This course proposes to put the history, theory and practice of photography at the heart of humanities and social science enquiry. This is a theoretically sophisticated course and students opting for this course must be in a position to appreciate the same.

**COURSE BRIEF**

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 technolozisation of art forms. Yet, at the heart of photography lies the complex and often conflicting registers of memory and time and of history that is both present and absent at the same time. 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 over the last century or so, would hope to provide a substantive idea about the form and function of photography across time, cultures and genres.

**OBJECTIVES AND STRUCTURE**

While detailing the origin, history and dissemination of photographic forms is the primary objective of this course, it would also look into the idea of space as central to the management of photography’s scopic intent. The course will also map photography’s relation to the other key apparatuses of modernity- mobility, architecture, urbanism and cinema- and how photographic visuality is reproduced in literatures of modernity. Moreover, the course hopes to provide access to key debates about the nature of photography’s claims to ‘objectivity’, ‘neutrality’ and ‘authenticity’. The last part of the course will look into the emerging debates on photography, anthropology and colonialism of which a rather exciting body of scholarship now exists. Given the massive scope of this course and the various debates, many of which are often inconclusive and unraveling and the absence of antecedents that such a course can follow, the course structure is aimed to be that of a seminar mode. In this course, the coordinator and the students read a range of essays and look at illustrations in available archives together and see that kind of conclusions one can draw from a course of this kind.

**CONTENTS**

**MODULE I| 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 being unearthed in new scholarship. A selection of readings is indicated below.

**Essential Reading (Selections from the following)**

Suggested Readings (Selections from the following)

- **Brian Coe**, *The Birth of Photography: The Story of the Formative Years, 1800-1900*, Book Sales, 1990
- **Ian Jeffrey**, *ReVisions: An Alternative History of Photography*, Lund Humphries, 1999

**MODULE 2 | THEORIZING PHOTOGRAPHY**

This section, the largest, is about the ways of looking at photography as a tool, as technology, as politics, as event and interruption, as discourse and visuality and as a compression of time and memory. A selection of readings is indicated below.

**Essential Reading**


**Suggested Readings**


**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 systems of thoughts, forms of enquiry and genres of representation. The readings below are a mix of essential and suggested readings.

**Photography in anthropology and architecture**

**Photograph is and as history**

**Photography and Literary Modernism**
• Stefanie Harris, *Exposures: Rilke, Photography, and the City*, in *New German Critique* 99, Modernism after Postmodernity (Fall, 2006), pp. 121-149.

**Photography and cinema**

**Photography and the city**

**MODULE 4| PHOTOGRAPHY AND COLONIALISM**

Any contemporary evaluation of photography in South Asia (and also in Africa and Southern America) must take into account regimes of photographic practice of its past. Because like most technologies, photography, say in India did not evolve in a vacuum and like most modern democracies, the visuality of its range and scope has mirrored the nation-state’s fears and anxieties, triumphs and tribulations, rants and raves. The existing scholarship, not large but assiduous and influential, foreground broadly two, well-received and undisputable observations on Indian photographic history: First, that photography in India was tied to the global circuit of technology and wonder of photography in mid-19th century; and second, the invention of photography sits comfortably and contemporaneously with other techniques of colonial governance and surveillance. Concurrently, scholarship on the history of imaging in India has been mostly anthropological in nature and to that end, has offered an excellent critical historiography of photography that is largely dominated by controversial (and often deeply problematic) portrait and ethnographic samples.

**Suggested readings for this module will be selected from the following:**
• Zahid R Chaudhary, *Afterimage of Empire: Photography in Nineteenth-Century India*, University of Minnesota Press, 2012

**INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN**

The course will be a mix of lectures, seminar readings and illustrative talks. A part of the course will consider teaching students the idea of exploring visual archives.

**ASSESSMENT STRUCTURE**
• Writing assessment – 30 %
• A paper based on archival enquiry/ family memory and history- 30 %
• Term paper- 40 %