

COURSE SYLLABUS **Intro Digital Photography - AVT 253**

Sue Wrbican swrbican@gmu.edu 3-8570 Office Hours by appointment

THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Prerequisites: AVT180 Computers in the Creative Arts and AVT 104 Studio Fundamentals or permission of instructor.

This class fulfills a General Education Core requirement for Arts.

Core requirements help ensure that students become acquainted with the broad range of intellectual domains that contribute to a liberal education. By experiencing the subject matter and ways of knowing in a variety of fields, students will be better able to synthesize new knowledge, respond to fresh challenges, and meet the demands of a complex world.

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.

This class satisfies a portion of the university's **General Education requirement**. Please consult the General Education website (http://catalog.gmu.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=5&poid=1437) for complete information about the program and its requirements.

Course Description: An introduction to the technical and aesthetic properties of digital photography with an emphasis on using a digital camera as a tool for electronic photographic tool for art making. Additionally, students will learn basic image-editing skills in a computer environment. No previous experience is necessary.

Objectives:

Learn constructive critique techniques for evaluating photography. This involves weekly discussions related to photography in the contemporary and historical art world.

Engage in the artistic process, including conception, creation and ongoing critical analysis

Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between artistic technique and the expression of a work's underlying concept

Learn how to print using a professional lab and self-publish using the web.

Learn **BASIC** functions of a 35mm digital SLR camera.

Gain understanding of controlling light readings to determine proper exposure.

Gain understanding of ISO scale

Gain basic understanding of digital darkroom skills.

Learn the **BASICS** of the Adobe programs, **Bridge & Photoshop**

Gain understanding of image composition and design elements.

Identify and analyze the formal elements of photography using vocabulary appropriate to the form.

The course will consist of lectures, demonstrations, lab work, research and critiques. Most of the semester will be devoted to project assignments. You will also be doing weekly research on contemporary photography which you will be required to present in class. Presentation projects will also be assigned. Keeping an "Artist Journal" is highly recommended.

The student is expected to make approximately 16-20 **print** images which will also provide the content for a **book** which will function as a final project at the end of the semester. ALL PRINTS MUST BE MADE IN SOAPrint. No exceptions. The student is **required** to make use of the **Blackboard** system at GMU. It can be found at <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>

All assignments and information pertaining to assignments will be posted to this system. Due to budget constraints the professor will not be providing paper copies of assignments. It is your (the students) responsibility to seek and keep track of this information once assigned. If there are any technical difficulties you are experiencing with this system please refer all queries to courses@gmu.edu

******* NOTE on ASSIGNMENTS:**All assignments are to be posted to **Blackboard**. Do not email me your assignments as they will not be entered into the **Blackboard** system and they will not be counted toward your grade. **Please hand in your prints in an envelope appropriately sized to enclose 8-1/2 x 11 PRINTS. YOU CAN BUY THESE AT THE JOHNSON CENTER BOOKSTORE. YOUR GRADES ARE BASED**

ON YOUR PRINTS & SUBMISSIONS IN Bb.

ALL CELL PHONES AND SIMILAR DEVICES such as iPads etc. **MUST BE TURNED OFF BEFORE ENTERING CLASSROOM. No Food or Beverage of any type permitted in the classroom.**

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory for both lecture and in class lab time. Attendance is part of your grade. You are allowed two unexcused absences, so use them wisely and save them for emergencies. Three late arrivals and / or early departures will count as one absence. Absences due to illness will only be excused by a doctor's note. Please see the George Mason Catalog for more information. Lectures and/or critiques begin promptly. Do not be late.

Grading: All assignments and critique work are due on the dates specified in the syllabus. Expect to create 72 images (this includes bracketing and different points of view) per week. **No assignments will be accepted via email. ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE POSTED TO BLACKBOARD IN PDF FORM. NO WORD DOCUMENTS OR ANY OTHER TYPES OF FILES UNLESS SPECIFIED. NO EXCEPTIONS. YOUR GRADES ARE BASED ON YOUR PRINTS & SUBMISSIONS IN Bb.** Late assignments/critique work must be brought to the attention of the professor before submission. **(Any late submissions will be subject to one full letter grade reduction for each class). After one week it will be considered an F.** Any request to discuss grades should be made in advance, and an appointment will be scheduled.

Students are to attend all lectures/critiques and will be graded on participation. **Being absent from critique will result in a 50% grade reduction,** regardless of work being submitted in time.

GRADING is based on several factors:

- I. **Satisfactory completion of visual assignments.** These assignments are due periodically throughout the semester and represent a cross-section of the principles of photographic seeing. **Evaluation will be based on aesthetic merit and technical competence.**
 - a. Your ability to produce appropriately created images, which exhibit an in-depth investigation of the problem at hand.
 - b. Solutions to problems discussed and evaluated in class critiques.
 - c. Creativity - *the depth and originality of your solutions involving social, historical, and/or personal contexts.*

- d. Your ability and understanding of working within a digital imaging environment

2. **Your personal contribution to the class.** Each student is partially responsible for the success of the class. *Contributions include:*

- a. Regular attendance and willingness to participate in class discussions and critiques. This includes preparation both in terms of completion of projects and coming to class with ideas and opinions that will promote discussion related to the assignment criteria.
- b. Completion of all assignments on time. (Late assignments will be graded accordingly – **no assignment(s) will be accepted after the due date without prior permission of the instructor.**)
- c. Participation in the orderly functioning of the lab...clean up, care of equipment, proper return of borrowed equipment, etc. are responsibilities everyone must share.
- d. All lab rules are to be followed at all times. This includes food and drink policies, cleanliness, safety and respect to others. All students are expected to follow and adhere to the GMU Code of Honor.

3. Presentation of a **Final BOOK** at the end of the semester.

- a. This is given utmost consideration in determining your final grade

Grade breakdown for your final grade:

1. All assignments (except your final) - 50%.

- a. Assignments related to aesthetics and hands on camera operation
- b. NOTE: All assignments are **PRINT** assignments. **You are also required** to upload **digital files** into **Bb** of your final prints. There will be a folder for this. Please make sure you are maintaining Bb as it counts toward your grade. Make sure they are posted in Bb when you turn in your prints for critique & grading.

2. Final Book - 20% .

- a. A Book that is theme related and content specific.

3. Museum Presentation – 10%

4. Class participation - 10%. – active speaking during critique

- a. Attendance is also considered here.
- b. 3 absences = 1 letter reduction in final grade
- c. 3 lates = 1 absence Bb postings - 10%

I expect and appreciate good student/teacher communication – PLEASE LET ME KNOW if you feel you are experiencing problems!

University and 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.

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, Performing Arts Building A407.

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. 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, 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.

Important University Dates

Consortium Registration Deadline	TBD
First day of classes; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date	August 29
Labor Day, university closed	September 5
Last day to add classes —all individualized section forms due Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	September 6
Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty	September 20
Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)	September 30
Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via Patriot Web	September 26 – October 21
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	October 3 – October 28
Columbus Day recess (Monday classes/labs meet Tuesday. Tuesday classes do not meet this week)	October 10
Incomplete work from spring/summer 2016 due to instructor	October 28
Incomplete grade changes from spring/summer 2016 due to Registrar	November 4
Thanksgiving recess	November 23 – 27
Last day of classes	December 10
Reading Days Reading days provide students with additional study time for final examinations. Faculty may schedule optional study sessions, but regular classes or exams may not be held.	December 12
Exam Period	Tues December 13 – Tues December 20
Degree Conferral Date The Winter Graduation Ceremony will be held on Wed December 21.	December 21

SCHEDULE: Digital Photography AVT 253

Professor Sue Wrbican swrbican@gmu.edu 3-8570 Office Hours MW 9:30-10:30AM or by appointment **This schedule is subject to change.**

August

- Monday 29 Introduction to class, course requirements, supplies. Contemporary Photography Camera Operation, Metering and Exposure Assignment: Purchase/rent supplies.
Bring camera, card & manual to next class.
- Wednesday 31 **Museum visit handout
Visit to SOA Print
Handout Assignment #1 (B&W)
Review Camera operation in class
Bring CAMERA, CARD, CARD READER AND FLASH DRIVE to
next class**

September

- Wednesday 07 Using camera in class
Downloading images.
- Monday 12 Bring card & card reader to class
Upload to Blackboard: **Contemporary Image #1** that exemplifies your interest in contemporary photography (Every Monday) Uploading images to computer w image capture Creating contact sheet in Bridge Creating TIF file in Photoshop
- Wednesday 14 **UPLOAD CONTACT SHEETS to Bb For ASSIGNMENT #1**
- Monday 19 2nd blog report due
- Wednesday 21 **Critique Assignment #1 (B&W) Handout Assignment #2 Shutter Speed (Time) (B&W)** Shutter speed lecture
- Monday 26 3rd blog report due
UPLOAD CONTACT SHEETS to Bb FOR ASSIGNMENT #2
- Wednesday 28 **Critique Assignment #2 (B&W) Have prints ready from SoA Print for critique Handout Assignment #3 Aperture (Space) (B&W) Depth of field lecture**

October

Monday

- 03 4th blog report due
UPLOAD CONTACT SHEETS to Bb FOR ASSIGNMENT #3 Discuss MagCloud Book – 20 pages

Create MagCloud account in class & Begin uploading test images (you can edit these selections at anytime)

Wednesday.

- 05 Photo Assignment #3 Due
Chance / John Cage / Rasuchenberg / The IChing

MONDAY

- 10 Columbus Day

Tuesday.

- 11 **Critique Assignment #3 (B&W) Have prints ready from SoAPrint for critique Handout Assignment #4 Portraiture (COLOR)**

Wednesday 12

Monday

- 17 Upload to Blackboard: **Contemporary Image #5** that exemplifies your interest in contemporary photography (Every Monday)
UPLOAD CONTACT SHEETS to Bb FOR ASSIGNMENT #4

Wednesday

- 19 **Critique Assignment #4**

Monday

- 24 Upload to Blackboard: **Contemporary Image #6** that exemplifies your interest in contemporary photography (Every Monday)

Wednesday

- 26 **Museum Presentations**

Monday

- 31 **Handout Assignment #5 Portraiture & Landscape (COLOR)** Review work uploaded for MagCloud book assignment

November

Wednesday

- 02 FILM TBA

Monday

- 07 **UPLOAD CONTACT SHEETS to Bb FOR ASSIGNMENT #5 Contemporary Image #7** that exemplifies your interest in contemporary photography (Every Monday)

Wednesday	09	Critique ASSIGNMENT #5
MONDAY	14	UPLOAD CONTACT SHEETS FOR ASSIGNMENT #6
Wednesday	16	Deadline to submit MagCloud book for printing and Critique Assignment #6
Monday	21	FILM TBA
Wednesday	23	Assignment #7
Monday	28	UPLOAD CONTACT SHEETS FOR ASSIGNMENT #7
Wednesday	30	Critique ASSIGNMENT #7
Monday	05	Open Lab
Wednesday	07	FINAL CRITIQUE / ALL PROJECTS DUE -NO EXCEPTIONS!!! Present Blurb Book & Assignment #6 2 11x14 Prints

Materials and Supplies:

Camera: Digital single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with manual adjustments of f/stops and shutter speeds will be required. Bring cameras and manuals to class if you have any questions.

Tripod: A small tripod will be necessary for longer exposures. Nothing special and no more than \$50 however you can rent these from the photo equipment office.

Remember a camera cannot be hand held below 1/60 sec.

UV or skylight filter to fit lens – (NOT THE LENS FOCAL LENGTH) A UV filter is used to protect your lens. It's a lot less expensive to crack or scratch a filter than a lens.

Camera Batteries: Make sure they are charged. Bring charger if necessary or have back up set.

2 - 4GB cards (minimum)

Memory card reader or USB cord for camera. USB flash-drive minimum 8G or portable hard drive. Wireless Remote (SUGGESTED)

PRINTS: You will make ALL of your prints at GMUs print lab located in the Art & Design Bldg: soaprint.gmu.edu

Book: You will make one small book using www.magcloud.com

Where To Buy Supplies:

Camera Stores:

Dominion Camera 112 West Broad St, Falls Church, VA www.dominioncamera.com
703-532-6700

District Camera 6025-C Burke Centre Pkwy, Burke, VA 703-430-3333
1735 Connecticut Ave NW, DC <https://www.districtcamera.com>

Ace Photo 44710 Cape Court Ste. 122, Ashburn, VA www.acephoto.net
McClanahan 306 W. Lee Hwy, Warrenton, VA www.mccamera.com 540-347-2533
B+H (NY) Adorama (NY) Freestyle (CA) www.bhphotovideo.com www.adorama.com

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