

## **JOUR 507: Visual Communication**

DePaul University, College of Communication  
Section 301, Class 30435, Spring Quarter 2017  
Room 1130 Daley, Loop Campus, Mondays, 5:45 – 9 p.m.

Instructor: Dr. Jill Hopke, Assistant Professor of Journalism

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Office location: 1123 Daley, 14 E. Jackson, Loop Campus

Office hours: Mondays 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. and Wednesdays 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.

(*or by email appointment*)

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jillhopke>

### **Course description and learning objectives**

This course is designed to give you a theoretical and practical grounding in the digital world of photojournalism. We will cover tools available to reporters in illustrating content from their stories on the Web and for distribution via mobile and social platforms.

Focusing on the science of the visual brain and neuro-aesthetics, this course will help you learn to think photographically and hone your visual critical thinking skills. You'll develop your own "photographer's eye" (Freeman, 2007) and come away from the course with a set of conceptual and practical tools in your personal photographer's toolkit.

We'll explore the early history of social documentary photography and examine case studies of the social documentary genre using Chicago and its diverse communities and peoples as subjects.

We'll also engage with ethical debates in the field of photojournalism, including: the rights of photography subjects, reporting in conflict zones and in other difficult situations, and the ethics of digital editing and image manipulation.

Our learning objectives for the quarter:

- Develop a personal photographer's eye, improving visual observation skills and your photographic thinking;
- Improve visual editing skills to make informed choices in pre- and post-production (e.g. framing and editing photographs);
- Understand the basics of good design for composing shots and in-the-field best practices for your photographic process;
- Increased understanding, and practice, of visual storytelling in journalism; and
- Apply ethical standards to one's own photographic work and in the evaluation of the work of other producers and creators.

## Course materials

### 1) Required readings

#### **Books**

Freeman, M. (2007). *The photographer's eye: Composition and design for better digital photos*. New York; London: Focal Press.

Note: A copy of the Freeman book will be on reserve at the Loop Campus library.

Garcia, A. (2014). *Depth of field: Tips on photojournalism and creativity*. Chicago: Chicago Tribune.

Note: This is an e-book. It is available for purchase from the *Chicago Tribune* website for \$4.99+tax (cheaper there than Amazon) at: <http://store.chicagotribune.com/ebook-depth-of-field-tips-on-photojournalism-and-creativity.html>

#### **D2L readings**

In the interest of keep the cost of course texts reasonable, additional readings are available as PDFs through the class D2L site. These are marked (D2L) in the course schedule.

- 2) **Monitor and participate on class D2L site** – Regularly check the class D2L site for updates. Readings marked (D2L) in the course schedule are available as PDFs on our D2L site. You will turn in your assignments via the D2L dropbox, unless otherwise noted.
- 3) **Professional Instagram account** – Part of being a working journalist and/or professional communicator is developing a professional digital presence. You'll be expected to showcase your best work on a professional Instagram account throughout the quarter. You may supplement your professional Instagram with other platforms if you choose (e.g. Flickr, Twitter, online portfolio, VSCO).
- 4) **Lynda.com** – We'll cover the basics of Adobe Photoshop and Lightroom in class. DePaul University subscribes to the online technology training resource Lynda.com. I strongly encourage you to make use of this technology training resources available to you as a student for free and will periodically recommend Lynda.com resources to deepen our in-class learning. For how to access Lynda.com through DePaul, see: <http://offices.depaul.edu/information-services/services/technology-training/Pages/online-training.aspx>
- 5) **Adobe Creative Cloud (recommended software)** – Adobe Creative Cloud software is available in the College of Communication labs. To further your comfort with the digital editing tools, you may want to subscribe to Adobe Creative Cloud (includes Photoshop and Lightroom) for a personal computer. You can access DePaul software

discounts (DePaul email address required which you can request from the university) at: <https://depaul.onthehub.com/WebStore/Welcome.aspx>

An educational license to Adobe Creative Cloud Desktop is \$9.75+tax for a one-year subscription.

## Assignments overview

1. Choose one of “My Chicago” OR “The Hidden City” (10% of final grade) –
  - “My Chicago” – Color and light concepts, due in week 3.
  - “The Hidden City” – Pattern and texture concepts, due in week 4.
2. Choose one of “Chicago in Action” OR “Faces of Chicago” (10% of final grade) –
  - “Chicago in Action” – Movement, motion, and “decisive moment” concepts, due in week 6.
  - “Faces of Chicago” – Environment portraiture concept, due in week 7.
3. Visual toolkit project (includes in-class presentation) (25% of final grade) – Working with a partner or independently, you’ll use the concepts from class to reevaluate your work to-date for the course and discuss how you’ll apply concepts to your personal visual toolkit. *Note, you may choose to do the presentation with a partner. However, each student will do an individual write-up to go along with the presentation.* Due in week 8.
4. Photo essay final project (40% of final grade) – On a topic of your choice, create a social documentary-style photo essay. Due at the end of week 10, Sunday, June 4, 11:59 p.m. via d2l. Project proposal, aka “pitch” due in week 7.
5. Professional Instagram (5% of final grade) – Throughout the quarter, post your best work utilizing the core principles we discuss in class, with photo captions, to a professional Instagram account. The minimum requirement is an average of three posts per week, for a total of *30-spaced out throughout the quarter*.
6. In-class participation (10% of final grade) – Active engagement in our shared learning community is expected. This includes in-class activities and coming prepared to discuss the week’s readings. For our discussions of assigned readings, please read the material in advance of class each week and come with at least two questions and/or reactions prepared. You’re expected to be an active participant in our discussions and critically engage with the week’s themes and use the concepts

to critique the work we examine as a group, as well as how you will apply them in your own photographer's toolkit. There may be pop quizzes on reading material.

We'll be utilizing DePaul's setting in the Loop, and the spring term scheduling, to get out of the classroom and do hands-on photography exercises. So each week, please come prepared for outdoor weather conditions (e.g. comfortable shoes for walking, dressed for the weather, have an umbrella if rainy).

## **Verification**

You will include a reference list, if applicable for each assignment. If you conduct interviews you are required to provide contact information for every person you interview, including phone number and e-mail address. Note, for Instagram posts it's fine to @mention and hyperlink to source material in lieu of a full reference list.

## **Plagiarism and academic integrity**

Plagiarism means taking someone else's work or ideas and passing them off as your own. Any idea that is not your own should be cited in every assignment with author(s) last name, publication year and page numbers, if a direct quote. You are expected to provide sources for all material that cannot be reasonably considered common knowledge (e.g. Chicago is located in IL; Chicago has two baseball teams). This includes any idea or piece of information that is not original to you. Plagiarism will result in an "F" for the assignment and for the course. It may lead to dismissal from the university.

All photographic material you produce for course assignments and in-class exercises is expected to be your original work and have been taken after the start of the course. Any exceptions must be part of an assignment (e.g. analyzing the work of photography masters) and be clearly labeled, including a full citation to the original source.

Failing to act with academic integrity is detrimental to DePaul's values, including the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. University academic integrity violations include, but are not limited to, the following: cheating; plagiarism; fabrication; falsification; misuse of academic resources; alteration or falsification of academic records; and academic misconduct.

Conduct that is punishable under the Academic Integrity Policy could result in additional disciplinary actions by university officials. Furthermore, all work done for this course should comply with the University Academic Integrity Policy available in the student handbook or at <http://academicintegrity.depaul.edu>.

## Grading

The conventional 10-point letter-grade scale will be used. The specific grading scale follows the recommendation of the College of Communication: A (93-100), A- (90-92), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D (60-69), F ( $\leq$  59).

An overview of the grading expectations is as follows:

**A-level work:** Very little improvement necessary to be published and/or distributed in social channels. Challenging and innovative concept, applying techniques discussed in class.

**B-level work:** Needs a little more retouching. Good concept and clear execution, applying techniques discussed in class.

**C-level work:** Effort and promise, but much execution must be improved in multiple categories.

**Unsatisfactory-level work (D or F):** Very little effort was made. Instructions were not followed. Reporting incomplete or only part of assignment completed. Major revisions necessary, did not make an attempt and/or plagiarized. Not full sourced by reference list, in-text citations, list of interviewee contact information, hyperlinking and/or @mentions (depending on distribution format).

## Sexual harassment

This class will faithfully follow university guidelines on sexual harassment. Such behavior will not be tolerated and may lead to dismissal from the university.

## Writing support

The Writing Center, at the Lincoln Park and Loop campuses, is available for consultation on all aspects of writing assignments. Writing Center tutors are specially trained undergraduate and graduate students who can help at any stage of the quarter or in your process. Visit <http://www.depaul.edu/writing> for more information.

## Attendance

Doing well in this class requires you to be in class and actively participate. Class attendance is mandatory, except in the case of university-authorized absences. More than one (1) absence will negatively impact your course grade. In addition, "phoning" (see below) in class will result in you being counted absent for the class period. Information on the Dean

of Students Office's "absence notification" policy and the form to submit to their office can be found at: <http://offices.depaul.edu/student-affairs/support-services/academic/Pages/absence-notification.aspx>

Your attendance and active participation are expected and required. Participation grades are factored by considering how often you participate in class and how that participation advances our overall learning (i.e., I will consider how your questions help lead us to a greater understanding of concepts and technical skills, as well as how your contributions further discussion). If you miss no class meetings and your participation level is excellent, you can expect an "A" for this portion of your grade. If you miss no more than one class meeting and your participation level is above average (i.e., you participate during most class sessions rather than every class session), you can expect a "B" for this portion of your grade. If you miss very few classes and your participation level is average (i.e., you contribute sometimes or your contributions don't elevate our thinking enough), you can expect a "C" for this portion of your grade. If you miss a significant number of class meetings and your participation level is average, you can expect a "D" for this portion of your grade.

If you are sick, please contact me as soon as possible, ideally before missing class, and follow-up to make-up what you have missed.

Work conflicts, vacations, and non-emergency family situations are not acceptable absences or excuses for missing deadlines, especially for the final project.

## **Late work**

Late work will not be accepted without a Dean of Students Office verified excused absence for a "medical, mental health or personal reason." See above for the URL of the Dean of Students absence notification policy.

That said, if you have a personal situation affecting your performance and engagement in our class, please contact me so that I can help identify campus resources that could be of assistance.

## **Classroom etiquette and equipment**

No *phoning* (aka, non-course related device usage) in class. It is a distraction to your classmates and disrespectful to me—the instructor—and will lower your course grade.

***A note on electronic note-taking:*** You are welcome to take notes on a laptop. *However, this is a privilege. If you use a laptop for noting-taking, please do so responsibly. Make sure you are engaged with the class and that it's not a distraction for your colleagues or for me as the instructor.* I reserve the right to request you email me your notes on-the-spot. Students

abusing the privilege of taking notes on a laptop (e.g. by being on email, chat, social media unrelated to class activities, websites unrelated to class activities, etc.) will lower your grade.

The College of Communication owns a variety of reporting equipment that you can access and check out for free from a location in the Loop with a DePaul ID. Please see me if you are interested in using College-provided photo and video cameras, recording devices and other reporting equipment as you complete course assignments.

## **Professionalism**

Remember that out in the Chicago community you are representing DePaul and our Journalism Program. My expectation is that you will conduct yourself appropriately and professionally wherever your reporting takes you this quarter.

## **Academic accommodations**

Students who require accommodations for any type of disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. To ensure that you receive the most appropriate reasonable accommodation based on your individual situation, it is preferable if you contact me during the first week of class.

Also, make sure that you have contacted the Center for Students with Disabilities. They are located at (and reachable via email at [csd@depaul.edu](mailto:csd@depaul.edu)):

### Lincoln Park

Center for Students with Disabilities  
2250 North Sheffield Avenue - Student Center 370  
Chicago, Illinois 60614-3673  
773.325.1677 main phone  
773.325.3720 fax  
773.325.7276 TTY

### Loop

Center for Students with Disabilities - Lewis Center 1420  
25 East Jackson Boulevard  
Chicago, IL 60604-2287  
312.362.8002 main phone  
312.362.6544 fax

On a personal note, I am hard-of-hearing and may request that you speak-up during classroom discussions, because I want to hear from you!

## **JOUR 507 Course Schedule** (*subject to change with advance notice*):

### **WEEK 1 – Introduction to the Visual Brain and Core Design Elements**

#### **Monday, March 27:**

Course overview; introduction to the visual brain and thinking photographically; core concepts for composing shots; getting started in photojournalism; work of master John H. White documenting life in Chicago for the EPA and at the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

#### **Readings:**

Freeman: “Perspective and Depth” (pp. 52-55); “Contrast” (pp. 34-37), “Figure and Ground” (pp. 46-47); “Balance” (pp. 40-43); “Placement” (pp. 24-24); “Horizon” (pp. 28-29); “Vertical Lines” (pp. 74-75)

Garcia: Chapter 1: “Discovering Photojournalism”

D2L: U.S. National Archives Flickr: Documerica Project (1971-1977), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), John H. White:

<https://secure.flickr.com/photos/usnationalarchives/sets/72157633309290525/>

### **WEEK 2 – Color, Light, and the Visual Brain**

#### **Monday, April 3:**

Work of master Ansel Adams; color, light and the visual brain.

#### **Readings:**

Freeman: “Exposure” (pp. 106-107); “Color in Composition” (pp. 114-117); “Color Relationships” (pp. 116-119); “Muted Colors” (pp. 122-125); “Black and White” (pp. 126-127)

Garcia: Chapter 2: “Getting Smart with the Basics”

**Due:** Turn in professional Instagram handle.

### **WEEK 3 – Gestalt Perception, Texture, and Pattern**

#### **Monday, April 10:**

Introduction to Photoshop, Gestalt perception, texture, and pattern.

#### **Readings:**

Freeman: “Gestalt Perception” (pp. 38-39), “Pattern, Texture, Many” (pp. 50-51), “Rhythm” (pp. 48-49), “Cropping” (pp. 20-21).

Garcia: Chapter 3: “Avoiding Mistakes and Clichés”

**Due:** “My Chicago” assignment (option 1).

## **WEEK 4 – Social Documentary and Street Photography**

### **Monday, April 17:**

History of social documentary and social photography, with examples of the genre’s use in Chicago. Work of masters Robert Frank, Vivian Maier, Dorothea Lange, Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine and others.

### **Readings:**

Freeman: “Visual Weight” (pp. 58-59), “Looking and Interest” (pp. 60-61), “Reactive or Planned” (pp. 134-135), “Documentary or Expressive” (pp. 136-137)

### **Study examples of social documentary photography in Chicago:**

- “Connected Division” (Austyn Wyche):  
<http://auswychemedia.webs.com/connected-division>
- “Poverty and Profit” (Alex Garcia for the *Chicago Tribune*):  
<http://newsblogs.chicagotribune.com/assignment-chicago/2013/10/street-photography-in-the-austin-neighborhood.html>
- “Heroin: A love/Hate Relationship” (Chuck Jines):  
<http://www.chuckjines.com/tag/heroin-addiction/> and background interview from WBEZ: <https://www.wbez.org/shows/morning-shift/morning-shift-august-18-2015/777dcc9c-34d4-4a58-a1e5-48de6d8eddd8>

**Due:** “The Hidden City” assignment (option 1).

## **WEEK 5 – Decisive Moments, Motion, and Movement**

### **Monday, April 24:**

Work of masters Henri Cartier-Bresson, Raghu Rai, Nick Ut, Alfred Stieglitz. Cartier-Bresson’s “decisive moment” concept, motion and movement.

### **Readings:**

Freeman: “Motion” (pp. 96-97); “Moment” (pp. 98-99); “Hunting” (pp. 156-157); “Anticipation” (pp. 166-167); “Exploration” (pp. 168-171)

Garcia: Chapter 6: “Capturing the Moment”

## WEEK 6 – Environmental Portraiture and Finding the Life of a Picture

### Monday, May 1:

“Afghan Girl” case study (Steve McCurry), how to take better pictures of people. Look at examples “I am Chicago” and “Humans of New York.”

### **Readings:**

Freeman: “Visual Weight” (pp. 58-59); “Looking and Interest” (pp. 60-61)

Garcia: Chapter 5: “Improving Your People Pictures”

### **Study examples of environmental portraiture:**

- “I am Chicago” (Adam Novak and Sara Collins): <http://iamchicago.net/> and background article from the *New York Times*: [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/21/us/21cncportraits.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/21/us/21cncportraits.html?_r=0)
- “Afghan Girl” (Steve McCurry): <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2002/04/afghan-girl/index-text>
- “Humans of New York” (Brandon Stanton) <http://www.humansofnewyork.com/>

**Due:** “Chicago in Action” assignment (option 2).

## WEEK 7 – Juxtaposition and Visual Storytelling

### Monday, May 8:

Visual storytelling in journalism and the visual brain.

### **Readings:**

Freeman: “Juxtaposition” (pp. 178-179); “Delay” (pp. 144-145); “Clear or Ambiguous” (pp. 140-143); “Aerial Perspective” (pp. 56-57)

Garcia: Chapter 4: “Finding New Ways to See”

**Due:** 1) “Faces of Chicago” assignment (option 2), and 2) Final project proposal.

## **WEEK 8 – Ethics in Digital Photography and Photojournalism**

### **Monday, May 15:**

Work of masters Lynsey Addario, Benjamin Lowy, and Damon Winter. Case studies in ethics in photojournalism and digital photography. Start visual toolkit presentations, individually or with a partner.

### ***Readings:***

D2L: NPPA Code of Ethics: [https://nppa.org/code\\_of\\_ethics](https://nppa.org/code_of_ethics)

D2L: RadioLab “Sight Unseen”: <http://www.radiolab.org/story/sight-unseen/>

D2L: Lynsey Addario: <http://www.lynseyaddario.com/>

**Due:** Visual toolkit write-up and in-class presentation.

## **WEEK 9 – Review Core Concepts and Present Visual Toolkits**

### **Monday, May 22:**

Reviewing core concepts for final projects; students present visual toolkits individually or with a partner. No new readings, review previous week’s readings.

**Due:** Continue in-class visual toolkit presentations (if needed).

## **WEEK 10 – Work on Final Projects**

**Monday, May 29:** Memorial Day (*no class*), work on final projects. No new readings.

**Final projects due via d2l, Sunday, June 4, 11:59 p.m.**