

PHOTO ESSAY

1. Description and Purpose

The [first] assignment of this course is a photo essay analyzing Canadian society through the camera lens. It is designed as an exercise in cultural observation, one which encourages you to explore your artistic imagination and ethnographic skills. To complete this assignment you need to visit a “cultural site” of your choosing (see list of possible sites below); spend at least 3-4 hours observing people, material objects, and architecture (feel free to return at another time); take notes on your observations (digitally or on paper); and snap numerous photographs of your experiences (at least 40 or even more). As you perform these tasks you need to imagine that you are an attentive traveller from another part of the world on your first trip to Canada. What would grab your attention in the Great White North? After you have finished your research, you need to select 10 photographs that capture the essence of the “cultural site” you chose to photograph. All of your photographs need to appear numbered on a separate page with the appropriate bibliographic information: author (which must be you), title (be creative), type of camera (still, instant, digital, or telephone), location (anywhere in Canada, but be specific), and date (day, month, and year). In addition to your photographs and bibliographic list, you need to write a 5-page reflection on your photo essay explaining your process of research and selection. What was your camera eye and how did this influence the way you viewed Canadian society? What did you do at the “cultural site” to obtain the best photographs? How and why did you choose your subjects? Why did you choose the 10 photographs you did and how did you determine their order of sequence? What do your photographs teach us about Canadian society (explain the significance of specific shots)? Before arriving to your “cultural site,” you should stimulate your camera eye by reading the essays by John Mraz and Peter Burke listed below.

2. Important Details

Due Date: To be determined (email before midnight)

Length: 10 photographs; [XX] pages (double-spaced, 12-font, Times New Roman)

Preparatory Reading:

- [SS] John Mraz. “Mexican History: A Photo Essay.” In *The Mexico Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, eds. Gilbert M. Joseph and Timothy J. Henderson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002): 297–331.
- [SS] Peter Burke. “Photographs and Portraits.” In *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001): 21–33.

Possible Cultural Sites:

- Shopping Centre
- Farmers’ Market
- Sporting Event
- Cultural Festival
- Union Station
- Specific Neighbourhood