

Photography, Stories, and the Educated Viewer

“Education is ideally civil defense against media fall-out.” — Marshall McLuhan

Papers are due: ~~Thursday, October 13th~~ **EXTENDED TO Thursday, October 20th**

You must submit your papers via SafeAssign on Blackboard.

The renowned media theorist, Marshall McLuhan, once wrote “the medium is the message” about how media often dictates how we see. His quote above suggests one needs to be an educated viewer to protect oneself from the pitfalls of media (i.e., distortion, too much information, etc.) Yet, photography and related media remain vital to how we communicate stories. This assignment gives you the opportunity to explore the role of photography in telling stories.

Your paper should be 4 double-spaced pages (4 pages does not mean a 3-page paper plus cover), 1” margins, 12-point type (Please use Arial, Helvetica or Times), not including a cover page.

Before you begin writing your paper, you must first do the following research.

Please **read** and **analyze** the following essay (look under supplementary reading on the class website):

1. Chapter 8 (pp. 140-161), “Toward a Hyperphotography” in Fred Ritchin’s *After Photography* (2009)
2. Watch a TED Talk by David Griffin “How Photography Connects Us”
<https://youtu.be/m-UrpcSRVGk>

Paper Instructions:

- A. Give yourself ample time to do the reading by Ritchin because he raises difficult issues that require time to contemplate and analyze. Consider the significance of photography in Ritchin’s essay and summarize his opinion of photography. What does Ritchin think are the positive aspects of photography? What are the negative ones? You must include examples from his essay.

- B. Second, watch David Griffin's TED Talk on photography. Think about how Ritchin and Griffin discuss the use of photography to tell stories, and how stories are vital to connect people to each other. Discuss whether you think photography is necessary for telling stories.
- C. Consider whether one needs to be educated to navigate contemporary media (internet, tv, movies, etc.). Do you think Ritchin and Griffin believe photography can contribute to our general education? Do you yourself think photography can contribute to our general education? Compare their views to **your own ideas** about photography and telling stories, and discuss whether one needs to be an educated viewer in the 21st century.
- D. Lastly, in your concluding paragraph, cite an example of a 21st-century photograph that was important to current events.

Important note: Avoid long quotes in short papers (all papers for this course are short). Lengthy quotes will weaken your paper and diminish your grade. Please look over the grading rubric for written assignments on the class website, and be sure to run spell check before submitting your final paper.

Please note that if you fail to discuss both the Ritchin reading and Griffin talk, it will be impossible to receive an A on the paper.

An important note on plagiarism

PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN ANY FORM AND WILL RESULT UNCONDITIONALLY IN A FAILING GRADE FOR THE COURSE.

To "plagiarize" is defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as:

Take and use as one's own (the thoughts, writings, inventions, etc., of another person); copy (literary works, ideas, etc.) improperly or without acknowledgment; pass off the thoughts, work, etc., of (another person) as one's own. [Lesley Brown, ed., *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, 2 vols. (Oxford: 1993), 2:2231]

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