



War Photography: Propaganda, Outrage, and Empathy

Curriculum Unit 06.01.01

by James P. Brochin

My beliefs, my camera, and some film. These were the weapons of my good intentions. My camera, my intentions, stopped no man from falling, nor did they aid him after he had fallen. It could be said that "photographs be damned, for they bind no wounds." Yet, I reasoned, if my photographs could cause compassionate horror in the viewer, they might also prod the conscience in the viewer into taking action...

...and each time I pressed the shutter release it was a shouted condemnation hurled with the hope that the pictures might survive through the years, with the hope that they might echo through the minds of men in the future -- causing them caution and remembrance and realization.

Know that these people of the pictures were my family - no matter how often they reflected the tortured features of another race. Accident of birth, accident of place -- the bloody, dying child I held momentarily while the life -- fluid seeped through my shirt and burned my heart -- that child was my child.

-W. Eugene Smith

Picture these:

A Life Magazine article features staff photographer Margaret Bourke White in an article called "Life's Bourke-White Goes Bombing."

A 1967 Life Magazine cover story called "To Keep a Village Free" features a photograph of a boy on crutches and a US soldier walking away from the camera.

A helmeted soldier holds an infant in his arms, who is naked and caked with mud or blood. The child's chest is sunken and the skull appears lopsided.

This baby was found with a head under a rock. Its head was lopsided and its eyes were masses of pus. Unfortunately, it was alive. We hoped that it would die.

-W. Eugene Smith

An Asian man is pointing a revolver at the temple of a prisoner. The prisoner is about to be executed, or more accurately, murdered, by Eddie Adams.

Screaming children are running towards the camera. One, a girl, is naked, and holding her arms away from her. Behind them are soldiers, and farther in the background billows dark smoke, by

Soldiers in formal military dress are bending over a flag draped casket in the cargo hold of a passenger jet. Above, solemn faces of passengers look out.

Introduction, Rationale and Narrative

This is a unit about photographs. In what follows, I will be describing certain key images.

As Eugene Smith so beautifully says, his goal was to instill in the viewer of his war photographs, a "compassionate horror." My goal in teaching this unit is the same.

Reality is not a video game. Students need to know about war, and they need to know about the human condition. War photography is a uniquely powerful form of photography, and a uniquely effective way to get high school students to respond to and describe the human condition.

Photography has been seen to carry a "burden of truth that no other medium possessed (Orvell, p. 61). Such phrases as "a picture is worth a thousand words" and "seeing is believing" express the undeniability of photography. Photography, being relatively new among the expressive arts, is in its own class. Photography is expected to be an accurately representation of what is really there. War photography in particular calls on the objective truth telling nature of photography. Whether the image is created by a heavy box camera or by an SLR, photography is assumed to express the truth about the nature of war making.

Students can and do become bored with the study of war history. War history can be facts upon facts, dates, battles, and strategy. I have had many students ask me, "Why do we always have to study wars?" I believe that the study of war presents many "teachable moments," perhaps more than any other topic in history. Why? Because the study of war is the study of the human condition: power, pride, idealism, technological advance, loyalty, courage, cruelty, sorrow, revenge, racism, atrocities, heroism, injury, death, sickness, pity. War photography, through its clear eyed and often-dramatic depiction of the reality of war, presents a "way in" to universal themes that is accessible and engaging for high school students.

In viewing all photographs in this unit, students will first be expected to respond to the images in silence. Silence is both a way for students to contact their visceral/emotional responses and itself an appropriate response to many of the images we will be viewing, allowing them to begin to form questions about the image: When was it taken? Under what circumstances? How did the photographer choose that moment to take the picture? Did the photographer know the subjects? There are too many possible questions to list here; many I will not have anticipated. This unit will be student-centered. In other words, there will be little "lecturing," and whatever content is required about, for example, technological changes in photography, will be given to students as homework. Thus, the bulk of class time will be centered on the images themselves.

The overall "narrative arc" of the unit will be to trace war photography from its use as propaganda, to its

realistic depiction of violence, to its powerful ability instill outrage, grief and empathy its viewers. I want students to make the transition in their viewing from audience to witness.

Unit Purpose

The essential question for the students in this unit will be "How has war photography described the human condition, and how has war photography affected history?" The learning objectives are for students to be able to:

- 1) describe and analyze their own personal reaction to war photographs.
- 2) describe in detail the contents of images.
- 3) identify and describe structural and compositional elements of images.
- 4) identify the historical context of photographic images.
- 5) describe important steps in the development of photographic technology from the Civil War to today's digital SLR's.
- 6) identify and describe the role that war photography has had in awakening a feeling of empathy for the many victims of war, wherever they may live and whatever culture they may be from.
- 7) identify and describe the role that war photography has had in awakening a feeling of outrage against atrocities and other war crimes, and
- 8) identify and describe the use of war photography, particularly on the "home front," as a propaganda tool.

Where will we begin? In this unit, we will begin with photographs that communicate the overall themes of propaganda, outrage, and empathy. However, in the earliest classes and in all classes we will not begin with the themes but will move instead from the specific to the general. In each class we will proceed using roughly the following steps in analysis, with suggested class activities, focused on specific photographs:

1. (Basic preliminary questions) Composition (vertical or horizontal lines, borders, open, closed, open or blocked views), **props** , **condition** of the place, **clothing** and its condition, condition of the room etc, **significance of the proximity** of people and items to one another.

2. (Essential questions) approximate historical time line of the photograph , **emotion** that is expressed, write a **caption** , write a brief **monologue or conversation** among the subjects in the photo, **describe what you feel** looking at this person or persons in the photo, socio-economic, cultural, historical

ideology: write their story (of the photo, the subjects, how does this break down racial or other barriers?)

Where will we get to in this unit? We will have traced a thematic treatment and a rough chronological treatment of war photography from propaganda to horror to grief, and in so doing, students should emerge with a feeling of "compassionate horror" (using W. Eugene Smith's words) and with empathy for soldiers, civilians, widows, and for humanity in general. We will end with an inquiry lesson taking two to three lessons. This will be the form of final assessment, where the students will be given a question or an issue, and will work in groups of three to answer the question on their own. This inquiry lesson will require groups of students to lead the class in a discussion, using projected images, where the class would go through some of the steps outlined above. This is the difference between the final assessment and the lessons preceding it.

Final Assessment: Inquiry Lesson

Students may pick their own photographs, and will be guided to sources relevant to their selected images. The groups will be groups of three, and, anticipating approximately 12-15 students in my journalism class, there would be 4 to 5 four groups. Each student would be responsible for one image.

- 1) three images revealing the use of photographs as propaganda;
- 2) one painting from Francisco de Goya's *Disaster's of War*, Picasso's *Guernica*, and one drawing by Kathe Kollwitz. The question posed for this would be "What are the strengths and weaknesses of art as a way to depict war's universal themes?"
- 3) three images revealing photography's ability to instill outrage, and in ways that influenced public opinion, and permanently influenced views of the nature of war.
- 4) three images revealing photography's ability to awaken empathy in viewers, and there permanently affect views of the nature and human cost of war, and, more generally, the tragedy of man's inhumanity, and also his ability show mercy and compassion for others.

What follows are three sample lesson plans.

Day One (Today) Lesson Plan: Introduction to The Unit and the Unit Themes: Propaganda, Outrage and Empathy

Lesson Plan for Day Two: Photography and War, The Early Days

A. Learning Objectives-The students will be able to

- 1) describe and analyze their personal reaction to images.
- 2) describe in detail the content of images.
- 3) describe structural and compositional elements of images.
- 4) define propaganda.
- 5) define outrage; and.
- 6) define empathy.

B. Images:

1) *Life Magazine* photo and story titled " *Life in Time of War;*" (*Life*, recent issue) The image is of a stern faced American soldier, in a helmet firmly fixed to his head by chin strap, camouflage uniform and camouflage paint. The soldier is looking at something far behind and oblique to the photographer: The task at hand? There is direct sunlight from high above, a hint at the heat of war in Iraq. His eyes are partly in shadow, intensely focused. He seems determined, tough as nails, but someone's son. He is not malevolent. He is handsome, an American hero to be, perhaps. This photograph may not fit some people's definition of propaganda, or at least the form that paints a negative, usually exaggerated, image of the enemy in war. A broader definition of propaganda may apply: any form of communication whose purpose or effect is to persuade. Such persuasion may take the form of exaggerating the benevolence or just cause of our side. In the case of this photograph, it can be seen as propaganda: America's might, a just cause, determination.

2) W. Eugene Smith image of soldier on stretcher (Aperture, *W. Eugene Smith* , unpaginated) Using Smith's own words: *He ran up the pathway towards us, and the blood ran the length of him and behind him as he ran. And after he had been bandaged and placed on a stretcher, he touched the tips of his fingers together, and he began moving his lips as if in prayer.* This image is taken from above the soldier who is on the stretcher. Everything on his clothing is specked with what looks like mud. It is blood. From his cheeks to his forehead, to the back of his head, is wrapped in a starkly white bandage. The stretcher is on a moderate diagonal, which may give the impression that he may die and his soul take flight at any time. His fingers and forearms are in brighter light than is uniform. We can barely make out his face. The most striking part of the photo is his hands; his fingertips are pressed together closely above his upper chest. We do not know if he is American, but we learn from Smith that the soldier is the enemy: "because governments determined that we should be enemies." (Scholastic Educational Filmstrip Series: *The Concerned Photographer*) In Smith's words and interpretation is the central meaning of the image, that the horrors of war are no less horrible because they may happen to our enemies. Smith has humanized war; Smith has humanized the enemy.

3) Larry Burrows' Vietnam photograph depicting black soldier trying to help wounded comrade (Knightley, pp. 194-195) This is a complex photograph rich with detail and unanswered questions. A group of soldiers is on a hill. The trees are denuded of leaves. At the bottom, on the

ground, is a white soldier covered in brown mud; except for his exposed left leg and knee, he is the color of the mud. It is hard to make out his face, and we cannot tell if his eyes are open or closed. His body, nearly covered in mud, looks as if he has already been buried. The only hint that he is alive is his outstretched left arm, his hand holding on to a wooden post. His face is turned upward; is it towards the sky? Towards the group of other soldiers standing around him? One soldier, a black soldier, with a black t-shirt, dog tag hanging from his neck, his head wrapped in a bandage from his chin to the top of his head, appears to be moving towards his fellow soldier. He appears awkward, his arms coming upwards and beginning to stretch out to the other man. The black soldier has very little mud on him; he appears to be making eye contact. Yet, he is being held back by two other soldiers, helmeted and fully loaded with equipment. A line can be drawn directly from his eyes to his comrade. Possible themes and meanings: pity for both men, warfare breaks down racial barriers, compassionate horror.

C. Initiation Strategy: I write the title of the unit, say it to the class, and tell the class to maintain silence until I give them further instructions. I then project the three images, with about a full minute on screen for each.

D. Lesson Strategy:

1. Students are given a few minutes to write about one or more of the images, including such things as their visceral responses (wonder, disgust, distress, wanting to know more, etc.), but it must include as much descriptive detail as possible . This is "thinking on the page."
- 2 Students are asked to look up and write down the definition of propaganda, outrage, and empathy.
3. Teacher guides a discussion of each image, getting student reaction and interpretation, and connecting the images with the themes. (Is *Life* 's bland head shot of an American soldier in Iraq propaganda? The Burrows image is complex and compassionate. The W. Eugene Smith image may elicit outrage.)
4. Closure: Teacher checks for understanding, about the preliminary descriptive and compositional analysis, the theme of the unit, and whether the students have any questions or further comments on the images shown.
5. Homework: Students read sections on censorship and propaganda from Susan Mueller's *Shooting War* , and are asked to write in response to prompts:
 - 1) How did any of the images fit the definition of propaganda? 2) What is the difference between official and voluntary censorship? 3) Describe one example of a journalistic image that you have recently observed which fits your definition of propaganda.

Lesson Plan from Day One: Introduction to the Unit

Day Two (Today) Lesson Plan: Propaganda

Lesson Plan for Day Three: The Reality of War

A. Learning Objectives-The students will be able to:

- 1) describe and analyze their own personal reaction to images;
- 2) describe in detail the content of images;
- 3) identify and describe the use of war photography, particularly on the "home front," as a propaganda tool.
- 4) identify the historical context of photographic images;
- 5) define voluntary censorship and official censorship.

B. Images:

1) *Life Magazine* story "Life's Bourke-White Goes Bombing" (*Life* . March 1, 1943) Margaret Bourke-White was one of the most famous all American photographers, famous partly for her fearlessness high above Manhattan's streets on the Chrysler Building. Bourke-White's homage to American industry. Her photograph of Fort Peck Dam graced *Life's* very first cover. Now, in time of war, Bourke-White's fearlessness finds another challenge, next to a bomber in World War II. The image of her is unmistakably heroic, taken from below, making her look bigger than life, the guts of the aircraft engine clearly visible behind her. She is clad head to toe in a high altitude flight suit, which appears to be made of sheepskin, goggles in her left hand and reconnaissance camera in her right hand. She has a broad smile. She is up to the challenge. Compositionally, there is much to see and discuss. The plane's wing and engine is to the right, and wheels and fuselage are outside the borders, making it seem that it is in flight and not on the ground. The engine points diagonally upwards and to the left, directly towards Bourke-White's head. Again, fearless, again heroic. Is it propaganda? Ordinarily, propaganda is associated with exaggerated and sometimes grotesque images depicting the evil of our enemies, such as the apelike "Hun" of American and British World War I posters, or German anti-Semitic propaganda. Of course, propaganda has included exaggerated depictions of one's own side, too. For example, Leni Riefenstahl's film *Olympiad* celebrated the German ideal of strength at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Since that time, Riefenstahl has been widely criticized as having produced a film to conform to Hitler's view of Aryan supremacy. The Bourke-White portrait does fit the definition of propaganda, which includes emphasizing the positive, here the fearless and heroic, about our side in World War II. It matters that this is a posed photograph, and it matters that the image is included in a story " *Life's* Bourke-White Goes Bombing."

2) 1950 Life Magazine cover image "Gregory Peck in *Twelve O'clock High*"

(*Life* . Feb. 20, 1950) Gregory Peck, America's most beloved and heroic movie actor, stars in a new film *Twelve O'clock High*. The issue date is February 20, 1950, just as the Korean War is about to start. America would have rather gone back to normal business after the end of World War II. It is now the Cold War, and new enemies threaten. The film is about the heroism of B-17 pilots conducting bombing raid over Europe from Britain during World War II. The photograph has numerous elements that students could describe. It, like the Bourke-White photograph, is posed. Peck wears a leather bomber jacket, zipped up nearly to the neck. The jacket collar is pulled up, on the left side but not all of the way around to the right. He is looking off to the left, not at the camera. He is wearing a leather helmet and his flying goggles are resting on his forehead. His hands are in his pockets, and he is leaning against a high wall, which has cracks in it. His face is determined, yet there is slight smile. This photo is not from the film, it is of him posing. Is he on the set? Was he told to dress up in character for the photographer? Does this image qualify as propaganda? Seen in the context of the Cold War, probably yes. Note that also "In This Issue" are also "Churchill's Memoirs on Stalin's Mistakes" and "FDR and Churchill's Meeting at Sea." The echoes of World War II still reverberate. Peck's film is about heroism, his photograph is of a young, brave warrior. Yet there is some self-consciousness about him; he is an actor, humble enough not to be confused with the real thing.

3) Adolf Hitler saluting parade of passing soldiers (Ambrose) There are so many images of Hitler that it is almost tempting to say that any image of him would evoke revulsion. Here, the image is unquestionably propaganda. It was created for a German audience, photographed by official German photographers, designed to please the subject. What did Hitler want from his photographers? And yet, there is more. Only Hitler is without a military hat. He and Himmler both look down, literally and figuratively, from the open Mercedes limousine. The ordinary soldiers march away from the camera, none of their faces showing. It is a chilling image; individuals are nothing to the all powerful Nazi state. There is immense arrogance, even disdain, in Hitler's and Himmler's gaze. The Nazi salute and Hitler's arms have an eerie, disembodied look, as if about to fly away, and simultaneously hold down, by sheer will, all that exists below his stiff hand. Hitler is sending these young men off to conquer. We cannot humanize them; the photographer chose not to. This photograph could have been used as propaganda for Germany and for the Allies. For German's it may have been an inspiring expression of strength. For the Allies, the image captures Nazi malevolence in full view.

4) Life Magazine Cover story, "To Keep a Village Free" (*Life* . August, 1967) This image is harder to define as propaganda. A handicapped child and an American soldier are walking away from the camera. The boy, on crutches, is wearing tattered clothing, a cloth hat, and is using crutches. The soldier is trim, apparently handsome, much taller than the boy; he looks down in a friendly and helpful way. Is the boy an orphan? In the soldier's left hand are two fishing poles, and in his right hand is an M16 rifle. The juxtaposition of these two elements, the fishing poles and the M16, symbolize the American goal of winning the "hearts and minds" of the South Vietnamese people. The full name of the Life article is "The 'Other War' In Vietnam: To Keep a Village Free." How might this be propaganda? Propaganda is a form of communication the goal or inevitable effect of which is edification or support of one point of view. The photograph by itself, without the article's title, might have a very different effect: poignant, ironic. The title makes the photograph of use for official American policy. That is what might make it propaganda. There are many other examples of other countries being depicted as "child-friends" needing our help. One of them is the John Wayne film, *The Green Berets* .

C. Initiation Strategy: As in all of the lessons, teacher shows the images for about a minute for each, students watch in silence. Students then write their reactions to one or more images for five minutes, which must include as much descriptive detail as possible. This is "thinking on the page."

D. Lesson Strategy:

1. Teacher leads discussion of general ideas of propaganda, official and voluntary censorship. Teacher gives background of uses of war images by both sides in World War II. In World War I, it was illegal to publish images of dead bodies. In Vietnam, photographers and cinematographers were allowed to accompany soldiers into battle, and many photographers were killed as a result. Official censorship and self-censorship has some validity, in that images may give away strategic and tactical secrets. Photographers have allowed all of us to become witnesses along with them. Censorship, official and self-imposed, has not prevented photographers from capturing war's drama, tragedy, and heroism.
2. Teacher shows additional three images, and the students discuss how photographs might show use of voluntary or official censorship. Teacher explains historical context for Vietnam images and World War II images.
3. Closure: Teacher checks for understanding and asks student feedback on which were the most effective images and why.
4. Homework: Students read segment from Orwell on Civil War Photography.

Lesson Plan from Day Two: Propaganda

Day Three (Today) Lesson Plan: The Reality of War

Lesson Plan for Day Four: Outrage and Atrocity

A. Learning Objectives-The students will be able to:

- 1) describe and analyze their own personal reaction to war photographs;
- 2) describe in detail the content of images;
- 3) identify the historical context of photographic images;

4) describe important steps in the development of photographic technology from the Civil War to today's digital SLR's.

B. Images:

1) Timothy O'Sullivan's *Harvest of Death* (Orvell, p. 66) This is one of the first images directly confronting the "blank horror of war, rather than its pageantry." (Alexander Gardner, in Orvell, at p. 66) The corpses are in focus in the foreground and out of focus in the background, which seems to exaggerate their numbers. The ones in the background are barely recognizable as human beings, yet we know that their putrefied state will be little different than the soldier in the foreground. His body is swollen, his left hand more like a pale glove. His right knee is bent, giving the feeling of his final struggles before dying. What is most shocking is his face. It is more animal than human. The mouth is more like a tube, or a fish. It is open, black in its interior, his eyes barely visible between the puffed eyelids and upper cheeks. The grass around him, around all of the bodies, is as lifeless as he is. It looks like cut hay during a draught. In the far background, faintly, in perfect profile, is a horse and rider. There is no mistaking it as a soldier. Is this the "hallowed ground" of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address? Time has worked its evil on the bodies, yet war has rushed these soldiers to their deaths as young men.

2) Portrait of Civil War amputee, with prosthetic leg removed (<http://www.civilwarphotography.com>) In a studio pose, a Civil War veteran's wounds are exposed. He is gaunt, sitting in a chair, not looking at the camera, and has an expression that is difficult to describe: resigned, angry, sad? He has a long and gaunt face and a full black beard with no mustache, in the style of President Lincoln. The camera has been placed far enough away from the subject that all of him, and some of the floor, is in full view. The central focus is his amputated leg. His left hand is on his left hip, in a slightly casual way, and his right hand is on his right thigh. He could not have placed his left hand on his left thigh, since he has no leg, it having been amputated just below the left hip. His left elbow and forearm seems to be propping up his prosthetic leg, which has been removed for the photographic session. He is naked from the waist down, his private parts are hidden from view by a shirt that has been pulled downward. The angles are striking. His left arm, the prosthetic leg and its connecting apparatus, his right leg and thigh, make a rectangle. The black chair is in stark contrast to the pale skin of his leg. He is awkwardly pushing himself back into the chair, supported by its rickety looking "legs." This is an image of a man in deep pain, with a wound so extreme that the viewer is likely to repeat Gardner's statement. This is war, this is the cost of war. There is no hero in this picture, only war's victim.

3) American Soldier Killed by German Snipers, by Robert Capa (Aperture, *Robert Capa* , p. 125) The date is April 18, 1945, in Leipzig, Germany, the very last battles of the war in Europe are being fought. Victory is three weeks away, on May 8, 1945. Knowing this context makes the image more poignant. Why did he have to die, why did he have to raise his head just as a German sniper fired his rifle? The photo is taken from medium distance, far enough away to see that the soldier had been positioned on a porch of a building. It looks like he was killed instantly. We see

him as if he had been shot seconds before. He has been knocked backward through an open door. We see the floor, and an empty chair to the right, and a window behind that. The leaves of the trees in the distance have not come out yet, or the trees have been killed by the battles. A river of blood, dividing in two, flows toward the camera. There is no sign of his gun, but we can see, in the foreground, a spent cartridge, and many more cartridges under his slightly raised back. The body is at an awkward, unnatural angle. His left knee is bent, but his right leg may be straight, his foot or foreleg caught on something, causing his pelvis to be suspended above the floor. His head is twisted to the right; his neck could be broken. His face is barely visible, and he has some kind of hat on, which does not look like a helmet.

In comparing these three photographs, it is useful to discuss the evolution of the camera. During the Civil War, cameras were large and heavy, and required the use of heavy, wooden tripods. The exposure times were so slow that taking pictures of moving objects was nearly impossible. That explains why war photographs from the Civil War are almost entirely of landscape, bodies, or stiffly posed subjects in studios. By the time of World War II, film has become fast, easy to load, and cameras had become light and able to use fast, interchangeable lenses. Rangefinders, and later single lens reflex cameras, allowed photographers to be as mobile as the soldiers themselves. Robert Capa must have arrived at the scene in Leipzig along with the American Army. Capa is most famous for his blurry images of his the D-Day landing. More than any other action photograph of the landings, these capture the feeling of it, blurry, chaotic, near panic. Teachers may want to include one of these in the lessons' on war's reality. My selection and description of certain photographs is not meant to be any kind of declaration that these are the best or richest that might exist. There are an enormous number of photographs that capture the harsh reality of war, including war atrocities, and teachers are encouraged to explore those rich sources. Careful searches on the Internet are highly productive.

C. Initiation Strategy: As in all of the lessons, teacher shows the first three images for about a minute for each, students watch in silence. Students then write their reactions to one or more images for five minutes, which must include as much descriptive detail as possible. This is "thinking on the page."

D. Lesson Strategy:

1. After the initiation, teacher guides discussion about the student's reactions and description of the Civil War images and a discussion of the Orvell reading.
2. Teacher projects the last three images, and the class discusses them after the three are projected.
4. Homework: Students are asked to search the net for images from the current Iraq war which show both the reality of war and which are also in some way an example of propaganda, or that clearly support a point of view, even if that point of view opposes the war.

APPENDIX

Academic Setting, Resources, and Assessments

The unit will be used in a large urban public school with great diversity among ethnic groups and levels of past academic preparation. It would be taught in an elective course on Journalism. It might also be taught in a course on United States History II. The target audience would be either eleventh grade for US History II or tenth through twelfth for a course on Journalism. Although this unit was written for "honors" US II, and/or motivated elective students, which include ELL ("English Language Learner") students, with the proper modifications it could be taught at any level.

The material for the unit is designed to be covered in ten sessions, (two weeks of classes, which breaks down as six 45 minute classes and two 90 minute block classes) divided into roughly three sections: Section I: *War Photography as a propaganda too, official censorship, and voluntary censorship*; Section II: *War photography's realistic depiction of war's horror*. Section III: *Atrocity, Outrage, and Grief*. The overarching theme in this unit will be the empathy that war photography can instill in the viewer and how it can awaken society to our common humanity, even with the "enemy." The observational and writing skills, along with historical context and the development of photographic technology, will be taught with the thematic structure and not as separate subjects.

The primary classroom materials and resources will be a computer and a high quality video projector, with student taking notes and writing. In addition, students will be provided with reading materials, such as sections of books on the technological change in photography since the Civil War. The longer classes will enable the teacher to use a greater variety classroom materials and teaching methods. For example, an LP containing audio commentary by W. Eugene Smith and other war photographers about their own work, audio commentary by Edward R. Murrow from England during World War II, segments of books such as *Johnny Got His Gun*, *Friendly Fire*, *Dispatches*, and *Regarding the Pain of Others*. The object would be to gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the horrors of war.

The primary teaching method will consist of class discussion, along with student writing, using sources such as the images and first person accounts, including those of the photographers, audio and book segments as described above, and perhaps one or two film clips from such films as *The Piano* and *The Thin Red Line*.

Assessments will be in the forms of 1) written critical and persuasive piece(s) during the Unit (in the five paragraph format used for the CAPT test (at most two), an end of Unit written examination, and at least one inquiry lesson. This inquiry project has been described generally above and is further described below.

The High School Teaching Challenge

While the goal will be to teach college bound students, even honors students will not be prepared for the demands, rigor, or boredom of lecture/discussions of a heavily academic focus. The fact is, students of this age must become engaged on a personal level to stimulate an ongoing interest in the material. One must

constantly ask oneself as a teacher, and the students: "Why do we give a damn about what happened to an Iraqi soldier, a Vietnamese Buddhist Monk, a Civil War amputee?" The challenge for any teacher of adolescents is how to engage the students. The answer may be to engage their sense of right and wrong, their heightened sense of what is fair, what is just. That is why I chose to design this Unit. So what are the "hooks" for this unit, the strategies will keep even the most disinterested heads off the desks? Well, the images themselves are so compelling that student attention is fairly assured. Of course, that may vary greatly with the teacher's style and preferences, and some techniques are laid out in the lesson plans that follow.

Recommendations for prior knowledge

Ideally, the following topics should have been studied in depth, or at least touched upon, in this course or other courses, prior to beginning this Unit: the Civil War, World War I, World War II, basic art and photographic techniques.

UNIT OUTLINE

Course Title: Journalism, or

United States History II

Unit Title: War Photography:

Propaganda, Outrage, and Empathy

Grade Level: Junior or Senior

Approximate Time Period: 10 days

(8 classes including two block classes)

Social Studies Standards (Connecticut Frameworks):

Content Standard 1: Historical Thinking

Use primary source documents to analyze multiple perspectives.

Content Standard 3: Historical Themes

Students will apply their understanding of historical periods, issues and trends to examine such historical themes as ideals, beliefs and institutions: conflict and conflict resolution; human movement and interaction; and science and technology in order to understand how the world came to be the way it is.

Content Standard 4: Applying History

Students will recognize the continuing importance of historical thinking and historical knowledge in their own lives and in the world in which they live.

Visual Arts Standards (Connecticut Frameworks)

Content Standard 1: Media

Students will understand, select and apply media, techniques and processes.

Content Standard 4: History and Cultures

Students will understand the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Content Standard 5: Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation

Students will reflect upon, describe, analyze, interpret and evaluate artwork.

Unit Goals/Objectives. Students will be able to:

- 1) describe and analyze their own personal reaction to war photographs.
- 2) describe in detail the content of images.
- 3) identify and describe structural and compositional elements of images, and focus on significant characteristics of a medium and why this medium was preferred to other media to express content in a historical period with attention to the design concepts and content.
- 4) identify the historical context of photographic images.
- 5) describe important steps in the development of photographic technology from the Civil War to today's digital SLR's.
- 6) identify and describe the use of war photography, particularly on the "home front," as a propaganda tool.
- 7) identify and describe the role that war photography has had in awakening a feeling of outrage against atrocities and other war crimes.
- 8) identify and describe the role that war photography has had in awakening a feeling of empathy for the many victims of war, wherever they may live and whatever culture they may be from.

Annotated Bibliography: Resources for Teachers and Students

Life Magazine. "50 Years." (Fall, 1986) (This special anniversary edition has some of life's best images, which include a number of war photographs, including "Combat Coverage Across Five Decades of War." Photography by Robert Capa, Larry Burrow, and David Douglas Duncan are featured, along with a full page of the faces of 217 men killed in one week.)

Ambrose, Steven. *American Heritage New History of World War II* . New York: Viking, 1997. (Excellent contextual background of World War II, extensively illustrated)

W. Eugene Smith. *W. Eugene Smith: His Photographs and Notes*. New York: Aperture, Inc. 1969. (Moving collection of Smith's most important photo-essays, including Smith's notes and commentary. Of all of the photographers, Smith's images and accompanying words best express the theme of empathy, and form the emotional core of this unit.)

Aperture Foundation, Inc. *Robert Capa Photographs* . Vicenza, Italy: Aperture, Inc., 1996.

Barthes, Roland . *Camera Lucida* . New York: Hill and Wang, 1980. (A philosophical essay on the nature of photography)

Burrows, Larry. *Vietnam* (Burrow's extensive work on Vietnam. He was killed there.)

Ed. by Cyma Rubin and Eric Newton. *The Pulitzer Prize Winning Photographs* . (Numerous war photographs are presented in this collection of news photos.)

Ed. by Steichen, Edward . *The Family of Man*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1955. (The most successful photography exhibit of all time, organized along universal themes. War is one of those themes.)

Ed. by William S. Johnson. *Master of the Photographic Essay: W. Eugene Smith*. Millerton, New York: Aperture, Inc., 1981. (Extensive collection of Smith's many photo-essays, including many war images from the Pacific War.)

Howe, Peter. *Shooting Under Fire: The World of the War Photographer*. New York: Artisan, 2002. (An extensive collection. The central thematic focus is the experience of the war photographers.)

Knightley, Phillip. *The Eyes of War: Words and Photographs From the Front Line*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 2003. (Extensive collection, including many taken since Vietnam, along with quotes.)

Moeller, Susan. *Shooting War: Photography and the American Experience of Combat*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1989. (An excellent chronological history of war photography.)

Moyes, Norman B. *Battle Eye: A History of American Combat Photography*. New York: MetroBooks, 1996. (A chronological history of combat photography)

Orvell, Miles. *American Photography*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. (An exhaustive, yet not overwhelming, text on the history of American photography in cultural context.)

Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977 (A critical examination of the role of photography in our lives.)

Sontag, Susan. *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Picador, 2003. (Nearly thirty years later, Sontag takes another look at photography's role in our lives. Images of atrocities have become common. Are viewers numbed to violence by the depiction of

cruelty?

Thomas, Gordon. *Guernica: The Crucible of World War II*. (A moment-by-moment account of Franco's terror bombing of the Basque city of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War. The bombing inspired Picasso's *Guernica* .)

Trachtenberg, Alan. *Reading American Photographs*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1989 (A book about the process of "reading" photographs as history. Very useful in constructing detailed descriptions and analyses of photographs.)

United States Holocaust Museum. *Liberation 1945* (Powerful images and testimony by American soldiers who liberated concentration camps)

Various Life Magazine cover stories, from World War II, Korean War, Vietnam

Internet Resources

Civil War Photographs . <http://www.loc.gov/cwphome> (Selected Civil War Photographs, 1861 - 1865; collection contains 1100 Civil War encampments, battlefields, and portraits as captured by Mathew Brady and others.)

The Civil War Photography Center . <http://www.civilwarphotography.com> (Devoted to the works of original Civil War photographers. Includes images and technical information.)

War Photography. <http://www.photography.about.com/od/warphotography> (A history of war photography with many examples)

War Photography since 1946. <http://www.photography.about.com/library> (Korea, Vietnam and elsewhere - Bert Hardy, Robert Capa, Don McCullin, Marc Riboud, Phillip Jones Griffiths and others) <http://www.ichiban1.org/html/photography.htm> (War photographs by ordinary soldiers in the field.)

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