

Ambedkar University Delhi
Course Outline
Monsoon Semester (August-December 2018)

School:	School of Letters
Programme with title:	MA English
Semester to which offered:	I and III
Course Title:	Photography: History, Theory, Practice
Course Code:	SOL2EN346
Credits:	4 Credits
Type of Course:	
Compulsory:	
Elective:	Yes

For SUS only (Mark an X for as many as appropriate):

1. Foundation (Compulsory)
2. Foundation (Elective)
3. Discipline (Compulsory)
4. Discipline (Elective)
5. Elective

Course Coordinator and Team:	Sayandeb Chowdhury
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Pre-requisites:	None

Aim: The AUD English MA Programme has since its inception resisted any effort towards following a definite lexicon of approaching literary studies and to that end, a course of this kind contributes to the idea of critical and cultural enquiry beyond the obvious. In the narrative of its origins and history, photography mirrors the definitive visual turn in social and cultural sciences and since the first experiments in the 1820s has come to occupy a foundational position in the gradual but inevitable 'technologisation' of art forms. Yet, at the heart of photography lies the

complex and often conflicting registers of representation and form; memory and time, gaze and witness; and of history that is both present and absent. One of the abiding concerns of photography has hence been its liminal position between art and technology as well as its efficacy of being a redoubtable representational template that it at odds with the various interpretations of reality that it projects. This course, by introducing students to a wide range of debates and movements in photography would hope to provide a substantive idea about the form and function of photography across time, cultures and genres.

Brief description of modules/ Main modules:

Module 1| The many histories of photography

This module will look at the history of photography not only from mainstream sources but also from other contested sources that have been unearthed in new scholarship.

Module 2| Understanding Photography

This section is about *ways of looking* at photography as technology, surveillance, witness, politics, event, visuality.

Module 3| Photographic practices

This module will look briefly into the major ways in which photography has been 'used' and 'abused' and how it contributed to other forms/kinds of enquiry

Module 4| Photography and colonialism

This module looks at a brief history of photography in South Asia (and also in Africa and Southern America) taking into account the regimes of contested practices of the past.

Reading List:

- Beaumont Newhall, *The History of Photography: From 1839 to the Present*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1982
- Mary Warner Marien, *Photography: A Cultural History*, Pearson, 2014.
- Allen Trachtenberg (ed) *Classic Essays on Photography*, Leete's Island Books, Maine, 1980.
- Liz Wells (ed) *The Photography Reader*, Routledge, London, 2002.
- Richard Bolton (ed) *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography* (Reprint Edition), MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 1992.
- Christopher Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology*, Reaktion Books, 2011.
- Andres Higgot and Timothy Wray (ed) *Camera Constructs: Photography, Architecture and the Modern City*, Routledge, 2012.
- Leo Charney, Vanessa R. Schwartz (ed) *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life*, University of California Press, 1995.
- James Ryan, *Picturing Empire: Photography and the Visualization of the British Empire*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Martin Jay & Sumathi Ramaswamy (Ed) *Empires of Vision: A Reader*, Duke University Press, 2014.

Tentative Assessment schedule with details of weightage:

S.No	Assessment	Date/period in which Assessment will take place	Weightage
1	Writing assignment	Mid-September	30%
2	A theoretical/reflective paper based on a set of essays	Mid October	30%
3	Term paper	End of November	40%