

Monday 12:10-3:00, AA-219
2 Units: 2 hours lecture and 1 hour lab per week

SYLLABUS

Course Description:

This course provides basic instruction in the operation and use of digital still cameras. Differences between traditional and digital photographic techniques will be discussed and explored. Coursework will include thematic projects, presentation of images, storage media and archiving strategies, utilizing image enhancing software (Photoshop), and the submission of a CD/DVD of digital images as a jpeg, psd, movie slide show or print portfolio.

Objectives:

- Conceptual and critical thinking: The exploration of ideas to create digital images and have the ability to critique ones own work and that of others
- Operate a digital camera, utilizing the specific and unique abilities of digital technology.
- Demonstrate the ability to manage focus, color, tone and value in an image
- Download images from a camera to a computer and use enhancing/editing software to continue the creative process.
- Image cataloging techniques and prepare a portfolio of the visual projects.
- Create several series of digital images, each with a cohesive theme

Content:

20%- General photography: Concept, composing, exposure, lighting, and photography history
40%- Digital camera techniques: Camera controls for intended effects
30%- Digital enhancing software: techniques and uses. (Photoshop)
10%- Digital Darkroom: Printing, removable media, archiving strategies, CD/DVD based portfolio preparation or alternatives

Methods of Instruction:

- Lectures, demonstrations, field trips, critiques and laboratory

Text:

- Barbara London and Jim Stone, *A Short Course in Digital Photography*, Prentice Hall/Pearson Education, ISBN-10: 0205645925 ISBN-13: 9780205645923
- Instructor provided handouts

Supplemental Required Reading:

- Your camera manual, either the paper copy or a PDF downloaded from the internet

Student Evaluation:

60%- Completion of assigned projects including submission of portfolio on a CD/DVD or a print portfolio
30%- Participation in critiques
10%- Notebook (effective note taking is essential)

Grading:

Letter Grade option

A= 100%-90%

B= 89%-80%

C= 79%-70%

D= 69%-60%

F= 59% and below

Credit/No Credit Option

70% and above = Credit

MODULES: The modules are not based on per class session schedule, but rather areas to be covered. Several modules may be given concurrently.

Module 1: Camera Basic Functions

- Definitions, terms, digital vers analog (film)
- Camera types: point and shoot, SLR (single lens reflex)
- Avoiding camera shake: tripods, monopods, electronic cable releases, bracing the camera and alternatives
- Mechanics, storage media, parameters
- Card readers: transferring images from the digital camera to a computer

Module 2: Camera Basics Continued

- How a camera works: General basics
- Lens: Focal length, angle of view, depth of field, types of lens: fixed focal length, zoom (variable focal length) and macro
- Exposure: Apertures, shutter speeds and ISO (ASA)
- Measuring light, light meters: Internal built-in meters vers hand held meters
- Different metering conditions: Normal, Backlight and Snow or sand
- Controlling depth of field and motion blur for the intended effect
- Lens filters and polarization
- Camera sensors: resolution factors: pixels and sensor size
- File formats: jpg, tiff, raw and psd
- Histogram
- White balance
- Color Theory: RGB/CMYK

Module 3: Light

- Quality of light
- Light direction
- Ambient light: natural and outdoor light
- Indoor and outdoor supplemental light (fill lighting and reflectors)
- Flash: on camera vers external flash, flash diffusers, flash range and limitations
- Studio lighting: tabletop and portraiture
- Portraiture demonstration

Module 4: Digital darkroom / Lab time

- Organizing images, image management applications: Apple iPhoto and Aperture, Adobe Lightroom, Extensis Portfolio, et cetera
- Adobe Photoshop: image editing and adjustment
- Color, and saturation
- Contrast: levels and curves
- Composing, cropping, and resolution and image size changes
- Layers and channels
- Retouching, dodging and burning

- Adding type
- Photoshop filters
- Alternative printing techniques: black and white digital negatives (discussion only)

Module 5: Storage and Archiving / Lab time

- Scanning
- Meta data
- Archiving formats
- Burning data to a recordable CDs and DVDs
- Creating self-published books: iBooks and other Internet based printers

Module 6: Midterms Projects due: These can be works in progress, but use time management. If you start early on projects they can be refined and improved, but both editing and additions. As with all studio art classes you learn by doing, including learning from your mistakes. So get to it!

Module 7: Photoshop Lab time

Module 8: Digital darkroom part two: Digital Printing / Lab time

- Paper options
- Inks and archival issues
- Color matching
- Digital printer basics
- Print dialogue box
- Lab time for printing

Module 9: History of Photography

- The Beginnings: Early Processes and Photographers
- 1900 to contemporary photography
- Issues and questions unique to digital photography

Module 10: Final Projects due: See college schedule

Required Supplies:

- Digital Camera: Either a point and shoot camera preferably with an optical focal range of at least 35 to 105mm and manual control of the shutter speeds and apertures or a digital SLR with zoom lens with a focal range of at least 35 to 120mm or at least two or three prime lens within that range. (A SLR is the suggested type of camera, but this depends on one's long-term commitment to photography and budget. If you are uncertain, it is best to wait. Do NOT spend more than you can afford.) Photographs from cell phones will not be accepted.
- Memory card for the camera
- USB flash drive 4GB or larger (largest presently is 128GB, but who knows what it will be next week) or an external USB bus-powered portable hard drive
- CD-R and DVD media

Suggested Supplies:

- Additional memory cards for your camera
- Additional battery for your camera
- Tripod

- Memory card reader (either solely for the media just for your camera or a multi-card reader)
- A good quality, small, bright flashlight with spare batteries
- Lens cleaning cloth or tissues
- Small table tripod or camera clamp

Ground Rules:

- Students are expected to bring and show work every week
- Students are also expected to participate in the class critiques; both in explaining their own work and critiquing other students work in a positive way
- Photographs must be edited before class or during lab time. The photographs that are selected to show are to be downloaded to a flash or portable drive or a recorded to a CD/DVD. Students will not be allowed to attach their camera to the instructor's computer and edit their photographs while the rest of the class waits.
- Photographic prints instead of digital files are also acceptable
- Please submit photographs that are created during the semester. (Photographs taken during the preceding winter or summer break will be allowed within reason, but students are primarily expected to do new work.) Please feel free though, to share older work with the class.
- As long as images are not presented as documentary photographs, digitally enhanced photographs are acceptable for this class. (Adobe Photoshop, Corel Painter et cetera)

Classroom Ethics and Rules:

- Text messaging or talking on cell phones will not be allowed. If you need to use your phone please go outside or in the hallway and do not disturb other classes or offices.
- Sorry, but college regulations do not allow food or drink near the computers.
- Computers during class and lab time are to be used for class work and research only, not for typing letters and unrelated schoolwork, browsing the Internet, games, shopping, downloading music and so forth. (Yes, you can briefly check your e-mails, browse at art, camera and photography related websites. Lets not get rigid, but please do not abuse this allowance.)

Assignments:

Minimum requirement: 8 projects, chosen from the following list, 12 images per project.

- 1) Low light: Use ambient light only. Use table lamps, flashlights, headlights, streetlamps, candlelights, and so on to light the subject. This series can include night photography. Do NOT use flash. (A tripod or camera support would be necessary to complete this project successfully.)
- 2) Macro (Close-up): Get as close as you can to various subjects, but remain in sharp focus. Look for interesting detail and color to keep the visual interest. Could be the human body, animals, plants, rocks or machines.
- 3) Abstraction: Emphasize the composition of forms in a photograph so the image becomes almost unrecognizable and the most content is the forms and shapes not the subject matter. This can also include a pattern or repetition of objects and forms.

- 4) Eggs: Any version of an egg is acceptable, but the egg must be a significant part of every image. Lighting and concept are important.
- 5) Human portraiture: Formal, studio, environmental portraiture, serious, amusing or candid, but should emphasize the personality of the individual or a concept by the photographer.
- 6) Animal portraiture: Same as above, with animals. Photographs must be of more than one subject and not in a snapshot style. As with photographing children, try photographing from the animal's level.
- 7) Documentary: "A depiction of the real world by a photographer whose intent is to communicate something of importance—to make a comment—that will be understood by the viewer", *Documentary Photography*, Life Library, 1972 (These can include a printed or digital text included with a slide show.) [Note: This project must be done with respect for the law and individuals documented.]
- 8) Street Photography: Photographs of people in public places that tell a visual narrative. [Note as aforementioned: This project must be done with respect for the law and individuals documented.]
- 9) Photographs and text: A series of photographs that relate to an included text. This could be one's own words written in prose or poetry or quotes from another author.
- 10) Picture Story: Tell a story, either fictional or truthful through photographs
- 11) Metamorphosis or Progression: Twelve shots that express a progression and/or a change.
- 12) Body parts: Twelve shots of different body parts, either from the same body or twelve different bodies
- 13) Self-portraits: Using your self-timer, twelve shots that include the photographer as the subject. (A tripod or camera support would be necessary to complete this project successfully.)
- 14) Black & White Photography: Shoot twelve images; convert to these to a full-range grey scale with a digital imaging program on the computer. (NOT with the black and white mode on the camera.)
- 15) Still Life or Nature Morte: Take either a fine art approach to this series or approach these images as commercial table top photographs, these could be wine, food, soap and so forth. If doing this commercially, think what kind of light, reflections and settings would make a product look good. Photographing glass and liquid creates many challenges and different approaches.
- 16) Landscape: Landscapes of nature, but also may include urban landscapes (cityscapes).

- 17) Environmental: Photograph and document one's own environment. Could be your home, family, community or group. Illustrate what your surroundings are like. Also this series could be documenting someone else's environment.
- 18) Architectural Photography: Exterior and interior, historic or contemporary architecture. Take either a fine art approach to this series or approach these images as commercial as if you were working for an architect
- 19) Fashion photography: Take either a commercial photographic approach or make a social commentary. Look at contemporary publications first to see what style of fashion photography is current.
- 20) Perspective: Shoot images using perspective as the dominant force of the composition. (An example could be the use of converging lines or unusual position)
- 21) Depth of Field: Construct a project that demonstrates a control a depth of field within the photograph.
- 22) Movement: A series of images that show control of shutter spend or tracking to portray a sense or feeling of movement.
- 23) Typography: The use words or letters within an image. (Photo manipulation is acceptable if the photograph is not presented as a document.)
- 24) Instead of one photo series, write a five hundred-word report on a museum photographic exhibit.
- 25) Instead of one photo series, present to the class as a slide show a ten to fifteen minute presentation on one photographer or photography movement. This must be informative and researched from printed texts, library (including the Library of Congress), university, and museum websites. (Wikipedia or other not verifiable websites will not be accepted, but the Britannica website is allowable.) The subject must be approved, discussed and scheduled in advance.
- 26) Name your own series: Create a series by defining your own parameters.

Additional Notes:

Advanced student may work on their own projects, but are also expected to show their work and participate in classes.

Both beginning and advanced students may solely work on a documentary photography essay, but prior approval is necessary and specific project is to be proposed.

All images with each project should have continuity and a relationship to each other. Create your own personal visual language that is recognizable as your own.

Photographs will be evaluated in four parts:

- 1) Technical: focus, exposure et cetera

- 2) Aesthetic: composition, color or tonality. Include the ability to develop one's own photographic style.
- 3) Concept: The ideas behind the photograph. What is it trying to communicate?
- 4) Overall body of work: The relationship of one photograph to another.

Work is to be presented in one of the following formats:

- 1) One CD or DVD with student's name, class and semester clearly printed on it.
- 2) Each project to be placed into a separate folder.
- 3) Each project can be individual photographs or a QuickTime movie created either with iPhoto or PowerPoint.
- 4) Instead of digital files the images of one or more projects can be prints. The prints all have to be the same size and inserted into an album's vinyl pockets or bound into an album. The presentation must have uniformity.
- 5) Another alternative would be to present one or more project in a soft or hard cover book form. It can be printed either by Apple's iPhoto or Aperture or any third party such as, but not necessarily, Lulu Publishers.
- 6) Other concepts can be used, but must be approved by the instructor beforehand.

DSPS Statement (approved by the Academic Senate November 19, 2001)

"The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504, requires Contra Costa College to make all programs accessible to qualified individuals with learning, physical, or psychological disabilities. Students who would like to receive accommodations for their learning, physical, or psychological disabilities should contact the Disabled Students Programs & Services (DSPS) office (Student Services Center, Room 109) and schedule an appointment. (510) 235-7800 ext. 7220."