

**MCOM 3365 – Digital Photography**  
**MW 4:05 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.**  
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**Office Hours: M/W 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., and by appointment**  
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**Course Description:** This course examines the theory and practice of digital photography for publication in the areas of journalism, public relations, websites, graphic design, and advertising. Application of visual communication theories includes composition, human perception, psychology of color, principles of design, and storytelling. Prerequisite: MCOM 2313.

**Course Objectives** Students will:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of visual images and their aesthetic functions, with attention to such areas as composition, color, and lighting.
2. Gain knowledge and skills in the use of basic photography tools, techniques, technologies, and processes to work from concept to finished product.
3. Develop and practice photography skills using digital photography equipment.
4. Understand the application of digital photography in multiple mass communication fields, including journalism, public relations, and advertising.
5. Gain a better understanding of mediated presentation requirements through the use of class critiques and photo presentations.

### **Course Requirements**

1. Readings as assigned and provided in class.
2. DSLR or other camera with manual functionality & SD Card – The studio has DSLR cameras with SD cards students can check out for use. If you choose to not use one of the studio's DSLR cameras, you may use your own but it must be able to be operated in manual mode (user chooses exposure, ISO, etc.). If you use your own camera, you must have an SD card – we do not have additional cards to check out. Cell phone cameras that cannot be operated in manual mode and basic point-to-shoot cameras are not permitted.
3. Photo editing software – We do have editing software for students to use in CAS 102. If you want to edit at home, however, you will need to have your own editing software. There are a variety of free software options available but the free version must NOT put a watermark across your image.
4. Flickr.com account – Flickr.com is a photo sharing website. You will utilize it throughout the semester to keep your photos organized and to utilize it as a semester portfolio. You will submit your Flickr.com link on Canvas instead of uploading images to Canvas directly.

5. Microsoft Word or comparable word processing software.
  - a. You may use Google Docs, Pages, or any other word processing software, but your assignment **MUST** be exported to a .DOC or .DOCX format before submission.
  - b. You **may not** utilize notepad or notes on your phone. If you submit a screenshot of your notepad on your phone or tablet, you will receive a zero for the assignment.

**Evaluation and Grade Calculation –**

Group	Percentage of Final Grade
Assignments (Misc., photos, etc.)	70%
Final project	30%

Percent	Letter Grade
90% - 100%	A
80% - 89%	B
70-79%	C
60-69%	D
59% and below	F

1. Assignments (70%) Student learning outcomes - 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5
  - a. Misc. assignments: Throughout the semester, students will complete a variety of miscellaneous assignments (minor assignments, equipment quizzes, etc.) that aim to increase understanding of the practice of digital photography, strengthen creativity, and meet the requirements of our studio for equipment usage.
  - b. Photos: Throughout the semester, students will take a variety of images, either in class or as assigned homework to strengthen their skills in digital photography and creativity. Additionally, students will participate in photography critiques during class sessions to gain feedback from the professor and classmates.
2. Final project (30%) Student learning outcomes – 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5
  - a. For their final project, students will utilize various photography and design skills and techniques to create a visually strong and contextually production for use in a variety of mass communication fields. Students will choose a medium to create such as a product advertising campaign, a PSA campaign, a magazine or illustrated book cover and spread, newsletter, or a brochure utilizing a topic of their choice and will be required to take all photos for the final product. Students must demonstrate a strong understanding of various photography skills, the ability to create a creative design that connects with

their photos, and an understanding of storytelling, continuity (one idea/focus per project), creativity, and other concepts needed in the fields of mass communication. Students will be required to submit a project pitch for approval, a rough draft for feedback, and a publish-ready final project. Students will also be required to give a brief presentation on their project.

## **Class Policies and Expectations**

### **1. Classroom Policies and Expectations**

- A. Work hard - learning requires constant reading, researching, thinking, discussing, and working with your classmates and me. Everyone has something important to contribute. My job is to present new information and prepare a climate in which you can contribute your own special knowledge. Your job is to be prepared to contribute.
- B. Participate – you must be an active part of the course to succeed. You will also have to give effort outside of class.
- C. Treat each other with respect and display common classroom courtesies.
  - 1. You are responsible for your attitude and how you treat others. I will not tolerate name calling, fighting, students belittling each other for differing opinions, etc. I expect you to act like adults, show each other respect, and to challenge yourself and each other to learn/understand opinions you may not agree with. If you are not treating individuals with respect or are causing a distraction, you will be asked to leave the classroom.
- D. The use of cellphones, tablets, or other device use during class times is not allowed unless the need is specified by me (i.e. during an activity). You are not permitted to use cellphones for note taking, check social media, view/work on material for another course, or simply browse the internet during class times.
  - 1. I understand emergencies and the need to take a call or text. If this must happen, be discreet, do not disturb others, do not let it get in the way of your learning, and DO NOT abuse this.
  - 2. If the only device you have to take notes on is your phone, I will provide you with a notebook to take notes during class.
- E. I use Canvas and email to communicate, post assignments and readings, present feedback and provide a space for you to communicate with your classmates. I expect you to check both daily and stay aware of what is coming up.
- F. Communicate - If you have a problem with anything throughout the semester... getting an assignment in on time, needing to be absent from a class, getting your book, checking out equipment, or anything I'm doing as a professor... talk to me about it. I cannot help you or fix the problem if I am unaware of it.

### **2. Attendance Policy**

- A. Attendance in this course is crucial to student success and students are expected to attend class each time it meets.
  - 1. If you miss class during an in-class activity, it is your responsibility to complete any assignment pertaining to the activity outside of class time.

We will not go back over the material in class. Failure to complete the assignment will result in a zero.

### **3. Assignment Policies**

- A. Assignments have deadlines and these deadlines need to be met. It is your responsibility to utilize time outside of class in an effective manner so you can ensure that you submit each assignment before the due date and time.
  - a. For many assignments, not all, the submission folder will stay open for one week after the due date. Any assignments turned in after the due date will receive a point per day deduction. Specific point values that will be deducted each day can be found on the assignment overviews on Canvas. It is your responsibility to know when the assignment is due for full credit, when the assignment closes, and the number of points that will be deducted each day for late submissions. Assignments will not be accepted after this final date.
- B. Assignments and due dates may be changed at the instructor’s discretion with fair notice to students.
- C. I will not accept assignments via email unless there are issues with Canvas and the email includes your assignment and a screenshot of the Canvas malfunction.
- D. Merely completing all assignments does not guarantee that you will pass the course. You must put forth effort and show an understanding of the material to earn a satisfactory grade.
- E. I will not accept screenshots of assignments. Unless otherwise indicated, all assignments must be typed, formatted to be a .DOC or .DOCX (Pages, Google Drive, and other online word processors must be exported to this specific format), and submitted via Canvas.
- F. Assignments will be discussed in class, students will be given a course schedule, Canvas includes a syllabus function that outlines upcoming due dates, due dates can be seen listed on each assignment under the assignment tab in Canvas, assignment due dates can be added to your Canvas calendar, and each due date will be listed in the course modules. There are SEVERAL ways to determine what is coming up due in class. It is your responsibility to be aware of what is coming up due and to stay on top of your assignments.
- G. It is your responsibility to ensure that your assignments are being submitted correctly to Canvas by the due date and time. If an assignment appears to be not submitted beyond the assignment closing, it will receive a zero. If you do not regularly check your grades or check Canvas for technical errors, there is little that can be done at the end of the semester. If you do experience technical difficulties submitting assignments, you must email me before the assignment closes.
- H. All assignments will be checked by TurnItIn – a plagiarism and AI detection software.
- I. Students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. A student who is caught doing either will earn a “0” for that assignment and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action. If a student is caught a second time, they will automatically fail the

course.

- a. In addition to UT Tyler’s Student Conduct and Discipline policy, plagiarism/cheating includes:
  - i. Self-plagiarism - the use of papers or other materials previously submitted elsewhere. I expect you to submit work created specifically for this class during this semester. Photos you submit for assignments must have been taken with intention and during this semester.
  - ii. AI generated content – the purpose of my assignments is for you to explore your understanding of the material on a deeper level and practice improving your skill in photography, not have a computer explore do it for you.

### **1. UT Tyler AI Statement**

A. UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools’ ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler’s Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course (see below) is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler’s Academic Integrity Policy.

1. Students can use AI platforms to help prepare for assignments and projects (i.e., brainstorming).
2. Students may not use AI to generate/create work for submission. All work submitted must come from the student.
3. While AI can be a good starting point for research, the AI platform utilized does not count as an academic source because it can be incorreced or incomplete. It will not be accepted as a source for citing information.

### Course Schedule

Date	Agenda	Due today
<b>Week One</b>		
M 8/26	<u>Course introduction:</u> Syllabus, schedule, equipment use agreements, studio policies, etc.	
W 8/28	<u>Topic:</u> Intro to Digital Photography  <u>Assign:</u> <u>Read:</u> Experience is the Best Teacher <u>Misc:</u> Flickr.com account creation due Wednesday, 9/4 by 11:59 p.m.	
<b>Week Two</b>		
M 9/2	<b>Labor Day – No class meeting</b>	
W 9/4	<u>Topic:</u> Exposure  <u>Assign:</u> <u>Read:</u> Exposure <u>Misc:</u> Camera simulation reflection due Wednesday, 9/11 by 11:59 p.m. <u>Misc:</u> Camera test – physical portion due Wednesday, 9/18 by 5:00 p.m. with lab techs, online portion due Wednesday, 9/18 by 11:59 p.m.	<u>Misc:</u> Flickr.com account creation
<b>Week Three</b>		
M 9/9	<u>Topic:</u> Composition & perspective  <u>Assign:</u> <u>Read:</u> What is Composition? <u>Read:</u> The 10 Elements of Composition <u>Photos:</u> Composition and perspective practice due Wednesday, 9/18 by 11:59 p.m.	
W 9/11	<u>Hands on:</u> Composition & perspective	Misc: Camera simulation reflection
<b>Week Four</b>		
M 9/16	<u>Topic:</u> Depth of field	

W 9/18	<p><u>Hands on:</u> Depth of field</p> <p><b>Assign:</b>  <u>Photos:</u> Depth of field due Wednesday, 9/25 by 11:59 p.m.</p>	<p><u>Photos:</u> Composition and perspective  <u>Misc:</u> Camera test – physical portion due by 5:00 p.m. with lab techs, online portion due by 11:59 p.m.</p>
<b>Week Five</b>		
M 9/23	<p><u>Topic:</u> Language of the image</p> <p><b>Assign:</b>  <u>Read:</u> Photo Journaling Can Make you a Better Photographer  <u>Read:</u> 10 Ways to Critique</p>	
W 9/25	<p><u>Topic:</u> Shooting modes</p> <p><b>Assign:</b>  <u>Read:</u> RAW vs. JPG</p>	<p><u>Photos:</u> Depth of field</p>
<b>Week Six</b>		
M 9/30	<p><u>Topic:</u> Image editing</p> <p><b>Assign:</b>  <u>Read:</u> Basic Photo Editing</p>	
W 10/2	<p><u>Topic:</u> Working with light</p> <p><b>Assign:</b>  <u>Read:</u> How to Use Light in Photography  <u>Photos:</u> Light as subject due Wednesday, 10/9 by the start of class</p>	
<b>Week Seven</b>		

M 10/7	<p><u>Topic:</u> Color theory</p> <p><b>Assign:</b>  <u>Read:</u> How to Use Color in Photography  <u>Read:</u> What is Contrast in Photography?</p> <p><u>Photos:</u> Color theory due Wednesday, 10/16 by the start of class</p>	
W 10/9	<p><u>Critique:</u> Light as subject</p>	<p><u>Photos:</u> Light as subject (start of class)</p>
<b>Week Eight</b>		
M 10/14	<p><u>Topic:</u> Major project</p> <p><b>Assign:</b>  <u>Final project:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project pitch due Monday, 10/21 by 11:59 p.m.</li> <li>• (Optional for extra credit) Rough draft for final project due Wednesday, 11/13 by 11:59 p.m.</li> <li>• Final project due Monday, 12/2 by the start of class</li> <li>• Final project presentations on Monday, 12/2 and Wednesday, 12/4</li> </ul>	
W 10/16	<p><u>Critique:</u> Color theory</p>	<p><u>Photos:</u> Color theory (start of class)</p>
<b>Week Nine</b>		
M 10/21	<p><u>Topic:</u> Portraits</p> <p><b>Assign:</b>  <u>Photos:</u> Portraits due Wednesday, 10/30 by the start of class</p>	<p><u>Major:</u> Project pitch</p>



W 10/23	<p><u>Topic:</u> Capturing motion</p> <p><b>Assign:</b>  <u>Photos:</u> Capturing motion due Wednesday, 11/6 by the start of class</p> <p><u>Major:</u> Project pitch resubmission – if required due Wednesday, 10/30 by 11:59 p.m.</p>	
<b>Week Ten</b>		
M 10/28	<u>Hands on:</u> Capturing motion	
W 10/30	<u>Critique:</u> Portraits	<p><u>Photos:</u> Portraits (start of class)</p> <p><u>Major:</u> Project pitch resubmission – if required</p>
<b>Week Eleven</b>		
M 11/4	<p><u>Topic:</u> Scenic, nature, &amp; wildlife</p> <p><b>Assign:</b>  <u>Photos:</u> Scenic, nature, &amp; wildlife due Wednesday, 11/13 by the start of class</p>	
W 11/6	<u>Critique:</u> Capturing motion	<u>Photos:</u> Capturing motion (start of class)
<b>Week Twelve</b>		
M 11/11	<p><u>Topic:</u> Close-up</p> <p><b>Assign:</b>  <u>Photos:</u> Close-up due Monday, 11/18 by the start of class</p>	
W 11/13	<u>Critique:</u> Scenic, nature, & wildlife	<p><u>Photos:</u> Scenic, nature, &amp; wildlife photography (start of class)</p> <p><u>(Optional for extra credit) Rough draft for final project</u></p>
<b>Week Thirteen</b>		
M 11/18	<u>Critique:</u> Close-up	<u>Photos:</u> Close-up (start of class)
W 11/20	Workday for final project – No class meeting	
<b>Week Fourteen</b>		

<b>Thanksgiving break – No class meetings</b>		
<b>Monday, 11/25 – Friday 11/29</b>		
<b>Week Fifteen</b>		
M 12/2	Final project presentations	<u>Final project:</u> Final project (start of class)
W 12/4	Final project presentations	
<b>Week Sixteen</b>		
<b>Finals Week – No class meetings</b>		
<b>Monday, 12/9 – Friday 12/13</b>		