

## **Syllabus for San Francisco in Photographs: 1850-2020**

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### **Session One**

#### **San Francisco Photography from 1850 through the 1906 Earthquake**

A. The birth of San Francisco, measured by when California was admitted to the union around the time of the Gold Rush in the late 1840s, coincides almost exactly with the birth of photography.

B. Photography in the 1850s and 1860s, including the initial surge of Gold Rush settlers, and the rapid construction of a city that saw its population explode from 1000 to 150,000 in twenty years.

C. Subjects diversify in the final decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as photographic techniques improve, and San Francisco becomes more cosmopolitan. Including early photos of Golden Gate Park, Chinatown, cable cars, and Nob Hill mansions and hotels.

D. San Francisco's prosperity at the turn of the century, its population now 350,000, interrupted by the earthquake of April 18, 1906. This disaster and its immediate aftermath, including numerous refugee camps, is extensively documented in photos, by Arnold Genthe and others.

Famous photographers include: G.R. Fardon, Carleton Watkins, Eadweard (sic) Muybridge, Arnold Genthe

### **Session Two**

#### **San Francisco Photography From the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century to the Dawn of World War II**

A. San Francisco recovers amazingly quickly from the earthquake, and showcases the recovery by hosting the Panama-Pacific International Exposition in 1915.

B. The Roaring Twenties and its aftermath see their share of good times and problems, with the popularity of the San Francisco Seals baseball team, who in the early 1930s feature a young Joe DiMaggio; the popularity of Muir Woods as a major recreational destination; the development of affluent neighborhoods (Sea Cliff) and ethnic neighborhoods (the Fillmore, where an African-American community gets established); the growth of an arts scene around the San Francisco Arts Institute; and the government and police corruption immortalized in the detective novels of Dashiell Hammett.

C. The Depression hits San Francisco hard, culminating in a longshoremen's strike that escalates into a general strike in July 1934, with police-protester conflicts resulting in injuries and some deaths.

D. Construction of the Golden Gate Bridge and Bay Bridge link the city with Marin County and the East Bay. Other notable projects include the Works Progress Administration's public art, Coit Tower, Aquatic Park, and a federal prison on Alcatraz.

Famous photographers include: Ansel Adams, Imogen Cunningham, John Gutmann, Dorothea Lange, Ted Higgins, Sonya Noskowiak

### **Session Three:**

#### **San Francisco Photography From World War II to the End of the 1950s**

A. Modern innovations are celebrated in another world's fair, the Golden Gate Exposition, on Treasure Island in 1939 and 1940.

B. San Francisco is a major center of action in World War II, with more than a million troops shipping out of Fort Mason; many women working in the defense industry, along with African-Americans, many of whom move here from the South; and, unfortunately, the internment of Japanese-Americans in detention centers until the war's end.

C. Civilian life returns to normal in the post-war years, though there are stirrings of a different kind of cultural arts scene in the African-American jazz and rhythm and blues of the Fillmore District, and the bohemian sensibilities of the San Francisco Art Institute.

D. After civilian life returns to normal in the post-war years, a new literary movement is born in North Beach, centered around City Lights Books. Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti are among the major figures to emerge in the Beat movement, which becomes associated with a beat lifestyle, again centered in North Beach.

E. Entertainment in the Bay Area includes the rise of comedians like Mort Sahl and Lenny Bruce, and folk acts like the Kingston Trio, in North Beach clubs like the hungry i (sic); a vibrant jazz and rhythm and blues scene in the Fillmore; and the arrival of major league baseball with the Giants, who start playing in San Francisco in 1958, with superstar Willie Mays. Candlestick Park is built shortly afterward.

Famous photographers include: David Johnson, Pirkle Jones, Charles Wong, Phiz Mezey

## **Session Four**

### **San Francisco in the 1960s: From the Beat Era to the Summer of Love**

A. The most famous decade in San Francisco history starts with the first major student protest at City Hall in 1960, in opposition to House Un-American Activities hearings there. Activism is also on the rise with neighborhood opposition to freeway expansion, including to a freeway that would have cut through Golden Gate Park's panhandle.

B. Bay Area activism has a worldwide impact with UC Berkeley's Free Speech Movement starting in late 1964, Mario Savo emerging as the most charismatic leader. Soon afterward, the Bay Area develops into a major center of demonstrations protesting US involvement in the Vietnam War.

C. The center of San Francisco counterculture moves from North Beach to the Haight-Ashbury, accompanied by an explosion of new and innovative rock bands including Jefferson Airplane, Big Brother & the Holding Company with Janis Joplin, and the Grateful Dead. An internationally popular and influential rock music scene emerges with a concert circuit centered around the Fillmore and Avalon ballrooms, advertised by legendary colorful posters; the founding of *Rolling Stone*; and the birth of FM underground rock radio at KMPX, most of whose staff moves to KSAN.

D. The Haight-Ashbury hippie scene is also associated with increased drug experimentation, free love, and radical utopian idealism as epitomized by a big January 1967 Be-In in Golden Gate Park, setting the stage for the Summer of Love.

E. In 1967, the Summer of Love finds San Francisco psychedelic rock reaching its peak with the nationwide hits of Jefferson Airplane, as well as the Monterey Pop Festival, which showcases numerous Bay Area bands. More than 100,000 youth come to Haight-Ashbury from all over the world, straining the neighborhood's resources as the streets are crowded with runaways and hustlers trying to take advantage of the newcomers.

Famous photographers include: Baron Wolman, Gene Anthony, Jim Marshall, Herb Greene, Michelle Vignes

## Session Five

### **San Francisco From the End of the Psychedelic Era through the Mid-1980s**

A. In the late 1960s, social and political activism becomes more militant with the emergence of the Oakland-founded Black Panthers, a lengthy student strike at San Francisco State University, and the Native American occupation of Alcatraz. The local rock scene continues to thrive with the emergence of multicultural superstars Sly & the Family Stone and Santana.

B. Some of the countercultural protests and celebrations turn violent in spring 1969 when conflicts between police and the community result in injuries at People's Park in Berkeley, with Governor Ronald Reagan calling in the National Guard. A one-day rock festival at Altamont in December 1969, about fifty miles from San Francisco (originally intended for Golden Gate Park), also turns bad when Hell's Angels security commit violence against the audience as the Rolling Stones close the concert, resulting in the fatal stabbing of a Berkeley teenager.

C. Bay Area activism and the counterculture hit troubled times with turmoil in the Black Panthers, the decay of Haight-Ashbury, the closing of the Fillmore, the kidnapping of Patty Hearst by the SLA, and the departure of *Rolling Stone* for New York.

D. Life goes on outside the underground, however, with the completion of the Transamerica Pyramid and BART; the explosion of California cuisine, most famously by Alice Waters and Chez Panisse; the first championship of the Golden State Warriors in the mid-1970s, led by superstar Rick Barry; three World Series titles for the Oakland A's in 1972-74; Francis Ford Coppola's American Zoetrope movie production company; the expansion of the Bay to Breakers race into a major sporting/party event; and a punk rock scene that coalesces around Mabuhay Gardens in North Beach in the late 1970s.

E. The gay rights movement gathers steam in the Castro neighborhood, especially after Harvey Milk is elected the district's supervisor. Tragedy hits the gay community and entire city when Dan White assassinates Milk and mayor George Moscone in 1979, around the same time there are mass deaths in Jonestown, in a congregation led by Jim Jones that had been a major political force in the city for a few years in the late 1970s.

Famous photographers include: Robert Altman, Ethan Russell, Ruth Marion-Baruch, Daniel Nicoletta, Janet Delaney, Ruby Ray, Joe Rosenthal

## Session Six

## San Francisco From the mid-1980s to the Present

A. Dianne Feinstein is mayor for most of the 1980s, and the financial district's developments are criticized for "Manhattanizing" the city. The Loma Prieta earthquake hits the Bay Area hard on October 17, 1989 in the middle of a Bay Bridge World Series between the Giants and A's, causing 63 deaths, 3757 injuries, and about \$6 billion property damage, as well as collapsing part of the Bay Bridge.

B. The expansion of tech companies into the city changes the character of San Francisco, increasing the cost of living, especially housing, to such an extent that many low-income residents and artists can no longer afford to live there. Bay Area activism remains vibrant, however, whether it's organizing to support AIDS research, large demonstrations of all sorts (especially against US intervention overseas), and the Critical Mass bike rides that take over downtown city traffic once a month.

C. San Francisco entertainment and culture continues to expand its reach with the construction of new facilities for the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Asian Museum, the main library, and the museums around Golden Gate Park's concourse. The Giants' new publicly funded stadium opens South of Market in 2000. The destruction of the Embarcadero Freeway frees the waterfront for views for the first time in three decades. In the underground, Green Day become superstars after emerging from the 924 Gilman Street punk club scene in Berkeley, and Litquake becomes a major literary festival.

D. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, tech companies continue to impact the city as the likes of Twitter, Uber, Lyft, Spotify, and Facebook establish headquarters or large branches there, and many employees commute to Silicon Valley outfits like Google. Yet San Francisco remains a progressive city with extremely liberal politics, mayor Gavin Newsom legalizing gay marriage after only narrowly defeating Green Party candidate Matt Gonzalez. The 2010s are good times for Bay Area sports teams, with three Giants World Series victories from 2010-2014, and three Warriors NBA championships.

E. In recent years, San Francisco continues to try to balance explosive growth with a progressive constituency. The growth is epitomized by the 2018 opening of Salesforce Tower, the second tallest building west of the Mississippi, joined the following year by the Chase Center in Mission Bay. Bike paths now connect the East Bay to Treasure Island along the Bay Bridge, and just opened on the Richmond-San Rafael bridge. As a reflection of the city's diversity, its first Chinese-American mayor, Ed Lee, takes office, succeeded after his death by the city's first African-American woman mayor, London Breed.

Famous photographers include: Jay Blakesberg, Judy Dater, John Harding, John Chiara