

AVT 354: DIGITAL PHOTO TECHNIQUES • T&Th 10:30 AM – 1:10 PM • ROOM L015 SYLLABUS – SPRING 2017

Professor: Jay Seawell

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Office hours: By appointment - either before or after class

NOTE: THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course will provide students with a comprehensive understanding of digital photography workflow with the end goal of producing high-quality inkjet prints. Throughout the whole semester, this course will cover technical issues of the medium through demonstrations and individual exercises. Students will apply those techniques to their own photographic work produced for this class. **Because this class is an intermediate level class, students are expected to know how to use a Digital SLR in manual mode by the end of the first week of class. After this point, there will be no review of camera fundamentals because there will be a lot of other material to cover.**

In terms of the work that you will make this class is divided into two parts: For the first part of the semester, you will make work that responds to two different assignment guidelines. For the second part of the semester, you will be expected to work independently and to generate your own ideas and content for an in-depth project. During the latter half of the semester students are expected to present 4-6 new 8.5x11 inch inkjet prints each time that we have a work-in-progress critiques. For the final critique you will present 12-15 inkjet prints.

By the end of this course, students will have the following four things: 1) a working knowledge of digital workflow in Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Camera Raw; 2) a working ability to adjust and manage negative scans and digitally captured files; 3) the ability to produce high-quality prints; 4) an in-depth body of photographic work existing as inkjet prints.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students will have a skill set that includes knowledge of the following:

DIGITAL CAPTURE

- Use a Digital SLR camera in manual mode
- Use an external flash unit while shooting with a Digital SLR camera
- Use scanning software for digitizing a variety of hard copy source materials

IMPORTING AND PROCESSING FILES

- Organize, view, and rate files in Adobe Bridge
- Make contact sheets in Adobe Bridge
- Process RAW files in Adobe Camera Raw
- Manage files as smart objects

PHOTOSHOP

- Learn Photoshop interface and select Preferences that are appropriate to your workflow
- Tools and Windows
- Adjustment Layers
- Layer masks
- Make selections through a variety of selection methods
- Remove content in an image through content aware fill, healing brushes, stamp tool, etc.
- Combine content from multiple files (compositing)
- Tone digital files in duotone mode
- Advanced sharpening

PRINTING

- Paper profiling
- Make high-quality digital inkjet prints
- Up-sample and prepare files for making large-scale inkjet prints

ATTENDANCE

You are required to attend class. I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences. You are allowed three absences for the entirety of the semester for which you won't be penalized. Four or more absences will automatically result in a F for the course. The only case in which you won't be penalized for excessive absences is if you are dealing with drastic circumstances (ex. hospitalization for a prolonged amount of time) and in that case I will need to see documentation that explains the reason for excessive absences.

LATENESS

Repeated lateness will not be tolerated in this class. I will take attendance within the first five minutes of every class period. If you show up after the time that I call your name, you will be considered late. Three or more latenesses will lead to an automatic letter-grade deduction from your final participation grade.

If you are late to a class period by more than 30 minutes, you will be considered absent.

LATE WORK

NO assignment(s) will be accepted after the due date without prior permission of the instructor. Assignments must be turned in on time in order to ensure that students stay on the established critique schedule.

WORKING OUTSIDE CLASS

You are expected to photograph for this class outside class time. Most of the image editing that you will do throughout the semester will be done outside of class.

There is a computer lab located on the 2nd floor of the School of Art and Design building that has computers equipped with Adobe Bridge, Camera Raw, and Photoshop. If you do not have these programs on your personal computer at home, then this lab will be where you will work on images outside of class time. The School of Art building is open 24/7 but the doors are locked from midnight to 6 AM. As long as you are in the building before midnight, you can work in the lab as long as you wish.

Additionally, the Star Lab in the Johnson Center has computers that are equipped with Adobe programs.

GRADING and CRITERIA FOR GRADING

Grades are not given; they are earned. Your grade is a reflection of your performance in the class based on clearly stated criteria.

For the first part of the semester you will be graded on the quality of the work you turn in for the first two assignments. Each assignment will have a rubric that states the grading criteria.

Here are some further criteria for grading:

PREPAREDNESS FOR CLASS CRITIQUES

With the exception of the 1st assignment, you will be expected to turn in prints each time there is a critique. You will turn in prints for the 2nd assignment critique, all work-in-progress critiques, and the final critique. Turning in new work in the form of inkjet prints counts for 10% of your final semester grade. If you do not show up for a critique or if you do not show new work, your grade in this category will be penalized.

QUALITY OF WORK PRESENTED IN WORK-IN-PROGRESS CRITIQUES:

Each time you present work for the work-in-progress critiques, you will be evaluated by three

main criteria:

1) TECHNIQUE

Appropriate camera settings. Students are expected to know how to operate a D-SLR camera on manual mode and making full use of controls such as aperture, shutter speed, and ISO not only to achieve correct exposures but also to explore the relationship between these controls and aesthetic properties of your images. Part of your grade will be based on how effectively you are using these camera controls to make images.

Ability to correctly edit image files in Adobe Camera Raw and Adobe Photoshop. This class covers a wide range of technical skills, from digital capture and image processing to editing images in Photoshop and making high-quality prints. Part of your grade throughout the semester will be determined by your proficiency in how well you edit images, manipulate images, and print images.

2) FORM

Effective use of the principles of design and compositional strategies. You will partly be evaluated on how well you use formal elements such as light, composition, vantage point, depth of field, and color to make visually dynamic images. Are you using these photographic tools to find unexpected and surprising ways to depict your subjects?

3) CONTENT

Demonstration of problem solving and intent in your photographs. A significant part of your grade involves how well you use problem solving to find thoughtful, creative solutions for making images. Working with intent is important. What do you intend to express through your images? What is the content? As the semester progresses, there will be an increased emphasis on the content of your photographs.

Consideration of subject matter. How actively are you exploring the world? Are you photographing different subjects for different assignments? Are you photographing things that you wouldn't normally photograph? Are you looking beyond cliché subject matters?

Thoroughness in completing the assignment. Each time you turn in work you will turn in a contact sheet of all the images you shot. The contact sheet will make it evident how thoroughly you explored the assignment. Do not wait until the last minute and spend an hour making photographs in a hurry; your grade will likely suffer. Oftentimes it takes multiple attempts to sufficiently address the challenges posed by these assignments.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

You will be expected to participate actively throughout the semester. Your class participation counts for 20% of your final grade. You are expected to speak up during class critiques so that you can give your peers **constructive** criticism. The presentations that I show in class include many images, and you are expected to discuss these images when I ask questions. You are also expected to participate when we discuss readings in class. Inability to discuss readings will lead to your participation grade being penalized.

Participation also involves respectful listening when I am talking or when a fellow classmate is contributing to a class discussion. If you behave disruptively in class, your participation grade will be penalized. The use of laptops and cell phones is prohibited in class except for during discussions about readings. Use of electronic devices during other occasions will lead to a deduction of your participation grade.

ORIGINAL WORK

All work that you turn in for this semester must be original work (not made by anyone else). All images must be made during this semester and specifically for this class. I will not accept image files made before this semester. If you plagiarize and turn in any image files that you did not shoot then you run the risk of receiving a significant penalty for your final semester grade.

GRADE BREAKDOWN FOR YOUR FINAL GRADE

Assignment #1: Light and location	10%
Assignment #2: Candid, Staged, Added, Removed	10%
Preparedness for class critiques	10%
Quality of work presented in work-in-progress critiques (technique, form, content)	20%
Participation	20%
Final project	30%

FINAL GRADING SCALE

A-, A, A+ (90% - 100%): superior work that exceeds expectations
 B-, B, B+ (80% - 89%): good or very good work that meets expectations
 C-, C, C+ (70% - 79%): acceptable work that barely meets expectations
 D (60% - 69%): unacceptable work that does not meet expectations
 F (0% - 59%): has not completed the work required for the class

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES

- Digital SLR camera and manual
- At least one memory card for your camera
- External hard drive for storing your work for this class. Your hard drive should be at least 500GB, though most hard drives available today have more storage space. This hard drive will allow you to work on images for class in the school of art building if you do not have Adobe software at home. **IMPORTANT:** you should also store your digital files for this class in another location (i.e. your home computer or a secondary hard drive) in case something happens to your primary hard drive!
- Memory card reader
- Wacom Intuos Pro Tablet (OPTIONAL)
<http://www.wacom.com/en-us/products/pen-tablets/intuos-pro-small>
- At least one box of 50 sheets of 8.5 x 11 inch luster paper from SoA Print

EQUIPMENT RENTAL

You do have the option of renting photo equipment from the GMU photo cage (L013) either on a weekly basis or for the duration of the semester. The information about renting equipment is on the course Blackboard page in Course Content.

The hours for the photo cage are as follows:

M-W 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Th 9:00 AM - 4:15 PM

University and School of Art Policies

In accordance with George Mason University policy, turn off all beepers, 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.

ArtsBus

Dates for Spring 2017:

February 18

March 25

April 15

ArtsBus Credit:

* Each student must have up to 5 AVT 300/Artsbus credits before graduation. For credit to appear on your transcript you must enroll in AVT 300. This also applies to anyone who intends to travel to New York independently, or do the DC Alternate Assignment.

* If you plan/need to go on multiple ArtsBus trips during a semester and need them towards your total requirement, you must enroll in multiple sections of AVT 300. Please go to the ArtsBus website: <http://artsbus.gmu.edu> "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding ArtsBus policy.

* Non-AVT majors taking art classes do not need Artsbus credit BUT may need to go on the Artsbus for a class assignment. You can either sign up for AVT 300 or buy a ticket for the bus trip at the Center of the Arts. Alternate trips must be approved by the instructor of the course that is requiring an ArtsBus trip.

Visual Voices Lecture Series

Dates for Spring 2017:

January 26

February 9

March 9

March 23

March 30

Visual Voices is a year-long series of lectures by artists, art historians and others about contemporary art and art practice. Visual Voices lectures are held on Thursday evenings from 7:20- 9:00 p.m. in Harris Theater: <http://soa.gmu.edu/visualvoices/>

Important Deadlines

<i>January 1 Day of Week</i>	<i>Sunday</i>
Martin Luther King Day (no classes)	Mon Jan 16
First day of classes ; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date; full semester waitlists removed	Mon Jan 23

Last day to add classes —all individualized section forms due	Mon Jan 30
Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	
Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty	Mon Feb 13
Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)	Fri Feb 24
Immunization Record Deadline	Wed Mar 1
Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via Patriot Web	Mon Feb 20 – Fri Mar 24
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	Mon Feb 27 – Fri Mar 31
Spring Break	Mon Mar 13 – Sun Mar 19
Incomplete work from Fall 2016 due to Instructor	Fri March 31
Incomplete grade changes from Fall 2016 due to Registrar	Fri April 7
Dissertation/Thesis Deadline	Fri May 5
Last day of classes	Sat May 6
Reading Days Reading days provide students with additional study time for final examinations. Faculty may schedule optional study sessions, but regular classes or exams may not be held.	Mon May 8 – Tue May 9
Exam Period (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)	Wed May 10 – Wed May 17
Commencement and Degree Conferral Date	May 20

Once the add and drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Requests for late adds (up until the last day of classes) must be made by the student in the SOA office (or the office of the department offering the course), and generally are only approved in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid being processed) , LATE ADD fee will apply. Requests for non-selective withdrawals and retroactive adds (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the academic dean of the college in which the student's major is located. For AVT majors, that is the CVPA Office of Academic Affairs, Performing Arts Building A407.

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 Disabilities Resource Center (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 DRC.

Official Communications via GMU E-Mail

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 in this class are bound by the Honor Code, as stated in the George Mason University Catalog. The honor code requires that the work you do as an individual be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas. (This does not prohibit collaborative work when it is approved by your instructor.) As a faculty member, I have an obligation to refer the names of students who may have violated the Honor Code to the Student Honor Council, which treats such cases very seriously. No grade is important enough to justify cheating, for which there are serious consequences that will follow you for the rest of your life. If you feel unusual pressure about your grade in this or any other course, please talk to me or to a member of the GMU Counseling Center staff.

Using someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is plagiarism, a very serious Honor Code offense. It is very important to understand how to prevent committing plagiarism when using material from a source. If you wish to quote verbatim, you must use the exact words and punctuation just as the passage appears in the original and must use quotation marks and page numbers in your citation. If you want to paraphrase or summarize ideas from a source, you must put the ideas into your own words, and you must cite the source, using the APA or MLA format. (For assistance with documentation, I recommend Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*.) The exception to this rule is information termed general knowledge—information that is widely known and stated in a number of sources. Determining what is general knowledge can be complicated, so the wise course is, "When in doubt, cite."

Be especially careful when using the Internet for research. Not all Internet sources are equally reliable; some are just plain wrong. Also, since you can download text, it becomes very easy to inadvertently plagiarize. If you use an Internet source, you must cite the exact URL in your paper and include with it the last date that you successfully accessed the site.

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.

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TUESDAY, JANUARY 24

Class introductions

Review syllabus

LECTURE: Using a D-SLR in manual mode - BRING CAMERA, MEMORY CARD AND MANUAL TO CLASS!!!

LECTURE: Depth of field, shutter speed, ISO, exposure

ASSIGN READING: "The Photographer's Playbook" excerpts

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26

DISCUSS READING: "The Photographer's Playbook" excerpts

LECTURE: Light

IN-CLASS ACTIVITY: External flash unit

LECTURE: Cliché

INTRODUCE ASSIGNMENT #1: Light and location

TUESDAY, JANUARY 31

LECTURE: Principles of design

LECTURE: Introduction to Adobe Bridge

- Importing images with a card reader
- Viewing images
- Ranking images

- Make contact sheets in Adobe Bridge

LECTURE: Processing RAW files in Camera Raw

- Histogram (exposure)
- Exposure, contrast, highlights, shadows, whites, blacks
- Black and white adjustments

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2

INTRODUCTION TO PHOTOSHOP

- Manage files as smart objects
- Learn Photoshop interface and select Preferences that are appropriate to your workflow
- Tools and Windows
- Adjustment Layers

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

REVIEW: INTRODUCTION TO PHOTOSHOP

Scanning - bring a film negative to class!

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9

CRITIQUE ASSIGNMENT #1: Light and location

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

LECTURE: Candid photography (Garry Winogrand, Robert Frank), staged and constructed (Philip-Lorca diCorcia), digitally manipulated work (Jeff Wall, Osamu James Nakagawa, Kelli Connell, Andreas Gursky)

PHOTOSHOP

- Layer masks
- Make selections through a variety of selection methods
- Remove content in an image through content aware fill, healing brushes, stamp tool, etc.
- Combine content from multiple files (compositing)

INTRODUCE ASSIGNMENT #2: CANDID, STAGED, ADDED, REMOVED

ASSIGN READING: Joan Fontcuberta "The Mystery of the Missing Nipple"

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16

REVIEW:

- Layer masks
- Make selections through a variety of selection methods
- Remove content in an image through content aware fill, healing brushes, stamp tool, etc.
- Combine content from multiple files (compositing)

PHOTOSHOP Cont.

- Advanced sharpening

INTRODUCTION TO INKJET PRINTING

- Paper profiling
- Make high-quality digital inkjet prints

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 21

REVIEW: Inkjet printing

DISCUSS READING: Joan Fontcuberta “The Mystery of the Missing Nipple”

ASSIGN READING: Joan Fontcuberta “The Eye of God”

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23

OPEN LAB: Work on Assignment #2

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28

DISCUSS READING: Joan Fontcuberta “The Eye of God”

OPEN LAB: Work on Assignment #2

THURSDAY, MARCH 2

CRITIQUE ASSIGNMENT #2: CANDID, STAGED, ADDED, REMOVED

TUESDAY, MARCH 7

LECTURE: Developing a long-term project

Discuss various projects and books by photographers

Brainstorming session for final project

THURSDAY, MARCH 9

NO CLASS

TUESDAY, MARCH 14 and THURSDAY, MARCH 16

NO CLASS - SPRING BREAK!!!

TUESDAY, MARCH 21

PHOTOSHOP

- Tone digital files in duotone mode
- Advanced sharpening

PRINTING

- Up-sample and prepare files for making large-scale inkjet prints

THURSDAY, MARCH 23

First work in progress critique!

TUESDAY, MARCH 28

Discuss various projects and books by photographers

THURSDAY, MARCH 30

Work in progress critique #2 - 4-6 8.5 x 11" prints PLUS 1 large-scale print due

TUESDAY, APRIL 4

Discuss various projects and books by photographers

THURSDAY, APRIL 6

Work in progress critique #3

TUESDAY, APRIL 11

INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS ABOUT FINAL PROJECT

THURSDAY, APRIL 13

Work in progress critique #4

TUESDAY, APRIL 18

Open lab for working on final project

THURSDAY, APRIL 20

Work in progress critique #5

TUESDAY, APRIL 25

Open lab for working on final project

THURSDAY, APRIL 27

Work in progress critique #6

TUESDAY, MAY 2

FINAL CRITIQUE (Group A)

THURSDAY, MAY 4

FINAL CRITIQUE (Group B)