

**Documentary Photography Workshop:
Photographing the Culture and Communities of Rome
Course Syllabus: Shortened Version
John Felice Rome Center
Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
June 30 to July 18, 2008**

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

On this photographic adventure, students will find inspiration in the community and cultural life in Rome. You will make images of rituals, customs, and community gatherings, explore the historic traditions of documentary practice and strengthen your technical and aesthetic skills. Embark on your own photographic project, deriving insight from the study of classic and contemporary artists who have pushed at the boundaries of the photographic term "documentary." Our range of inquiry will introduce scientific approaches and historical contexts in the collection of documentary images, as found in ethnographic photography and in visual anthropology. Issues of cultural representation and stereotype will also be addressed as we move through this vibrant urban metropolis. This course will be based on the formal study of photography as an art form, and include technical photographic review, weekly photographic assignments, participation in-group critiques, and visits with local artists and museum and gallery visits. At least two excursions will be planned outside of Rome, in order to expose the class broadly to modern art and architecture of Italy. This is a shooting and walking intensive course and will require that each student possess a **working digital camera** and comfortable walking shoes.

Course Calendar (*subject to change*):

Week 1: Introduction to Documentary Practice

- Cultural and Community Themes: Piazza Navona
- The Coliseum and Forum
- Discussion and Selection of Project Focus
- Introduction to Photographic Field Work --
- Documentary Fact vs. Fiction ù The Trevi Fountain
- St. PeterÆs Square: Street Photography and Environmental Portrait
- Photo production and Critique 1
- Saturday excursion to the Etruscan town of Assisi, Umbria.

Week 2: Group Shooting exercise

- Readings on Cultural Representation and Community Cohesiveness
- Piazza Venezia, Castel St. Angelo
- Exploration of International Documentary work
- Alinari Photo Archive Visit study historic images of community life
- Modern Boundaries in Documentary Practice
- Vatican Museum Visit
- Subject Building and Focus
- Evening shooting at TrajanÆs Column and Forum
- Photo production and Critique II
- Saturday excursion to the seaside town of Cittavecchia.

Week 3: Moral & Psychological Tensions of Documentary Practice

- Introduction to Visual Anthropology
- Shooting exercises at the Spanish Steps, Villa Borghese Gardens
- Other Media as Inspiration for Documentary Work
- Privateá meeting with Photography Curator and Gallery Artist
- Basilica of Constantine -- Use of Text with Documentary Image
- Modern Boundaries in Documentary Practice ù Via Veneto
- Editing and Sequencing Work
- Fine Tuning the Documentary Vision

- Final Critique and Presentation of Projects

Course Objective & Goals:

In this course you will develop a photographic documentary project. Working to become a competent documentary photographer you will learn to; clearly define a focused project, develop your own consistent method for productivity, to interpret your subject matter with sophistication and insight, and to incorporate a thoughtful use of image sequencing into your final presentation.

Requirements & Evaluations:

Attendance and continuous photographic production are required. Students are expected to shoot a minimum of five rolls of film or the digital equivalent during each of our three weeks. Critiques will be scheduled at the end of each week and during each critique session you will be expected to present your visual work and to provide verbal feedback regarding the work of classmates. At each of these critiques you will be expected to present evidence of your shooting in the form of contact sheets or digital proofs along with a minimum of ten digital image files or work prints. A short exhibition review and analytical essay will also be required.

Grading Policy and Evaluation Procedures:

Grades will be based on consistent and dedicated participation in all areas of our creative exploration.

Attendance:

Mandatory.

Text and reading Assignments:

Individual articles from some of the following publications will be assigned

- *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, edited by Stuart Hall
- *Observations: Essays on Documentary Photography*, Edited by David Featherstone
- *Documentary Photography* by Arthur Rothstein
- *Exploring Society Photographically* by Howard Becker
- *Anthropology & Photography 1860-1920*, edited by Elizabeth Edwards