

George Mason University School of Art  
Spring 2018 / AVT 252 – Darkroom Photography  
Class meets Mondays/Wednesdays from 1:30-4:10pm

Paolo Morales  
pmorale8@gmu.edu  
Office hours: by appointment on M/W, 12:30-1:15pm and T/Th 3:45-4:30pm

***Syllabus, course content, and schedule are subject to change***

Course Description

Introduces photographic study and investigation of the fundamental practices and techniques of both film and digital forms with attention to its history and contemporary practices. Class discussions, field trips and critiques enhance visual and verbal vocabularies. Offered by School of Art. May not be repeated for credit.

In this class, we will investigate and shape our individual ways of seeing through what we choose to include (and exclude) within a frame. Through photographing weekly, in class demonstrations, slide lectures, and critique, students will engage in the problems of photographic production and seeing.

This class will focus on technical and aesthetic issues of developing 35mm black and white negatives and printing in the darkroom. Students will read, discuss, and look at work by Diane Arbus, Lee Friedlander, Garry Winogrand, Robert Frank, Henri Cartier Bresson, John Gossage, and Thomas Roma, among others. Students will also read and discuss the writings of John Szarkowski, Walker Evans, Susan Sontag, and Tod Papageorge. This course requires students to expose at least twenty (20) rolls of 35mm black and white film, process negatives, print in the darkroom, and discuss their work and the work of their peers. Students will leave this course with a technical understanding of film exposure, advanced darkroom printing techniques, and an in-progress body of photographic work.

*Additional note:* readings are posted to the Blackboard (except for textbook readings). General communications and announcements are made via email. Write by email with any questions using your GMU email address.

Mason Core Arts Requirement

This class fulfills a Mason Core requirement for Arts. 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.

Mason Core Arts Learning Outcomes

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.

## Goals

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- To expose, develop, and print black and white film
- To learn and retain a technical skill set that includes:
  - o Loading film in a 100% dark room
  - o Negative development using developer, stop, fix, and fixer remover chemicals
  - o Mix chemicals to develop film
  - o Use filters to control contrast when printing
  - o Printing with two filters on one piece of light sensitive paper
  - o Understand the difference between resin-coated paper and fiber paper
  - o Make contact sheets
  - o Isolate and adjust areas that need to be brightened or darkened in a print
  - o Enlarge negatives to an 8x10 inch print
  - o Mounting finished prints on to board
- To have a thorough understanding and command of camera exposure: aperture, shutter, ISO and how these elements affect photographic description
- To assert control over and have a working understanding of photographic description through depth of field, shutter speed, grain, and lens choices
- To establish a working process in the darkroom
- To find and establish a personal photographic vision through producing and editing new pictures
- To produce and print at least four (4) new 8x10 inch prints weekly for critique
- To verbally articulate how and why visual information affects you in your own work and the work of others

## Grading

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Grades in this course are by participation, attendance, and assignments. You will earn and lose points in the following situations:

- If you attend class you receive **+100 points** per meeting
- If you are absent (up to two times) from regular class for *any* reason you receive **0 points**
- If you are absent *more than* two times from regular class for *any* reason you will receive **-100 points** per missed class
- If you attend critique and show 4 prints you receive **+150 points**. There is no extra credit for more than 4 prints
- If you attend critique and show 1-3 prints, you receive **+50 points** per print
- If you attend critique but *do not* show prints you receive **+50 points**

- If you do not show prints one week (present or absent) then the following week present *at least* 8 prints (4 prints for the crit you missed AND 4 additional prints for the current crit) you receive **+250 points**
- If you are absent and/or do not show new work for two rounds of critique in *any* order you receive **-200 points**
- If you miss and/or do not show new work in *any* order for a third time **-100 points** per critique (example: -200 for the two missed crits, then -100 for the third missed crit = -300 total points)
- Each quiz is worth **+100 points**, and contains ten (10) questions each
- Each contact sheet is worth **+50 points**. Twelve (12) are due on 3/28 for 600 points, and eight (8) are due on 4/25 for 400 points. Twenty (20) contact sheets total.
- You will receive **0 points** for missing contact sheets or late submission
- If you participate in the final critiques on both days and send in scanned files you receive **+500 points**
- If you do not submit scanned files by the due date you receive **-150 points**
- If you show new work for your final critique but are absent for the other crit day you receive **+250 points**
- If you are absent for your final critique you will receive **-1500 points**

Nineteen (19) regular class meetings: 1900 possible points  
*(Not including crits)*

Seven (7) critiques: 1050 possible points  
*(On Mondays 2/12, 2/19, 2/26, 3/5, 3/26, 4/2, and 4/9)*

Three (3) quizzes: 300 possible points

Twenty (20) contact sheets: 1000 possible points

Two (2) final critique days: 500 possible points

### **4750 possible points**

At the midterm and end of the semester, I add up all the points you have earned, and then convert to a percent (ex:  $4750/4750 = 100\% = A$ ). I will use the following percentage table to calculate grades:

93-100% = A  
 90-92% = A-  
 87-89% = B+  
 84-86% = B  
 80-83% = B-  
 77-79% = C+  
 75-77% = C  
 70-74% = C-  
 66-69% = D  
 00-65% = F

### On Critique

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Definition - Criticism [krit-uh-siz-uh m]

1. The act of passing judgment as to the merits of anything.
2. The act of passing severe judgment; censure; faultfinding.

3. The act or art of analyzing and evaluating or judging the quality of a literary or artistic work, musical performance, art exhibit, dramatic production, etc.
4. A critical comment, article, or essay; critique
5. Any of various methods of studying texts or documents for the purpose of dating or reconstructing them evaluating their authenticity, analyzing their content or style, etc.

*Dictionary.com*

Critique in this class is timed for 10 minutes per student. All students are expected to participate when reviewing the work of their peers. In this class, we aim to analyze and read the visual facts contained within each photographic frame. When making comments about photographs, it is important to explain why. Please do not simply state “I like your photographs.” Instead, say “I like your photographs because...” When giving negative comments, please suggest solutions. Offer different ways to solve problems occurring in the photographs. The aim of weekly critique is to discuss how we make pictures, refine our technical choices, and delve deeper into each person’s photographic way of seeing.

Weekly review of student work allows each student to clarify their thoughts (visually and verbally) in a predictable format without surprises. Students learn to control and navigate critique in a formalized structure. Furthermore, it allows for a distinctly privileged discussion among the class where we approach each other’s work from a position of knowing and seeing the work develop and change week after week. We are here to talk about, make, and take pictures.

### Open Lab

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Class meetings qualified as “open lab” are not optional. Please use the time to develop film or print in the darkroom with my assistance. My goal is to help you make technically competent prints in an efficient manner. In addition, I hope my suggestions during open lab days in class will help you print on your own during open lab times outside of class.

Open lab with student-monitors is scheduled so you can print or develop film outside of class time, which you will need to do in order to make four prints a week for critique.

Please sign up for weekend open labs by 5pm on Thursdays. Sign up sheets are located on the board outside the darkroom.

### Materials

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- Textbook: Henry Horenstein “Black and White Photography: A Basic Manual” 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Little Brown and Company (available at GMU bookstore or Amazon)
- 35mm with manual controls and a 50mm lens
- Light meter (internal) or handheld (smart phone apps are OK)
- At least twenty (20) rolls of ISO 400 film: Kodak Tri-X, Kodak T-Max, or Ilford HP5, 24 exposures each (purchase first rolls from Annie in SoA print and more from B&H Photo or Adorama)
- Ilford Multigrade RC paper 8x10 inch glossy (around 50 sheets; you can also buy a pack of 100 and split it with another student)
- Ilford Multigrade Fiber paper 8x10 inch glossy (100 sheets). One box is required; two are recommended.
- Negative sleeves for 35mm film, 36 exposures
- Twenty (20) white mounting board 11x14 inches

- Twenty-five (25) dry mount tissue paper, 8x10 inches
- 3 ring binder
- Scissors (suggested)
- Canned air (suggested)
- Anti static cloth (suggested)
- Smock or old shirt that you can wear while developing film (suggested)
- China marker or sharpie (suggested)

#### Resources to Purchase Materials Off Campus

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B&H Photo (free 2-day shipping)

[www.bhphoto.com](http://www.bhphoto.com)

420 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, New York

Adorama

[www.adorama.com](http://www.adorama.com)

42 West 18<sup>th</sup> Street, New York

KEH Camera (for used cameras)

[www.keh.com](http://www.keh.com)

Dominion Camera

[www.dominioncamera.com](http://www.dominioncamera.com)

112 West Broad Street, Falls Church VA

District Camera

[www.districtcamera.com](http://www.districtcamera.com)

6025-G Burke Center Parkway, Burke, VA

1225 I Street NW, Washington

ACE Photo

[www.acephoto.net](http://www.acephoto.net)

44710 Cape Court, Ashburn, VA

McClanahan

[www.mcccamea.com](http://www.mcccamea.com)

306 West Lee Highway, Warrenton, VA

Ritz Camera

[www.ritzcamera.com](http://www.ritzcamera.com)

6917 Arlington Road, Bethesda, MD

Nippon Photo Clinic (camera repair)

[www.nipponphotoclinic.com](http://www.nipponphotoclinic.com)

37 West 39<sup>th</sup> Street, suite 401, New York

Photo Tech Repair Service (camera repair)

[www.phototech.com](http://www.phototech.com)

360 West 36<sup>th</sup> Street, New York

Pro Photo (camera repair)

www.prophoto-dc.com  
2000 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington

Strauss Photo Technical Service (camera repair)  
www.straussphototech.com  
8504 Dakota Drive, Gaithersburg, MD

## Class Schedule

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### **Day 1 Monday 1/22:**

Introductions  
Review syllabus  
Exposure basics: shutter, aperture, ISO

### **Day 2 Wednesday 1/24:**

Exposure continued / lecture on depth of field and motion  
Loading film into cameras  
Partner portraits on depth of field and motion  
Demo and practice loading film on to reels

*Assignment due on 1/29: read chapters 1, 3, 4, 5*

### **Day 3 Monday 1/29:**

Darkroom tour  
Film development demo and exercise (if you have unusable film please re-shoot and develop before class on Thursday)

*Assignment due on Wednesday 1/31: read chapters 6 and 9 and read John Szarkowski "The Photographer's Eye"*

### **Day 4 Wednesday 1/31:**

Quiz #1 on aperture, shutter, ISO, depth of field, and motion  
Lecture: Szarkowski and On Photographic Seeing  
Analyzing/troubleshooting film development issues  
Contact sheets demo

*Assignment due Monday 2/5: read chapter 10*

### **Day 5 Monday 2/5:**

Demo: Enlargements, filtration  
Print in the darkroom as a class  
On an individual basis: burning, dodging

### **Day 6 Wednesday 2/7:**

Open lab in preparation for critique #1

### **Day 7 Monday 2/12:**

Critique #1: at least four (4) 8x10inch fiber-based prints using single filters (1/2 – 4 1/2)

*Read excerpts from "Show and Tell" by Thomas Roma and Szarkowski on Atget for class on 2/14*

**Day 8 Wednesday 2/14:**

Quiz #2 on printing

Lecture and discussion: John Szarkowski, Eugene Atget, and Thomas Roma

Demo: split filtration

Open lab

**Day 9 Monday 2/19:**

Critique #2: at least four (4) 8x10inch fiber-based prints using spilt filtration

**Day 10 Wednesday 2/21:**

Lecture: On Walker Evans and Robert Frank “The Americans”

Demo: print mounting

Open lab

**Day 11 Monday 2/26:**

Critique #3: at least four (4) 8x10inch fiber-based prints using spilt filtration plus one (1) mounted print

*Read excerpt from “On Photography” by Susan Sontag for class on 2/28*

**Day 12 Wednesday 2/28:**

Lecture: On Diane Arbus, Susan Sontag

Open lab

**Day 13 Monday 3/5:**

Critique #4: at least four (4) 8x10inch fiber-based prints using spilt filtration

*Read essays by Richard Benson and Rod Slemmons on Lee Friedlander for class on 3/7*

**Day 14 Wednesday 3/7:**

Lecture: On Lee Friedlander

Open lab

Midterm grades posted to Patriot Web and will be given in class

*Read Gerry Badger essay on Gossage for class on 3/19*

**SPRING BREAK** (classes do not meet 3/12 and 3/14)

**Day 15 Monday 3/19:**

Lecture: On John Gossage

Open lab

**Day 16 Wednesday 3/21:**

Open lab

**Day 17 Monday 3/26:**

Critique #5: at least eight (8) 8x10inch fiber-based prints using spilt filtration (300 pts)

**Day 18 Wednesday 3/28:**

Lecture: how to produce a project

Open lab

*Assignment due (for points): submit twelve (12) contact sheets*

*Assignment (no points): describe your project to me by email or verbally in class by 1:30pm on Wednesday 4/4*

**Day 19 Monday 4/2:**

Critique #6: at least four (4) 8x10inch fiber-based prints using spilt filtration

**Day 20 Wednesday 4/4:**

Open lab

**Day 21 Monday 4/9:**

Critique #7: at least four (4) 8x10inch fiber-based prints using spilt filtration

**Day 22 Wednesday 4/11:**

Introduction to scanning negatives and prints

Photoshop basics: burning, dodging, spotting

**Day 23 Monday 4/16:**

Scanning/Photoshop continued

Open lab

**Day 24 Wednesday 4/18:**

Quiz #3 on scanning and Photoshop

Individual meetings

Open lab

**Day 25 Monday 4/23:**

Individual meetings continued

Open lab

**Day 26 Wednesday 4/25:**

Open lab

*Assignment due (for points); submit eight (8) contact sheets. May be digital*

**Day 27 Monday 4/30:**

Final critique Group A

**Day 28 Wednesday 5/2:**

Final critique Group B

**Final critique** groups A and B. Present sixteen (16) \*perfect\* 8x10 inch silver gelatin prints with spilt filtration mounted to board. You may present up to four (4) prints previously presented in class. **Submit scans of ALL final prints by 4:30 pm on Wednesday 5/2 as a compressed (zipped) file on Blackboard.**

*“Perfect” means a dust-less print with all areas properly dodged and burned, even edges, and evenly mounted to board*



## Shooting Assignments

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Two options: 1) photograph anything you like; your pictures can simply respond to the world around you and/or photograph a series/project of your choosing; 2) complete the following assignments in any order.

### The Decisive Moment

What is Henri Cartier Bresson's "decisive moment"? Research what this is. Respond to the decisive moment by undermining it, finding it, or staging it.

### Making versus Taking

You must "make" pictures and "take" pictures. Try to differentiate between the two words and what making and taking can look like as photographs. Think about your process and what the difference is when photographing and seeing the final product.

### Love and Hate

Photograph something you love and photograph something you hate. Use the language of photography to suggest or imply love and to also suggest or imply hate. Photograph something you both love and hate.

### Staged versus Found

Find a compelling situation and photograph it. Then, in a different situation, attempt to stage that event. Compare and contrast the pictures.

### Photograph Someone You Do Not Know Well

Photograph a stranger/someone you do not know very well. Meet them on the street or arrange an appointment.

### Photograph Someone You Are Close To

Photograph someone you are close to. Use photographic description to suggest your feelings or your relationship toward or with this person.

### Ode To—

Find a photographer whose work you find compelling or inspirational. Produce pictures that use similar formal strategies, photographic description, or processes, as the photographer you have chosen. Think about the ways you are updating this person's work to make it your own.

### Working the Scene

Find a situation you are interested in (example: a party, an outdoor event, etc.) and photograph it from as many different angles as possible. Make different types of photographs: portraits, landscapes, still lives, and action shots. Photograph from as many different points of view as possible.

### Every Half an Hour

Expose at least one frame every half an hour you are awake. The aim of this assignment is to respond to different lighting conditions and also to impose a schedule for picture making.

### Hard Versus Soft

Produce pictures of the same subject in harsh lighting conditions (hard edged shadows) and also in soft lighting conditions (soft edged shadows or no shadows at all).

### Flash

Check out a flash from the cage and make pictures with handheld flash. Make pictures that the eye cannot see—in other words, pictures that can only exist because of the use of flash.

### Abstract and Representational

Make a something representational (a person's face, for example) look abstract. Make an abstract scene look representational.

### Compare and Contrast

Find or construct a visual comparison using at least two elements in the frame.

### The Americans

Look at Robert Frank's "The Americans" and make a contemporary version of Frank's photographs.

### Beautiful and Ugly

Make something that you think is beautiful look ugly in a photograph. Make something that you think is ugly look beautiful in a photograph.

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

Important University Dates:

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|---|----------------------------|
| Martin Luther King Day (no classes)   | Mon Jan 15                 |
| <b>First day of classes</b> ; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date; full semester waitlists removed | Mon Jan 22                 |
| <b>Last day to add classes</b> —all individualized section forms due<br>Last day to drop with no tuition penalty                          | Mon Jan 29                 |
| <b>Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty</b>  | Mon Feb 12                 |
| <b>Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)</b>  | Fri Feb 23                 |
| Immunization Record Deadline  | Thu Mar 1                  |
| Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via <a href="#">Patriot Web</a>                                | Mon Feb 19<br>– Fri Mar 23 |
| Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)   | Mon Feb 26<br>– Fri Mar 30 |
| Spring Break  | Mon Mar 12<br>– Sun Mar 18 |
| <b>Incomplete work from Fall 2017 due to Instructor</b>   | Fri Mar 23                 |
| <b>Incomplete grade changes from Fall 2017 due to Registrar</b>   | Fri Mar 30                 |

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| Dissertation/Thesis Deadline  | Fri May 4                 |
| <b>Last day of classes</b>  | Sat May 5                 |
| <b>Reading Days</b><br>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. | Mon May 7 –<br>Tue May 8  |
| <b>Exam Period</b> (beginning at 7:30 a.m.)   | Wed May 9 –<br>Wed May 16 |
| <b>Commencement</b>   | Fri May 18                |
| <b>Degree Conferral Date</b>  | Sat May 19                |

ArtsBus Credit and Policies: You are responsible for knowing and following Artsbus policies and rules. Please go to the ArtsBus website: <http://artsbus.gmu.edu> "Student Information" for important information regarding ArtsBus policy. 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\* 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.

ArtsBus - Dates for Spring 2018:

February 24

March 24

April 14

Visual Voices Lecture Series Spring 2018: 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: <http://soa.gmu.edu/visualvoices/>

January 24 – Brian Noyes

February 1 – Teresa Jaynes

February 22 – Sharif Bey

March 1 – Juliet Bellow

March 8 – John Henry

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.

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.

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.

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, and are responsible knowing the rules, as stated on the George Mason University website's 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."

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.