

Visual and Cultural Studies

Spring 2009

Photographs: Conceptual Analysis & Interpretation

Second Stage: *Studium* and *Punctum*

In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes introduces two key concepts with obscure Latin names: ***studium*** and ***punctum***. He offers brief definitions of these concepts, but more importantly he attempts to demonstrate their significance and value in understanding photographs by applying these terms to numerous examples of public photos and photographs from his personal collection of family portraits.

In order to better understand these concepts and to test their usefulness, I would like you to do the following:

1. Give a **brief definition** of *studium* and *punctum* **in your own words**. Note that Barthes actually suggests two understandings or senses of *punctum*. Be sure to give a characterization of **both** senses of the term.
2. **Apply** these concepts to either your **public** photo, your **found** photo, or one of the photos that **you've** taken. To what extent do these concepts apply? Explain.

Your text should be no longer than two pages.

Once again, you can post your photos and observations to the blog as a **separate post**. The category will be "Barthes".

This assignment is part of the **participation** component of the course and will not be given a letter grade.

If you have concerns about doing this in a quasi-public forum, or if you have objections or philosophical concerns about the use of web-based technology for these assignments, please let me know and we'll discuss alternatives.

Deadline for Posting: 6 p.m., Monday, 2 March 09