

Digital Photography, Stories, and the Educated Viewer

“Neither a person nor a photograph should be taken at face value; it is more complicated than that.” — Fred Ritchin

Papers are due: **Monday, October 16th**

You must submit your papers on Blackboard (your papers will be checked via SafeAssign)

In our digital age, photography and related media are vital to how we communicate. This paper assignment asks you to consider the importance of stories and how digital photographs can be interpreted through numerous ways. Looking at photographs encourages one to think about the multiplicity of images. This assignment gives you the opportunity to explore the different ways photography is used to tell stories

Your paper should be at minimum 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 Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie on the danger of the single story:
https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

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 Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s TED Talk on stories. Think about the ways Ritchin and Adichie discuss how stories can be told from different points of view. Stories are vital in connecting people to each other. How do you think we can be

better story tellers? Can photography help tell stories?

- C. Consider whether one needs to be educated to navigate contemporary media (internet, tv, movies, etc.). Do you think Ritchin and Adiche 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, name and describe an example of a recent photograph (late 20th to 21st century) that seems to tell a story.

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 Adichie 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]

Blackboard’s SafeAssign checks your paper against a Google-like search engine and other student papers on file. You will receive 0 points for your paper if the matching rate exceeds 35%. Wait several minutes after you submit your paper to see your SafeAssign report. If the matching rate is too high, I strongly recommend that you re-write your paper with your own words to get it below the 35% threshold because receiving a 0 will reflect badly on your final grade. If you have any doubts or questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask me in class, in office hours, or via e-mail.