

PGY 2441C – Photography: Image, Order, and Idea

Instructor: Dylan A. Taylor

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Office Hours: Appointments available upon request

Recommended Textbooks:

- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Hill and Wang, 2010.
- Hunter, Fil. *Light: Science and Magic: An Introduction to Photographic Lighting*. 6th Edition. Routledge, 2021.
- Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. Vol. 48. Macmillan, 2001.

Course Fees:

- 6-month subscription to [Adobe Creative Cloud](#) for \$77.00 (discounted through UF IT)

Course Description:

This dynamic digital photography course immerses students in the art of visual storytelling, emphasizing technical prowess, compositional techniques, and conceptual thinking. Through theoretical discussions, hands-on exercises, and critical analyses, participants will evolve their skills, understanding the pivotal role of images in shaping narratives. Encouraging individual exploration, students engage in projects ranging from conceptual photo essays to visual narratives. Ideal for those passionate about unlocking the creative potential of digital photography, this course navigates the intricate interplay between technology and storytelling in the visual realm.

Course Objective:

This course explores the multifaceted nature of digital photography as a visual language, emphasizing the importance of composition, storytelling, and conceptual thinking. Through theoretical discussions, hands-on exercises, and critical analysis, students will develop their technical skills while cultivating a deeper understanding of the role of images in shaping narratives and ideas. Additionally, students will have weekly discussions about readings and viewings that will be distributed as digital links prior to the discussion. This course will culminate in a final semester project that encourages students to apply their knowledge in a meaningful and creative way. Students will leave this course with a well-developed portfolio of powerful images that will inform their future photographic endeavors.

Required Materials:

Students are strongly encouraged to have access to their own digital cameras for the duration of the course to facilitate hands-on learning and creative exploration. The use of personal cameras allows for a deeper understanding of individual equipment and preferences. However, recognizing that not all students may have immediate access to their own cameras, a limited

number of digital cameras will be available for check-out from the department. These cameras are intended for short-term use during class sessions and projects. It is advisable for students to secure their own cameras to maximize their engagement with the course material and to have the flexibility to work on assignments outside of class hours. If you encounter any challenges in acquiring a camera, please reach out to the instructor for guidance and support. Photo paper will be provided for printing images for critiques, but you are welcome to purchase your own paper if you prefer a different type. Links to vendors will be provided in class.

While the texts listed above are *not required*—and digital PDF versions of select sections will be distributed—students are *strongly encouraged* to obtain their own physical copies.

Students will also be expected to have access to the Adobe Creative Cloud suite, primarily for the use of Adobe Lightroom and Photoshop. Subscriptions to Adobe Creative Cloud can be purchased through [UF IT](#), which offers a discounted \$77.00 6-month subscription.

Course Schedule (subject to change as the semester progresses):

<i>Week #</i>	<i>Agenda Description</i>	<i>Deadlines (due at the start of class)</i>
Week 1: Introduction to Photography (History & Visual Language)	<p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> History of the camera and historical perspectives of photography Overview of photography as a form of communication and expression Introduction to composition, framing, and perspective <p>Readings & Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walter Benjamin, Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (pg. 42-51) Team Deakins Podcast, Composition <p>Introduce Project #1: Visual Language Students will demonstrate their newfound knowledge of composition and photographic practices by preparing a small gallery of photographs—each illustrating one of the principles discussed in the lectures.</p>	<p>(Thurs, 01/15) Walter Benjamin, Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction (pg. 42-51)</p> <p>Team Deakins Podcast, Composition</p>

Week 2: The Camera	<p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anatomy of the camera • Technical characteristics of photography • The exposure triangle • Lenses & optics <p>Workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camera demo + walkabout <p>Project #1 Critique</p>	(Thurs, 01/22) Project #1 Due
Week 3: Editing & Printing	<p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to editing techniques • Overview of Adobe Photoshop & Lightroom • Tour of the Fawbush printing and computer lab <p>Workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photoshop and Lightroom demo • Fawbush printing demo <p>Introduce Project #2: Technical Foundations Using the information on the technical characteristics of photography and editing provided over the previous two weeks, students will prepare a gallery of stills that effectively demonstrates an intentional and creative engagement with the exposure triangle.</p>	Work on Project #2
Week 4: Conceptual & Critical Thinking in Photography	<p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to semiotics in photography • Applying the semiotic method • Critique methodology for photography <p>Reading & Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stuart Hall, <i>The Work of Representation</i> 	(Thurs, 02/06) Stuart Hall, The Work of Representation
Week 5: Conceptual & Critical Thinking in Photography (Cont.)	<p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conceptual approaches to photography • Developing a personal vision and style <p>Reading & Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susan Sontag, <i>On Photography</i>, "In Plato's Cave" <p>Project #2 Critique</p>	<p>(Tues, 02/10) Susan Sontag, On Photography, "In Plato's Cave"</p> <p>(Thurs, 02/12) Project #2 Due</p>

Week 6: Narrative & Thematic Storytelling	<p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to thematic storytelling • Natural and Unnatural Narrative Theory • Genre Work <p>Reading & Discussion: Brian Richardson, <i>Unnatural Narrative: Theory, History, and Practice</i>, “The Limitations of Conventional Narrative”</p>	<p>(Thurs, 02/19) Brian Richardson, <i>Unnatural Narrative: Theory, History, and Practice</i>, “The Limitations of Conventional Narrative”</p>
Week 7: Documentary Photography	<p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-fictional storytelling • The role of photography in documentation • Ethics & law in photography <p>Workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campus investigative documentary photography <p>Screening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lance Oppenheim, The Happiest Guy in the World <p>Introduce Project #3: Documentary Photography In this project, students will develop a series of photos that documents and creatively conveys a story about an individual or an event in a photojournalistic capacity within a specific theme.</p>	<p><i>Work on Project #3</i></p>
Week 8: Lighting	<p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artificial and natural lighting approaches • Introduction to grip & electric principles and best practices <p>Workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three-point lighting + safety demo • Portrait demo <p>Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fil Hunter, <i>Science and Magic: An Introduction to Photographic Lighting</i> (excerpt TBD) • Blain Brown, <i>Cinematography: Theory and Practice</i>, Fourth Edition, “Lighting” (pg. 263-290) 	<p>(Thurs, 03/06) Fil Hunter, <i>Science and Magic: An Introduction to Photographic Lighting</i> (excerpt TBD)</p> <p>Blain Brown, <i>Cinematography: Theory and Practice</i>, Fourth Edition, “Lighting” (pg. 263-290)</p>

Week 9: Tableau Photography	<p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeper dive into fictional storytelling in photography and the applications of mise-en-scène • Character casting and blocking • The production pipeline of staged photography <p>Workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staged photography demo <p>Project #3 Critique Introduce Project #4: Staged Photography Using the narrative principles, techniques, and production processes discussed in class, students will orchestrate and entirely produce a tableau photograph.</p>	(Thurs, 03/13) Project #3 Due
Week 10: SPRING BREAK	No Classes	Work on Project #4
Week 11: Sequentiality, Montage, Graphical Conflicts	<p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing montage theory • Sequentiality in photographic series <p>Workshop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Kuleshov Effect, sequencing demo <p>Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lev Kuleshov, <i>Kuleshov on Film: Writings of Lev Kuleshov</i> (pg. 183-195) 	(Thurs, 03/26) Lev Kuleshov, Kuleshov on Film: Writings of Lev Kuleshov (pg. 183-195)
Week 12: Sequentiality, Montage, Graphical Conflicts (Cont.)	<p>Lecture:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphical conflicts and their applications for storytelling in photography <p>Screening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris Marker, <i>La Jetee</i> <p>Project #4 Critique Introduce Project #5: Final Semester Project For the final project, students will conceptualize, pitch, and execute a cohesive photographic series that demonstrates conceptual depth and narrative richness. This project will be a culmination and compilation of all the information from the semester to date, allowing students to work with the branch of photography that best serves their concept.</p>	(Thurs, 04/02) Project #4 Due

Week 13: Project Proposals	In-Class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will propose concepts for their final project and receive individualized feedback from the instructor in scheduled one-on-one discussions. 	(Tuesday, 04/07) Project #5 Proposal Due
Week 14 Project Proposals	In-Class: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will continue working on project #5, provide the class with an update on their progress, and receive in-progress feedback and guidance. 	<i>Work on Project #5</i>
Week 15 Final Critique	Project #5 Critique	(Tuesday 04/21) Project #5 Due

Attendance:

Regular attendance is crucial for success in this course. Class sessions are designed to provide essential information, discussions, and hands-on activities that contribute to your learning experience. Absences may result in missing important content, announcements, or in-class activities that could impact your understanding of the material.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions. If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to inform the instructor in advance, when possible. Missed classwork, quizzes, or assignments due to absences are generally not eligible for make-up unless due to extenuating circumstances (illness, family emergency, etc.). Arriving late disrupts the class and may result in a reduction of participation points. Persistent tardiness may be addressed as part of the attendance and participation grades.

See the University of Florida's full policy here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/#absenceextension>

Assessment:

Projects 1-4: 40%

Final Semester Project: 25%

Attendance: 15%

Class Participation and Engagement: 20%

Grading Rubric: Projects + Group Critique

1. Photo Projects (50 points)

- Technical Skill Choices (20 points):
 - Exposure and lighting (5)
 - Focus and sharpness (5)
 - Composition (5)
 - Color and tone (5)
- Conceptual and Creative Elements (20 points):
 - Concept and message (10)
 - Creativity and originality (10)
- Presentation and Execution (10 points):
 - Post-processing (5)
 - Print or digital display (5)

2. Critiques (50 points)

- Participation (20 points):
 - Actively engages in discussion (10)
 - Offers constructive feedback to peers (10)
- Critical Analysis (15 points):
 - Demonstrates insightful observations (10)
 - Identifies common themes or trends (5)
- Communication (15 points):
 - Clearly presents own work (5)
 - Effectively articulates feedback to others (10)

NOTE: Photos must be printed and already on display in the designated critique space by the start of the critique period. Students who have not set up, or are still setting up, at the beginning of the class will automatically lose 20% of their grade for that project and critique. Treat critiques like exams, and be mindful of strict deadlines.

This course operates in accordance with the University of Florida's grading policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Disability Accommodations:

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. Click on the following link to get started with the Disability Resource Center: <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>

It is essential for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Electronic Device Policy:

A note on cell phones, texting, and checking one's email during class: checking texts, emails, and messages is unprofessional and disrespectful to our class community. Please put your phones on

vibrate and do not check email, social media, or other devices during class; I will do so as well.

UF Religious Holidays Policy:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/#religiousholidaystext>

To be approved for an incomplete:

Students must have completed the major portion of the class with a passing grade of C or better. The student is unable to complete course requirements because of documented circumstances beyond his or her control. The student and instructor have discussed the situation in writing prior to the final class (except under emergency conditions).

Student Conduct And Honesty Codes:

Students are expected to abide by the UF Academic Honesty Policy, which defines an academic honesty offense as "the act of lying, cheating, or stealing academic information so that one gains academic advantage." In the context of this class, this includes properly citing sources for any materials (both printed and online) used in completing course assignments. In addition, the work is original and completed by the student. <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>

Use of Generative AI:

While engaging with generative AI, it is crucial to adhere to ethical guidelines. Students should use the tool responsibly, recognizing that the generated content is a product of machine learning and may not always be entirely accurate or contextually appropriate. Collaboration and discussion are acceptable, but individual understanding and critical thinking should remain central to the learning process. Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, is strictly prohibited. The emphasis is on leveraging generative AI as a tool for learning and exploration, while maintaining the integrity of one's work through ethical and responsible use. With that said, students may not use any text-to-image software to create or modify images. Some use of AI post-processing may be permitted (e.g., generative fill, noise reduction, and object removal), but all AI image manipulations must be pre-approved. Any unsanctioned use of AI image manipulation is grounds for a failing grade for the assignment.

Course Evaluations:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluations are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Health and Wellness:

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umaier@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit the U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress. <https://umatter.ufl.edu/>

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the CWC website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services. <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website. <https://shcc.ufl.edu/>

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273- 4450. <https://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/>