

## AVT 253-007 Digital Photography I (Spring 2018)

*George Mason University*

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*“Your first 10,000 photographs are your worst.” - Henri Cartier-Bresson*

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| <b>Instructor:</b>   | Duncan Hill                           |
| <b>Email:</b>        | dhill24@gmu.edu                       |
| <b>Classroom:</b>    | L016                                  |
| <b>Class Time:</b>   | T & TH 7:20-10:00pm                   |
| <b>Office:</b>       | 2050 Art and Design Building; MSN:1C3 |
| <b>Office Hours:</b> | T & TH 6:45-7:20pm and by appointment |

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### Course Overview

This course is a multifaceted introduction to digital photography. We will study photographic fundamentals and aesthetics, DSLR (or mirrorless equivalent) camera functions, post-production practices, photo printing, and a variety of historical and contemporary photographers. Emphasis will be placed on integrating techniques and practices learned in the classroom into your own creative practice(s).

*Over the semester, you will:*

- Learn how to maximize the potential of your digital camera.
- Understand resolution, noise, depth of field, aperture, shutter speed, ISO, and white balance.
- Develop a thorough understanding of exposure, focus, color, lighting, and composition.
- Study the origins of photography and its progression through the digital age.
- Express your photographic interests and comprehension verbally, and in written form.
- Create your own photographs and complete assigned photo projects.
- Experiment with new processes and learn from hands-on experience.
- Explore the possibilities of digital photo printing.
- Grow as a creative and critical thinker.

To achieve these goals, you will complete weekly assignments and projects, ATTEND class and PARTICIPATE in group discussions, read all assigned texts, and submit a portfolio at the end of the semester. Classes will consist of lectures, group discussions, critiques, presentations, and workshops.

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.

## Handouts, Books, and Supplies

*Digital Photography: A Basic Manual*, by Henry Horenstein is the required textbook for this course. In addition to regularly assigned readings in this textbook, there will be a variety of required articles and essays posted on Blackboard (or provided in print). In addition to the required textbook, you will also need: a camera with manual controls and a flash drive with a capacity of at least 32 GB.

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## Grading

Class Participation: 15%  
Quizzes: 15%  
Written Responses: 10%  
Assignments/Projects: 35%  
Final Portfolio: 25%

To earn an “A” in this course (93% and above), students should attend class regularly and expect to complete all readings, assignments, and workshops on time. “A” students will offer insight during class discussions and demonstrate mastery of all course material in their photographic work. The grade of “A” is reserved for students who exceed minimum requirements, put forth tremendous effort, and produce outstanding photography. Simply meeting the minimum requirements of this course will likely result in a “C” grade.

A 93-100  
A- 90-92  
B+ 87-89  
B 83-86  
B- 80-82  
C+ 77-79  
C 73-76  
C- 70-72  
D 65-69  
F 0 - 64

Any questions regarding grades must be addressed in person, not via email.

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## Punctuality

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Late assignments will be deducted 10% for each day they are late. Please arrive on time and stay for the duration of class. Every 3 late arrivals = 1 absence. Extremely late arrival or early departure from class will be counted as an absence.

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## Attendance

Attendance is a vital part of this course. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get notes and materials from your classmates. Missing more than 3 classes throughout the semester will result in a significant grade deduction (see chart below).

More than 3 unexcused absences will result in a following reduction of your final grade:

0-3 Absences: No Grade Reduction

4-5 Absences: 1 Letter Grade Reduction (eg B → C)

6+ Absences: 2 Letter Grade Reduction (eg B → D)

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## Classroom Policies

Computers may **only** be used for note taking, or to bring up pertinent information during a discussion. Students found using a computer for anything unrelated to class will be counted absent for the day and have participation points deducted. **Mobile phones should be kept silent and out of sight.** Students seen using their phone in class will be counted absent for the day and have class participation points deducted. Students should be respectful of classmates at all times and resolve any disagreements in a scholarly manner. To get the most out of this class, note-taking is strongly encouraged; however, engaged learning in the classroom should be your top priority.

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## Academic Integrity

As the focus of this course is to encourage you to foster your own personal vision, all work must be your own. Plagiarism of any sort will result in an Honor Code violation and potential failure of the course. Photographs contain metadata from which I can see copyright, date, camera type, settings, and sometimes, even the location. Any student found using another person's work will fail this course.

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## Important University Dates

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| Martin Luther King Day (no classes)   | Mon Jan 15                 |
| <b>First day of classes</b> ; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date; full semester waitlists removed | Mon Jan 22                 |
| <b>Last day to add classes</b> —all individualized section forms due<br>Last day to drop with no tuition penalty                          | Mon Jan 29                 |
| <b>Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty</b>  | Mon Feb 12                 |
| <b>Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)</b>  | Fri Feb 23                 |
| Immunization Record Deadline  | Thu Mar 1                  |
| Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via <a href="#">Patriot Web</a>                                | Mon Feb 19 –<br>Fri Mar 23 |
| Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)   | Mon Feb 26 –<br>Fri Mar 30 |

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| Spring Break  | Mon Mar 12 –<br>Sun Mar 18 |
| <b>Incomplete work from Fall 2017 due to Instructor</b>   | Fri Mar 23                 |
| <b>Incomplete grade changes from Fall 2017 due to Registrar</b>   | Fri Mar 30                 |
| Dissertation/Thesis Deadline  | Fri May 4                  |
| <b>Last day of classes</b>  | Sat May 5                  |
| <b>Reading Days</b><br>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 –<br>Tue May 8   |
| <b>Exam Period</b> (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)   | Wed May 9 –<br>Wed May 16  |
| <b>Commencement</b>   | Fri May 18                 |
| <b>Degree Conferral Date</b>  | 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

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### 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.

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## **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.

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## **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.

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## **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).

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## **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.

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## 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.

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## 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."

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## 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 [itraining.gmu.edu](http://itraining.gmu.edu) to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.