George Mason University School of Art  
Spring 2018 / AVT 354 – Digital Photography II  
Class meets Mondays/Wednesdays from 4:30-7:10pm

Paolo Morales
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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

A computer-intensive class in which students create digital images from the viewpoint of a photographic artist. Emphasis on digital photo techniques, including making digital negatives, concept development, and visual aesthetics. Offered by School of Art. May not be repeated for credit.

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.

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 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
- 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 4 prints you receive +150 points. There is no extra credit for more than 4 prints
- If you attend critique and show 1-3 prints, you receive +50 points per print
- 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 at least 8 prints (4 prints for the crit you missed AND 4 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
- 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 final critiques on both days and send in files you receive +500 points
- 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)
Eight (8) critiques: 1200 possible points
(on Wednesdays: 2/7, 2/14, 2/21, 2/28, 3/7, 3/28, 4/4, 4/9, and 4/11)
Ten (10) assignments due for credit: 1000 possible points
Two (2) final critique days: 500 possible points

4500 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: 4500/4500 = 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.

Open lab (with a lab monitor, so you can print) will occur at least once a week, from 7:30-10pm. We will vote on open lab day(s) as a class. My recommendation is to have open lab the evening before critique. In this class, we crit on Wednesdays, so open lab would ideally be on Tuesdays.
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 it is urgent for you to print 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.
- 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 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 Monday 1/22:**
Introductions
Review syllabus
Exposure: shutter, aperture, ISO and related issues
Digital camera review and set up

**Day 2 Wednesday 1/24:**
Introduction to Photoshop, quick keys
Tone painting demo: layers, curves, masks (burning, dodging)
Bridge demo

*Assignment due Monday 1/29 by 4:30pm: work on tone painting exercise files. Submit screenshot on blackboard (For points)*

**Day 3 Monday 1/29:**
Monotone color correction
Color corrections in Photoshop (color points, curves)

*Assignment due Wednesday 1/31: 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 Wednesday 1/31:**
Lecture and discussion: “The Photographer’s Eye” and “The New Documents: Arbus, Friedlander, and Winogrand”
Uploading files to computers / bridge screenshot demo
Printing demo

*Assignment due Wednesday 2/7: fifty (50) files 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 5 Monday 2/5:
Partner editing exercise
Lab day – print for crit

Day 6 Wednesday 2/7:
Critique #1 – five (5) 8.5x11 inches prints due in response to The Photographer’s Eye

Assignment due Monday 2/12: read excerpts from Thomas Roma “Show and Tell” and Szarkowski on Atget (No points)

Day 7 Monday 2/12:
Camera Raw / smart object workflow
On how to critique each other’s work

Assignment due Monday 2/19: camera raw/smart object exercise files. Submit tif files on blackboard (no screenshots). (For points)

Day 8 Wednesday 2/14:
Critique #2 – four to six 8.5x11 inches prints due

Assignment due on Monday 2/19: read “The Nature of Photographs” by Stephen Shore. PDF available on blackboard. (No points)

Day 9 Monday 2/19:
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 Wednesday 2/21:
Critique #3 – four to six 8.5x11 inches prints due

Day 11 Monday 2/26:
Demo on blending: bracketing, high dynamic range (HDR), combining files
Lecture and discussion: Walker Evans

Assignment due Monday 3/5: make a picture using HDR with at least three (3) layers/exposures. Submit screenshots on blackboard (For points)

Assignment due Wednesday 2/28: three (3) screenshots, fifty (50) images each, representing exposures for three weeks worth of critique (critique weeks 2, 3, and 4). (For points)

Day 12 Wednesday 2/28:
Critique #4 – four to six 8.5x11 inches prints due

Day 13 Monday 3/5:
Midterm individual meetings. Bring ALL prints you’ve made in this class. (20) minutes each

Day 14 Wednesday 3/7:
Critique #5 – four to six 8.5x11 inches prints due
SPRING BREAK (classes do not meet 3/12 and 3/14)

Day 15 Monday 3/19:
File/print share: bring a print, a raw file, and a finished file. One-on-one share and sharing on the board
Art star workflow demo

Day 16 Wednesday 3/21:
Open lab

Day 17 Monday 3/26:
Review art star workflow
Lecture: looking at projects/books, and work mentioned in critique
Reading successful statements

Day 18 Wednesday 3/28:
Critique #6 – eight to twelve 8.5x11 inches prints due (150 pts)

Day 19 Monday 4/2:
Workshop: writing about your work

Assignment: Two parts. Part one: write an in-progress statement on your work, due by 8:00am on Wednesday 4/4 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 Wednesday 4/4:
Critique #7 – four to six 8.5x11 inches prints due + one art star size print of previously presented photograph, at least 24 inches on the longest side (submit file at least one week before to SoA print).

Day 21 Monday 4/9:
Looking at files on the board: prints, raw files, and edited files. Three (3) volunteers. Sign up on blackboard
Open lab

Assignment due Wednesday 4/11: four (4) screenshots, fifty (50) images each, representing exposures for four weeks worth of critique (critique weeks 5, 6, 7, and 8). (For points)

Day 22 Wednesday 4/11:
Critique #8 – four to six 8.5x11 inches prints due

Day 23 Monday 4/16:
Guest speaker TBA
Open lab

Assignment: bring your edited statement to class, printed or on the computer, to share with a classmate in class on Wednesday 4/18 (No points)

Day 24 Wednesday 4/18:
Workshop: reading each other’s statements
Looking at files on the board: prints, raw files, and edited files. Three (3) volunteers. Sign up on blackboard
Open lab

**Day 25 Monday 4/23:**
Open lab

*Assignment: post final statements on blackboard by 8am on Wednesday 4/25 so I can read them before class and give feedback in class (For points)*

**Day 26 Wednesday 4/25:**
Open lab

**Day 27 Monday 4/30:**
Final crit group A

**Day 28 Wednesday 5/2:**
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. You may present up to four (4) prints previously presented in class. Part three: submit all the jpegs and statement as a compressed (zipped) file on blackboard by 4:30pm on Wednesday 5/2.

**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.

**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 to 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. Photograph something you both love and hate.

**Staged versus Found**
Find a compelling situation and photograph it. Then, in a different situation, attempt to stage that event. Compare and contrast the pictures.

**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 that use similar formal strategies, photographic description, or processes, as the photographer you have chosen. Think about the ways you are updating this person’s work to make it your own.

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. Make different types of photographs: portraits, landscapes, still lives, and action shots. Photograph from as many different points of view as possible.

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 also to impose a schedule for picture making.

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).

Flash
Check out a flash from the cage and make pictures with handheld flash. Make pictures that the eye cannot see—in other words, pictures that can only exist because of the use of flash.

Abstract and Representational
Make a something representational (a person’s face, for example) look abstract. Make an abstract scene look representational.

Compare and Contrast
Find or construct a visual comparison using at least two elements in the frame.

The Americans
Look at Robert Frank’s “The Americans” and make a contemporary version of Frank’s photographs.

Beautiful and Ugly
Make something that you think is beautiful look ugly in a photograph. Make something that you think is ugly look beautiful in a photograph.

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**GENERAL INFORMATION**
Important University Dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Martin Luther King Day (no classes)</td>
<td>Mon Jan 15</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>First day of classes</strong>; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application;</td>
<td>Mon Jan 22</td>
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<td>Event</td>
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<td>Payment Due Date; full semester waitlists removed</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Last day to add classes</strong>—all individualized section forms due</td>
<td>Mon Jan 29</td>
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<td>Last day to drop with no tuition penalty</td>
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<td><strong>Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty</strong></td>
<td>Mon Feb 12</td>
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<td><strong>Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)</strong></td>
<td>Fri Feb 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immunization Record Deadline</td>
<td>Thu Mar 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades</td>
<td>Mon Feb 19 – Fri Mar 23</td>
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<td>available via <strong>Patriot Web</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)</td>
<td>Mon Feb 26 – Fri Mar 30</td>
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<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>Mon Mar 12 – Sun Mar 18</td>
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<td><strong>Incomplete work from Fall 2017 due to Instructor</strong></td>
<td>Fri Mar 23</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Incomplete grade changes from Fall 2017 due to Registrar</strong></td>
<td>Fri Mar 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dissertation/Thesis Deadline</td>
<td>Fri May 4</td>
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<td><strong>Last day of classes</strong></td>
<td>Sat May 5</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reading Days</strong></td>
<td>Mon May 7 – Tue May 8</td>
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<td>Reading days provide students with additional study time for final</td>
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<td>examinations. Faculty may schedule optional study sessions, but</td>
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<td>regular classes or exams may not be held.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Exam Period</strong> (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)</td>
<td>Wed May 9 – Wed May 16</td>
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<td><strong>Commencement</strong></td>
<td>Fri May 18</td>
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<td><strong>Degree Conferral Date</strong></td>
<td>Sat May 19</td>
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**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
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.