

George Mason University
College of Visual and Performing Arts
School of Art
AVT 252 – Fundamentals of Photography, Spring 2015

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Office Hours: Wednesday, noon to 3:00 pm or by appointment

Optional Text: *Black and White Photography: A Basic Manual, 3rd Ed. Rev.*, Henry Horenstein, Publisher, Little, Brown and Company

Course Description:

This course will explore black and white photography as an art medium. No previous experience in photography is necessary, however Studio Fundamentals I and II are suggested prerequisites and serve as strong foundation courses.

For the purpose of this course, it is assumed that you know nothing about photography. Although it is very likely that you do know something, it is better that I make this assumption on the grounds that it will give everyone a common background to work from.

This class will not emphasize traditional problems and routine or formalized solutions. Specific unique seeing is our goal and success is incumbent upon the ability to explore, with an open mind, a number of visual possibilities. Personal taste is an issue in this course, not as something to be satisfied and not as a criterion for judgment, but instead as something to be made more intelligent and more sophisticated, through a process of continual challenge.

GENERAL EDUCATION INFORMATION:

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.

ATTENDANCE is mandatory! This is an experience class and growth comes only through continued active participation. **In case of an unavoidable absence, please contact me IMMEDIATELY (email is best).** You are responsible for all missed information. **Excessive tardiness (5 minutes plus) and/or absence (more than two classes) will result in a lowering of your final course grade by one letter for each absence beyond the two excused absences. (e.g. if you earn a grade of B and you have 3 absences, your final grade is a C.)** Non-class open lab periods serve to provide additional work time. They do not serve as a replacement for scheduled class time.

GRADING is based on several factors:

1- Satisfactory completion of visual assignments. These assignments are due periodically throughout the semester and represent a cross-section of the principles of photographic seeing. Solutions to these problems will be discussed and evaluated in class critiques and grades will be based on aesthetic merit and technical competence.

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

A-**Regular attendance.**

B-**Completion of assignments on time.** (Late assignments will be graded accordingly (1 FULL letter grade for each class past due) – **NO assignment(s) will be accepted after the due date without prior permission of the instructor.**

C-**Willingness to participate in class discussions,** this includes preparation both in terms of completion of projects and coming to class with ideas and opinions that will promote discussion.

D- **Participation in the orderly functioning of the lab...**clean up, care of equipment, proper return of borrowed equipment, etc. are responsibilities everyone must share.

3- **Presentation of a final series at the end of the semester.** This body of work is given utmost consideration in determining your final grade.

4- **Grade breakdown:**

A. All assignments (except your final) count for 50% of your final grade.

B. Your final series counts for 20% of your final grade.

C. Class participation counts for 10% of your final grade.

D. Your written criticism counts for 10% of your final grade.

E. 1 Semester Quiz counts for 10% of your final grade.

5- **Resubmissions:**

You will have the option of resubmitting an assignment. **All resubmissions are due NO later than one week after the assignment is due.** Resubmissions are defined as a **completed** assignment that does not meet your personal approval. However, you must have actual prints in hand for the critique, but please do not mount them). **Lastly and most importantly, you must have my prior approval before taking the option to resubmit.**

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

1-An acknowledged understanding of the assignment and the seeking of unique solutions.

2- Demonstration of sensitivity to the camera as an image-making tool.

3- Degree to which you develop a concept or idea; indications of your invention and creative thought

4- Willingness to discuss openly all solutions to the visual problems you face with the class as well as the ability to respond to **constructive** criticism from the class.

5- Over ambition and involvement with the projects undertaken

6- Ability to work independently, with discipline and responsibility

OTHER POLICIES AND DISCLAIMERS

Assumption of Risk

There are inherent risks that you assume as a student participating in a laboratory course. You are responsible for observing both safety precautions and specific guidance when working in a GMU photo lab. Laboratory hazards to which you may be exposed may include, but are not limited to the following: toxic and chemical substances, mounting presses and cutters, and the operation of electrical equipment in an environment containing water (shock potential).

Individuals who suffer allergic reactions, are pregnant, have sensitive skin, or have other medical issues, must make these concerns known to the course instructor before being exposed to the laboratory environment. Course descriptive materials and the course instructor will address specific hazards to which you will be exposed. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for hazardous materials used in the laboratory are available for review through the course instructor or the laboratory manager.

Photography Program Policies

The Photography Program provides equipment such as, cameras, lenses, flashes, tripods, lights and other miscellaneous items for loan. Borrowed equipment is your responsibility and you are held liable for any and all costs if the equipment is damaged, lost or stolen. The program

uses Mason Money for deposit charges and rental fees may vary depending on equipment borrowed. Please check-out/reserve your equipment on the program's website: gmuphoto.wordpress.com under **Reserve Equipment**.

The photography area has established a policy prohibiting use of an I Pod or other portable audio devices during scheduled class time. You may however, use your audio devices during any open lab period (i.e. non-scheduled class time). ALWAYS, remember turn off any and all illuminated dials before entering the darkroom!

University and School of Art Policies

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 in the studios.

ArtsBus - Dates for Spring 2015

February 21

March 21

April 11

ArtsBus Credit

* 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, Spring 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:

January 22, 2015	Grad Students	"Loading Content"
January 29, 2015	Ray Nichols & Jill Cypher	"A colored letter at the bottom of a ditch"
February 5, 2015	Klaus Ottmann	"Art and Contemplation"
February 26, 2015	Jame Anderson	"I make things"
March 5, 2015	Steve Badanes & Linda Beaumont	"Jersey Devils"
March 26, 2015*	Anil Revri [<i>Bonus Speaker</i>]	"Evoking Memories"

**Anil Revri's lecture will be held in Johnson Center Cinema on the lower level at 7:30 p.m.*

Important Deadlines

Last day to add classes or drop without financial penalty: January 27

Last day to drop classes with 33% penalty: February 10

Last day to drop classes with 67% penalty: February 20

Last day to file graduation intent: February 20

Selective withdrawal: February 23- March 27

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.

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 to see the schedule of workshops and to sign up.