

**CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHY - GAD3422**  
**SPECIAL PROJECTS CLASS (GALLERY) - VS3100**

Tyler School of Art/ Department of Graphic Arts & Design/ Visual Studies Program  
Class Meetings: Mondays/ Wednesdays, 3:00 - 5:30 PM, selected Saturdays on Gallery Tour  
Lectures, Discussions and Critiques in the Tyler Photo Area Seminar Room B30R,  
additional production in the Tyler Photo Area or Tech Center

**COURSE DESCRIPTION/ GAD3422**

We live in an extraordinary moment in the history of photography, a moment much hoped for and anticipated by many champions of the medium. Finally one can say without qualification that photography is a medium fully embraced by the contemporary art world. While there has always been a movement to look at and discuss photography as art, photography has never played a more central, critical and vital role in contemporary art than it does now. This course will look at both the role that photography plays in contemporary art and the role that contemporary art plays in photography. By surveying contemporary trends in photography, students in this class will develop an understanding of what exactly photography is now. At the same time the class will attempt to answer questions about what it means to be contemporary, about what the relationship between the contemporary and the historical is, and why this might be important. Through these problems students will be encouraged to develop personal work that addresses themes and ideas discussed in the class.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION/ VS3100**

This studio-based course explores a special topic or theme deemed especially relevant to contemporary visual culture. Material techniques and Tyler studio facilities that relate to the topic will be taught and utilized.

**COURSE STRUCTURE**

Students are exposed to photography-based contemporary art through gallery visits with Tyler School of Art faculty in Philadelphia and New York City. Students develop their own studio-based work (digital and analog) and critical writing (in blog formats and a research paper) in direct response to other artists' work seen during these site visits. Students will also be exposed to ways of promoting their work, including professional portfolios and learning how to research appropriate venues for the display or exhibition of their own photography.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- Exposure to the range of photographic practices being employed in contemporary art; including photographic methods used in combination with installation, sculpture, moving image, and digital media.
- Introduction to, and development of photographic techniques in studio assignments such as black & white toning and printing, lighting, lifts and transfer, creation of photo books, printing on alternative materials and objects, digital methods and related software.
- Exposure to the range of galleries, museums, non-profits, and websites devoted to hosting and promoting contemporary photo-based work.
- Introduction and development of critical literacy about contemporary photographic discourses as read about in recent texts by artists, curators, and scholars; and an introduction to key texts about the history of photography.
- Development of writing about art.

- Introduction to professional practices for photography-based practices (researching exhibition opportunities, submitting applications to different venues, submitting work for exhibition, marketing through websites, and other skills).

One main goal is to become familiar with what kind of photo artwork is being shown in contemporary Photography Galleries and to see how that work is presented. The photo artwork that is being viewed varies throughout the semester and depends on what the galleries are presenting. The content of this course changes each semester echoing what is most current. Galleries hang new shows every month, so there is a wealth of inspiration waiting to be seen, from famous names to emerging talent.

Another goal is to present responses to the exhibited work, both in visual and written form. The style of student's photographs is determined by the medium that is most relevant to their work. It is expected that the gallery work will inspire new forms of photographic investigation on the part of the students and instruction in new media work is available. There are readings that supplement what is being seen. Some academic research is necessary to become familiar with various types of photo work and to delve into the photographic legacy that supports the exhibited work and the issues being addressed.

An additional objective is to learn how to find exhibition opportunities, how to submit applications to these venues, and how to submit work for exhibition. Students publish their visual and written work on a blog that presents their work to a public forum and also permits commentary from their peers.

#### COURSE GOALS

- examine and criticize contemporary photographs
- understand the motivation and organization behind gallery exhibitions
- research the legacy behind art-photo production
- understand the process of submitting work to galleries or museums for exhibition
- make a professional digital portfolio
- develop personal photographic works and/or learn new photographic techniques, e.g.
  - ✦ black & white toning and printing, darkroom vs. digital
  - ✦ shooting at night, alternative lighting
  - ✦ alternative processes, hand-applied emulsions
  - ✦ lifts and transfers to make photo objects
  - ✦ photo books, traditional and alternative

#### GALLERY VISITS

About once a month the class will meet on a Saturday to visit galleries or other exhibition venues. The class meets at a predetermined time and location near the galleries that will be seen that day. Modes of travel will be discussed in class early in the semester. Numerous galleries are seen during each tour. Students should have cameras and writing materials to document what they are experiencing. Good walking shoes are also an asset.

#### RESEARCH / DISCUSSION/ CLASS REVIEWS

Students meet in the classroom following each gallery visit to discuss what they have experienced. A written critical review is drafted that week and ideas for visual pieces are presented. Preliminary photographs made in response to what was experienced are discussed by the group. The subject however, is up to you. The content has to have personal relevance before anyone else can be interested. The rest of the week is spent in production mode, writing, shooting, printing and preparing photo artwork for presentation. The following week is a critique where everyone presents their finished work. A blog entry is distilled from the work shown at the critique. The blog entries are uploaded during the week after the critique.

## LECTURE/DEMONSTRATION

This is not a class in any particular photographic discipline yet any type of image-making that students wish to know about can be presented. There is a wealth of handouts and tutorials on the professor's web site that you all may use freely.

## INDEPENDENT LAB WORK

You are welcome to work in the Tyler Photo Studios, digital or analog, preparing photographs shot and manipulated outside of class time. It is expected that the student will spend at least as much time working outside the class as in. It will be important to have the appropriate Handouts available when working independently. You should be shooting and processing the equivalent of at least 4 rolls of film per week. That is at least 144 shots. You should process your photos at least once a week and make prints at least once a week. It is not a photograph until the image sits on a piece of paper. What you see on a computer screen in its preprocessed state is equivalent to a negative. This is the minimum to make work of the quality required for this class.

## INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

The names of photographers and artists whose work relates to yours will be mentioned during critiques. The work of these people will be discussed in future class sessions. You are expected to do research and come to the next class with a list of relevant web sites, a collection of 'borrowed' images from the web, and even a book or two that display this work. Any interesting philosophies that you learn in your academic elective classes should be brought into class for discussion. Any interesting strategies that you devise should also be written up, with example pictures and handed in for potential addition to the class web site. You should also be searching for exhibition opportunities. Bring anything you find to class to be shared with all.

## GROUP CRITIQUES

Student's photographs will be discussed during group critiques approximately every other week. See the online schedule [www.berk-edu.com](http://www.berk-edu.com) for exact dates, as the schedule may change. Everyone must show on their assigned days – no lateness or absence will be tolerated.

## PICTURES of the WEEK

The best photographs from each person will be selected at the end of each crit. These prints will be hung on the POW wall and will remain there until the next crit. You are challenged to duplicate that print from your notes, to indicate that you have control over your printing technique. Either the original or duplicate print will be held for the Photo Archives.

## VIRTUAL GALLERY

The best student work from each critique will be published on the Tyler Photo web site. Students are responsible for creating their own web pictures, including scanning and cleaning up, following the guidelines that will be taught. The recipe is available on-line. These web files are due at the class meeting immediately following the end of the crit. No lateness or absence will be tolerated

## DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

Students are required to hand in a Digital Portfolio of your best work at the end of the year. There is a specific format of 1920 pixels square with a black matte that will be used. This will be demoed. An Artist's Statement will accompany the photos. The photographs must be formally labeled, and will be included in the Photo Archives and to shown to future students. Failure to hand this in on time will result in the failure of this class.

Do not wait until the end of the semester to start building this collection of work. It is best to organize and select your 5 best photos after each critique and then save them on your own backup media throughout the semester.

## READINGS

Readings include articles and sections from the following books:

**Liz Wells:** *Photography: a Critical Introduction*, Oxford, Routledge, 2009

**John Szarkowski:** *The Photographers Eye*, Museum of Modern Art, 1966

**Charlotte Cotton:** *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*, Thames & Hudson, 2009

**Robin Earle Kelsey, Blake Stimson:** *The Meaning of Photography*, Clark Art Institute, 2008

**James Elkins:** *Photography Theory*, Taylor & Francis, 2013

**Stephen Shore:** *The Nature of Photographs: A Primer*, Phaidon Press, 2010

## GRADING

If you do everything just as defined in this syllabus, then you will receive a grade of C. That is average. Average is what everyone else does. If you want a better than average grade then you need to do better than average and more than average work. It is very important to keep on schedule. Being on time for all deadlines is extremely important. This means demonstrating an ongoing effort to produce quality work that has content with personal relevance, and includes evidence of research to support this content; shows prowess in the technical aspects producing formal qualities that supports the content; and making a portfolio of photographs that communicate one's personal vision while generating an inspiring response from your peer audience.

Final grades for the course are given based on the learning outcomes in this syllabus. Attainment of these goals is evaluated by the completion of projects and several other factors, including:

1. Quality of concept and craftsmanship, showing an ability to respond to given assignment and criteria. Risk taken in work, including experimentation with both concepts and techniques. Provide evidence of research to support both the aesthetic and technical components of the work.
2. Producing a portfolio of prints that communicate one's personal vision, while generating an inspiring response from your peer audience. Packaging this portfolio for both the web and as digital slides on DVD.
3. Significant progress based upon individual growth throughout the semester. Assignments are given more weight towards the end of the semester.
4. Class participation and attendance as detailed above. Students are expected to be present in every class and to be actively engaged with all activities, discussions, critiques, and slide presentations during the semester.
5. Successful completion of assignments by the given deadline. Each major project has a deadline ending with a critique that includes a written statement. Each critique is followed by making web versions of the work and a set of digital 'slides'.

Basic guidelines for letter grades:

A – Produce work of the highest quality, show marked improvement, participate significantly in commenting, and meet all deadlines.

B – Produce good quality work, show good improvement, participate reasonably in commenting, meet all deadlines.

C – Produce average quality work that may be strong in some areas but is weaker in others, show some improvement, participate nominally in commenting, be no more than a day late on a deadline.

D – Produce below average or poor quality work, do not show any improvement or the desire to improve, do not participate in commenting, miss deadlines, and are absent.

F – Failure because of poor work, lack of improvement, no participation in discussions, missed deadlines, excessive absence and/or lateness, or a combination of these factors.

## FINAL REVIEWS

Final reviews take place during the last week of regular classes, before study days (that are also cleanup days). All students must attend all Final Reviews – no exceptions! A minimum number of photo pieces must be presented at Final Reviews, along with a digital portfolio, an artist's statement, and a legacy print submitted for the Photo Archives. A sense of consistency, both in content and style, is necessary. Failure to produce any one of these items means that the minimum requirements of this class have not been met. This can result in a failing grade.

## REQUIREMENTS and EXPECTATIONS

### Attendance Policy

You must attend every class meeting. Absences will negatively affect your grade. When absent, you must contact your teacher to find out what occurred in classes you've missed. Work should be completed upon your return to class.

### Excused Absences

Excused absences are for medical reasons and/or family emergencies only and require documentation. Medical absences require note from a doctor or nurse (use Temple Health Services). Students are allowed a maximum of three excused absences after which, you must see the Academic Advisor to withdraw from the course.

### Unexcused Absences

One: Deficiency notice will be given to the student.

Two: Deficiency notice + drop of one letter in your final grade.

Three: Three absences are grounds for failure of the course.

### Withdrawing from a Class

Please review the Temple University policy of Withdrawal from Classes. You are financially responsible for classes from which you withdraw. Withdrawing from a class may greatly delay your time to graduation. Please consult with an academic advisor before withdrawing from a course. See the University policy at:

[http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy\\_no=02.10.14](http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=02.10.14)

### Lateness Policy

Arriving any time after class is scheduled to begin is considered late. Even if you are late, you should always come to class. It is better for you to be present for some of the information than to miss an entire class.

Lateness is recorded: 2 latenesses = 1 absence. It is possible to fail a course based upon lateness alone. If you have a class that ends when another begins, let both teachers know so they are aware of your individual situation.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Please refer to the University's statement on Academic Integrity at: [www.temple.edu/bulletin/Responsibilities\\_rights/responsibilities/responsibilities.shtm](http://www.temple.edu/bulletin/Responsibilities_rights/responsibilities/responsibilities.shtm)

The Student Code of Conduct considers the following to be a violation of academic integrity:

1. Academic dishonesty and impropriety, including plagiarism, fabrication and academic cheating. This includes helping, procuring or encouraging another person to engage in academic misconduct;
2. Interfering with or disrupting the conduct of classes or any other normal or regular activities of the University

## POLICY ON PLAGIARISM, ACADEMIC CHEATING AND DISHONESTY

### Original Work

All work submitted for a class must have been made by you, specifically for the course it has been submitted to. A specific project may not be submitted in multiple classes. Submitting work not generated for a specific course constitutes academic dishonesty. The penalty for academic dishonesty is an automatic "F" in the course in which the offense is committed and a report to the Dean. Subsequent offenses are referred to the University Disciplinary Committee.

## STUDENTS and FACULTY RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES POLICY

Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has a policy on Student and Faculty and Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy #03.70.02), which can be accessed through the following link:

<http://policies.temple.edu/PDF/99.pdf>

Every registered student agrees to abide by an overall set of values, principles and regulations mandated by the university. In order for a student to remain in good standing, it is imperative that each student assumes responsibilities throughout his/her enrollment at Temple. Students also have a number of rights, which protect their interests. Access these rights and responsibilities, including Academic Honesty and Attendance at:

[http://www.temple.edu/bulletin/Responsibilities\\_rights/rights/rights.shtm#rights\\_reps](http://www.temple.edu/bulletin/Responsibilities_rights/rights/rights.shtm#rights_reps)

## DISABILITY DISCLOSURE

Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact Tyler's Academic Advisor Laurie Duffy at 215-777-9185 privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 at 100 Ritter Annex to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Students must present the appropriate paperwork in order to receive special accommodations. Accommodations are limited to those documented by the office of Disability Resources and Services and presented in an official letter to the faculty member.

## INFORMATION on CANCELLATION of CLASSES due to INCLEMENT WEATHER

Information about class closures is prominently displayed on the Temple University homepage ([www.temple.edu](http://www.temple.edu)). The University participates with the City of Philadelphia and local radio stations such as KYW (1060-AM), WDAS (1480-AM, 105.3-FM), WIOQ (102.1-FM), WUSL (98.9-FM) and WPEN (950-AM), which broadcast code numbers indicating when classes are closed because of snow or other inclement weather.

373 Day Class Cancellation (classes that begin before 4pm)

2353 Evening Class Cancellation (classes that begin at or after 4pm)

The most accurate and up-to-date information on class cancellations can be obtained by calling the University's hotline at (215) 204-1975, by listening to Temple's radio station, WRTI (90.1-FM) or referring to Temple's website at: <http://www.temple.edu>.

## LAB USE

The TYLER Photo Area is open for student use according to the published schedules, available online at [www.berk-edu.com](http://www.berk-edu.com). Only students enrolled in these photo classes during the current semester are allowed in these Labs. Do not bring your friends to hang out.

You will need your Temple University ID Card to gain access to any building at Temple. Diligently show your ID every time you enter a building. Don't balk at doing this, even though you think the security people know who you are.

There is absolutely NO FOOD or DRINK ALLOWED in any of the Photo Labs. There is NO SMOKING allowed anywhere in any Temple building.

#### SAFETY TRAINING

All students who will work in the Tyler Labs need to attend a Safety Training session. This is mandated by the Temple University Environmental Health and Radiation Safety Department (EHRS). These sessions will typically happen at either the end of the second week or start of the third week of the semester. You may attend any session that best fits your schedule, but make sure the instructor has your name on their list. An 'Authorized Student' list is prepared and all names are checked against this for access. Make sure you always have your Nitrile Gloves when working in a toxic area.

#### CLEANUP

All students working in the Tyler Photography Labs are required to participate in the end-of-year cleanup. You can sign up for a specific time with the Lab Technician when the time comes. The work will be minimal and it will take about an hour.

#### ID CARDS

Trade in your Temple University ID Card to receive equipment to print. Go to the Equipment Cage and ask the Lab Monitor for the necessary items. Your card will be returned when you are finished working. Do not leave equipment unattended for any extended period of time.

#### CONTACTS

TYLER Photo Cage		777-9225
Department of Graphic Arts & Design/ Tyler Building, Room 210U		777-9145
Steven Berkowitz / Associate Professor	<a href="mailto:berk@temple.edu">berk@temple.edu</a>	<a href="http://www.berk-edu.com">www.berk-edu.com</a>
office hours (by appointment):		Tuesday 3:30 – 4:30 PM