

Intro to Digital Photography AVT 253.003
Course Syllabus, Fall 2017
George Mason University
T-TH 4:30 – 7:10pm; Room L016
Instructor: Katie Kehoe
Contact: kt@katiekehoe.com

“The picture that you took with your camera is the imagination you want to create with reality.” — Scott Lorenz

Course Description: An introduction to the technical and aesthetic properties of digital photography. Through the development of critical thinking and technical training, students will learn how to visualize, create and assess photographic images. Techniques covered will include camera functions, exposure, file types, basic lighting, basic editing and basic printing as well as final presentation options. Classes will compose of lectures, technical demonstrations, studio assignments, group critiques, research and writing assignments. No previous experience in digital photography is necessary.

Learning Objectives:

- Learn the basic functions of a DSLR camera including:
 - Proper exposure control and light metering
 - Aperture, shutter speed and ISO
 - White balance
- Demonstrate an understanding of visual elements and design principals when composing images and discussing digital photography.
- Learn the basics of importing and editing images, and adjusting file formats for print or web.
- Learn how to print using a professional lab and consider presentation techniques.
- Learn constructive critique techniques for evaluating work.
- Develop time management skills and work ethic, while cultivating a sense of curiosity and experimentation in approaching digital photography as a creative medium.

Course Requirements & Grading:

- Attend class on time, stay for its entirety and come prepared: **attendance counts toward your grade.** You are allowed two unexcused absences, so 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.

- Be committed to spending time outside of class to advancing your technique and further developing your projects.
- Complete work on time. All projects, assignments and presentations must be completed on time: **failure to complete work on time will result in being downgraded one full letter grade for each class it is late. After one week it will be considered an F.**
- Participate in class critiques: **being absent from a critique will result in a 50% grade reduction**, even if the work was submitted on time.
- Be respectful of the photo labs and equipment – follow posted instructions and keep in mind these are shared resources.

Criteria for Evaluation and Grading:

- Use of appropriate tools and techniques to demonstrate understanding of the assignments
- Evidence of risk taking, ambition and engagement with the assignments
- Image quality of final work submitted
- Creative expression and originality of final work submitted
- Attendance
- Participation in class discussions and critiques

Assessment:

- A (90 – 100%): Work far exceeds the expectations. Shows exceptional grasp of technique, concept and creative expression.
- B (80 - 90%): Work is of high standard that shows a firm understanding of technical considerations and individual creative expression.
- C (70 - 80%): Meets the expectations of the assignment and shows technical competency
- D (60 - 70%): Does not meet the expectations of the assignment, is uninspired and does not show technical understanding.
- F (0 - 60%): Failure

Grade Breakdown:

10% Attendance, Participation & Preparedness (3 absences = 1 letter reduction in final grade)

10% Artist Presentations

5% Quizzes

10% Photo Exhibition Review

45% Assignments (All assignments must be completed; however, the best three out of 4 will count toward your grade.)

20% Final Assignment (assignment #5 in course outline)

Please hand in your prints in an envelope appropriately sized. You can buy these at the Johnson Center Bookstore or at SoAPrint. **All prints must be made in SoAPrint.** No exceptions.

“One doesn’t stop seeing. One doesn’t stop framing. It doesn’t turn off and turn on. It’s on all the time.” — Annie Leibovitz

Assignment Resubmission! The best way to get to develop expertise is to practice! And to encourage this, students may resubmit work up to two weeks after it is marked. Work that is submitted late is not eligible for resubmission. This is only applicable to the assignments.

Course Supplies:

- DSLR in good working condition, 8 megapixels or higher with manual settings
- Memory cards specific to your camera
- External hard drive or 64G USB key for saving work
- Tripod (optional)

Examples of Cameras:

Canon EOS Rebel Series

Nikon D3100 Series

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 LOI I.

SoA Print: A required part of this class is having professional prints for critique.

Course Reading: While, I will be assigning required and optional readings periodically to accompany course material, there are a number of great books on digital photography that can further supplement the material I will be covering in class. You are not required to purchase a book for this purpose. However, if you are interested, here are two titles, I recommend flipping through them and choosing the book that makes you want to read it:

Digital Photography: A Basic Manual, Henry Horenstein,

Reframing Photography: Theory and Practice, Bill Anthes and Rebekah Modrak

“I really believe there are things nobody would see if I didn’t photograph them.” — Diane Arbus

Class Policies:

You must check email and Blackboard on a regular basis. Assignments and course communications will be dispersed via email and/or posted to Blackboard. Please be professional in your emails, allow at least 24 hours for a response during the week and at least 48 hours on the weekend. 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 last name and the course number in the subject line.

Computer hard drives are cleaned regularly – anything you have saved to the desktop or hard drive folders will be erased. Please save your work directly to your external drives or copy them to your drive before leaving the lab.

Students are expected to **show respect** to each other, the teacher and each other’s artwork at all times.

The lab is to be used for class work only – no writing papers, checking email, surfing the net, watching videos etc during class time.

All cell phone and similar devices must be turned to silent before entering the classroom.

No food or beverage of any type is permitted in the lab.

In this course **one may experience provocative content.** Please be respectful of other peoples’ feelings, even if you do not share their position. Part of the course is to discuss difficult issues and put these into a historical and artistic context. Please feel free to communicate with me via email if you feel you need additional space or information to process course content.

Students are required to make use of the Blackboard system at GMU.

It can be found at <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu>. Due to budget constraints, the professor will not be providing paper copies of assignments. It is the student’s 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

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:

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 (<https://chss.gmu.edu/general-education/all-requirements>) for complete information about the program and its requirements.

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.

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 Dates: Dates listed in the following chart are for full semester courses only.

Consortium Registration Deadline	TBD
First day of classes ; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date	August 28
Labor Day, university closed	September 4
Last day to add classes —all individualized section forms due Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	September 5
Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty	September 19
Final Drop Deadline (67% tuition penalty)	September 29
Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via Patriot Web	September 25 – October 20
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	October 2 – October 27
Columbus Day recess (Monday classes/labs meet Tuesday. Tuesday classes do not meet this week)	October 9
Incomplete work from spring/summer 2017 due to instructor	October 27
Incomplete grade changes from spring/summer 2017 due to Registrar	November 3
Thanksgiving recess	November 22 – 26
Last day of classes	December 9
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 11 – 12
Exam Period	Wed December 13 – Wed December 20
Winter Graduation Ceremony	Thu December 21

Degree Conferral Date

Sat December 23

*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 C21 I.

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Class Schedule

(Please note this schedule is subject to change)

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment Due
1	29-Aug	Syllabus Review, Computer Lab Policies, Class Introductions	
		Visit A/V Cage	
		Lecture: History of Photography 1	
		Reading Assigned: Photography is Easy, Photography is Difficult	
	31-Aug	Discuss Reading	Bring your cameras and manuals to class!
		Lecture: Camera Fundamentals	Bring photographable objects
		Digital Camera Boot Camp	
		Introduce Assignment 1: <i>Seeing Through Your Lens</i>	
2	5-Sep	Lecture: Depth of Field & Exposure	Bring your cameras and manuals to class!
		Digital Camera Boot Camp	Bring photographable objects
		Review & Discuss Assignment 1	Assignment 1 Due
		Reading Assigned (choose one): John Szarkowski's, The Photographer's Eye OR An excerpt from Susan Sontag's, On Photography, "The Heroism of Seeing" (65-87)	Assignment 1 Due
	7-Sep	Lecture: Visual Elements & Principals of Design	Bring your cameras and manuals to class!
		Intro to Critiquing	Bring photographable objects
		Visit SoA Print	
		Review: Exposure and Camera Controls as needed	
		Introduce Assignment 2	
3	12-Sep	Lecture: Point of View	Bring your cameras and manuals to class!
		Discuss Reading	
		Demo: Adobe Bridge & Importing Basics	Bring memory card, card reader and hard drive or USB key to class

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	14-Sep	Lecture: Lighting	Bring your cameras and manuals to class!
		Demo: Lighting Techniques	
4	19-Sep	Lecture: Black and White Photography	
		Visit the Library	
		Introduce Photo Research Assignment	
	21-Sep	Lecture: Processing RAW Files in Camera Raw	
		Class Critique: Assignment 2	Assignment 2 Due
5	26-Sep	Lecture: Color Photography	
		Work Period for Research Assignment	
	28-Sep	Lecture: Photo Editing	
		Demo: Photoshop	
		Introduce Assignment 3	
6	3-Oct	Lecture: Portrait Photography	
		Work Period for Research Assignment and Assignment 3	
	5-Oct	Lecture: Photographing your Environment	
		Work Period for Research Assignment and Assignment 3	
7	10-Oct	MONDAYS MEET ON TUESDAY - NO CLASS	
	12-Oct	Lecture: Intro to Printing and Presentation	
		Work Period for Research Assignment and Assignment 3	
	17-Oct	Lecture: Abstraction in Photography	
		Class Critique: Assignment 3	Assignment 3 Due
8	19-Oct	Lecture: Conceptualism in Photography	
		Work Period for Research Assignment	
9	24-Oct	Student Presentations	Research Assignment Due

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	26-Oct	Student Presentations	
		Introduce Exhibition Review Assignment	
10	31-Oct	Lecture: Documenting Art with Photography	
		Documentation Techniques Demo	
		Introduce Assignment 4	
	2-Nov	Lecture: Documentary Photography	
		Work Period for Assignment 4 and Exhibition Review	
11	7-Nov	Lecture: Breaking the Rules & Thinking Outside the Box	
		Work Period for Assignment 4 and Exhibition Review	
	9-Nov	Lecture: Building a Body of Work	
		Work Period for Assignment 4 and Exhibition Review	
12	14-Nov	Lecture: Presentation Techniques	
		Introduce Assignment 5 (Final)	
	16-Nov	Critique Assignment 4	Assignment 4 Due
13	21-Nov	Work Period for Assignment 5	
	23-Nov	THANKSGIVING NO CLASS	
14	28-Nov	Work Period for Assignment 5	Photo Exhibition Review Due
	30-Nov	Work Period for Assignment 5	
15	5-Dec	FINAL CRITIQUE	Assignment 5 Due
	7-Dec	FINAL CRITIQUE	