

George Mason University School of Art
Spring 2017 / AVT 354 – Digital Photography II
Class meets Tuesdays/Thursdays 4:30-7:10pm

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Office hours: by appointment on Tuesdays/Thursdays noon-1:15pm

Syllabus, course content, and schedule all subject to change

Course Description

How can we use photography to describe a personal vision? In this class, we will investigate and shape our individual ways of seeing through what we choose to include (and exclude) within a frame. Through photographing weekly, in class demonstrations, slide lectures, and critique, students will engage in the problems of digital photographic production and seeing.

The course will provide students with a comprehensive understanding of digital photography workflow with the end goal of producing high-quality inkjet prints. Students will begin by learning about tonal adjustments, masks, and color correcting using curve layers, then moving into color and monotone corrections, and finally Camera Raw workflow for digitally captured files. After covering technical issues of the medium through demonstrations and individual exercises both in class and as assignments, students will apply those techniques to their own photographic work produced for this class. Students are expected to present at 4-6 new 8.5x11 inch inkjet prints every week. 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 digitally captured files in color and monotone; 3) the ability to produce high-quality prints; 4) an in-progress body of photographic work existing as inkjet prints.

Additional note: readings are posted to the blackboard. General communications and announcements are made via email. Write by email with any questions. I usually respond within the hour, except for Tuesday and Thursday afternoons when I am on campus.

Goals

- To have a thorough understanding and command of camera exposure: aperture, shutter, ISO and how these elements affect photographic description
- To photograph weekly using prompts or by visually responding to particular subject matter
- To produce 4-6 inkjet prints every week for critique
- To produce a body of work of 12-15 inkjet prints by the end of this course
- To articulate, both in writing and verbally, how and why visual information affects you in your own work and the work of others
- To have a working technical skill set that includes:

- Adjusting files in Photoshop and Camera Raw
- Curve adjustments: color correction, contrast
- Masking and selections
- Sharpening
- Digital camera capture
- Importing files into Camera Raw and manage files as smart objects
- Camera Raw/smart object workflow
- Compositing files
- Up-sampling files to produce large prints

Grading

Grades in this course are by participation, attendance, and assignments. You will earn and lose points in the following scenarios:

- If you attend class you receive **+100 points** per meeting
- If you attend individual meetings you receive **+100 points**
- If you are absent from regular class for any reason you receive **0 points**
- If you attend critique and show 4-6 prints you receive **+150 points**
- If you attend critique but do not show prints you receive **+50 points**
- If you do not show prints one week (present or absent) then the following week present 8-12 prints (4-6 prints for the crit you missed AND 4-6 additional prints for the current crit) you receive **+250 points**
- If you are absent and/or do not show new work for two rounds of critique in *any* order you receive **-200 points**
 - o If you miss and/or do not show new work in any order for a third time **-100 points** per critique (example: -200 for the two missed crits, then -100 for the third missed crit = -300 total points)
- If you submit your assignment by the due date/time you receive **+100 points**
- If you submit your assignment after the due date/time you receive **+50 points** (example: due at 4:30pm and submitted at 4:45pm)
- If you participate in the final critiques on both days you receive **+500 points**
- If you show new work for your final critique but are absent for the other crit day you receive **+250 points**
- If you are absent for your final critique you receive **-500 points**
- If you are absent for your final critique but attend the other critique day you receive **0 points**

Fourteen (14) regular, required class meetings: 1400 possible points
(*not including crits*)

Eight (8) rounds of critique: 1200 possible points
(*on Thursdays: 9/21, 9/28, 10/5, 10/19, 10/26, 11/2, 11/9, 11/16*)

Seven (7) assignments due for credit: 700 possible points

Two (2) final critique days: 500 possible points

3800 possible points

Grade breakdown:

3650-3800 = A
3450-3600 = A-
3350-3400 = B+
3200-3300 = B
3050-3150 = B-
2950-3000 = C+
2800-2900 = C
2650-2750 = C-
2300-2600 = D
0000-2250 = F

On Critique

Definition - Criticism [krit-uh-siz-uh m]

1. The act of passing judgment as to the merits of anything.
2. The act of passing severe judgment; censure; faultfinding.
3. The act or art of analyzing and evaluating or judging the quality of a literary or artistic work, musical performance, art exhibit, dramatic production, etc.
4. A critical comment, article, or essay; critique
5. Any of various methods of studying texts or documents for the purpose of dating or reconstructing them evaluating their authenticity, analyzing their content or style, etc.

Dictionary.com

Critique in this class will last for 10-12 minutes per student. All students are expected to participate when reviewing the work of his or her peers. In this class, we aim to analyze and read the visual facts contained within each photographic frame. When making comments about photographs, it is important to explain why. Please do not simply state “I like your photographs.” Instead, say “I like your photographs because...” When giving negative comments, please suggest solutions. Offer different ways to solve problems occurring in the photographs. The aim of weekly critique is to discuss how we make pictures, refine our technical choices, and delve deeper into each person’s photographic way of seeing.

Weekly review of student work allows each student to clarify his or her thoughts (visually and verbally) in a predictable forum without surprises. Students learn to control and navigate his or her critique in a formalized structure. Furthermore, it allows for a distinctly privileged discussion among the class where we approach each other’s work from a position of knowing and seeing the work develop and change week after week. We are here to talk about, make, and take pictures.

Materials

- At least 1TB external hard drive plus *optional* back-up drive. Suggested brands: Seagate, G Drive, WD.
- At least one (1) box of 50-sheets of 8.5x11 inch luster paper from SoA print. Approximately \$100.00, which covers the paper and ink usage (recommended: two boxes)

- Digital SLR or micro $\frac{3}{4}$ camera with lens. The camera must be able to produce raw files
- Card reader

Class Schedule

Day 1 – Tuesday 8/29:

Introductions

Review syllabus

Exposure: shutter, aperture, ISO and related issues

Digital camera review and set up

Day 2 Thursday 8/31:

Introduction to Photoshop, quick keys

Tone painting demo: layers, curves, masks (burning, dodging)

Bridge demo

Assignment Tuesday 9/5 by 4:30pm: work on tone painting exercise files. Submit screenshot on blackboard (For points)

Day 3 Tuesday 9/5:

Monotone color correction

Color corrections in Photoshop (color points, curves)

Assignment due Thursday 9/7: Two parts. Part one: work on color correction exercises. Submit screenshots on blackboard (For points) Part two: read “The Photographer’s Eye” by John Szarkowski. Link available on black board. (No points)

Day 4 Thursday 9/7:

Lecture and discussion: “The Photographer’s Eye” and “The New Documents: Arbus, Friedlander, and Winogrand”

Printing demo

Day 5 Tuesday 9/12:

Individual help with files

Lab day – print for crit

Day 6 Thursday 9/14:

NO CLASS

Day 7 Tuesday 9/19:

Camera Raw / smart object workflow

On how to critique each other’s work

Assignment due Tuesday 9/25: camera raw/smart object exercise files. Submit tif files on blackboard (no screenshots). (For points)

Day 8 Thursday 9/21:

Critique #1 – five (5) 8.5x11 inches prints due in response to The Photographer’s Eye

Assignment due on Tuesday 9/25: read “The Nature of Photographs” by Stephen Shore. PDF available on black board. (No points)

Day 9 Tuesday 9/25:

Camera Raw continued: smart objects in color and monotone
Editing tools, selections, burning, dodging
Lecture and discussion: Stephen Shore and on photographic seeing

Day 10 Thursday 9/28:

Critique #2 – four to six 8.5x11 inches prints due

Assignment due Tuesday 10/3: read “Lyric Documentary” lecture notes by Walker Evans (No points)

Day 11 Tuesday 10/3:

Demo on blending: bracketing, high dynamic range (HDR), combining files
Lecture and discussion: Walker Evans

Assignment due Tuesday 10/10: make a picture using HDR with at least three (3) layers/exposures. Submit screenshots on blackboard (For points)

Day 12 Thursday 10/5:

Critique #3 – four to six 8.5x11 inches prints due

Day 13 Tuesday 10/10:

Columbus Day recess (Monday classes meet Tuesday. Tuesday classes do not meet)

Day 14 Thursday 10/12:

Mid-term meeting. Bring ALL prints you’ve made in this class and any problematic files you want to work on. Twenty (20) minutes each.

Day 15 Tuesday 10/17:

Lecture: discuss work in direct reference to pictures presented by students in critique
Art star workflow demo

Day 16 Thursday 10/19:

Critique #4 – four to six 8.5x11 inches prints due

Day 17 Tuesday 10/24:

Review art star workflow and meet with Annie in SoA print
Lecture: looking at projects/books
Reading successful statements

Day 18 Thursday 10/26:

Critique #5 – four to six 8.5x11 inches prints due

Day 19 Tuesday 10/31:

Workshop: writing about your work

Assignment: Two parts. Part one: write an in-progress statement on your work, due by 11:59pm on Monday 11/6 so I can read your writing and return it in class. (For points)
Part two: submit a screenshot at 100% of the file you sent to SoA print by 4:30pm on blackboard (For points)

Day 20 Thursday 11/2

Critique #6 – four to six 8.5x11 inches prints due + one art star size prints, at least 24 inches on the longest side **(submit file at least one week before to SoA print)**

Day 21 Tuesday 11/7:

Lecture: on executing projects, logistics of production, looking at work discussed in crit
Check in on statements
Open lab

Assignment: describe your project to me, either by email, or verbally in class (No points)

Day 22 Thursday 11/9:

Critique #7 – four to six 8.5x11 inches prints due

Day 23 Tuesday 11/14:

Guest speaker TBA
Open lab

Day 24 Thursday 11/16:

Critique #8 – four to six 8.5x11 inches prints due

By 4:30pm: I must hear from everyone about plans for final projects

Day 25 Tuesday 11/21:

Open lab – optional class

No class Thursday 11/23 – Thanksgiving

Day 26 Tuesday 11/28:

Workshop: reading each other's statements
Sign-up for final crit groups

Assignment: post statements on black board by 11:59pm on Wednesday 11/29 so I can read your writing and return feedback in class (For points)

Day 27 Thursday 11/30:

Open lab

Day 28 Tuesday 12/5:

Final crit group A

Day 29 Thursday 12/7:

Final crit group B

Final critique groups A and B. Three parts. Part one: read and submit a statement on your work. Part two: present 12-15 finished prints, at least 8.5x11 inches each. Part three: submit all the finished tif files AND the statement via weTransfer.com on or before 4:30pm on the day you present to pmorale8@gmu.edu

*This is the **only** option for submission*

At least two-thirds (2/3) of the photographs must be new. In other words, the pictures must be made this semester, for this class *only*, and must have never been shown in crit before (2/3's is 8 if you present 12; or 10 if you present 15). The other 1/3 may be older work presented previously in crit in this class.

Unrequired—but suggested—textbook:

(handouts will be photocopied and available as PDF)

Evening, Martin. "Adobe Photoshop CS6 for Photographers" ISBN-13: 978-0240526041

Shooting Assignments

Two options: 1) photograph anything you like; your pictures can simply respond to the world around you and/or photograph a series/project of your choosing; 2) complete the following assignments in any order you like. For either option, be prepared to show 4-6 new prints for each critique. Also, please have screenshots prepared for submission so I can see how your individual workflows progress.

The Decisive Moment

What is Henri Cartier Bresson's "decisive moment"? Research what this is. Respond to the decisive moment by undermining it, finding it, or staging it.

Making versus Taking

You must "make" pictures and "take" pictures. Try and differentiate between the two words and what making and taking can look like as photographs. Think about your process and what the difference is when photographing and seeing the final product.

Love and Hate

Photograph something you love and photograph something you hate. Use the language of photography to suggest or imply love and to also suggest or imply hate. Challenge: photograph something you love and hate.

Staged versus Found

Find a compelling situation (example: dinner party, friends playing in the park, making dinner) and photograph it. Then, in a different situation, attempt to stage that event. Compare and contrast the pictures in critique.

Photograph Someone You Do Not Know Well

Photograph a stranger/someone you do not know very well. Meet them on the street or arrange an appointment.

Photograph Someone You Are Close To

Photograph someone you are close to. Use photographic description to suggest your feelings or your relationship toward or with this person.

Ode To—

Find a photographer whose work you find compelling or inspirational. Produce pictures which trade on the same virtues, either in formal invention and photographic description or in process, as the photographer you have chosen.

Working the Scene

Find a situation you are interested in (example: a party, an outdoor event, etc.) and photograph it from as many different angles as possible: portraits, landscapes, still lives, action shots. Photograph from as many different points of view as possible: close-up, far shot, looking up, looking down.

Every Half an Hour

Expose at least one frame every half an hour you are awake. The aim of this assignment is to respond to different lighting conditions and to see how film/digital sensors and exposure reacts. In another, perhaps more long-term way, the aim is also to find a type of lighting condition that you prefer to photograph in.

Hard Versus Soft

Produce pictures of the same subject in harsh lighting conditions (hard edged shadows) and also in soft lighting conditions (soft edged shadows or no shadows at all). What is the difference in the pictures? Make pictures in the opposing conditions of similar subject matter and see how it changes the reading of the pictures in critique.

Photograph a Feeling

Photograph something or someone suggesting emotion: melancholy, sentiment, happiness, anger, etc. Use the camera to point to an emotion either implicitly or explicitly. Think about objects as visual metaphors, how light functions, or how an expression on a person's face can suggest an interior feeling.

Compare and Contrast

Find or construct a visual comparison using at least two elements in the frame. Examples: apples and oranges, bike and car, adult and child.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Important University Dates:

Consortium Registration Deadline	TBD
First day of classes ; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date	August 28
Labor Day, university closed	September 4
Last day to add classes —all individualized section forms due Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	September 5
Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty	September 19
Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)	September 29
Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via Patriot Web	September 25 – October 20
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	October 2 – October 27
Columbus Day recess (Monday classes/labs meet Tuesday. Tuesday classes do not meet this week)	October 9
Incomplete work from spring/summer 2017 due to instructor	October 27
Incomplete grade changes from spring/summer 2017 due to Registrar	November 3
Thanksgiving recess	November 22 – 26
Last day of classes	December 9
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.	December 11 – 12
Exam Period	Wed December 13 – Wed December 20
Degree Conferral Date The Winter Graduation Ceremony will be held on Thu December 21.	Sat December 23

ArtsBus - Dates for Fall 2017:

September 23

October 21

November 18

ArtsBus Credit and Policies: You are responsible for knowing and following Artsbus policies and rules. Please go to the ArtsBus website: <http://artsbus.gmu.edu> "Student Information" for important information regarding ArtsBus policy. 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* 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 Fall 2017 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/>

August 31...Simon Schwartz

Sept 14... Andy Birnbaum

Oct 5...Patricia Bello-Gillen

Oct 19...Sadie Barnette

Nov 11... Walter Kravitz

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 your instructor 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.

Cell Phones: 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.

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, and are responsible knowing the rules, as stated on the George Mason University website's Academic Integrity page (<http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/>). "To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, trust, and fairness among all members of the Mason community, and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code:

Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.

Mason's Commitment: To create an environment that is innovative, diverse, entrepreneurial, and accessible—helping you avoid accidental or intentional violations of the Honor Code."

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.