

HCAH Student Research Assistantships 2018

Project Description:

Digital Camera Lucida: A Teaching Aid

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This research project will result in a web platform for the teaching of Roland Barthes' Camera Lucida.

While this essential book is available to students in a fine 1981 translation by Richard Howard, the original French 1980 edition (Gallimard, Le Seuil) includes a scholarly armature (marginal notes, bibliography of literary, philosophical, and photographic sources) lacking in the English. And while both are richly illustrated, Barthes describes numerous photographs that aren't included in either edition.

The proposed web platform would allow students to move back and forth between the original French and the English translation, would offer higher resolution versions of the photographs Barthes does include as well as high resolutions versions of the ones he doesn't. It would link all illustrations and notes to the articles, books, and magazines he references, offering a richer context for research and teaching.

The platform would also offer useful annotation tools, allowing dynamic mark-up to facilitate assigned reading, homework, as well as in-class discussions.

A book this crucial to the history of photography, photography theory, and visual studies more broadly, currently remains bound by print and translation conventions that digital tools would help to expand.

Research assistance is needed with the scanning and encoding of both the English and original French, locating and scanning and editing of all visual media sources, and mark-up of all marginal notations. Assistance needed too with the building of a web-based platform for the management and sharing of the resources.

The project will have the technical support of Michael Zarafonetis

Estimate of the number of hours of work needed and when:

400 hours over the summer

Special skills required: Intermediate French, Visual literacy, Basic research skills, Scanning skills, Adobe Photoshop CC

What would you hope to achieve if funded?

My pedagogy would be enriched and my research into this singularly influential work of Roland Barthes would be further guided.

What might the student learn from this collaboration?

With the help of Zarafonetis and Khokhlov, this student would learn how to build a visually rich, hyperlinked text; and from me and Barthes' own sources, they would learn the import of Camera Lucida.
