

History of Photography – A Guide to Online Resources

Class Website – An Information Resource

There is a web page for the class available at:

<http://www.cod.edu/photo/curto/1105/>

The web page contains a link to a PDF version of the course syllabus, a link to a separate page devoted to course handouts, lecture slides and podcasts, and approximately 200 links to resources for the course. The class web page should be one of your first stops for information related to course content and concepts.

The numerous resource links on the page are divided into categories, accessible via a pop-up menu:

- Key Class Resources (Syllabus, Podcasts & Handouts)
- Research & Writing Links
- General History
- Timelines
- Photo History
- Camera Obscura
- Niepce, Daguerre & Fox Talbot
- Daguerreotype Photography
- Wet-Plate Negative & Albumen Print
- Muybridge & Marey
- Civil War Photo Sites:
- Women in Photography:
- 20th & 21st Century Photographers:
- Chicago Galleries & Resources:
- Articles & Essays:
- Photography Blogs, Online Magazines and other "news" resources:

RSS “Feeds” – A Way to Stay Informed

Typically, our web browsing experience consists of, well, browsing... looking for the content we want by clicking on links and going to web sites that we think might have the content we want. Much like “channel surfing” our TV sets, sometimes we find what we want, sometimes we don’t, and sometimes we settle for something we don’t really care much about, while wishing we could find what we really want.

What if the content of your favorite news and weblog (also known as “blog”) sites came to you rather than you having to go to it? Better yet, what if that content came to you in summary form, so you could get the gist of the piece without having to devote too much time to finding out if you really like it? RSS “feeds” function much like a subscription to a magazine or a newspaper, where new content arrives without you having to do anything other than initiate the original subscription.

RSS (which stands for "Really Simple Syndication") is a type of web address used to publish frequently updated content such as blog entries, news headlines or podcasts. While not all websites have RSS addresses, many news and weblog sites do. Look for the phrase “subscribe to our feed” or for the acronym “RSS” on a web page.

An RSS document, which is called a "feed", "web feed", or "channel," can contain either a summary of content from an associated web site or the full text. RSS makes it possible for people to keep up with their favorite web sites in an automated manner that's easier than checking them manually.

RSS content can be read using software called a "feed reader" or an "aggregator." The user subscribes to a feed by entering the feed's link into the reader or by clicking an RSS icon in a browser that initiates the subscription process. The reader checks the user's subscribed feeds regularly for new content, downloading any updates that it finds.

There are many feed readers available for both Macintosh and Windows computers. Some web browsers (like Safari on the Mac or Firefox for Mac and Windows) can act as feed readers, or you can use a separate reader software application (do a Google search to find readers, try a couple out and pick one that seems easy for you to use).

Subscribing to a few photo-related RSS feeds is an excellent way of finding material to use for your “Photo History in the News” assignments. See the very bottom of the class web page for selected news and photography info sites, most of which have RSS addresses listed on their web pages. Of course, you can use RSS feeds to simplify other parts of your information-gathering life, as well.

Podcasts – Subscription Radio on your Computer

Podcasts are audio or audio/visual files, available free of charge, that play on your computer or on a portable audio player. Their name comes from a combination of Apple's iPod and Broadcasting. Despite their name, though, it's not necessary to have an iPod to listen to podcasts. Podcasts can be played on a portable digital audio player (with the iPod being the most popular) or on your computer.

File formats for podcasts vary, with the .mp3 format being the most popular, primarily because it's the most readily played on any audio player. The .mp3 format is limited to audio content only however, so other formats that allow still visual content (known as "enhanced podcasts) or motion video content (known as video podcasts) to be added to the file have begun to proliferate. Thousands of podcasts are available on almost any topic imaginable.

Podcasts can be downloaded individually through a website or they can be subscribed to via an RSS feed. The RSS subscription concept is ideal for podcasts because when the subscription reader notices a new podcast, it's automatically downloaded to your computer. The most popular subscription reader for podcasts is Apple's iTunes, a music and video "jukebox" application, available for free for both Mac and Windows (www.apple.com/itunes). Some people use the iTunes application to burn audio CDs of podcasts so they can listen to them in their car or on their home or portable CD players.

Each class session of the History of Photography course is recorded and published as a podcast. I use a software package that records not only the audio of our classroom sessions but also records when I advance my lecture slides. When class is over, the software puts together the classroom visuals with the classroom audio. The podcast file that results is in .m4a format, which allows the visuals to be displayed along with the audio in an "enhanced podcast" format.

Because of the .m4a format, the class podcasts can only be played using QuickTime Player (available for free for both Mac and Windows), in a web browser window (using the QuickTime plugin; also free), in iTunes or on an iPod. Since you can subscribe to the RSS feed for the podcast using iTunes, that software might be a logical choice for listening to and viewing the class podcasts.

In addition to having the presentation slides change along with the audio, each presentation slide acts as a "chapter" so you can randomly select the segment of the class that most interests you. If you note a section of the lecture that you might want to review, you could make a quick note of the approximate time after class started so that you can easily zip to that section.

Why listen to the podcasts of this class? Well, being able to hear and see what we did in a class session over again might be helpful to you. You might use the course podcasts for review, to make up for a missed class session or to refresh your memory about a certain segment of a class session. You could also join the several thousand "class participants" who live far and wide around the world who are regular listeners to the podcasts.

You can find and download the individual podcasts from the podcast, handout and lecture slide web page: <http://photohistory.jeffcurto.com>

On that page, you'll find a link to each individual podcast as well as a link to the podcast's page on iTunes. Alternately, you can search the iTunes store for History of Photography or for Jeff Curto and you'll find the iTunes page for the History of Photography Podcast.

InsideCOD & Blackboard – Linking you to COD & the Class

College of DuPage offers two "portals" for currently registered students. Both portals use the same login as the college's MyAccess registration and class schedule site.

Inside.cod is a general student portal, where you can check your COD email account, find and email other students and keep up with campus news. You can find it here: inside.cod.edu

Blackboard is an online course management system where you can track information about your classes, and interact with other class members, see your grades, etc. You can find it here: <http://bb.cod.edu/>

Note: once you're logged into InsideCOD, you can access Blackboard right from that portal and you're already logged in; an easy one-stop access point.