

## **BCB SPRING SEMESTER 2025**

### **FA325 The Photo Zine: A Subversive Phenomenon**

Seminar Leader: April Gertler

Course Time: Tuesdays: 9 - 12.15pm

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### **Course Description**

The concept of a "Zine" (pronounced 'zeen') references small-circulation (typically an edition of 100 or less), self-published works of original or appropriated images and texts, often reproduced using a copy machine / printer / duplicator. Zines, or 'fanzines' can be traced back to the 1940s. They were rooted in the science fiction world initially and were created by fans who created small self-published magazines about the science fiction they loved. Zines famously played a significant role in the punk movement of 1970s as a way to explore subversive topics and ideas around the movement. Zines have continued to be found in many subcultures and have always played a crucial role as a means of communication within those diverse subcultures. They often embrace a "do-it-yourself" ethos, challenging the established norms of professional design and publishing. Zines offer an alternative, confident, and self-aware mode of expression. Photography is an essential component to most Zines. The Zine works as a space for visual story telling, but can also be used to create a preview of an ongoing photographic project. Historically the diversity of photography used in Zines is very wide reaching; from personal photographs created specifically for the inclusion in a Zine to found images from any source.

This class will work with printers, copy machines and a RISO duplicator to create Photo Zines and explore the joys of the limited edition Photo Zine and how it can manifest into an important mode of self expression. We will work with image and text; both using found images and also found text to creating photographs and text specific for the formats we will explore. The class will visit Schikkimikki - a Zine library that has Zines from all over the world in their collection. At the end of this class, each student will leave the class with a small library consisting of both their own Photo Zines and those made by the other students in the class.

### **Requirements**

Students are expected to:

- Use the designated printing times given to each student at the beginning of the semester. If the time is not used, please contact the Professor.
- Be prepared to present artworks / assignments / presentations without reminder.
- Engage in critiques and discussions.
- Initiate appointments with the Professor or arts staff outside of class time when assistance is necessary.

- Always allocate extra time for work preparation and clean-up for independent production.
- Respond to emails and/or text messages from the Professor in a timely manner.
- Inform Professor at beginning of semester if photos of student, artwork, works in progress are NOT to be taken and / or used for Bard College Berlin.
- Remove all artworks, art materials, and any personal belongings before the final inspection of the arts spaces during completion week. Failure to remove works and / or clean spaces used will result in final grade penalization. Donating artworks or art materials (unrequested) at anytime is not permitted and will still be considered student's property that will be expected to be uninstalled and removed.
- Students are expected to purchase 36 exposure Black and White film and photographic paper as needed for class assignments.

### **Attendance and Special considerations for SPRING 2025:**

***All students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill.***

- Attendance of ALL classes is expected.
- More than one absence (that is, absence from one three-hour session per week) in a semester will affect the participation grade for the course.
- Students are expected to attend all off-campus classes punctually, from start to finish. If there is a scheduling/travel conflict, the Professor must be informed in advance.
- Tardiness after five minutes will be considered an absence unless the Professor is contacted at least 1/2 an hour before class.

### **Policy on Late Submission of Artworks / Presentations**

Assignments (artworks, essays, oral presentations) that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (Example: B+ becomes C+). Professor is not obliged to accept assignments that are more than 24 hours late. Where the Professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it must be submitted within two weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than a C.

Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

### **Grade Breakdown**

This class is based on the simple principle of doing the best you can in class.

That means; handing your work in on time, coming to class on time, participating in class and cleaning / maintaining the darkroom and finally, being prepared and ready when in class. You will get a written assessment of every assignment you do.

Corita Kent, the artist and former nun wrote a very apt list titled:

10 RULES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS.

I follow this list quite closely - (see the rest of the list at the end of the document)

**Rule Number 7 says; The only rule is work. If you work it will lead to something. It is the people who do all the work all the time who eventually catch to things.**

**You can fool the fans — but not the players.**

**Keep this in mind during this class.** Although you are needed to be in class to get grades and pass the course — much more importantly you are needed to help make the class what it is. The structure is there for you and you are also part of the structure; your contributions help shape the class.

## **Assessment**

Students are also assessed on their ability to work independently and responsibly. They will be graded on their ability to communicate with the Professor as well as amongst themselves. This also includes their ambition to create artworks as well as their willingness to budget their time for all requirements connected to this class. This assessment also includes preparation, production, and cleaning up of spaces used at P98 at Bard College Berlin. During the semester, all assignments will be graded and commented on. If you feel that you are unsure of your grade and want clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me, I am always happy to discuss.

## **Anticipated Costs for this Class**

Each student will be expected to purchase their own paper - which can include cover stock or other types of paper one might want to use for their Zines in this class. The other costs incurred could be thread (for sewing a Zine together) and the price of photocopying the Zine. The costs should not go over 50€ for this class.

## **Materials list**

Basic tools for Zine making will be provided to the students during the class. Outside of those materials, specialty papers/threads that the student might want for their Zines will be the costs the students will have to incur themselves.

## **What are Zines?**

Stephen Duncombe wrote the first scholarly book on zines (Notes from the Underground, Zines and the Politics of Alternative Culture, 1997) and described them as: "Non-commercial, nonprofessional, small circulation magazines which their creators produce, publish and distribute by themselves"

They are "scruffy, homemade pamphlets that are filled with rantings of high weirdness and exploding with chaotic design"

## **SPRING 2025 WEEKLY SCHEDULE\***

\*There may be adjustments to the timing of assignments as course progresses. All students will be informed of any new expectations and/or deadlines.

All Zines in this class will be in an edition of 11 for swapping - historically that's what people do with their Zines! They swap them!

For every assignment you will be handing in one Zine in to me, which I will keep and grade you on, and it will go into the BCB Zine library archive!

VOCABULARY that we will be going over in this class:

Zine	Seam Ripper
Fanzine	Bobbin
Signature	Presser Feet
Diptych	Notions
Awl	Bobbin Case
Bone Folder	Perzine
Mountains and Valleys	Risograph
Paper Grain	Bone folder
Back stitch	

### January 28: Week 1

Introductions, expectations, rules, Zine examples

If you have a Zine or have made a Zine - BRING IT TO CLASS TODAY!!

In class exercise: Multiple one page zine format demo!

#### **Assignment #1 (due 17 Feb): The Self-Portrait Narrative**

Go to a photoautomat somewhere in Berlin

(map of various automats in the city: <http://www.photoautomat.de/standorte.html>)

and make 2 self-portrait photographic narratives that are continuous (4 'scenes' that complete one story line) in the photo booth. Each strip is a series of 4 images, so you will have to plan ahead. It will cost €3 for a strip of black and white photographs - bring coins with you.

### February 4: Week 2

Starter Zine Kit handed out

In-class demos include: The Signature / binding options /paper grain

Slide Presentation on the photographic narrative

Let's look at some Zine samples today as well!!

### February 11: Week 3

#### **Assignment #1 due! Bring the 2 strips of photographs with you to class.**

Critique and discussion about the photographic narrative.

**Assignment #2 (due Feb 23);** make a Zine (in an edition of 12) of the photo strips.

February 18: Week 3

In progress review of the Self Portrait Narrative Zine

- + Binding tutorials (spiral binding, sewn binding, staple binding)
- + Sewing machine tutorial
- + What is a colophon?

February 25: Week 4

Class meets at WIRWIR Today! - WIRWIR, Stuttgarter Str. 56, 12059 Berlin-Neukölln

**Assignment #2 due! In class critique**

**Assignment #3 - Fan Zine printed in Risograph! (Due March 25)**

Create a Zine dedicated to your favourite band (this can be any band at all - your house-mates band even), this Zine must include one color component (can be hand coloured or can be a color photo copy or a color photograph inserted) and be in an edition of 11.

This zine will be printed on Risograph! We will be discussing how the Riso machine works during our meeting at WIRWIR

This assignment connects to the historical roots of the concept of the Zine.

The credits for the person who's submission you included in your Zine must be given in the colophon.

This Zine must include a 'submission' by someone else about the band.

Best option is to ask a friend to submit something (can be a drawing, poem, article, an interview - whatever you want) or you can find something online to submit.

This Zine must also be 8 pages long (it can be sewn or stapled) = 2 sheets of paper

The size and format of this Zine is up to you.

The big question we will address here is :

What is a Fan Zine and what is included in a Fan Zine?

**Prepare for your presentation next week!**

March 4: Week 5

In-progress review of your FanZine!

You should be ready to show the format of your Zine, basic info about the band, and an idea of the layout in a presentation format:

**The 5-7min presentation should include:**

- + 10 slides minimum about your band
- + Play your favourite song by the band
- + biographical background on the artist(s)
- + Have they made any zines or have any zines been made of them? what type of zines did they make? Or did they make any or do any currently exist?
- + Share with us your favourite Zine they made - can be a double page spread, or the concept for the Zine, etc If they don't have any Zines, show us what you plan on doing in your Zine.

March 11: Week 6 -

Class meets at WIRWIR today for more printing

March 18: Week 7

Class meets at WIRWIR today for more printing!

March 25: Week 8

**Assignment #3 due! - in-class critique**

**Introduction of Assignment #4 - The One Topic Zine! (Due April 11)**

Choose one topic that is of interest to you, make a series of photographs (at least 8, but better 10 photos) of this topic: it can be anything from man hole covers to egg cups; whatever you can think of that has caught your attention.

Sequence the photos and create a Zine - this Zine is meant to be image based only.

Zine must be 8 pages long (using 2 sheets of paper folded), zine must include at least 8 photos. Zine edition must be 12.

April 1: Week 10

In-class progress review on assignment #4 today

April 8: Week 11

**Assignment #4 - The One Topic Zine! DUE today!**

Bring a poem to class today.

The poems everyone brings to class in will play a role in the evolution of this assignment.

**SPRING BREAK 14 - 20 April!**

April 22 : Week 12

**Assignment #6 - The Political Zine! (Due May 3)**

This is a chance for you to promote your own political agenda.

What is it? How can you relate your ideas in your zine?

But it must be a minimum of 8 pages (2 sheets of paper).

You can use the Riso duplicating machine for this assignment - but let's discuss who might want to do that.

Slide show of examples of political zines!

April 29: Week 12

Check in with everyone on their zines.

**ARTSEEN submission information!**

May 6: Week 13

Critique of **Assignment #6** at WIRWIR coupled with dinner!

May 8: Week 13: install for open studio!

**ARTSEEN submission information!**

\*\*\*Please make a one A4 page featuring image(s) of your artwork, with your own layout / page design.

The zine will be printed in Portrait format on A4 paper with a plastic spiral binding on the left side.

The official size of A4 is 210 x 297mm.

Considering the 5mm white border on each side, the true workable size of your page is 200 x 287mm. Keep in mind while designing your page that the holes punched for the binding will intrude at least 1cm into the left side of the page.

The final design should be saved as either PDF or JPG.

The resolution or print quality should be 300 dpi.

The page\* MUST include your name.

In addition to: work(s) title, date, materials, and size

The typical art caption info might appear like this:

Artist Name, "Title," 2024, Silver gelatin print, 20 x 30 cm

Or this:

Artist Name

"Title" 2024

Silver gelatin print

30 x 20 cm

This will be considered as part of your Final Grade.

Please email me (sooner rather than later) if you have any questions or need any help with designing your page.

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\*If you are unclear as to how to do this; you can scan your desired image that you want to submit with your phone (using an App scanner) and then open the document in PREVIEW - you can add a text box on your image there and add the relevant information.

IMMACULATE HEART COLLEGE ART DEPARTMENT RULES

- Rule 1 FIND A PLACE YOU TRUST AND THEN TRY TRUSTING IT FOR A WHILE.
- Rule 2 GENERAL DUTIES OF A STUDENT:  
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR TEACHER.  
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS.
- Rule 3 GENERAL DUTIES OF A TEACHER:  
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR STUDENTS.
- Rule 4 CONSIDER EVERYTHING AN EXPERIMENT.
- Rule 5 BE SELF DISCIPLINED. THIS MEANS FINDING SOMEONE WISE OR SMART AND CHOOSING TO FOLLOW THEM.  
TO BE DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A GOOD WAY.  
TO BE SELF DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A BETTER WAY.
- Rule 6 NOTHING IS A MISTAKE. THERE'S NO WIN AND NO FAIL. THERE'S ONLY MAKE.
- Rule 7 The only rule is work.  
IF YOU WORK IT WILL LEAD TO SOMETHING.  
IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO DO ALL OF THE WORK ALL THE TIME WHO EVENTUALLY CATCH ON TO THINGS.
- Rule 8 DON'T TRY TO CREATE AND ANALYSE AT THE SAME TIME. THEY'RE DIFFERENT PROCESSES.
- Rule 9 BE HAPPY WHENEVER YOU CAN MANAGE IT. ENJOY YOURSELF. IT'S LIGHTER THAN YOU THINK.
- Rule 10 "WE'RE BREAKING ALL OF THE RULES. EVEN OUR OWN RULES. AND HOW DO WE DO THAT? BY LEAVING PLENTY OF ROOM FOR X QUANTITIES." JOHN CAGE

HELPFUL HINTS: ALWAYS BE AROUND. COME OR GO TO EVERYTHING. ALWAYS GO TO CLASSES. READ ANYTHING YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON. LOOK AT MOVIES CAREFULLY, OFTEN. SAVE EVERYTHING-IT MIGHT COME IN HANDY LATER.  
THERE SHOULD BE NEW RULES NEXT WEEK.