

**AVT-253 Intro to Digital Photography  
Course Syllabus- Fall 2015  
George Mason University**

**T-Th 10:30-1:10**

**Room:** L015

**Instructor:** Stephanie Booth

**Contact:** sbooth@gmu.edu

**Office Hours:** By Appointment

**Prerequisites:** No previous experience in photography is necessary and no prerequisites are required for this class.

**DESCRIPTION:**

This course is an introduction to the technical and aesthetic properties of digital photography with an emphasis on the use of a manual camera as a tool for electronic photographic image making. Additionally, students will learn to create efficient digital workflow using basic image-editing skills and software programs. Students will learn the technical aspects of photography as well as how to use the camera as a tool for creating art and idea expression.

**Course Learner Objectives**

- Demonstrate the use basic functions of a manual digital camera including:
  - Proper exposure control and light metering
  - Aperture and Shutter speed
  - White balance
  - The use of ISO in controlling digital noise
- Apply appropriate digital darkroom tools, applications and equipment for the image
- Build critical thinking and problem solving skills
- Identify and illustrate formal art principles of image composition and design
- Communicate ideas visually through photographs
- Discuss and defend their work verbally and give constructive feedback to others in group critiques.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

To be successful in this class, you must:

- Be prepared to participate fully in all aspects of the course.
- Attend class on time, stay for its entirety, and come to class prepared.
- Be committed to spending time outside of class hours to shoot and edit your photographs. This course cannot be done within the allotted class time and you must be willing to spend time out of class.
- Participate in class discussions and critique. The more you participate in the discussion or your and work and your peer's work, the easier it is to communicate your own ideas. Receiving constructive criticism is crucial in the artistic process.
- Follow the requirements of the assignment and complete it on time. Failure to turn in an assignment on time will result in the grade being dropped two grades for each class it is late.
- Take ownership of the lab and equipment. This includes following any posted rules, cleaning up at the end of class, and returning borrowed equipment on time and in the same condition it was received.
- Satisfactory completion of visual, written, and presentation assignments. Solutions to visual problems will be discussed and evaluated in class critiques and grades will be based on aesthetic merit, conceptual strength, and technical competence.

### Criteria for Evaluation and Grading

- Use of appropriate tools and techniques to demonstrate understanding of the assignment
- Image quality of the final image
- Idea development and creativity
- Risk taking, ambition, and engagement with the assignment
- Participation in class discussions and critiques

### Grade Breakdown:

All Assignments (except your final):	400pts
Final Assignment:	150pts
Digital Portfolio	25pts
Digital Boot Camp/Scavenger Hunt	25pts
Critique Participation	50pts
Photography Research and Presentation	100pts
Artist Statements/Evaluations	50pts
Blog Call and Response	40pts

### Assignment Resubmission:

To encourage ongoing editing of ideas and work, students, after receiving feedback in critique, can turn their work in for grade reconsideration up to two weeks after critique. Work that is turned in late is not eligible for resubmission. This is only applicable to major assignments excluding the final exam.

### Final Assessment

- A--Excellent:** Work far exceeds the expectations for the assignment. Shows exceptional grasp of technique, concept, and creative expression
- B--Very Good:** Work is of a high standard that shows a firm understanding of technical considerations and individual creative expression.
- C--Average:** Meets the expectations of the assignment and shows technical competency
- D--Poor:** Does not meet the expectations of the assignment. Work is uninspired and does not show a technical understanding.
- F--Fail:** Failure to complete the assignment in the time allotted.

A:	93%-100%
A-:	90%-92%
B+:	87%-89%
B:	84%-86%
B-:	80%-83%
C+:	77%-79%
C:	74%-76%
C-:	70%-73%
D+:	67%-69%
D:	64%-66%
D-:	60%-63%
F:	<59%

### Attendance

Attendance is an essential part of the course. This is an experience based class and artistic growth comes only through continued active participation. In case of an unavoidable absence, please contact me immediately (email is best). Attendance is mandatory for all class activities including the field trip.

- Arriving late or leaving early counts as half an absence
- Arriving late or leaving early twice counts as a full absence

- On your third absence your grade will automatically drop a letter grade
- On your fifth absences your grade will drop two letter grades
- The grade will continue to drop as absences accrue
- Missed critiques will result in a dropped project grade and a zero on critique participation for that project.

### **Plagiarism/Cheating**

Only students' own photos and images are permitted for use in projects. The unauthorized use of images and compositions that are not your own is considered plagiarism and will result in a zero for the project. Any type of plagiarism, artistic or written, can result in a zero for the assignment and will negatively impact your final grade in the course.

### **CLASS POLICIES**

#### **EMAIL / Blackboard POLICY**

**You must check e-mail and Blackboard on a regular basis.** Assignments and course communications will be dispersed via email and/or posted to Blackboard.

Be professional in your emails. Open them with a greeting, be respectful, write in complete sentences and avoid all caps. Before asking a question, first thoroughly read the syllabus, course documents, assignments, and announcements on Blackboard. Allow at least 24 hours for a response during the work week, and at least 48 hours for emails sent on the weekend (Friday-Sunday).

Because of the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**, I will only respond to emails sent from your **school-assigned address**: please include your full name and the course number (example: Jane Doe, Art 100) in the subject line.

#### **Electronic Devices**

Cell phones and any other electronic devices should be on silent during the class time and used for personal or social purposes only during class breaks. Students should use the lab computers for editing work in class and not personal laptops. Students who are not intellectually present in class because they are glued to a screen will be counted absent for the class and their grade will be adjusted accordingly.

#### **Lab Rules**

- The lab is a shared space — please treat it with respect.
- If you bring something into the lab, take it with you when you leave. This includes not only snacks, but also things like papers, projects, tools, flash drives, SD cards, etc. *Leave no trace.*
- Computer hard drives will be cleaned every two weeks — this means that all files saved to the Desktop, Documents and Downloads folders will be erased. If you are working in the lab, bring an external hard drive or flash drive to take your work with you.
- Please quit programs when you are finished working with them: **Cmd + Q** or **(Program Name) > Quit** in the menu bar.
- If you are working on a project with audio, please use headphones. All computers have an audio jack.

#### **Student Expectations and Behavior**

##### **Classroom Expectations**

Students are expected to show respect to each other, the teacher, and each other's artwork at all times. In conjunction with this students, are expected to:

- Arrive in class on time
- Always be prepared with supplies
- Begin work immediately

- Participate in class discussions and critiques
- Stay on task and complete all work
- The lab is to be used for classwork only – No writing papers, checking email, surfing the net, watching videos etc during class time.

### **Notes on Course Content**

In this course we may experience some content that can be, or has in the past, been considered provocative. People can be potentially offended by what we're about to see. Have respect for how other people in the room may feel, even if you don't share those feelings. Though provocative art might not be directly offensive, it can remind you of difficult experiences. Part of the course is to discuss difficult issues and put them into a historical and artistic context. You can also communicate with me via email or during office hours if you feel you need additional space or information to process course content.

### **MATERIALS:**

Please bring all equipment and materials to class unless otherwise instructed.

**Recommended Text:** *Reframing Photography: Theory and Practice* by Modrak and Anthes  
<http://tinyurl.com/34zqk66>

Though we will not read through this book like a traditional text, it will serve to reinforce class lectures and be a resource for you to get technical guidance outside of class and office hours. You can rent it for less than twenty dollars on Amazon.com.

**SoA Print:** A required part of this class is having professional prints for critique. You will be purchasing a packet of prints, in the beginning of the semester from SoA Print. The cost of the packet for this class is approximately \$80 dollars. Please note, if you choose to resubmit your work, you may need to buy additional prints a la carte.

**Photo Cage:** There are resources than can be rented from the cage including, cameras, lenses, Wacom tablets, tripods, etc. You must pay a rental fee and a security deposit for most items. This must be paid for using Mason Money. For more information on pricing see the cage in LO11.

**Camera:** Digital Camera with manual exposure metering, manual focus controls, and RAW file capability is required for the course. All DSLR cameras will meet the requirements. If you have a compact camera that you think meets the requirements, please ask the instructor. A limited number of cameras are available for checkout through the cage.

Examples: Canon EOS Rebel series  
 Nikon D3100 series

**Memory Card:** You will need to have your own digital Memory Card that is compatible with your camera. It is recommended that you have a card that is at least 2 GB in size. You will also need a card reader that works with your card, if you do not have a SD memory card. It is not recommended that you transfer images through your camera's USB connection.

**Envelopes for Turning in Prints:** You will need to purchase 12.5" x 18.5" envelopes for the transport and grading of your projects. This can be done from SoA Print when you buy your packet.

**Portable Media for your Files:** You will need a USB flash drive and/or portable hard drive for the course to back up your work.

**CD-R:** You will need one CD-R to turn in a digital version of your final portfolio. USB drives are an alternative, but they will not be returned. More information will be given when the final exam project is assigned.

**Tripod** (recommended) Tripods are available to rent from the cage.

### **Online Photo Supply Stores**

B&H Photo: [www.bhphotovideo.com](http://www.bhphotovideo.com)  
Amazon: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)  
Freestyle: <http://www.freestylephoto.biz/>

### **University and School of Art Policies**

**This class fulfills a Mason Core requirement for Arts.**

Mason courses in the film making, 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.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

Students who successfully complete a course in the Arts category must meet the first learning outcome and a minimum of two of the remaining four learning outcomes:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic process, and a work's underlying concept, and where appropriate, contexts associated with the work
2. Identify and analyze the formal elements of a particular art form using vocabulary and critique appropriate to that form.
3. Analyze cultural productions using standards appropriate to the form, as well as the works cultural significance and context.
4. Analyze and interpret the content of material or performance culture through its social, historical, and personal contexts.
5. Engage in generative artistic processes, including conception, creation, and ongoing critical analysis.

In accordance with George Mason University policy, **turn off all 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 outside the studios.

### **School of Art Print Studio**

**School of Art Print Studio (SOAP)** is located in the School of Art Building on the Fairfax Campus. As a non-profit studio, SOAP offers a variety of services including printing and production services to students, faculty and staff. All jobs are processed with high quality materials on state-of-the-art equipment, specifically for graphic design portfolios, mixed-media paintings and reproductions, posters, handmade books, student assignments and proof sheets. More information can be found at [soaprint.gmu.edu](http://soaprint.gmu.edu) or 703-993-7203.

### **ArtsBus Dates and Credit**

Fall 2015

September 26<sup>th</sup>

October 24<sup>th</sup>

November 21<sup>st</sup>

Each student must have up to 5 AVT 300/Artsbus credits before graduation. 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. Please go to the ArtsBus website: <http://artsbus.gmu.edu> "Student Information" for additional, very important information regarding ArtsBus policy.

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.

### **Visual Voices Lecture Series Fall 2015**

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.

September 3<sup>rd</sup> Jon Rubin "Art in Public Life"

September 10<sup>th</sup> Helen Zughuib "Arab Song – Arab Spring"

September 24<sup>th</sup> Catherine Kehoe "It's Not What You Think"

October 1<sup>st</sup> SOA Grads "Loading Content"

October 8<sup>th</sup> Steve Badanes + Linda Beaumont "Speak of the Devil"

### **Important Deadlines**

Last Day to Add - **Tuesday, September 8**

Last Day to Drop (No Tuition Penalty) - **Tuesday, September 8**

Final Drop (67% Tuition Penalty) – **October 2**

Selective Withdrawal Period – **October 5 - October 30**

Incomplete work from Spring/Summer 2015 due to instructor - **October 30**

Once the add and drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Requests for *late adds* (up until the last day of classes) must be made by the student in the SOA office (or the office of the department offering the course), and generally are only approved in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid being processed) LATE ADD fee will apply. Requests for non-selective *withdrawals* and *retroactive adds* (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the academic dean of the college in which the student's major is located. For AVT majors, that is the CVPA Office of Academic Affairs, College Hall C211.

### **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 me 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.

### **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. Class participation may be a factor in grading, therefore 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, as stated in the George Mason University Catalog. The honor code requires that the work you do as an individual be the product of your own individual synthesis or integration of ideas. (This does not prohibit collaborative work when it is approved by your instructor.) As a faculty member, I have an obligation to refer the names of students who may have violated the Honor Code to the Student Honor Council, which treats such cases very seriously.

No grade is important enough to justify cheating, for which there are serious consequences that will follow you for the rest of your life. If you feel unusual pressure about your grade in this or any other course, please talk to me or to a member of the GMU Counseling Center staff.

Using someone else's words or ideas without giving them credit is *plagiarism*, a very serious Honor Code offense. It is very important to understand how to prevent committing plagiarism when using material from a source. If you wish to quote verbatim, you must use the exact words and punctuation just as the passage appears in the original and must use quotation marks and page numbers in your citation. If you want to paraphrase or summarize ideas from a source, you must put the ideas into your own words, and you must cite the source, using the APA or MLA format. (For assistance with documentation, I recommend Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*.) The exception to this rule is information termed *general knowledge*—information that is widely known and stated in a number of sources. Determining what is general knowledge can be complicated, so the wise course is, "When in doubt, cite."

Be especially careful when using the Internet for research. Not all Internet sources are equally reliable; some are just plain wrong. Also, since you can download text, it becomes very easy to inadvertently plagiarize. If you use an Internet source, you must cite the exact URL in your paper and include with it the last date that you successfully accessed the site.

### **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.

**Course Schedule for ART-151**  
***Subject to change based on the needs of the class***

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment Due
1	9/1	-Welcome! Syllabus review  Lecture <i>Intro to Digital Photography</i>	Bring Cameras and Photographable Objects Next Class
	9/3	Lecture <i>Exposure and Camera Controls</i>  Digital Camera Boot camp	
2	9/8	Review Exposure on Cameras  Lecture on Cliché Images  Introduce Project #1: Seeing Through the Lens	
	9/10	Cliché Image Challenge  Work period for Assignment #1	Scavenger Hunt Due
3	9/15	Review Cliché Images Visit SoA Print Work period for Assignment #1	Cliché Image Due
	9/17	Introduce research assignment Work period for Assignment #1	
4	9/22	CRITIQUE: FIRST PROJECT	FIRST PROJECT
	9/24	Research for artist presentations Work Period for Assignment #2	
5	9/29	Research for artist presentations Work Period for Assignment #2	
	10/1	Work Period for Assignment #2	
6	10/6	CRITIQUE: SECOND PROJECT	SECOND PROJECT
	10/8	Introduce Third Assignment	
7	10/13	<b>MONDAYS MEET ON TUESDAY. NO CLASS</b>	
	10/15	Photographer presentations	PHOTOGRAPHER PRESENTATIONS DUE



8	10/20	Photographer presentations	
	10/22	Work period Assignment #2	
9	10/27	Introduce fourth project in class Work period Assignment #3	
	10/29	CRITIQUE: THIRD PROJECT	THIRD PROJECT
10	11/3	Review images for Assignment #4	
	11/5	Work period: Assignment #4	
11	11/10	Work period: Assignment #4	
	11/12	Work period: Assignment #4	
12	11/17	Lecture <i>Building a Body of Work</i> Work period: Assignment #4	
	11/19	CRITIQUE: FOURTH PROJECT	FOURTH PROJECT DUE
13	11/24	Review ideas for Final Project	
	11/26	<b>THANKSGIVING NO CLASS</b>	
14	12/1	Review Images for Final Project	
	12/3	Work Period: Final Project	
15	12/8	Work Period: Final Project	
	12/10	<b>FINAL CRITIQUE</b>	