

# **AVT 253-004 Digital Photography I (Spring 2019)**

*George Mason University*

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

<b>Instructor:</b>	Duncan Hill
<b>Email:</b>	dhill24@gmu.edu
<b>Classroom:</b>	L016
<b>Class Time:</b>	T & TH 1:30-4:10pm
<b>Office:</b>	2050 Art and Design Building; Ffx, MSN:1C3
<b>Office Hours:</b>	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 to maximize the potential of DSLR cameras.
- Understand resolution, noise, depth of field, aperture, shutter speed, ISO, and white balance.
- Develop a thorough understanding of exposure, 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 edit them in Photoshop.
- Experiment with new processes and learn from hands-on experience.
- Explore 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. Mason courses in the filmmaking, visual and performing arts stress generative, inquiry based learning through direct aesthetic and creative experience in the studio environment. Art history courses address the intrinsic relationship of personal and cultural creativity, and the manifestation of aesthetics, visual culture and visual narrative within historical contexts.

*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 exposure and focus 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 (Excellent)	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B (Good)	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C (Satisfactory)	73-76
C-	70-72
D (Poor)	65-69
F (Fail)	0 - 64

Questions about grades must be addressed in writing, with detailed explanation of question or grievance.

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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**

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.

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

More than 3 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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## 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.

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

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## Tentative Class Schedule

### Week 1

Introduction to photography and getting started with your camera.

- Read your camera manual and chapter 1 in *Digital Photography: A Basic Manual*.
- Project 1 (Intro)
- Life without photography written reflection.

### Week 2

Chapter 1 reading discussion. Camera troubleshooting. Intro to Depth of Field. Project 1 critiques. Intro to Photoshop. Life without photography discussion.

- Read chapters 2, 3, and 4 in *Digital Photography: A Basic Manual*.
- Practice resizing and saving jpg files.
- Project 2 (Aperture)
- Lynda Photoshop tutorial

### Week 3

Reading discussion. Photoshop review and raw file introduction. Project 2 critiques.

- Read chapters 7 and 8 in *Digital Photography: A Basic Manual*.
- Read chapter 1 in *The Photographer's Eye* PDF.
- Project 3 (Shutter Speed)

### Week 4

Reading discussion. Photoshop lab time. Project 3 critiques. In class ISO exercise.

- Read photography article.
- Study for quiz 1.

### Week 5

Quiz 1. Intro to white balance, color corrections, and black and white. Looking at Magnum Photos.

Preparing digital photos for print. Photoshop lab time.

- Read chapter 5 in *Digital Photography: A Basic Manual*.
- Project 4 (Magnum Photos)

- Make prints at SOA lab.

### **Week 6**

Reading discussion. Intro to lighting. Print troubleshooting. Project 4 critiques. Intro to Street Photography.

- Read PDF on Street Photography.
- Project 5 (Street)

### **Week 7**

Reading discussion. Street Photography discussion. Photoshop lab time.

- Read Street Photography article.
- Finish Project 5 (Street).

### **Week 8**

Reading discussion. Project 5 critiques. Intro to Documentary Photography.

- Read chapters 1, 2, and 3 in *Regarding the Pain of Others* by Sontag.
- Written response to Sontag reading.
- Project 6 (Documentary)

### **Week 9**

Reading discussion. Documentary Photography discussion. Can a photo tell a lie? Photo ethics. Photoshop lab time.

- Read Documentary Photography article.
- Work on Project 6 (Documentary)

### **Week 10**

Reading discussion. *Which Way is the Front Line from Here* film screening. Photography in the age of social media.

- Read article on photography and social media.
- Study for quiz 2
- Complete Project 6.

### **Week 11**

Reading discussion. Project 6 critiques. Quiz 2. Intro to Landscape Photography.

- Landscape Photography reading.
- Written response comparing natural landscape to New Topographics.
- Project 7 (Landscape)

### **Week 12**

Reading discussion. Landscape photography discussion. Project 7 critiques. Intro to Conceptual Photography.

- Read *The Photographic Idea: Reconsidering Conceptual Photography*.
- Project 8 (Conceptual)

### **Week 13**

Reading discussion. Conceptual photography discussion. Lighting studio workshop.

- Finish Project 8 (Conceptual)

### **Week 14**

Looking at results from lighting studio. Project 8 critiques.

- Read article on the future of photography.
- Study for quiz 3.

### **Week 15**

Quiz 3. What does the photography of the future look like? Final Portfolio check-in and photoshop lab time. Film screening.

- Complete Final Portfolio and submit via email before the end of our scheduled exam time.