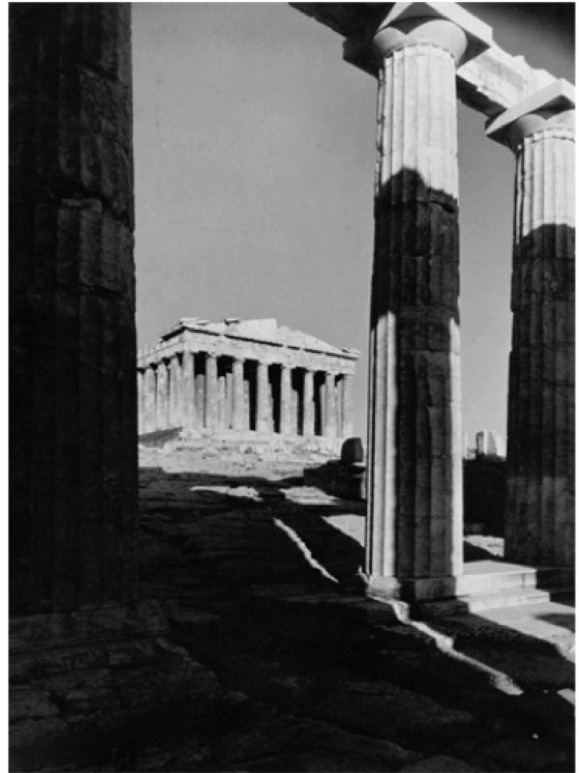


## ARTH/CHTE 323 Photography and Archaeology: The Art of Documentation Spring 2024

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Images (from L to R): Engraving by Frédéric Martens, 1841, based on photograph by Pierre-Gustave Joly de Lotbinière, 1839; Nelly's, 1937; Anagnostopoulos Bros. OE, 1985; Martin Parr, 1991.

*"Documentary photography has nothing whatsoever to do with art, but it is an art for all that."*

Walker Evans

## Course Description

When we look at photographs of antiquity we often privilege the subject over the photograph. In fact, one of the unwritten tenets of archaeological photography is that of impartial depiction. This effectively implies that the "hand" of the photographer should be invisible. But can it actually be made invisible, and to what extent? Perhaps we have desensitized our vision when examining archaeological photographs, considering only the subject and not the photograph that delivers it? In recent years, the photograph itself has become the focus of study, thus transforming it from being a mere document to a cultural object in its own right.

By their nature, photographs and archaeological evidence may appear to document "the facts." Reading a photograph or an artifact at face value, however, can be misleading. In truth, "the facts" are often presented by people with varying agendas. Therefore, one of the primary objectives of this course is to learn to interrogate images to discover their broader context, since photographers and archaeologists are as much cultural producers as they are observers and scientists.

The study of the relationship between photography and archaeology requires a multi-disciplinary approach. We must be practitioners and theorists, researchers and analysts, approaching the depiction of archaeological subjects from a variety of angles. Through lectures and through viewing the work of major figures in the field you will become familiar with the development of the medium alongside the discipline of archaeology. Through site visits, classroom activities and hands-on experience you will gain insight into the mechanics of photography and how it shapes vision. Through examining case-studies and conducting your own research you will discover how photography has often held up a mirror to the greater cultural contexts of archaeology.

Greece is an ideal setting for this course: photography and scientific archaeology were born at roughly the same time and the histories of both disciplines are intricately connected. To explore this relationship, the class will visit archaeological sites, photographic archives and museums. Students will also be required to conduct visits in their own time to complete a photography-based research project.

## The goals of the course are:

- To learn to "read" and interrogate photographic images;
- To gain the ability to evaluate archaeological photographs both for their success as a visual record and/or as part of a historical narrative;
- To acquire an understanding and appreciation for the role of photography in archaeology;
- To foster an understanding and appreciation of the art of photography.
- And to develop visual and critical thinking skills relevant to this class and beyond.

Upon completion of the course students are expected:

- To be knowledgeable about historical developments in, and theoretical approaches to, archaeological photography and photography in general;
- To be able to recognize, describe, analyze, and interpret visual images;
- And to be familiar with strategies with which to approach photographic images.

This course does not require any familiarity with photography or photographic processes. Since it is designed as a higher-level art history course, previous knowledge of Western art is expected. Some knowledge of archaeological processes and/or the ancient world is helpful but not necessary.

## Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Explore, compare, and contrast historical narratives and artistic vision.

# CYA Syllabus

- Exercise critical thinking while looking, reading, writing and speaking about photographers and photographic images.
- Reflect on the importance of the still image both as a recording tool for archaeological work and as a source of information itself with respect to the cultural context of the archaeological process.
- Reflect on and engage with the basic mechanics of the production of archaeological photographs.
- Compare and contrast different perspectives on the same subject by authors and photographers with divergent backgrounds and agendas.
- Craft thoughtful, well-organized and edited, thesis-driven essays in a clear and comprehensible style.
- Employ textual evidence in support of a clearly-stated analytic argument.
- Communicate ideas through images and writing.

## Course Resources and Activities

### Reading

We will read a wide variety of texts, from historical accounts to essays on image theory. There are a few core texts that will constitute our primary reading and will be required reading in preparation for our lectures and discussions. There is also a longer "supplemental bibliography" from which you will be reading certain selections that will help you directly with your coursework.

### Writing

Writing is an important way of communicating ideas and forms an essential part of this course. you will be expected to present clear, well-written arguments that are backed up by research and observation. Students who want to take their writing to the next level and earn better grades are encouraged to consult the CYA academic skills advisor!

Students are also expected to look up any words they are unfamiliar with. Vocabulary building is an important part of any college course. You may be tested on your understanding of the vocabulary in the assigned texts during quizzes and of course will be expected to use correct vocabulary when necessary in describing concepts and processes.

### Photography

This course presents a multidisciplinary approach to the subject. In order to put yourself in the shoes of the photographer and gain an inside understanding of the photographer's thoughts and processes that result in a final image, you will be required to produce some practice-based work and conduct image research.

Several of our meetings will be on-site at archives, museums or archaeological sites. You are not required to have any specialist equipment to participate. Where equipment is not provided, a decent smartphone camera will suffice. If you have your own camera, so much the better.

### Final Paper

Your final paper will be based on class readings and research and address the broader theme of interconnectedness between photography and archaeology. You will have the freedom to develop your own research question and strategy based on your interests.

The results of your work will be written up in a 2,500 word illustrated essay with relevant images and bibliography to support your work. Some subject areas for a final paper include but are certainly not limited to:

## Course Requirements

You will be assessed based on your assignments, your presentation, your essays and your classroom participation.

Final grades will be based upon the following:

15%	Informed class participation
25%	Class. Assignments
25%	Midterm paper
35%	Final paper

Grades are intended to give you a sense of the quality of a particular piece of work: roughly speaking, a B means that you have done a good job with the writing, the ideas, and the organization of the work; a C conveys that the work lacks some important qualities and has some problems, while an A means that the work is exemplary in some key ways: the writing is particularly clear, the ideas thoroughly treated, the organization of the presentation well considered and effective.

**Class Participation:** You must attend class having completed all reading assignments. You will be expected to engage fully in class discussions. The quality of your class participation will affect your final grade.

**Use of Laptops:** Electronic devices may not be used in class to access readings or other materials. In this class, our focus is on creating a learning community and developing your critical thinking and ability to discuss and debate ideas. All research shows that students who use electronic devices during class are less engaged, make fewer friends, and master less of the material. So, this rule is designed to benefit you and help you succeed. We will occasionally do in-class projects or research that may call for the use of electronic devices, but you will be told when you can use them.

**Attendance:** Students are expected to report for classes promptly. CYA regards attendance in class and on-site as essential. Absences are recorded and have consequences. Illness or other such compelling reasons which result in absences should be reported immediately in the Student Affairs Office.

**Policy on Original Work:** Unless otherwise specified, all submitted work must be your own, original work. Any excerpts from the work of others must be clearly identified as a quotation, and a proper citation provided. (see Student handbook)

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you are a registered (with your home institution) student with a disability and you are entitled to learning accommodation, please inform the Director of Academic Affairs and make sure that your school forwards the necessary documentation.

## Books, Course Materials, Moodle

Adams, A. *The Camera*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2003.

Asdrachas, S.I., A. Moshovi, and A. Tsirgialou. *Greece Through Photographs: 160 Years of Visual Testimony*. Athens: Melissa, 2009.

Baldwin, G. and, M.C. Jurgens. *Looking at Photographs: A Guide to Technical Terms*. Revised edition. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2009.

Barrett, T. *Criticizing Photographs: An Introduction to Understanding Images*. London: Routledge, 2020.

Barthes, R. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. London: Vintage Books, 2000.

Birkin, J. *Archive, Photography and the Language of Administration*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021.

Bohrer, F.N. *Photography and Archaeology*. London: Reaktion Books, 2011.

Dorrell, P.G. *Photography in Archaeology and Conservation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

- Farrell, I. *Complete Guide to Digital Photography*. London: Quercus, 2014.
- Lyons, C.L., J.K. Papadopoulos, L.S. Stewart, and A. Szegedy-Maszak. *Antiquity and Photography: Early Views of Ancient Mediterranean Sites*. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2005.
- Marien, M. W. *Photography: A Cultural History*. London: Laurence King, 2002.
- Mavrommatis, S., ed. *The Creative Photograph in Archaeology*. Athens: Benaki Museum, 2008.
- McFadyen, L., and D. Hicks. *Archaeology and Photography: Time, Objectivity and Archive*. London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020.
- Molyneaux, B. *The Cultural Life of Images: Visual Representation in Archaeology*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Morris, E. *Believing is Seeing: (Observations on the Mysteries of Photography)*. New York: Penguin, 2011.
- Rosenblum, N. *A World History of Photography*. London: Abbeville Press, 2007.
- Sontag, S. *On Photography*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979.
- Sturken, M., and L. Cartwright. *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.