

AVT-253 Intro to Digital Photography
Course Syllabus
George Mason University

Online Instructor: Rahshia Sawyer

Contact: rlinendo@gmu.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

Prerequisites

No previous experience in photography is necessary and no prerequisites are required for this class.

DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the technical and aesthetic properties of digital photography with an emphasis on the use of a manual camera as a tool for electronic photographic image making. Additionally, students will learn to create efficient digital workflow using basic image-editing skills and software programs. Students will learn the technical aspects of photography as well as how to use the camera as a tool for creating art and idea expression.

Course Learner Objectives

- Adjust the camera settings to control the resulting image including:
 - Proper exposure control and light metering
 - Aperture and Shutter speed
 - White balance
 - The use of ISO in controlling digital noise
- Apply technique and aesthetics to express visual concepts
- Create a small body of work
- Critique images created by themselves and their peers in terms of technical quality and conceptual strengths
- Deconstruct the work of fine arts photographers.

Course Requirements and Grading

To be successful in this class, you must:

- Be prepared to participate fully in all aspects of the course. This is an online course and you are expected to log on at least three times a week.
- Participate in class discussions and critique on Blackboard discussion boards. The more you participate in the discussion or your and work and your peer's work, the easier it is to communicate your own ideas. Receiving constructive criticism is crucial in the artistic process.
- Follow the requirements of the assignment and complete it on time. Failure to turn in an assignment on time will result in the grade being dropped one grade for each day it is late.

- Satisfactory completion of visual, written, and presentation assignments. Solutions to visual problems will be discussed and evaluated in class critiques and grades will be based on aesthetic merit, conceptual strength, and technical competence.

Criteria for Evaluation and Grading

- Use of appropriate tools and techniques to demonstrate understanding of the assignment
- Image quality of the final image
- Idea development and creativity
- Risk taking, ambition, and engagement with the assignment
- Participation in **online** discussions and critiques

Grade Breakdown:

All Shooting Assignments:	682 pts
Critique Participation	60 pts
Discussions	50 pts

Final Assessment

- A—Excellent Work far exceeds the expectations for the assignment. Shows exceptional grasp of technique, concept, and creative expression
- B—Very Good Work is of a high standard that shows a firm understanding of technical considerations and individual creative expression.
- C—Average: Meets the expectations of the assignment and shows technical competency
- D—Poor: Does not meet the expectations of the assignment. Work is uninspired and does not show a technical understanding.
- F—Fail: Failure to complete the assignment in the time allotted.

A: 93%-100%	A-: 90%-92%	B+: 87%-89%	B: 84%-86%
B-: 80%-83%	C+: 77%-79%	C: 74%-76%	C-: 70%-73%
D+: 67%-69%	D: 64%-66%	D-: 60%-63%	F: <59%

Attendance

Online attendance is an essential part of the course. This is an experience based class and artistic growth comes only through continued active participation. You are expected to log on and participate on class discussion boards and assignments a minimum of three times a week.

Plagiarism/Cheating

Only students' own photos and images are permitted for use in projects. The unauthorized use of images and compositions that are not your own is considered plagiarism and will result in a zero for the project. Any type of plagiarism, artistic or written, can result in a zero for the assignment and will negatively impact your final grade in the course.

CLASS POLICIES

EMAIL / Blackboard POLICY

You must check e-mail and Blackboard on a regular basis. Assignments and course communications will be dispersed via email and/or posted to Blackboard.

Be professional in your emails. Open them with a greeting, be respectful, write in complete sentences and avoid all caps. Before asking a question, first thoroughly read the syllabus, course documents, assignments, and announcements on Blackboard. Allow at least 48 hours for a response during the work week.

Emails sent after 4pm on Friday will be returned by Monday at noon.

Because of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), **I will only respond to emails sent from your school-assigned address:** please include your full name and the course number (example: Jane Doe, AVT 253) in the subject line.

Notes on Course

Content In this course we may experience some content that can be, or has in the past, been considered provocative. People can be potentially offended by what we're about to see. Have respect for how other people in the room may feel, even if you don't share those feelings. Though provocative art might not be directly offensive, it can remind you of difficult experiences. Part of the course is to discuss difficult issues and put them into a historical and artistic context. You can also communicate with me via email if you feel you need additional space or information to process course content.

MATERIALS:

Recommended Text:

Reframing Photography: Theory and Practice by Modrak and Anthes
<http://tinyurl.com/34zqk66>

Most of our "text" comes from Lynda.com tutorials. However, if you feel you learn better from a traditional textbook I recommended the one listed above. You can rent it for less than twenty dollars on Amazon.com.

Software

Students who choose to work remotely will need to purchase the Adobe Creative Cloud while enrolled in this course. You will need the Photographer's Package at minimum. Visit www.adobe.com for student pricing.

Photo Cage:

Students who are local to campus can rent equipment from the photo cage on campus. There are resources than can be rented from the cage including, cameras, lenses, Wacom tablets, tripods, etc. You must pay a rental fee and a security deposit for most items. This must be paid for using Mason Money. Other forms of currency are not accepted. For more information on pricing see the cage in LO11of the School of Art on the Fairfax campus.

Camera:

Digital Camera with manual exposure metering, manual focus controls, and RAW file capability is required for the course. All DSLR cameras will meet the requirements. If you have a compact camera that you think meets the requirements, please ask the instructor. A limited number of cameras are available for checkout through the cage.

Examples:

Canon EOS Rebel series

Nikon D3100 series

Memory Card:

You will need to have your own digital Memory Card that is compatible with your camera. It is recommended that you have a card that is at least 2 GB in size.

Portable Media for your Files:

Even if you work on your own computer you should always back up your work! Losing your memory card is not an excuse for turning in your work late. You will need a USB flash drive and/or portable hard drive for the course to back up your work.

Tripod (recommended) Tripods are available to rent from the cage.

Local Photo Supply Store

District Camera 6025 Burke Center Parkway Bring your student ID for a possible discount

Online Photo Supply Stores

B&H Photo: www.bhphotovideo.com

Amazon: www.amazon.com

Freestyle: <http://www.freestylephoto.biz/>

School of Art Policies

This class fulfills a Mason Core requirement for Arts. Arts goal: Courses aim to achieve a majority of the following learning outcomes: students will be able to identify and analyze the formal elements of a particular art form using vocabulary appropriate to that form; demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic technique and the expression of a work's underlying concept; analyze cultural productions using standards

appropriate to the form and cultural context; analyze and interpret material or performance culture in its social, historical, and personal contexts; and engage in the artistic process, including conception, creation, and ongoing critical analysis.

Students with Disabilities and Learning Differences:

If you have a diagnosed disability or learning difference and you need Academic accommodations please inform me at the beginning of the semester and contact the Office of Disability Services (SUB I room 234, 703-993-2474). You must provide me with a faculty contact sheet from that office outlining the accommodations needed for your disability or learning difference. All academic accommodations must be arranged in advance through the Office of Disability Services.

Technology:

In accordance with George Mason University policy, please silence all cellular telephones and other wireless communication devices at the start of class. The instructor of the class will keep his/her cell phone active to assure receipt of any Mason Alerts in a timely fashion; or in the event that the instructor does not have a cell phone, he/she will designate one student to keep a cell phone active to receive such alerts.

Commitment to Diversity:

This class will be conducted as an intentionally inclusive community that celebrates diversity and welcomes the participation in the life of the university of faculty, staff and students who reflect the diversity of our plural society. All may feel free to speak and to be heard without fear that the content of the opinions they express will bias the evaluation of their academic performance or hinder their opportunities for participation in class activities. In turn, all are expected to be respectful of each other without regard to race, class, linguistic background, religion, political beliefs, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, veteran's status, or physical ability.

Statement on Ethics in Teaching and Practicing Art and Design:

As professionals, responsible for the education of undergraduate and graduate art and design students, the faculty of the School of Art adheres to the ethical standards and practices incorporated in the professional Code of Ethics of our national accreditation organization, The National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).

Open Studio Hours:

SOA teaching studios are open to students for extended periods of time mornings, evenings and weekends whenever classes are not in progress. Policies, procedures and schedules for studio use are established by the SOA studio faculty and are posted in the studios.

Masonlive/Email:

Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor

feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their Mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly.

Attendance Policies:

Students are expected to attend the class periods of the courses for which they register. In-class participation is important not only to the individual student, but also to the class as a whole. Because class participation may be a factor in grading, instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. Students who miss an exam with an acceptable excuse may be penalized according to the individual instructor's grading policy, as stated in the course syllabus.

Honor Code:

Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code. Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

Writing Center:

Students who are in need of intensive help with grammar, structure or mechanics in their writing should make use of the services of Writing Center, located in Robinson A116 (703-993-1200). The services of the Writing Center are available by appointment, online and, occasionally, on a walk-in basis. The Collaborative Learning Hub Located in Johnson Center 311 (703-993-3141), the lab offers in-person one-on-one support for the Adobe Creative Suite, Microsoft Office, Blackboard, and a variety of other software. Dual monitor PCs make the lab ideal for collaborating on group projects, Macs are also available; as well as a digital recording space, collaborative tables, and a SMART Board. Free workshops are also available (Adobe and Microsoft) through Training and Certification; visit ittraining.gmu.edu to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.