

George Mason University School of Art
Spring 2018 / AVT 253 – Digital Photography I
Class meets Tuesdays/Thursdays from 4:30-7:10pm

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Office hours: by appointment on M/W, 12:30-1:15pm and T/Th 3:45-4:30pm

Syllabus, course content, and schedule all subject to change

Course Description

Introduction to the digital camera as a tool for electronic photographic image making. Students will be introduced to principles and exploration of the aesthetics of digital photography and also learn basic image-editing skills in a computer environment. Offered by School of Art. May not be repeated for credit.

Through photographing weekly, in class demonstrations, slide lectures, and critique, students in this course will engage in the problems of digital photographic production and seeing. The course focuses on the technical and aesthetic issues of producing, editing, and printing digitally captured files. In addition, students will read, discuss, and look at work by Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander, Garry Winogrand, Eugene Atget, Robert Frank, Jen Davis, Thomas Roma, LaToya Ruby Frazier, and Eugene Smith, among others. Students will also read and discuss the writings of John Szarkowski and Peter Galassi. Students are required to photograph weekly, present new work, and discuss their work and the work of their peers. Students will leave this course with the following four things: 1) a comprehensive understanding of digital camera exposure, 2) a working knowledge of digital workflow in Adobe Camera Raw, 3) the ability to produce prints, and 4) an in-progress body of photographic work.

Additional note: readings and assignments are posted to the blackboard. General communications and announcements are made via email. Write by email with any questions.

Mason Core Arts Requirement

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.

Mason Core Arts Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcomes:

Students who successfully complete a course in the Arts category must meet the first learning outcome and a minimum of two of the remaining four learning outcomes:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic process, and a work's underlying concept, and where appropriate, contexts associated with the work.
2. Identify and analyze the formal elements of a particular art form using vocabulary and critique appropriate to that form.
3. Analyze cultural productions using standards appropriate to the form, as well as the works cultural significance and context.
4. Analyze and interpret the content of material or performance culture through its social, historical, and personal contexts.
5. Engage in generative artistic processes, including conception, creation, and ongoing critical analysis.

Goals

- To have a thorough understanding and command of camera exposure: aperture, shutter, ISO and how these elements affect photographic description
- To assert control over and have a working understanding of photographic description through depth of field, shutter speed, grain, and lens choices
- To photograph weekly using prompts and visually responding to particular subject matter
- To produce and edit new work weekly
- To produce six (6) finished prints at the midterm and twelve (12) for the final
- To establish a working process in the digital lab
- To find and establish a personal photographic vision through producing and editing new pictures
- To verbally articulate 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:
 - In-camera exposure adjustments
 - Adjusting files Adobe Camera Raw
 - Curve adjustments: color correction, contrast
 - Sharpening
 - Digital camera capture
 - Importing files into Bridge and Camera Raw and manage files as smart objects
 - Camera Raw/smart object workflow
 - Organizing files

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 are absent (up to two times) from regular class for *any* reason you receive **0 points**
- If you are absent *more than* two times from regular class for *any* reason you will receive **-100 points** per missed class
- If you submit your completed assignment on time, you receive **+100 points**. All work is due by 4:30 on the due date on Blackboard. Anything submitted late will receive **+50 points**. You have until the last day of class to submit late work (5/3). **0 points** if you fail to submit completed work by the end of the semester.
- If you attend critique and show new work **+150 points**
- If you attend critique but *do not* show work you receive **+50 points**

- If you do not show work one week (present or absent) then the following week present the new work plus the missing work, 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**
- 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 participate in the midterm critique, you receive **+500 points**
- If you miss the midterm critique, you receive **-500 points**
- If you deliver your presentation, you receive **+200 points**
- If you do not make your presentation, you receive **-200 points**
- If you participate in the final critiques on both days and send in files you receive **+500 points**
 - o If you do not submit files by the due date you receive **-150 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 will receive **-1500 points**

Eighteen (18) regular class meetings: 1800 possible points

(not including crits)

Six (6) critiques: 900 possible points

Eight (8) assignments due for credit/points: 800 possible points

One (1) presentation: 200 possible points

One (1) midterm: 500 possible points

Two (2) final critique days: 500 possible points

4700 possible points

At the midterm and end of the semester, I add up all the points you have earned, and then convert to a percent (ex: $4700/4700 = 100\% = A$). I will use the following percentage table to calculate grades:

93-100% = A

90-92% = A-

87-89% = B+

84-86% = B

80-83% = B-

77-79% = C+

75-77% = C

70-74% = C-

66-69% = D

00-65% = 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 is timed for 10 minutes per student. All students are expected to participate when reviewing the work of their 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 their thoughts (visually and verbally) in a predictable format without surprises. Students learn to control and navigate 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.

Open Lab

Class meetings qualified as “open lab” are not optional. Please use the time to edit new pictures and/or work on files for critique. You may not use the time to photograph.

There is a 24-hour open lab on the 3rd floor of the School of Art building in the open space near the main office. The building is unlocked between 6am and midnight, so you must be in the building by 11:59pm to use the computers between 12:01am and 5:59am.

If there are people using the computers with scanners who are not doing work, you can politely ask them to switch computers.

If it is urgent for you to work outside of open lab time, you can ask the darkroom lab manager, Joshua Sackett, to let you in. He is in his office Monday to Thursday, 9am to 5pm.

Materials

- 500GB (1 TB suggested) external hard drive plus *optional* back-up drive. Suggested brands: Seagate, G Drive, WD.
- Digital SLR or micro ¾ camera with lens. The camera must be able to produce raw files
- Card reader (optional, depending on the card your camera takes)

Class Schedule

Day 1 Tuesday 1/23:

Introductions

Review syllabus

Digital camera review and set up

Day 2 Thursday 1/25:

Exposure workshop

Partner portraits

Demo on how to upload files to computer and saving to drives

*Assignment due Tuesday 1/29. Read The Photographer's Eye by John Szarkowski (**no points**)*

Day 3 Tuesday 1/29:

Group share of partner portraits – what is good, what needs improvement

Exposure issues and histograms

Lecture and discussion: “The Photographer’s Eye”

*Assignment due Tuesday 2/6: fifty (50) exposures in response to The Photographer’s Eye. Ten (10) pictures for each of Szarkowski’s five things (The Thing Itself, Detail, Vantage Point, Time, and Frame). Submit screenshot on blackboard (**For points**)*

Day 4 Thursday 2/1:

Bridge screenshot demo

JPEG v. Camera Raw

Preparing files for crit

Open lab

Day 5 Tuesday 2/6:

Critique #1: ten (10) edited JPEG files uploaded to the shared drive for critique representing Szarkowski’s five things (two pictures for each “thing,” ten total).

*Assignment due Tuesday 2/13: fifty (50) exposures illustrating your understanding aperture, shutter, and ISO. Ten (10) images using shallow depth of field, ten (10) images using deep depth of field, ten (10) images using frozen motion, ten (10) images using blurry motion, five (5) with ISO 100 in a sunny/bright situation, and five (5) with ISO 1600 or higher in a low-lit situation. Upload a screenshot to blackboard. (**For points**)*

Day 6 Thursday 2/8:

Camera Raw continued: basic panel, curves, sharpness, and color correction

*Assignment due Thursday 2/15: read excerpts from Thomas Roma “Show and Tell” and Szarkowski on Atget (**No points**)*

Day 7 Tuesday 2/13:

Critique #2: ten (10) edited JPEG files uploaded to the shared drive for critique. Two (2) for shallow DOF, two (2) for deep DOF, two (2) for blurry motion, two (2) for frozen motion, one (1) for ISO 100, and one (1) for ISO 1600 or higher.

Day 8 Thursday 2/15:

Lecture on Thomas Roma, Szarkowski, and Atget

Smart objects

Open lab

*Assignment due Tuesday 2/20: fifty (50) exposures in response to Atget or Roma. Upload a screenshot to blackboard. (**For points**)*

*Assignment due on Thursday 2/22: read Peter Galassi essay “The Pleasures and Terrors of Domestic Comfort” (**No points**)*

Day 9 Tuesday 2/20:

Critique #3: six (6) to eight (8) edited JPEG files uploaded to the shared drive for critique in response to Roma or Atget

Day 10 Thursday 2/22:

Visit SoA Print

Preparing files to print for midterm

Lecture “The Pleasures and Terrors of Domestic Comfort”

Open lab

*Assignment due Tuesday 2/27: fifty (50) exposures in response to Galassi essay and catalog.
Upload a screenshot to blackboard. (For points)*

Day 11 Tuesday 2/27:

Critique #4: six (6) to eight (8) edited JPEG files uploaded to the shared drive for critique in response to Galassi essay

Day 12 Thursday 3/1:

Demo: external lights, flash, and editing those files

Open lab

Day 13 Tuesday 3/6:

Midterm review: eight prints, 8.5x11 inches each, made in SoA print. Two (2) from each critique

Day 14 Thursday 3/8:

Individual meetings to discuss your progress so far. Grade summary delivered in the meeting and on patriot web

Assignment due Tuesday 3/20: one hundred and fifty (150) exposures describing your spring vacation. Upload a screenshot to blackboard. (For points)

SPRING BREAK (classes do not meet 3/13 and 3/15)

Day 15 Tuesday 3/20:

File/print share. Share an edited file, raw file, and a print from the midterm

Open lab

Day 16 Thursday 3/22:

Lecture: narrative issues, documentary, and, The Country Doctor essay

Open lab

Day 17 Tuesday 3/27:

Critique #5: ten (10) to twelve (12) edited JPEG files uploaded to the shared drive for critique from spring break pictures

Assignment due Tuesday 4/3: fifty (50) exposures showing a day in your life. Upload screenshot to blackboard (For points)

Day 18 Thursday 3/29:

Lecture/demo on self-portraits

Re-shuffle workshop. Editing each other's work in groups of two or three from spring break

*Assignment due Thursday 4/5: twenty-five (25) exposures of self portraits. Upload screenshot to blackboard (**For points**)*

Day 19 Tuesday 4/3:

Editing day two. Make an edit of your day in the life, and then have a partner make an edit of your photographs. Have your files ready to share with a classmate from the assignment.

Day 20 Thursday 4/5:

Critique #6: four (4) edited JPEG files uploaded to the shared drive for critique of self portraits

*Assignment for Tuesday 4/10: begin thinking of a final project (**No points**)*

Day 21 Tuesday 4/10:

Problematic files: three volunteers upload raw and edited files to work through on the board

Lecture on how to produce a project

Project brain storming exercise

*Assignment due Thursday 4/19: fifty (50) images in preparation for your final project. Upload screenshot to blackboard (**For points**)*

Day 22 Thursday 4/12:

5-minute, informal, (timed) presentations on a proposed project. Show picture(s) you made previously, describe and/or outline how you plan execute the project, and discuss photographers whose work or process you can look to for guidance. Verbal presentation plus (optional) slides

Day 23 Tuesday 4/17:

Guest speaker TBA

Day 24 Thursday 4/19:

Individual meetings in preparation for final project

Day 25 Tuesday 4/24:

Submission demo for final

Open lab

Day 26 Thursday 4/26:

Open lab

Day 27 Tuesday 5/1:

Final crit group A

Day 28 Thursday 5/3:

Final crit group B

Final critique groups A and B. Twelve (12) prints, 8.5x11 inches, showing a coherent, edited, series of photographs made this semester. You may present up to four (4) photographs presented in critique previously. Upload all your edited and finished jpegs to blackboard as a compressed (zipped) file by 4:30pm on Thursday 5/3.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Important University Dates:

Martin Luther King Day (no classes)	Mon Jan 15
First day of classes; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date; full semester waitlists removed	Mon Jan 22
Last day to add classes —all individualized section forms due Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	Mon Jan 29
Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty	Mon Feb 12
Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)	Fri Feb 23
Immunization Record Deadline	Thu Mar 1
Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via Patriot Web	Mon Feb 19 – Fri Mar 23
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	Mon Feb 26 – Fri Mar 30
Spring Break	Mon Mar 12 – Sun Mar 18
Incomplete work from Fall 2017 due to Instructor	Fri Mar 23
Incomplete grade changes from Fall 2017 due to Registrar	Fri Mar 30
Dissertation/Thesis Deadline	Fri May 4
Last day of classes	Sat May 5
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 7 – Tue May 8
Exam Period (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)	Wed May 9 – Wed May 16
Commencement	Fri May 18
Degree Conferral Date	Sat May 19

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.

ArtsBus - Dates for Spring 2018:

February 24

March 24

April 14

Visual Voices Lecture Series Spring 2018: 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/>

January 24 – Brian Noyes

February 1 – Teresa Jaynes

February 22 – Sharif Bey

March 1 – Juliet Bellow

March 8 – John Henry

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' 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.