

VAH4482G – The Photograph and the Archive in Contemporary Art Practice

Professor: Dr. Joy James
Class Day/Time: Monday 2:30 – 5:30pm
Location: VAC148
Office Hours: (By appointment)
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Course Description

This fourth year seminar in photography focuses on art practices that engage the photographic as archive. Within this foundational framework, the course will examine contemporary artists' multiple archival encounters across a range of concerns, objects and ideas. Recent study has theorized the role of the archive in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century as having prominent conceptual significance and identifying a move away from narrative explanation to a less linear and more inclusive method of understanding individual and collective life. In the context of a series of readings, presentations and projects the course looks at how we might understand what has been referred to as the "archival turn" and what this has to do with the proliferation of uses and contestations of the archival model in modern and contemporary art. We will focus on works based on the model of the archive in contemporary art across all media. The continued importance of photography's aesthetic legacies to ways of seeing, sensing and making meaning of and in the world will be a topic of investigation throughout the course.

Evaluation

(Attendance at all classes is mandatory. Active participation and full engagement is required for successful completion of this 4th year discussion-based course.)

Active Participation & Engagement	20%	Ongoing
Critical Summary of Assigned Text	10%	Due date: January 28
Book Review	15%	Due date: February 25
Research Paper	35%	Due date: March 18
Individual Archive Project & Presentation	20%	Due date: March 25 & April 1

Textbooks

All texts for this course will be distributed through the OWL course site.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

- conduct research using a variety of library resources—use these resources effectively in a research essay
- articulate an argument in writing, support the argument using appropriate evidence, address counter-arguments
- work collaboratively within the group setting of the seminar

- effectively access and conduct close critical readings of course texts
- understand and articulate key critical, conceptual and theoretical frameworks employed in the study and analysis of the construct of the archive in contemporary art production
- apply theories and methods from the classroom in the 'real' world context of existing archival holdings