ART HISTORY & ART CONSERVATION

ARTH 342/3.0
Photography in Canada, 1839-1939

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:
Through lectures, readings, and research, this course explores the nature, practice, and impact of photography in Canada between 1839 and 1939. By examining how the new medium was used to confirm, complement, and contest older forms of aesthetic expression, written documentation, or visual evidence, it traces the role of photography in Canadian society during this critical period of Canadian nation building.

Prerequisites: Level 3 or above

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
Photography and Canada came of age together in the nineteenth century. Drawn into art, science, and the business of life, the new medium was used to confirm, complement, and contest older forms of aesthetic expression, written documentation, and oral testimony within the increasingly visual culture of mid-nineteenth-century British North America. Studied as part of a complex relationship between “images and imaginings,” photographs can be seen as active participants in the construction of notions of landscape and identity, place, and progress, history and memory on various levels from individual to imperial. Focusing primarily on the first century of the medium, lectures and assignments will introduce students to key photographers and their bodies of work. We will explore the nature of photography as both an image-making technology and a social practice and also investigate the meaning behind the images and how that meaning has been defined and redefined by the contexts in which they are viewed.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
A list of lectures, readings, and assignments will be distributed during the first class. Students are expected to attend lectures, do weekly readings and/or online research, and participate in class or small group discussions. Various evaluation methods will be used to assess knowledge of course materials and concepts, and may include a combination of short written assignments, in-class tests, and a major research assignment.