At its inception in 1839, the photograph was considered the pencil of nature and its images perceived as direct and unmediated transcriptions of reality. But as photography immediately began to participate in anthropology, portraiture, war, social reform, pornography, art, and a plethora of other discourses, practitioners and public alike started to question its supposed objectivity and transparent truthfulness. The photograph, it seemed, could be as manipulated (and as manipulative) as any other form of representation. Visual Culture became a material that was reflective of politics of power relations between the photographer and the photographed and how the photograph was used. This course will approach the photograph (and other forms of images made) as a cultural document as well as an aesthetic object. We will examine the photographer’s intentions and stylistic strategies, the photographs functions, intended audiences and reception, and contemporary theories of representation. Whether we are looking at 19th century daguerrotype types or 21st century digital images, our central concern will be how photographs convey meanings, to whom and for what purposes. By uncovering the ideologies at work, we will enrich our understanding of photography’s seductive appeal.

This course is a way to understand and analyze the ways in which image like an object has a biography and history. What we see in photographs is invariably what is shown to us. Implicit in this statement is the argument that a photograph embodies the eye of photographer, the ideology informing the photographic technique, and the relation of all these to the subject that is objectified and represented through the camera lens. The intent of this inter-disciplinary seminar is to develop a critical way to read and hear the ‘thousand words’ that exist behind an ‘image’. It aims to inquire how the imagination implicit in the image as argued in recent scholarship, has become a way to extract a critical history of people and cultures. Such a methodology involves a consideration of the material and visual cultures that condition the classical ‘subject and object’ relationship in photographic encounters. This course will consider a range of photographs and photography, as texts embedded in history and culture and as objects that communicate meanings beyond a specific context.

Over a period the technology of image making has changed but what is the role of the evolving technology and the image-maker behind the technological instrument to convey the communicated content at various levels in culture and history? This question is fundamental background to ‘how and what’ of communication that brings together the concerns for “I” as a subject in the images made and “Eye” that perceives what “I” wants to show. Mediated by technology the images that are product of “I” and “Eye” are bound within various predicaments of what is edited, what is truth and what is asserted.

**COURSE OUTCOMES:**
By the end of this course, you should be able to come away with a critical understanding of the following aspects of communication and culture and the role of technology in it:
(a) That which the images do and do not “show”

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(b) The many potential meanings embedded in any one image
(c) The history of visual documentation of people
(d) The implications of visual recordings
(e) The limitations and benefits of using photography and film in research
(f) The expectations to be faced when utilizing an image for communication

Course Structure:
Three hours of lecture each week.
Do not expect that the material presented by the instructor in the lecture be all in the reading. Lectures will complement or will be based on the readings. Readings are basically for you to acquire an understanding of the ideas presented in the lecture. Each unit will first introduce you to the general theoretical and conceptual ideas invoked by the segment and then mesh the readings provided for you to reflect upon and develop your own understanding and analysis. You are advised to do the readings before coming to the lecture. Readings and lectures together make up the ideas and concepts that each individual student is to acquire and develop. Some lecture session will be reserved for students to raise questions and participate in a discussion.
You will be expected to come to the lectures prepared, by doing the readings before hand. Attending lectures and reading along with preparation for assignments should, at a minimum, involve you in 18 hours of work a week. This includes research and background readings as well as participation in discussions. Some students will find they need to do more than this, and students aiming for high grades will almost certainly need to do more.

Prerequisites and Expectations
This is a reading intensive seminar course, where regular involvement and participation is essential. Students will be expected to present analytical work utilizing a particular kind of photographic production, research, readings and or complimenting the analysis with a photographic project undertaken by each individual. Based on readings and discussions students would be expected to generate their own ‘raw material’ that demonstrate application of ideas to understand objects like photographs, or representative objects, that have their own dynamic histories and biographies that can be heard and seen as different realities.
Having done well in AIS and STS will place you in a firm footing to undertake this course. If you have an interest and or skill in photography and visual cultures, it will be an added advantage and might interest you further. However, this course is not to teach you photography per se.

Course Grades:
Letter Grade system will be applicable.
“F” will be assigned to individuals who are found not following an honours code. What I mean by honours code is:
Academic dishonesty cheating, plagiarism, or any kind of deceit- will not be tolerated, and will result in a zero for the assignment. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask.
All ideas and words that you did not generate yourself must be cited in your papers. I do not anticipate this scenario for the work required in this class, but in extreme cases I reserve the right to assign a failing grade for the course or a specific assignment.

Lectures & Class Organization
Do not expect that the material presented by the instructor in the lecture be all in the reading. Lectures will complement or will be based on the readings. Readings are basically for you to acquire an understanding of the ideas presented in the lecture. Each unit will first introduce you to the general theoretical and conceptual ideas invoked by the segment and then mesh the readings provided for you to reflect upon and develop your own understanding and analysis. You are advised to do the readings before coming to the lecture. Readings and lectures together make up the ideas and concepts that each individual student is to acquire and develop. Some lecture session will be reserved for students to raise questions and participate in a discussion. Instructor will assign students to lead certain discussion
sessions, or make series of presentations. This is a course requirement and each student would be graded that would constitute 40% of your final grade. The assigned presentations to be made by a student must reflect that the readings have been done, what is the central point made by the provided piece of writing and how it relates to the understanding you have in relation to the course and world around you. The final grade for the course 60% will be given for your final presentation of a research project. (See details below). Student’s participation in form of questioning and responses in the presentation sessions will also be considered in the final evaluation.

TEXT/READINGS/WORKLOAD:
A set of readings, especially prepared for this course, will be available through the institute library. This is a compilation of the basic readings that you are expected to study from for this course. The readings are assigned on a unit-by-unit basis to back up lectures and to provide additional background information Please follow the Reading Guide below. In order to do further research you will be expected to use the Library of the institute. You will be expected to come to the lectures prepared, by doing the readings before hand. Attending lectures and reading along with preparation for assignments should, at a minimum, involve you in 18 hours of work a week. This includes research and background readings as well as participation in discussions. Some students will find they need to do more than this, and students aiming for high grades will almost certainly need to do more.

IN CLASS PRESENTATIONS. (40%)
Topic for class presentation to be made by individual will be fixed in relation to the course outline. It will be provided by the instructor. Each student would be expected to undertake the related readings, explicate, and present the issues that emerge from the readings. Secondly, under take research in relation to the concepts and ideas that originate from the given topic/readings and present an analytical report. The work presented must show the connection to the course at large. Individual presentation must answer the problem and or issue raised by the topic/readings. It must show that the related given readings have been incorporated. individual will be expected to carry out research on their own and go beyond just the readings provided. You are expected to search and furnish proper evidence/documentation and image to support your presentation.

ABOUT THE FINAL PROJECT (60%)
Each student in the last three weeks will be assigned a specific lecture session to present a 30 to 40 minute presentation. All individuals for this assignment will get the project cleared by the instructor after submitting a written proposal. You are expected to discuss the proposal with the instructor and follow the suggestions to develop the ideas and analysis. Individual will take up the topic given to them and will analyze various dimensions of it. The presentation will be graded on the three distinct criteria (I) Research, (II) Analysis, and (III) Capacity to relate ideas from the class and readings. It will be up to the individual’s creative aptitude to structure the presentation session and they should try to utilize ‘multimedia’ in making a sleek professional presentation with academic content and quality. It is expected that you will either undertake photography on your own or utilize images that are scanned and source is documented. Before the final exam weekend, each individual will be responsible for turning in the CD (with images and text in word file only, [NOT PDF or any other formatting]) that holds the presentation and the based final research project. I will not grade just the power point or bullet points of your presentation. It must be a proper paper with references, footnotes, and bibliography. This CD must incorporate the discussion and modifications suggested at the actual presentation session. The first page of the research document must identify the individual by name and ID number and a @mail address. This should be followed by a page that states clearly, what the report/research is on in 200 words (Abstract). It is up to you how long the paper is as long as you can sustain my interest in the posed abstract and stick to it and is worth the weight given to this part of your grade. This document must outline the material researched into. What research question was and what answers were derived based on analysis and critical thinking. Each student must substantiate the ideas presented and relate to the ideas and issue connected with the course.
TIPS ON RESEARCH AND WRITING

Think before you write and make revisions before you hand in the essay/report.

1) Start early, it is always too late to start. Construct a question out of the topic selected. Remember the paper is not to show what you have read and describe it but it must raise a question and have an analysis.
2) Go through the list and select possible/probable question. Consider the question in light of readings and reduce your options; chose a question.
3) Analyze the question carefully. What exactly is it asking? Underline key ideas and concepts. Can the question be reduced within the limits of the question? What are its possible constituent parts? Record your thoughts on a separate piece of paper; place to one side.
4) Start research. Make notes and follow up on possible sources.
5) Record all the information you will need to complete referencing within your essay and in the essays bibliography.
6) After you have done, some research and thinking go back to the question and your initial thoughts on its parts. You may well now see the question in a different light.
7) Draw up a new set of guidelines, attempting to identify the key points of argument in relation to the question. Sketch out how your research could be utilized in an essay. You may well now realize that you need to do some more research.
8) Firm up the guidelines into a plan. Attempt to identify between two and five major points of argument in the essay, which you can support, with examples/sources. Check that this confirms to the question asked.
9) Check on whether you need all the points; discard minor issues or relegate to conclusion. Check you have the points in a logical order.
10) Start to write your essay. You do not need to start with the introduction. Identify your strongest section; write it up. Complete core of essay in draft first. Check how parts fit together. Is your essay balanced? Have you answered the question? Are you using your sources to full advantage? Do you have the references correct? Once the core is finished, write the introduction and the conclusion. Does your introduction really introduce what you claim you are going to do? Does your conclusion really conclude?
11) Once you are satisfied with the balance of the essay check it through for length and style.

Tips on how to do the readings for this course.
- What is the reading about?
- Why and how the reading fits into the course theme and sequence of lecture
- What does the author intend to communicate
- How (methodologically) he does so?
- What are author’s sources and points of reference?
- What is the central argument for and against present in the reading
- How do you reflect upon the reading?
POTENTIAL AREAS OF RESEARCH PROJECTS:
Some Ways of Looking at All Things Visual: Ideas for research project/ topics

Emergence of a new paradigm for studying all forms of visual culture as parts of a cross-media system

- "Visual Culture" studies recognizes the predominance of visual forms of media, communication, and information in the postmodern world.
- Has there been a social and cultural shift to the visual, over against the verbal and textual, in the past 50 years, and has it been accelerating in the past 10 or 20 years?
- Or are our written, textual, and visual systems continuing an ongoing reconfiguration in a new (recognizable) phase?
- Study of visual culture merges popular and "low" cultural forms, media and communications, and the study of "high" cultural forms or fine art, design, and architecture.
- "Visual Studies" intersects with the notion of "mediasphere" in mediology, the study of media systems and media as a system.
- Getting clear on terms: "visual" | "culture" | "system"
- The "visual culture" approach acknowledges the reality of living in a world of cross-mediation—our experience of culturally meaningful visual content appears in multiple forms, and visual content and codes migrate from one form to another:
  - print images and graphic design
  - TV and cable TV
  - film and video
  - computer interfaces and software design
  - Internet/Web as a visual platform
  - digital media
  - advertising in all media (a true cross-media institution)
  - fine art and photography
  - fashion
  - architecture, design, and urban design
- We learn the codes for each form and code switch among the media and the "high" and "low" culture forms.
- The experience of everyday life can be described as code-switching or hacking the visual codes around us to navigate and negotiate meaning.
- But: Important to deconstruct potential visual/textual binary opposition: most of our experience of media is a hybrid of texts, images, and sounds, rather than pure states of any one mode.
- Challenge is studying visual culture as a system, but not as a pure state of visuality.
- Cases studies: *W* and *Vogue* | Rhizome.org (examples of digital images, text, design)

Visual Culture and Institutions of Meaning

Visual Culture Produced by / Embedded in Social Institutions

- Social institutions are systems of order that perpetuate, preserve, and legitimize complex forms of collective identity.
- Institutions are ways for mediating power, policing boundaries, and creating identities.
- You can recognize a social institution at sites of competition for power, spheres of control, and definition of identities.
- Examples of institutions coming into view:
  - who owns the definition of "family"?
  - who owns the decisions and definitions of the representations of sex and nudity in the mass media and fine art?
  - who owns the distinction between art and popular culture; fashion and clothing?
  - We live in many institutions, from a macro level (embracing many people) to micro levels (smaller or elite groups that define a special sphere and influence the rest of the social order)
- Macro
  - Education / Academe / Schooling
  - The Family
  - Religion
  - Governance, the State
  - Social class system
- Micro
  - Media System and its differentiation of forms and technologies: controls mediation and is distributed through the various industries and consumer sectors
  - System of Professions (Law, Medicine, Business, etc.): maintains professional status and boundaries
  - Art and the Artworld system: maintains the cultural category of art
  - Fashion: replicates codes for desire, fashion as a sign, maintains the binary of fashion vs. clothing
• Institutions operate through actual organizations and legal entities, which are themselves defined and legitimized by their dependence on the larger institution.
• Visual culture is transinstitutional and works across media, but is used to encode identities in several institutions—personal, national, ethnic, sexual, subcultures.
• The transinstitutional and cross-media aspects of visual culture make it a large site for contested views of identity, power, and control.

Culture(s) of Visualization: Strategies for Analysis
• Visual culture, to borrow Nicholas Mirzoeff’s definition, is perhaps best understood as a tactic for studying the functions of a world addressed through pictures, images, and visualizations, rather than through texts and words.
• Studying visual culture isolates or brackets "visual mediation" or "visual representation" for analysis.
• However, most of our experience of media is a hybrid of texts, images, and sounds, rather than pure states of any one mode.
• The visual is always "contaminated" by the non-visual: ideologies, texts, discourses, beliefs, intertextual presuppositions, prior experience and "visual competence" (cf. Eco and Bourdieu).
• Shouldn’t it be "visual cultures" (plural)?

Image-Saturated world: visual culture and everyday life
• Experience of images today mainly through photographic means, or images encoded as photographs.
• Digital images now dominate production of images in every medium.
• The era of "post-photography" photography: images and film that imitate photography and camera-based images, but are entirely digital in composition and viewable output.
• What is the role of the visual arts in a mass-mediated visual world?
• Many elements of our visual mediasphere are consumer-culture driven: advertising
• Viewer in the subject position of consumer: advertising constructs its viewer.
• "Advertising serves not so much to advertise products as to promote consumption as a way of life."
• Case studies: shopping malls

Theory and disciplinary resources for thinking about visual culture
• Visual Culture Theory Map
• Disciplinary construction of objects of knowledge: approaches meet at the intersection of epistemology and institutional disciplinary professionalization
• “Visual Culture Studies”: can it be defined as an interdisciplinary field?
• How are its objects constituted and subject matter formed? Is there a subject for this field?
• Necessity of theory. Legacy of party-line academic orthodoxies in humanities and social sciences, professionalization of disciplines, boundaries, turf.
• Already a debate about the professional legitimization of the field as intellectually and institutionally viable.

"Visual Cultures": Are Our Modes of Visuality like a Language?
• Social and cultural, not natural
• Rule-governed: use of images form systems of meaning based on a grammar of learned rules
• Extend levels of function and analysis from linguistics and semiotics
• Minimal signifying units in meaningful strings (syntax, grammar) to connected discourse.
• Both theory and production rules have already described the visual grammars of advertising, fashion, design, visual art, film, television genres.

Is There a Language of Visual Culture Visual Media?
• We can now talk about intervisuality, intermediality: cross-image interpretation, visual literacy
• Viewing images and media as a process of socialization in culture: who gets to produce images, who gets to consume them, who can do both.
• The codes of the photographic image: index, icon
• Semiotics of images and visual culture: signs and interpretive communities
• Codes of realism and index of the real
• Problem of reference, referentiality, representation
• Language of images is now the language of media
• Is there a visual language analogous to spoke/written language?
• Syntax, syntagmatics, pragmatics of "visual language"?
• Images in "syntagmatic"structures (linear sequences following a code or pattern like narrative or designed composition) and "paradigmatic" (the vertical relations among levels or types of signs, like linguistic levels, a network protocol "stack," items within menu categories)
"High art" or "fine art" is part of visual culture, competes with popular visual culture for attention.

- The "high art" world is both a source and destination for the whole of visual culture.
- Popular forms get rechannelled through artworld validated art genres and venues.
- Visual culture and mediological mix, the always already hybridization of visual media.
- Case Study: *W* magazine and appropriation of "high art" styles and content.
- Fashion and design appropriating, and converging with, the codes for high art.
- Appropriating the "celebrity" code for artists: artists inserted in the glamour scene with models, fashionistas, rock stars, movie stars, the wealthy.
- Case study: nudity codes in popular culture and fine art
- The power of context and institutions: the significance of images of the nude body.
- When is a nude human body received as encoded as art?

Rhetoric of the Image

- Positioning the viewer-spectator: media and visual works construct certain kinds of spectators, carry information about the "implied viewer" (cf. the implied reader of literary theory).
- Styles and subcultures: every visual sign has a style ("we're never out of uniform"), and subcultures identify with visual styles.

Range of materials and physical media used in creating/constructing visual artifacts and images today.

- Artworld embrace of wide range of materials unknown to "serious" art before the 1960s.
- Post-1980s expansion of art media and image technologies.
- Centrality of photography and lens-based art
- Deconstructed and re-presented back in a high-art or artworld context
- Multiple cross-overs between art techniques and design, advertising and fashion, and popular media images
- A dialogic interplay of high and low cultural forms, cross-media interventions
- Disclosure of visual and photographic codes
Reading Material

A set of readings, especially prepared for this course, will be available through the institute library. This is a compilation of the basic readings that you are expected to study from for this course. The readings are assigned on a unit-by-unit basis to back up lectures and to provide additional background information. Please follow the Reading Guide below. In order to do further research you will be expected to use the Library of the institute.

Readings for each of the theme are provided below. (Some themes and readings will be added or altered depending on the student interest and as the seminar presentations develop to accommodate student interests)

COURSE OUTLINE AND TENTATIVE READINGS

UNIT 1


Nicholas, Mirzoeff. 1999 “What is visual culture?” pp 1-34 An Introduction to Visual Culture. Routledge


Colonialism and Exhibited Others: Differences as Spectacle and Science


Corbey Raymond 1993 “Ethnographic Showcases.1870-1930” Cultural Anthropology Vol 8, No 3:338-369


William Carol 1999 “Photographic Portraiture of Aboriginal Women on Canada’s Northwest coast Circa 1863-1880”


Conventions and Methodologies


Paradigms and Debates
Margret Mead ‘Visual Anthropology in a Discipline of words” pp 3-10 [Hockings, P. 1995 Principles of Visual Anthropology]

UNIT 2
Histories.
Berger. Ways of Seeing pp 7-34
Geeti Sen 2003 “Iconising the Nation” pp 155-175. [India a national Culture  G.Sen (ed) Sage Publication]

UNIT 3
Image, Object, Photography and Power
A, Nandy 2003 “Ethnic Cuisine: The significant Other” pp 246-251. [India a national Culture. G.Sen (ed) Sage Publication]
Pandya, V 2009 (Forthcoming) ‘Through lens and text: Constructions of a “Stone Age” Tribe in the Andaman Islands’ [In History Workshop Journal.Oxford University]

Unit 4
Indigenous use of Photography Albums and Family Photographs
Bourdieu. Photography
David, MacDougall. 1992 “Photowalls: An encounter with photography” Visual Anthropology Review, September Vol 8 No.2: 96-100

UNIT 5
Photography as Fragment, Photos as Evidence

Nicholas, Mirzoeff. 1999 “Virtuality :From virtual antiquity to the pixel zone” pp 91-126 An Introduction to Visual Culture. Routledge

UNIT 6
Photography as a Method

UNIT 7
Nature Photographs True or False?

Unit 8.
Advertisements, Gender, Fashion Photography and Paparazzi

Nicholas, Mirzoeff. 1999 “Diana’ death: Gender, photography and the inauguration of global visual culture” pp 229-254 An Introduction to Visual Culture. Routledge

Unit 10.
Photography and “Others” or Orientalism


Unit 11
Who owns and makes images.