

Winter 2026

Dear Students:

Welcome to *The History of Photography* on-line course. I hope that you will gain a much better appreciation for the medium after our short time together.

It is important for each of you to remember that this course takes the traditional 15-week semester and reduces it to 5 weeks. Given the fact that we start this course soon after the end of the Fall semester, your break from traditional class work will be short!

While the material in this course is not difficult to comprehend, to successfully complete *The History of Photography*, you will need to remember that it is impossible to slack off for a few days and then think that you can pick up and succeed.

With that said, we will be rapidly going through our textbook *Seizing the Light: A Social & Aesthetic History of Photography* (4th Edition). It will be important for you to stay current with all our assignments which are clearly listed in the **Syllabus** section for our course in **Brightspace**. As I mentioned before, this class requires constant participation. But the end results will give each of you tools to take with you as you encounter photographic images during the rest of your life, and new ways of looking at visual images.

This course is set up in **Brightspace** and the *Syllabus* link will give you a full layout of the course. There is a lot to accomplish in the class; you will have to organize your time effectively to complete the readings with enough time to reflect on questions that I pose to you. You will also be fully involved in our on-line discussions which you will do in small groups. It is expected that each student will submit thoughtful responses and not dash something off just to get it done!

If I were in a face-to-face classroom setting, I would begin by introducing myself and asking all of you to do the same. Since we will be engaging with one another online, it is even more important that we identify ourselves to provide a character beyond our name. When we start the course, I will have a *Discussion* set up where each of you will be required to introduce yourself. While I will give a more complete introduction of myself then, I will quickly give you some highlights now:

I have been a lecturer in the art history department at Marist for 29 years having taught a range of courses including *Art of the Western World*, *History of Modern Sculpture*, *Arts & Values* and *Museum Studies*. I have taught the classroom version of *The History of Photography* for the past 23 years. I was the one who purposed this course be offered at Marist. While many colleges and universities offer history of photography courses today, when this class first started 23 years ago, it was quite a unique feature for the Art Department here at Marist. Today there are many history books to choose from; 23 years ago, there was virtually nothing!

If you haven't gathered, my specialty is the history of photography, and my major research interest includes both 19th Century British female photographers and contemporary American photography (1960 - onwards). I continue to work on a research project in London and have spent a good amount of time at the Marist branch campus in Florence, Italy conducting research at The British Institute which is based in this Renaissance city.

If you are going to be around Marist for a few years, Prof. Amy Finkel from the photo department and myself are planning a short term abroad program to London and its outskirts where we will combine actual photography projects along with visits to museum and galleries and historic sites in order to understand the rich history of British photography – both past and present. We hope to offer this during the Spring 2027 semester which will conclude with a 12-day trip to England in May. Stay tuned for more details!

We will use the following book that is available at the Marist College Bookstore or on-line at any one of the many booksellers one may encounter or if you are into digital versions, this is acceptable as well:

*Seizing the Light: A Social & Aesthetic History of Photography (Fourth Edition)* by Robert Hirsch

McGraw Hill

ISBN: 978-103207339 [You should get the soft-back version if you are buying this book]

- **It is critical that you secure this book immediately so that you are ready to begin your reading on the first day of class. I will not accept the fact that you cannot complete your work because you do not have the text book! And I have sent emails to all of you already via our Brightspace site regarding the textbook.**

**\* Also: Please note that if you are going away on holiday this winter, it is critical that you have internet access! I will not consider the excuse that you were at a place that did not have internet access as a reason why you could not complete an assignment. Remember, if you sign up for an on-line course, you are expected to have on-line access at all times!**

If you need to reach me before the class begins, you can e-mail at Marist at:

[Wayne.Lempka@marist.edu](mailto:Wayne.Lempka@marist.edu)

If you email me before class begins, please identify yourself as a student in the Winter 2026 online course.

I look forward to meeting you online! We will be hearing a lot from each other!

Wayne Lempka . Lecturer, Art History, Department of Art & Digital Media.

