

**ENGS 095: STORYTELLING WITH WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHS**

**SUMMER ACADEMY 2019**

PICTURES WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

**COURSE LOCATION:** Cohen 209

**COURSE DATES:** July 8<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> in the classroom, and July 20<sup>th</sup> to August 2<sup>nd</sup> online

**FACULTY CONTACTS AND BIOS:**

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**ANDREW FROST** is a photographer, printer, and book maker who lives and works in Burlington, Vermont. He received his MFA from Syracuse University and has published multiple books of photographs. His work has recently been exhibited nationally and internationally.

**JENNY GROSVENOR** earned a BA in English from Smith College, an MA in English Education from Teachers College, Columbia University, and an MFA in Creative Writing from Bennington College. She worked as a writer, producer, and director for *LIFE* and *Sports Illustrated* magazines. Her creative nonfiction essays have appeared in *Writing On the Edge*, *On Writing and Teaching Writing*, and *The Bennington Review*. In addition to teaching writing courses full-time as a Senior Lecturer in the English Department at the University of Vermont, she is at work on an investigative memoir.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** In this journalism and photography course, students will explore how words paint pictures and pictures tell stories, looking closely at the interplay, the reciprocity and collaboration of writing and images: how one can spark, conjure, compliment, or enhance the other in making meaning and creating stories that matter. Writing is about *seeing*. Finding pictures that tell stories, images that relay powerful messages requires close observation. Life is about paying attention, about being conscious. Chance favors the prepared—and connected—mind. This making of connections happens through storytelling—with words, with pictures (moving or still), or both. Stories matter. Playing on the well-known phrase, “a picture worth a thousand words,” this course—a combination of hands-on writing and photography—will challenge students in addition to generating original ideas to use visual rhetoric as inspiration for a range of nonfiction writing: poetic, essayistic, advertorial, script-based, fact-based, journalistic. Students will study, reconsider, and imitate its subgenres: Profiles, Travel Narratives, Personal Essays, Columns, Writing About History, Narrative Investigative Reporting, Public Radio/Podcasts, Documentaries, and Photo Essays.

*To see life; to see the world; to eyewitness great events; to watch the faces of the poor and the gestures of the proud; to see strange things—machines, armies, multitudes, shadows in the jungle and on the moon; to see man's work—his paintings, towers and discoveries; to see things thousands of miles away, things hidden behind walls and within rooms, things dangerous to come to; the women that men love and many children; to see and take pleasure in seeing; to see and be amazed; to see and be instructed. Thus, to see, and to be shown, is now the will and expectancy of half [hu]mankind. To see, and show, is the mission now undertaken by a new kind of publication.”*

—Drafted by Henry R. Luce; refined by Archibald MacLeish  
“Introduction to the First Issue of *Life*,” November 23, 1936

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES** (in keeping with the interdisciplinary Reporting and Documentary Storytelling Minor toward which this course counts for fulfillment):

- To study the practice and theory of telling socially and culturally engaged stories in journalism and nonfiction writing, photography and digital media formats
- To ground hands-on storytelling projects in inquiry, observation, research, reporting skills, photography, and immersion in a subject
- To blend careful research and documentary attention with personal expression
- To explore ideas, issues, problems, and theories related to media, journalism, and nonfiction storytelling
- To develop vital skills in media literacy, critical thinking, ethical awareness, creativity, and problem solving
- To bear witness, promote social reform, and embrace humanism
- To show readers and viewers a mirror of the times and themselves

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

*Through close and critical reading and observation, you will learn:*  
to appreciate the ability of words and pictures to illuminate universal human experiences.

*Through process and journal writing, you will learn:*  
to capture an audience in “a New York minute,” painting pictures with words and presenting photographs that tell stories, sometimes pairing both to craft stories that matter.

*Through the art and craft of photography, you will learn:*  
to build a visual narrative that communicates without written language.

*Prepare for the journey. Trust the process.*

**REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS:**

*Telling True Stories, A Nonfiction Writers’ Guide from the Nieman Foundation at Harvard University*, edited by Mark Kramer and Wendy Call, (A Plume Book, Penguin Publishing Group). **ISBN: 978-10452287556.**

*100 Photographs: The Most Influential Photographs of All Time*, (Publisher: Time, October 16, 2016). **ISBN-13: 978-1618931603**

Online access to *The Nieman Foundation*

Online subscriptions to *NiemanStoryboard* and *NiemanLab* (free)

Access to *Humans of New York* video stories via Facebook

Access to Blackboard for Syllabus, Detailed Schedule of Assignments, Daily Writing Prompts, and your Photojournalist’s Notebook

A portable “Discourse Journal”—one you *love* to write in and carry with you everywhere

A folder for handouts, drafts, and submissions

**HIGHLY RECOMMENDED:**

An online subscription to *The New York Times* (student rate: \$7.50/month)

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Daily Writings (1,000 words), Photography Projects, and Peer Workshops, Midterm Portfolio, Discourse Journal and online Photojournalist's Notebook, One Student-led Photojournalism Presentation/Discussion, and a Final Portfolio and Reflection.

### METHODS OF EVALUATION:

#### **Class presence and participation: 50%**

Includes: Discourse Journal, Photojournalist's Notebook, and Peer Workshops  
Daily Writings/Revisions and Photography Projects/Lab and the Midterm Portfolio  
(to be completed in the first 2 week of the summer semester)

Student-led Photojournalism Discussion/Presentation: 10%

**Final Writing and Photography Portfolio (done collaboratively and digitally over the second 2 weeks of the summer semester): 40%**

### EXPECTATIONS (HOW TO SUCCEED):

**Keeping up with readings and photography assignments.** *Reading well precedes writing well* (Donald Hall). This course—in which reading, thinking, observation, discussion, photography, writing, and response are closely interconnected—requires critical exploration, discernment, and effective modeling through exposure to a variety of assigned readings and study of photographs.

**Submitting work on time.** Due dates are rigorous and unyielding. For each day that elapses from the time a journal entry, essay, draft of final paper is due, 5 points will be deducted from the final grade. Assignments will no longer be accepted one week beyond the due date. Absences from class or lost files are not valid excuses for missing deadlines. Be sure to make back-up copies of all your writing and *don't throw anything away during the semester*. All work submitted must be printed and stapled. *NO work accepted via email*. If you are absent, put your essay in the box outside my office door or bring it to the next class. NOTE: The deadlines are absolute: half a letter grade will be deducted for every day a paper is late, e.g., A to A-minus, B+ to B, etc.

**Class presence, punctuality, and preparedness.** This is not only appreciated, but expected. The vitality of the classroom environment and peer workshops, *and* your personal progression as a writer depend on your effort and proactive involvement. *Three or more unexcused absences from class each incur a penalty of one letter grade*. Active listening as well as sharing, and most importantly, the respect of others' ideas (agreeing to disagree) is at all times required. *Please bring to every class* your texts, hard copies of your drafts-in-progress, and your Discourse Journal.

**Laptops and cell phones.** You may bring both to class as long as they are turned *OFF*. Computers are great; but in this course, hard copies are better. Revision requires *seeing* the changes from draft to draft. There will be no in-class electronic editing, or text messaging. A note on text-messaging: the body language is instantly recognizable. If I see you texting, you will be marked absence. Don't be tempted. Tuck your cell phone where you can't reach it; turn it off or put it in airplane mode.

**Periodic (minimum one, ideally two or three) individual writing conferences.** It is imperative that we meet with each of you one-on-one at least once during the semester, not only to share ideas, but also to evaluate personal growth in your thinking and writing. These will be scheduled during regular class meeting times.

**THE PHOTOJOURNALIST'S NOTEBOOK:** Here, you will record thoughts and ideas (some as “freewriting” instant reactions, some as “double-entry” responses to a direct quote or posted image, others in reflection) in reaction to: happenings, images, stories you've encountered through course readings, your *Nieman*

*Storyboard* or *NiemanLab* online newsfeeds, *100 Most Influential Photographs*, *Humans of New York Stories*, or daily encounters. You will be expected to upload or create entries daily. This will be “shared” (available to our community of writers only) so that your responses may inspire peers, so that they can learn from your posts and ideas and you from them. On occasion, you will be asked (not required) to share these images and stories on-screen in class.

**THE DISCOURSE JOURNAL:** In addition to an online Photojournalist’s Notebook, you are expected to keep and carry with you and to every class a “Discourse Journal” to: respond to reading assignments, document daily observations, record story ideas and your “Paying Attention” Daily Warm-up (What’d you see? Why’d it matter? What questions does it raise?), and complete exercises assigned both in and out of the classroom. You will bring this portable journal to each class for sharing and writing.

**DAILY OBSERVATIONS, THINKING, READING, PHOTOGRAPH-TAKING, REVIEWING, WRITING, AND REWRITING WORKSHOPS:** Daily, you will brainstorm, take photographs, write, or rewrite (depending on the specific assignment and point in *the process*) and bring to class: photographs, a hard copy of a short (1,000-word) essay; a synopsis (list, questions) of your thinking; a draft addressing a question or issue generated by the previous week’s readings, class discussions, and other activities; or a rewrite (revision) of a previous week’s draft. We will not collect these pieces every week, but you must come to class prepared to share and read your ideas, photographs, draft, or revised essay with peers in small groups. We will review and comment on these essays mid-term (during the second week), in one-on-one conferences, and periodically throughout the summer semester. Some process pieces will culminate in final essays; others will fuel your contribution to our Final Collaborative Project and Reflection: The Storytelling Power of Words and Photographs (to be completed online during the second two weeks of the semester). ***Be sure to save all thinking pages, photographs, drafts, and revisions. Process matters.***

#### **PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECTS/LAB:**

In the lab portion of the course, you’ll spend time making photographs out in the world and then work on editing them in the lab, and then sequencing them to build narrative. We’ll spend time on camera technique, on photographic strategies, as well as on editing and workflows. What happens when photographs are placed next to each other? How do they build on one another? How are photographs honest and more importantly, how are they not?

**STUDENT-LED PHOTOJOURNALISM PRESENTATIONS/DISCUSSIONS:** What’s happening in the world of journalism? What’s interesting? What’s developing? What’s something interesting that you’ve read, seen, or discovered about reporting and documentary storytelling? What themes are emerging from all we’ve discussed, read, contemplated, and produced? *Look at this!* you’ll tell your peers as you share an idea and instruct the class. Think of this more as a casual discussion than a “presentation.” Just be sure to make it stimulating, entertaining, interactive, and informative. Think of ways to engage peers in the material and get them talking. You may assign suggested readings or images ahead of time, if necessary. Approximate length of discussion: 30 minutes.

**ESSAY SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:** All submitted work must be typed/word-processed, 12-point font, double-spaced, thoroughly spell-checked and proofread. Please include your name, professor’s name, course, and date, flush, upper left (MLA-style heading); insert page numbers and a header (your last name). Give each final piece a compelling title. Include all “process” pieces and drafts. *Submissions will not be accepted electronically* and are to be handed in at the end of class on the due date. Page requirements vary with each writing project. Be sure to defer to quality over quantity, depth over length.

**PHOTOGRAPHY SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:**

Photographs will be submitted via UVM File transfer in a zipped folder labeled with the assignment name. Each photograph should be named with your last name and a sequential number: “smith001.jpg”

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** College students are expected to be honest in all academic endeavors. Any acts of dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating only hurts you, the student. Plagiarism—“borrowing” work from another source, another student, author, or the internet without proper acknowledgment and/or citation—is not only morally wrong, but impinges directly upon your own learning and personal growth. Such actions will result in an immediate failing grade, and could lead to expulsion from the learning institution.

**ABBREVIATED COURSE OVERVIEW:**

**First 2 Weeks of the Summer Academy Semester:**

*Writing Photojournalism* Questionnaire  
Pictures Worth a Thousand Words  
Stories Matter  
Photography Projects  
Delving into Private Lives  
The Narrative Idea  
Difficult Journalism  
  
A Passion for Writing and Photography  
Not Stopping: Time Management for Writers and Photographers

**Finding, Researching, and Reporting Topics**

A Writer’s Questions  
An Editor’s Questions  
A Photographer’s Questions  
Interviewing  
Being There

**Exploring Subgenres**

Profiles  
Travel Writing  
The Personal Essay  
Columns  
Writing About History  
Narrative Investigative Writing  
Public Radio and Podcasts  
The Photographic Narrative Essay

**Constructing a Structure**

Learning from Screenwriters  
Beginnings  
Narrative Distance  
Hearing Subjects’ Voices: Quotes and Dialogue  
Keeping It Real and True  
Story Structure  
Summary Versus Dramatic Narrative  
Weaving Story and Idea  
Endings

**Building Quality into the Work**

Character

Details Matter  
Reconstructing Scenes  
That *Re-* Prefix  
    Re-*porting*, Re-*searching*, Re-*constructing*, Re-*vising* (*seeing again*)...  
Handling Time and Sequencing  
Writing Complicated Stories  
What's the Point?  
What's the Emotional Core of the Story?  
Telling the Story, Telling the Truth  
On Voice

**Ethics and Editing**

The Line Between Fact and Fiction  
Toward an Ethical Code for Narrative Journalism  
Playing Fair with Subjects  
Securing Consent  
Truth and Consequences  
Dealing with Danger:  
    Protecting Subject, Story (and Self)  
The Immersion Dilemma  
Ethics in Personal Writing and Photography  
The Ethics of Attribution  
Endnotes  
  
On Style in both Writing and Photography  
Revising—Over and Over Again  
Cutting: from 100 Notebooks to 1,000 words  
Narrative Subgenres:  
    Nano-, News-Driven, True, and Serial

**Last 2 Weeks of the Summer Academy Semester:**

**Final Collaborative Online Writing and Photography Project:**  
**The Storytelling Power of Words and Photographs**  
Building a Narrative Team of Writers and Photographers  
Team Storytelling

**NOTE:** A DETAILED SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE POSTED IN THE COURSE BLACKBOARD SITE.