



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Faculty of Arts

Department of Sociology

Sociology Department Home Page: <http://www.soci.ucalgary.ca>

SOCI 445

Visual Sociology

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| • Winter 2019 | • Monday 4:00-6:45 pm | • SA 017 |
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Instructor: Liza McCoy

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Phone: 403-220-6856

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-3:00 pm, and by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

This course explores the use of photographs in sociological research. How can photographs help us develop and express sociological understandings of complex social phenomena? In order to use photographs effectively in research, however, we need to understand something about photography as a social practice and the different ways photographs are made and used.

Therefore, this course focuses on *both* dimensions of visual sociology: the sociological study of photography as a social practice and the use of photography in sociological research.

We will begin by establishing a conceptual approach to the sociological study of photographic representation and consider the role that photography has played in the development of modern society. We will explore some significant photographic practices, from selfies to surveillance, learning from existing research but also pursuing our own inquiry, drawing on our own knowledge and experience. We will consider the history and current practice of documentary photography, which shares some common ground with sociological inquiry, and we will move from there to methods of visual research. The objective is not just to study *how*

social researchers use visual methods, but to practise these methods through in-class exercises, short assignments and an independent research project using photo-elicitation interviews.

This course emphasizes hands-on practice, critical reflection, writing, active participation in discussion and collaborative analysis. No photographic skill beyond everyday know-how for making and posting photographs is required.

Required Textbooks, Readings, Materials

A collection of journal articles and chapters, which is available through D2L (either as a permanent link or a PDF). The reading list and the schedule of readings by date will be posted in D2L.

Methods of Evaluation

Reading responses	10 %
Short Assignments	30 %
Research project	35 %
In-Class midterm test	15 %
In-Class final test	10 %
Total	100 %

Reading responses (10%)

It is expected that you will come to class having read and thought about the assigned readings for that day. In addition to that default preparation, for up to 10 of the readings you may write a (maximum) one-page, single space summary/response, following guidelines given in class. To get credit for your response, you must post it to the Drop Box in D2L by 12 pm (noon) on the day that we will be discussing the reading. Each response that is submitted on time is worth 1 point, to a maximum of 10 points. Work that is poorly written or that does not display evidence of a careful engagement with the reading will be given half credit or no credit.

Short Assignments (30%) (See course schedule for due dates.)

Assignment 1: Auto-ethnography of your own photographic practice (10%)

Assignment 2: Sociological reflections on the work of a documentary photographer (10%)

Assignment 3: Group analysis of photographic representations of place (10%)

Research project (35%)

You will design and carry out your own small project of independent sociological research, using photo elicitation interviewing. Training and preparation for this research will be provided in class, and detailed instructions for the assignment will be posted in D2L.

Proposals (1-2 pages) due: March 11

Final paper due: April 15

Midterm test (15%):

There will be an in-class test on February 25. This essay test will cover assigned readings and class material from the first half of the course.

Final test (10%)

There will be a short, final in-class test on April 8. This essay test will cover practices and issues in visual research.

Final Exam Information

There is no registrar-controlled final exam in this course.

Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned and submitted to the registrar based on the following scale:

Grade	Percent range	Grade Point Value	Description
A+	96 – 100%	4.0	Outstanding performance
A	90 – 95.99%	4.0	Excellent-superior performance
A-	85 – 89.99%	3.7	
B+	80 – 84.99%	3.3	
B	75 – 79.99%	3.0	Good – clearly above average performance
B-	70 – 74.99%	2.7	
C+	67 – 69.99%	2.3	
C	63 – 66.99%	2.0	Satisfactory - basic understanding
C-	59 – 62.99%	1.7	
D+	55 – 58.99%	1.3	
D	50 – 54.99%	1.0	Minimal pass - marginal performance
F	<50%	0	Unsatisfactory performance

The grades for a course component may be scaled to maintain equity among sections and to conform to departmental norms.

Schedule of Lectures and Readings

This information will be posted in D2L.

Grade Reappraisal

Within two weeks of the date the exam/assignment is returned, students seeking reappraisal of examinations or assignments must submit a written response to the instructor explaining the basis for reconsideration of one's mark. The instructor will reconsider the grade assigned and will then book a time with the student to discuss his or her work and rationale. It should be noted that a re-assessed grade may be raised, lowered, or remain the same.

Technology Use

Please bring your image-capture and Internet-capable devices to class. From time to time you will need to make pictures, show pictures, do Internet research and view images online. You may want to use your laptop or tablet for course notes. Your devices should, of course, only be used for course-related purposes and in ways that are not discourteous or distracting to other people. (It's also good to avoid distracting yourself with your devices.)

Emergency Evacuations

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point in the Social Science food court.

Handing in Papers, Assignments

1. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
2. **Protection of Privacy:** The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation does not allow students to retrieve any course material from public places. Anything that requires handing back will be returned directly during class or office hours. If students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are only available online.

Research Ethics

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 Faculty 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

Please refer to the website listed below for information on University of Calgary policies on Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html>

Absences and Deferrals

Students who are absent from class assessments (tests, participation activities, or other assignments) should inform their instructors as soon as possible. Instructors may request that

evidence in the form of documentation be provided. If the reason provided for the absence is acceptable, instructors may decide that any arrangements made can take forms other than make-up tests or assignments. For example, the weight of a missed grade may be added to another assignment or test. For information on possible forms of documentation, including statutory declarations, please see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/n-1.html>.

Deferred Final Exam Form: Please note that requests to defer a Registrar scheduled final exam are dealt with through the Registrar's Office. Further information can be found at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>

Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term also requires a form to be filled out. It's available at: https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/deferred_termwork15_0.pdf

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 110) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

Student Representation

The 2018-19 Students' Union VP Academic is Jessica Revington (suvpaca@ucalgary.ca).

For more information, and to contact other elected officials with the Student's Union, please visit this link: <https://www.su.ucalgary.ca/about/who-we-are/elected-officials/>

You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ombuds/contact>

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

The student accommodation policy can be found at: ucalgary.ca/access/accommodations/policy.

Students needing an Accommodation because of a Disability or medical condition should communicate this need to Student Accessibility Services in accordance with the Procedure for Accommodations for Students with Disabilities ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.

Students needing an Accommodation based on a Protected Ground other than Disability, should communicate this need, preferably in writing, to the course instructor.

Student Resources

[SU Wellness Centre](#)

[Campus Mental Health Strategy](#)