

Title: Documentary Photography

My love for photography derives not from the medium's technical possibilities, but rather I fell in love with photography through a general concern for humanity and the opportunity it offers as a language of vision. This relationship to photography is humanistically motivated, set to challenge ideologies by visually isolating facts within the frame of the camera in such a way that tells something true about humanity. My message is a testimony as much as it is a persuasion that illustrates the often overlooked, yet significant details which demonstrate the interconnectedness of life and reinforce life's value.

From Jacob Riis' photographic records of tenement slum conditions in early twentieth century New York, to Lauren Greenfield's contemporary records of youth culture in Southern California, documentary photography has long been an effective tool in documenting societal issues in order to create awareness and instigate social change. To produce effective bodies of work, documentary photographers and filmmakers must first have a firm foundation in their chosen medium, as well as the ability to educate themselves on the cultures and issues that they are approaching.

Hendrix College does not offer a degree specifically designed for the purpose of the documentary photographer. Therefore, the Interdisciplinary Studies major that I am proposing unites photography and film, philosophy, and social sciences. Through documentary photography, I intend to explore and develop a critical perspective the human condition and its variations as manifested through the diverse issues of culture, time, and geography. This interdisciplinary major will result in a holistic understanding

regarding ethical, cultural, and global issues, thus achieving an informed approach to subject matter selected for meaningful photographic documentation.

I cannot use an existing major because photography is a multidimensional method to explore the world. Furthermore, when attempting to visually represent an issue or subject with authenticity, the photographer must have knowledge and resources from many different disciplines. Although the studio art major does cover black and white film-based photography as an art medium, it does not analyze in depth societal issues, or ethics. The anthropology/ Sociology major supplies applicable ethnographic methods, but fails to offer tools to gain a mastery of the camera to investigate many different aspects of the human condition. The Philosophy major does offer many different trains of thought related to society and reality, but it does not allow for a social science approach or observation as well as camera operation. Although film is similar to documentary photography in its method, theory, and at times its goal in production, it is only available as a minor. My photographic interests are distinguishable in each of these majors (or minor) since each offers a specific focus that is critical to documentary photography.

The courses I am proposing to meet the requirements of this Interdisciplinary Studies degree have been selected with the guidance of the professors in the respective departments. The Photography courses will develop the necessary technical skills to effectively communicate a profound meaning through utilization of various photographic equipment and technique. Courses exploring film will play an integral role in developing knowledge of various visual storytelling methods. The philosophy course that I have chosen for this interdisciplinary major discusses ethics and its purpose within the

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appropriate culture. The selected Social Science courses explore issues in society, as well as provide appropriate theoretical foundations.

The objective of this Interdisciplinary major is set to guide my interests, vision, and ability as a documentary photographer, thus allowing me to visually convey my humanistic message in a compelling and comprehensible way.

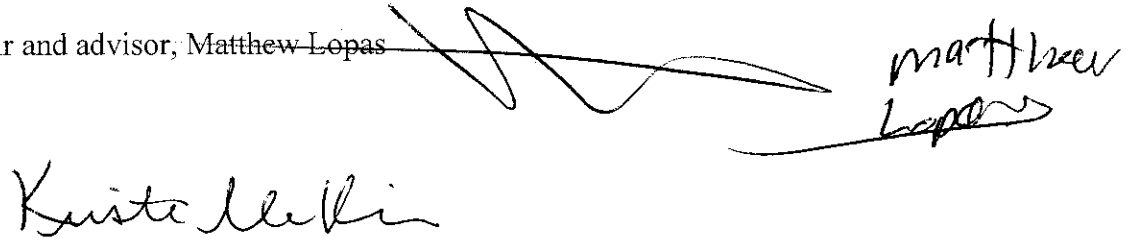
My capstone experience for this interdisciplinary major will be the course ARTS 497 Practicum: Studio Art. My participation in this course includes periodical critiques and exhibition of my work in the spring Senior Show.

Interdisciplinary Committee:

Committee Chair and advisor, ~~Matthew Lopas~~

Chris Campolo

Kristi McKim

Handwritten signatures of Matthew Lopas and Kristi McKim. The signature for Matthew Lopas is written in cursive and is positioned to the right of the text 'Committee Chair and advisor, Matthew Lopas'. The signature for Kristi McKim is written in cursive and is positioned to the right of the text 'Kristi McKim'.

Proposed Courses:

ARTH 170: Western Art History Survey I

ARTS 250: Beginning Photography

ARTS 350: Intermediate Photography

ARTS 450: Advanced Photography

ARTS 497: Practicum: Studio Art

ENGL 269: Introduction to Film Studies

FILM 382: Non-fiction Film\*

1 additional upper level film course

ANTH 100: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

SOCI 360: Social change/ Social movement

1 or more of the following:

SOCI 362: Images of the city or SOCI 300: Urban Community

SOCI 320: Peace and War\*

SOCI 390: Social Inequalities and Identity

ANTH 240: Applying Anthropology

PHIL 215: Ethics and Society and/or PHIL 289: Philosophy of Aesthetics\*

\* New Courses to be offered in the 2009-2010 academic school year.