

## “Writing with Light: Writers Writing about Photography”

Fall 2012, Department of English, University of North Florida  
LIT 4650 (Comparative Literature) TR 3:05-4:20 p.m. Bldg. 15-John E. Mathews 1205

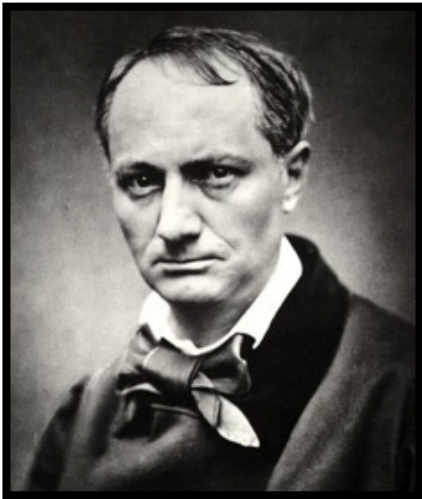
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### Course Description

“Photographers, you will never become artists. All you are is mere copiers.”  
-Charles Baudelaire

“Photographs state the innocence, the vulnerability of lives heading toward their own destruction, and this link between photography haunts all photographs of people.”  
-Susan Sontag



Since its beginnings in the 19th century, photography has inspired a remarkable amount of fine and fascinating writing (very often by non-photographers) that has accompanied its own development. From the French poet and critic Charles Baudelaire, to the American writer Susan Sontag, the medium of photography has continued to provoke rich and varied responses, while inciting complex and lyrical elaborations about this most recent form of representation, of picturing the world.

In this class, we will be reading and discussing many of the finest essays and books that have been written about photography, examining the manner in which this “writing with words” can be read alongside photography’s own “writing with light.” How

might the medium of language illuminate the medium of photography?

Among the writers to be read are the following: Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin, Paul Valéry, Susan Sontag, Roland Barthes, Geoff Dyer, Jane Gallop, Annette Kuhn, Roberto Bolaño and W. G. Sebald.

**\*A prerequisite for this course is some real interest in photography, either as a spectator or practitioner.**



**Required Texts:** In order for us to all be “on the same page” in our discussions, please buy the *exact* editions of the books listed below, with the same ISBN listed below. All of these books are available in the UNF bookstore.

1. *Classic Essays on Photography*, ed. Alan Trachtenberg Publisher: Leete's Island Books ISBN-10: 091817208X
2. *The Photographer's Eye*, by John Szarkowski. Publisher: The Museum of Modern Art; ISBN-10: 087070527X
3. *On Photography*, by Susan Sontag. Publisher: Picador; ISBN-10: 0312420099
4. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, by Roland Barthes Publisher: Hill and Wang; Reprint edition; ISBN-10: 0374532338
5. *Family Secrets*, by Annette Kuhn, Publisher: Verso ISBN-10: 1859844065
6. *The Ongoing Moment* by Geoff Dyer, Publisher: Vintage, ISBN-10: 1400031680
7. *The Rings of Saturn*, by W.G. Sebald, Publisher: New Directions, ISBN-10: 0811214133
8. *Living with His Camera*, by Jane Gallup. Publisher: Duke University Press Books; ISBN-10: 0822331020