

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**Sociology 401.02**  
**Visual Sociology**  
**Fall 2009**

Instructor: Dr. Liza McCoy

Office: SS 934

Telephone: 403-220-6856

Email: mccoym@ucalgary.ca

Office hours: Wednesdays, 12:30-1:30 pm; Fridays, 12:30-1:30 pm; and by appointment

Emergency Evacuations:

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point by the Food Court in the Professional Faculties Building

### **Course Description**

Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an increasingly significant part of what we see on a daily basis involves *images or visual depictions* such as photographs, maps, pictures, films, and graphics. Many activities of contemporary everyday life are mediated by visual representation: medical diagnosis, surveillance, war, entertainment, science, education, and family life, to name just a few. In recent years, digital technology and the Internet have accelerated the circulation of images and made it easier for more people to be producers as well as users (and subjects) of visual representation.

There are two main trends within **visual sociology**. The first studies the visual aspects of human society, with an emphasis on social forms and uses of visual representation. The second uses visual methods to conduct sociological research. In this course we will learn about – and *do* – both types of visual sociology. Our focus will be on still photographs and practices of photographic representation, both as objects of sociological analysis and as data within sociological research.

Class participants will need access to a digital camera of some kind: cell phone, point-and-shoot, SLR. Ordinary life experience of taking and storing/transferring digital images is all that is required.

### **Readings**

Steve Edwards, *Photography: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Readings available on-line, through links provided in Blackboard. (Some TBA readings may need to be purchased in hard copy from Bound & Copied.)

## **Exercises, Assignments, Assessment**

***Inquiry-based learning activities/practice exercises.*** An important component of the course is the exploratory and analytic work we will do collaboratively, as well as the practice exercises that will give you an opportunity to develop your skills at using photographs in sociological research. Some IBL activities ask you to find or take photographs and post them in Blackboard. Others require you to write a short reflective piece you will hand in to me. Your individual contributions to the IBL component will not be graded; instead, you get credit for the total number of activities to which you contribute, as follows:

5 IBL activities:	10 points
4 IBL activities:	8 points
3 IBL activities:	6 points
2 IBL activities:	4 points
1 IBL activity:	2 points

To get credit for the activity, you must post your image or hand in your writing by the deadline. To get full credit, you must also attend the class discussion based on the activity. If you only post/write but do not attend the discussion, you will get half credit (1.0 point). No credit is given for attending the discussion without turning in work.

***Midterm.*** There are two parts to this. The first is a take-home essay assignment, given on October 14 and due on October 19. The second part is an in-class test on October 19. The test will involve fixed choice, short answer and short essay questions.

***Final test.*** There will be a final in-class test on Friday, December 4. This test will involve fixed choice, short answer and short essay questions.

***Final project.*** Due December 14; approximately 12-15 pages. This will be an original piece of sociological research analysing or using photographic images. Projects that merge the creative and the sociological, such as photo essays, are welcome. Parameters of the project will be given in class. You must turn in a written proposal for your project on or before November 9. (The proposal is ungraded, but if it is late there will be a deduction from the final project grade.)

***Assessment.*** Your final percentage grade will be calculated as follows:

IBL activities	10 %
Midterm essay	20 %
In-class midterm test	20 %
In-class final test	10 %

Final project	40 %
Total	100 %

Your final letter grade will be determined according to the following schedule:

Percentage Grade	Letter Grade
95-100	A+
90-94	A
85-89	A-
80-84	B+
75-79	B
70-74	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
55-59	D+
50-54	D
49 or less	F

***Rounding policy:*** If your percentage grade falls on the cusp between two letter grades, I will look at your final paper grade, your test grades and your course participation over the semester in order to decide whether to round your final grade up or down. My decisions about rounding are not open to negotiation.

### **Official University & Departmental Policy Stuff**

***Exam Policies:*** You must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take an exam. All requests for deferral of an examination due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferred exams may be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. If you have missed an exam for a legitimate reason, you will be able to write a “make up” exam as close to the original exam as possible. The date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferred exam. Deferred exams will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

***Ethics Research:*** Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

**Academic Misconduct:** Cheating is regarded as a serious academic offense. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar, which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

**The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP)** legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department main office. Term assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

**Safewalk:** The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

**Academic Accommodation:** Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**

### ***Handing in Papers Outside of Class, Return of Final Papers, and Release of Final Grades***

When students are unable to submit papers at class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant rather than at the Sociology Department main office.

Final papers will not be returned through the Sociology Department main office. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, (i.e., outside an instructor's office, the department office, etc.). Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will only be available for pick-up during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or the beginning of the next term.

Final grades are not posted by the Sociology department. They are only available online.

## (Tentative) Schedule of topics, readings, activities, assignments and tests

Readings for second half of course will be finalized at a later date.

Please note: Except for tests and essay/project due dates, which are fixed, this schedule is open to modification in order to fit the needs of the class and the pace of our work together.

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings</b>
September 9, 11	Introduction to course	Edwards, chs. 1 & 2
September 14, 16, 18	History of photography Social uses of photography <i>IBL#1 assigned on Friday</i>	Edwards, chs. 3-6 & Afterword
September 21, 23, 25	Personal photographs Guest speaker on Wednesday <i>IBL discussion on Friday</i>	Bourdieu & Bourdieu article Sather-Wagstaff article
September 28, 30, Oct. 2	Public photographs <i>IBL#2 assigned on Friday</i>	McNamara article Payne article
October 5, 7, 9	Advertising images <i>IBL discussions on Wednesday and Friday</i>	Gill article Robinson & Hunter article
Oct. 14	Review for test <i>Midterm essay assigned</i>	– no readings –
Oct. 19, 21, 23	<b><i>Monday – test; essay due</i></b> Using photography in sociological research	TBA
Oct. 26, 28, 30	Visuality of social places <i>IBL #3 assigned on Monday IBL discussion on Friday</i>	O Donoghue article Hurdley article
Nov. 2, 4, 6	Photo elicitation interviews Oral history and memory <i>IBL #4 assigned on Friday</i>	Barr article Harper article
Nov. 9	<b><i>Final project proposal due</i></b>	Brown article
Nov. 16, 18, 20	<i>IBL discussion on Monday</i> Ethnographic photographs <i>IBL #5 assigned on Wednesday</i> Guest speaker (Friday)	Knowles article Neale chapter

Nov. 23, 25, 27	<i>IBL discussion on Monday</i> Photovoice and social change Guest speaker (Friday)	Castleden article Wang article Wang et al article
Nov. 30, Dec. 2, Dec. 4	Informal presentations on final projects Other topics to be announced Review for test	TBA
Dec. 6	<i>Test</i>	– no readings –
Dec. 14	<i>Final projects due</i>	