

ART PHOTOGRAPHY (SMARTPHONE) : ON-LINE – Syllabus

Tyler School of Art/ Department of Graphic Arts & Design/ ARTU 2831-701

Class Meetings: on-Line only, Spring Semester 2016

Lectures, Demos and Critiques held on-line, additional production at the Tech Center

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course teaches students the use of smartphones and related devices to make fine art photography. The results are posted to art-specific online visual communities. Responses from fellow students are evaluated in on-line class critiques. This course raises the aesthetics bar above what is usually seen on-line. It teaches students how to see the world through a camera, organize the visual spaces found in their local community, and fill these photographs with meaningful content that can communicate their personal vision to a broader audience.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This is not a course in photography. It is a course in **art**. The basic goal of this class is to see the world in a new way. The next is to record how you interact with the world using this new vision. The third is to communicate your discoveries. Photography is the medium through which we will achieve these goals.

There are two sides to making photographs -- the technical and the aesthetic, the how and the why you do what you do. Aesthetics are very important. Technique is very important. One cannot make good images without having a statement to be made and without having the technical proficiency to present that statement clearly. It is up to you to discover what really interests you, and then make photos that can inspire someone else.

Lecture/ Demonstrations, Independent Lab Work, and Interactive On-Line Critiques are all employed, each one building on the previous. The student is expected to demonstrate their full understanding of all tools and materials, produce a series of compelling photographic prints that will cultivate a personal approach to the medium, and develop the ability to use the vocabulary of photography to discuss their work.

The psychology that dictates the way people respond to photographic images is also studied. Digital photography today uses a lot of emulation. This class examines how today's photos relate to the processes of the past to understand how the legacy of photography affects digital photography today.

CLASS BLOG

This class takes place primarily online. Most activity happens on dedicated blog sites. Students shoot photographs with their smartphones. They post their shots on a blog called SmartphonePhotoS16-01.blogspot.com. Recipes that demonstrate the strategies used to make the most interesting photos are written and posted at the bottom of that blog page.

Students critique each other's works in the comments section of that blog approximately every 3 weeks. Students also vote on the best photograph in each student's post. Each student then reviews the commentary they have received and writes a self-evaluation that is sent to the professor via OWLbox.

Another blog called SmartphoneTeachingS16-01.blogspot.com provides information on the topics that will be pursued for each critique cycle as well as posts of the professor's feedback called 'teaching points' that encapsulate the most important aspects of the photographs from the preceding critique.

TOPICS/ Aesthetic & Technical

There are no specific aesthetic assignments in this class. It is up to you to discover what really interests you and then make photographs about that subject that will inspire someone else. There is a series of topics to provide guidance, each one building on the previous. Students move through the aesthetic and technical challenges posed by these topics and concentrate on the use of photography as a fine art medium.

New technical information will be presented throughout the semester on the Smart Phone Teaching blog. We will be constantly challenging the idea of what can be achieved with these small devices.

The class begins with shooting photos in grayscale so we can concentrate on framing and composition. Then we add color on top of that. Finally, the world of photo apps is explored. This is called 'post-processing' and is where you make the photographs into something more than just what the camera captures.

The main topics covered are:

Basic technique -	device operation, on-line connectivity, grayscale shooting
Composition -	the visual toolkit (proximity, angle of view, lighting, etc...)
Editing -	selecting and organizing photos, ways of shooting
Processing -	apps, e.g. color fx, vintage, polaroid, lomo, pinhole, cross-processing, color grading, etc...
Presentation -	preparing for web, making a digital portfolio

INDEPENDENT LAB WORK

A new process/technique/strategy will be presented as a Topic approximately every 3 weeks.

You are expected to shoot and post at least a dozen shots every week, preferably 2 to 3 shots per day.

At least half of your weekly collection of photos should be from the current process while the other half can use whatever process suits your personal imagery best. The most important factor is that form must support content, meaning that specific techniques are not used just because they 'look cool'. The formal considerations have to be relevant to the content of the photographs. This consistency is what makes good photographs. (You might not know what process suits your personal vision best until we get half way through the semester, but...)

You should shoot a number of shots of each subject. It is not until you shoot a few that you find the best way to look at any particular subject. It is suggested that about 150 shots should be taken per week (the equivalent of 4 rolls of film). This is the minimum to produce enough quality work to pass this course. The task is to select the best shots from that group to post the best presentation of each subject. This is called editing.

Timely participation in all class projects is imperative. If you fall behind because this class does not have regular face-to-face meetings then you will never catch up. Lateness will be rewarded by withdrawal.

SELF-PORTRAITS

It is required that the work for each critique be accompanied by at least two self-portraits. We are not interested in nice pictures that your mother would like. We are looking for evocative character sketches that include environment. You may want to consider starting and ending each time that you shoot with a self-portrait, no matter where you are when you start or end. Another approach is to take a self-portrait immediately upon rising and just before retiring each night. Or shoot at exactly the same time every day.

CRITIQUES

Student work will be critiqued every 2 or 3 weeks. You should post more shots than are needed for each critique and then edit down to the best at the end of the shooting period. Posting 2 shots every day for 3 weeks, not including weekends or critique days, yields 15 prints that can be edited down to the best 10 (plus 2 self portraits). This number will increase by 2 or 3 each critique until 15 prints will be presented in the last critique. A digital portfolio of your 24 best photographs is required just before finals.

COMMENTARY

Everyone is required to post comments on at least half the students in the class. Look through what is on the blog and find which photos are the most interesting to you and write a comment. If a certain photographer already has 5 comments, find someone else. In the end we want everyone to receive at least 10 comments so the feedback is balanced.

The comments will take the form of a response about the physical nature of the prints (form), the subject of the prints (content), and the feeling of the prints (impact). These constitute the physical, conceptual and emotional disciplines. [see the handout on [*Aesthetics - the Three Disciplines.*](#)]

SELF-EVALUATIONS

It is then the responsibility of each student to **write an analysis of their work based on the comments they have received online.** The format of the self-evaluation follows the same criteria as the Commentary; Form, Impact, Content. This self-evaluation is emailed to the instructor and includes a copy of the photo voted best by your peers. These papers are devices to help each student learn about how their images are being responded to so you can use that information to improve your work in the future. These evaluations are not graded primarily for grammar and writing ability but they should be written to a University standard, not in the jargon of typical internet commentary.

Anyone who fails to fulfill any segment of the critique cycle according to published deadlines will not pass the course. See the Semester Schedule for the exact dates.

TEACHING POINTS

After all the self-evaluations are handed in the professor will write a post called 'Teaching Points' that provides a critical response to what students have produced. In this way all students will benefit from what everyone else has done. This class functions as a community in which all students are invested in helping the rest of the group grow and learn. Certain trends will evolve during the semester that are totally dependent on the intellectual and emotional make-up of the student population. Because of this, the class content changes every semester in a way that is impossible to predict. The Teaching Points are tailored to respond to the individual and overall creative energies of the class.

RESEARCH

The technology for this class is a matter for constant research. There are always new apps coming online and old ones being overused and becoming passé. And even with any single app (such as PhotoFX that has 850 presets that can be modified manually), the range of creative possibilities is virtually endless. [note: not all of these will make good photographs, but...] An important part of the research for this class is experimentation with the tools at hand. You will be given some basic examples as starting points but you are expected to move way past those to see what else you can come up with out of your own creative mind. You are also expected to find any new apps or new ways of working and share those with the class. This class also functions as a research laboratory. You are expected to try any new apps that come out and report back to the class on your blog.

RECIPES

You must keep careful notes on what you're doing so that when you come up with something really interesting, you'll not only be able to repeat it, (a necessary component if craftsmanship) but be able to share what you did with the class. [note: It is very easy to start working intuitively, so you have to keep your third eye open.] **You are responsible to hand in at least 1 'recipe' with every critique** written at the end of your photo blog post. From these we will build a library of fascinating photographs and the strategies that went into making them, to be shared with this class and future generations.

The names of photographers and artists whose work relates to yours will be mentioned during critiques. Since this is a new medium there are not many established photo artists working this way. You are expected to do research and **collect a list of relevant web sites and downloaded images from the web that showcase this work**. These can be added to the [Research Pages](#) on the professor's web site for all to share.

VIRTUAL GALLERY

A 'best photograph' from each person will be selected at the end of each critique. The voting is part of the commentary process. These are the 'Pictures of the Week.'

The Pictures of the Week will be merged with the professor's choices and presented on a separate the class web site, along with photographs from other classes. These constitute the 'Best of the Semester' photographs.

DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

Students are required to hand in a digital portfolio of your best work at the end of the year.

An Artist's Statement about all that you have produced this semester will accompany the photos. The photographs must be formally labeled, and will be included in the Photo Archives and to shown to future classes. 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 10 best photos after each critique and then save them on your own backup media throughout the semester. [note: make backups of all your files; best photos, blog pages and written statements.]

GRADING

It is very important to keep on schedule. Being on time for all deadlines is extremely important, especially for an on-line class. Cramming for an art class does not work. Your progress throughout the semester is a major measuring stick. You cannot progress if you only shoot once a week. 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. 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.

This also includes developing a ritual of shooting every day, posting to the class blog regularly, participating in commenting and voting for the Pictures of the Week, experimenting with the process and uniting it with the content and submitting recipes of what you have done, and meeting all critique deadlines.

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.

ID CARDS

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.

DISABILITY

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.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

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.

- 101 Day Class Cancellation
- 2101 Evening Class Cancellation

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

E-MAIL

It is imperative that you check your TU E-Mail at least once a week. You will be sent important information about this course regularly. **You should print a copy of the Class Schedule and keep it in a visible location throughout the semester** so you always know what is happening. It is the student's responsibility to always what is due when.

CONTACTS

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Tyler Photo Area/ Equipment Cage	777-9225	
Steven Berkowitz / Associate Professor	berk@temple.edu	www.berk-edu.com
Office Hours (by appointment)	Tuesdays 4:00 - 5:00 PM	