Advanced Photography: Narrative Strategies

Professor: Jennifer Garza-Cuen
Logistics: Texas A&M Corpus Christi – Fall 2017
Course: ARTS 4365.001 – Room #: MOD2 100A
Tues/Thurs: 3:30-6:20pm
Office & Hours: MOD2 111 - Hours TBA
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“We tell stories to ourselves; of our journey from birth to death, friends, families, who we are and who we want to be. Or public stories about history and politics, about our country, our race, our religion. At each moment of our lives these stories place us in space and time. They console us, making our lives meaningful by placing us in something bigger than ourselves. Maybe the story is just that we are in love, that we have to feed the cat or educate the children. Or maybe it’s a lifelong struggle for salvation or liberation. Either way – however large or small the story – the human impulse is to make sense of each moment by referring it to a larger narrative. We need to live in a world not of our own making”

~ Bryan Appleyard, Sunday times Magazine, 7 February, 1999:39

Course Description

What does it mean to tell a story in still images? In this class, we will explore that question and raise others through making narrative photographs and discussing the role of storytelling within the context of photographic history. We will examine different types of photographic narrative, including the archive, the family photograph, photojournalism as well as personal mythology. Through weekly assignments designed to tease out and develop personal language, we will focus on pacing, sequencing, linear vs. nonlinear narrative and how text functions with image. Students will be asked to keep a visual journal of images and ideas for use in developing a long-term project. This class is aimed at students who already have a working knowledge of camera functions, digital processes, black and white film, and printing techniques. While we will hone our technical practice, emphasis will be placed on developing personal vision and content. As the class evolves, students are encouraged to experiment with new camera formats and to bridge media, using photography as part of a broad vocabulary of image-making processes.
Learning Objectives

• Explore how narrative strategies can expand your visual language
• Consider how storytelling has been employed within the history of photography
• Discuss and identify how narrative functions in a given image
• Demonstrate technical excellence in making black and white photographs
• Experiment with narrative strategies; incorporate other mediums into photographic process
• Express confidence experimenting with the camera and in the darkroom
• Participate in thoughtful, critical discourse
• Engage in critical dialog; respond thoughtfully to the work of others
• Be able to articulate the content of your own work as well as others

The professor will supply a schedule for demonstrations, lectures, critiques, and any class trips. These dates may be modified and it is the student’s responsibility to keep abreast of any changes. The Final Project will consist of a cohesive professional level portfolio accompanied by a clear, concise artist statement.

Open Studio

This is a studio-based art course and ample time will be allotted to production and creative output; however, students are expected to work at least five hours a week outside of class time. Regarding the studio time built into this class: this is time for you to work under supervision in the studio. This is the best time to ask me specific questions about your work and get feedback on your work in progress. It is expected that you will have enough work to occupy the full class period. It is also expected that students put in the adequate work time outside of class in order to ensure the quality outcome of their work.

Assessment

Attendance
Attendance is mandatory for your success, will be recorded during each class session and is considered as part of the professionalism element of your final grade. You will lose a single letter grade on your fourth (4) absence. Five (5) absences will result in the drop of another letter grade. Six (6) absences will result in the failure of the course. Three (3) late arrivals or early departures will result in the recording of one (1) full absence. Students are required to attend class for the duration of the scheduled time or until the Professor dismisses the class. Attending critiques are mandatory.

Participation
Being a part of group discussions and critiques are vital to developing as an artist – please do your best to voice what you are thinking!
Sketchbook
This is a place for you to brainstorm and plan your ideas for assignments, collect inspirational visual imagery and write your thoughts on readings – or your ideas in general. It is meant to be a resource that you can draw from in the making of your final, self-directed project. It will be turned in at the end of the class and returned to you.

Readings
Over the course of the semester, you will be assigned readings. It is important that you give careful attention to each reading, as they will be the basis for discussion in the following week’s class. You are asked to respond briefly, but thoughtfully in your sketchbooks so that you will have collected your thoughts before our group conversation.

Research Project
A research paper or project will be proposed by the student and approved by the professor.

Final Project
A self-directed portfolio project is due at your final critique on the last day of class. I encourage you to put yourself into the work, this is your opportunity to create something uniquely yours. 10-12 images minimum.

Grading Rubric
100-90 = A  89-80=B  79-70=C  69-60=D  60 and Below = F
10% Sketchbook
10% Readings
10% Participation and Professionalism
30% Critiques 1 & 2
40% Final Critique

Subjectivity & Art
In Art, there is no simple formula for success. Unlike Math and Science courses there is no right answer. Simply following instructions and feeding back information provided in the correct manner is important for establishing the basics of the technique of photography however, it will not help much as we move further into the creative process. In the end, it is the inventive process that is paramount. Artists are seekers, they ask probing questions, seek out unusual perspectives, take risks, experiment, and find visual solutions to conceptual problems; it is that seeking process that forms the basis of what it means to be an artist. In this course you will be expected to learn that process and to use it to create striking, conceptually strong images; your ability to do so will make up the majority of your grade this term.

Rules, Regulations & Academic Integrity
This is a college classroom; you are all adults and are expected to act accordingly.
Please show respect to yourself and others at all times.
Absolutely NO mobile phone use in the classroom.
No surfing the internet, checking email, or watching u-tube during class.
Leave the classroom as clean or cleaner than you found it.

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one's own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade on the assignment or in the class and may also result in further action by the college.
ACADEMIC ADVISING
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information, please call 361-825-3466.

DISABILITY SERVICES
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

GRADE APPEALS PROCESS
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

Care of Equipment
The use of departmental equipment is a privilege, subject at all times to the instructor’s approval. "If you break it, you buy it!" Students must replace damaged equipment with an equivalent model in similar or better condition. Safe and Cooperative use of the darkroom and graduate lab equipment by students enrolled in this class is expected. Only students enrolled in a class may have access to departmental equipment. Because art studios use materials and tools that can be dangerous, safe and cooperative behavior by students is absolutely necessary. Uncooperative and/or unsafe behavior will result in your being withdrawn from the class.

I am looking forward to an exciting and mutually rewarding semester!