artists

1. The Modernists: Ansel Adams, Eliot Porter, Paul Strand, Laura Gilpin
2. Miguel Gandert, contemporary
3. Alex Harris, contemporary
4. Skeet McAuley

IV. Anglo Culture

The photographic history of the Southwest is almost entirely made by Anglos. How does this archive reflect Anglo values? Can we identify the cooperation and conflict of Native, Hispanos and Anglo cultures within contemporary Taos?

Fieldtrips

1. Kit Carson House, (frontiersman 1829-1868)
2. Taos Art Community (1915-1933) Fechin House, Blumenschein House, Harwood Museum of Art
3. New Buffalo Center, 1960s-1970s
4. El Monte Sagrado Hotel and Spa

Primary Source Material

Photo-eye Gallery and Verve Gallery, Santa Fe to view contemporary fine art photography

Readings

The Last Conquistador, film. (Yes, I am putting this under Anglo Culture).

Photographic Artists

1. Paul Strand, historical
2. Edward Weston, historical
3. Lee Friedlander, contemporary

4. Tony O'Brien, contemporary
5. Lisa Law, now historical
6. Jonathan Blaustein, contemporary
7. Debora Hunter, contemporary
8. Jamie Stillings, contemporary

More on Readings

The first three books, all considered classics, address the dual role of photography as document and art in the West.

1. *Crossing the Frontier: Photographs of the Developing West, 1849 to the Present*, by Richard Rodriguez and Sandra Phillips, SFMOMA, Chronicle Books, 1996.
2. *Perpetual Mirage: Photographic Narratives of the Desert West*, various authors, Whitney Museum, Abrams, 1996.
3. *Print the Legend: Photography and the American West* (The Lamar Series in Western History) by Martha A. Sandweiss, Yale Western Americana, 2002.
4. *Taos, A Topical History*, edited by Corina Santistevan and Julia Moore, Museum of New Mexico Press, 2013.

More on Fieldtrip to find Primary Sources

1. UNM Taos, Southwest Research Center
<http://taos.unm.edu/swrc>
 Bustling with academic and amateur researchers, this humble hole-in-the wall center off the town's square holds records, books, photographs and historical documents, all under the loving auspices of Nita Murphy. It's a great place to be inspired by primary sources, easily available to students.
 "Through Exceptional partnerships, the Southwest Research Center has compiled over 12,500 publications. The materials focus on art, history, ethnology, and archeology of the southwest. The SWRC has an extensive Native American collection, legal documents pertaining to water rights and land grants, the D.H. Lawrence Collection, and American fur trade documents. The SWRC also contains genealogy records such as census records since 1823 and baptismal, marriage, and burial records for Taos County since 1701. Information on historical figures in New Mexico, historical maps of New Mexico, private collections, thousands of books including first editions and original issues of "The Laughing Horse" are also contained in the SWRC."
2. New Mexico History Museum, <http://www.nmhistorymuseum.org>
3. Palace of the Governors Photo Archives
<http://www.palaceofthegovernors.org/photoarchives.html>
4. New Mexico Museum of Art,
<http://nmartmuseum.org/>
5. Andrew Smith Gallery, Santa Fe
6. Verve Gallery, Santa Fe
7. Photo-eye Gallery, Santa Fe

Photography Books at Fort Burgwin Library

The Fort's library has an excellent collection of over 200 books related to photography in the Southwest. A 7-page bibliography, referencing the four topics of the course will be provided to

students. Students will be required to incorporate research from several of these books into their final PowerPoint Presentation.

Digital Collections We Will Use in Research:

1. DeGoyler Digital Collection, <http://digitalcollections.smu.edu/all/cul/dgl/>
The DeGoyler extensive collection: U.S. West: Photographs holds many magnificent photographs by O'Sullivan and William Henry Jackson that are digitally represented online. Additionally, they hold a copy of *Taos Pueblo*, a book by Ansel Adams and Mary Hunter Austin, 1930. This rare book of ten actual silver gelatin photographs was produced in an edition of 100. We will use SMU's digital collection to preview these images and then visit the Harwood Museum to see another real copy of *Taos Pueblo*. Students will be encouraged to visit DeGoyler Special Collection when they return to campus.
2. Harwood Museum of Art <http://collections.harwoodmuseum.org/view/objects/asimages/3493>
3. New Mexico Digital Collection, a vast archive of UNM and UN Museum Photographic Collection
<http://econtent.unm.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/acpa>

Evaluation

Classes in Taos are very small and so it is easy to provide guidance daily to each student. There will be quiz or a reflecting paper posted on Canvas required for each of the readings that precede the field trips. Short on Human Diversity and Global Engagement (20%). Daily photographic production, verbal participation, engagement (20%). Final Power Point Presentation (60% (30% situating their work within a historical context, 30% on the strength of their photographs.)) Lengthy description of requirements, format and phased schedule for Power Point Presentation will be given.