

MCOM 3365 – Digital Photography

MWF 9:05 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

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Office Hours: Friday 12:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m., and by appointment

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.
 - c. Attendance and participation: Students are expected to attend class and participation is a requirement in this course to meet the SLOs of the course. Without regular attendance and participation, students will not be able to sufficiently learn the material.
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. Grading – The grading process begins with the assumption that the work is good, which earns a grade within the range of a “B.” To earn an A, you must show exceptional understanding of the material, utilizing additional sources, examples, and original thought. This means going beyond stating the obvious, the simple answer, or what Google says. Additionally, poor organization, not following assignment instructions, grammar/spelling, lack of depth and thought, failing to illustrate an understanding of the material, etc. will result in your grade being lowered.
- E. 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.
- F. 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.

1. It is highly recommended that you download the Canvas application and adjust your settings to allow for notifications.

G. 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.

H. Food and drinks are not allowed in the classroom or studio. Food/drinks are allowed in the studio when we are doing 10-minute shows and the show involves food. This is the only exception. Food and drink can be left at the lab tech station or at the tables in the back room. Students are expected to clean up after themselves. If trash becomes an issue, food and drinks will have to remain completely outside in the hallway.

2. Attendance Policy

A. Attendance in this course is crucial to student success and students are expected to attend class each time it meets. Attendance will be taken at each meeting. Each student starts with an attendance grade of 100. Each day that is missed (not including excused absences), your score will be reduced by 3 points. Students have **two** days they can miss without having a point deduction for any unexcused reason. Point deductions will start after the second unexcused absence.

1. Excused absences include illnesses supported by a doctor's note, deaths in your immediate family, school sponsored events that the student has given notice for by the second week of classes, and religious observances that the student has given notice for by the second week of classes. All other absences will be handled on a case-by-case basis by me. It is the responsibility of the student to provide **verifiable** documentation for their absence to be considered excused.
2. Work is not an excusable reason to miss class. You should ensure that your employer knows when you need to be in class.
3. Many assignments will be started during a class period. If you miss one of these classes, it is your responsibility to still complete the assignment by the due date and time. If your absence falls under an excused absence and it prevents you from completing your assignment on time, it is your responsibility to provide proper documentation to be granted an extension.

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. 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 work copied from sources without proper attribution/citing, AI-generated content, and papers or other materials previously submitted in my classes or other professor’s classes.

Course Schedule

Date	Agenda	Due today
Week One		
M 8/21	<u>Course introduction:</u> Syllabus, schedule, equipment use agreements, studio policies, etc.	
W 8/23	<u>Topic:</u> Camera & exposure basics Assign: <u>Read:</u> Experience is the Best Teacher <u>Read:</u> Exposure <u>Misc:</u> Camera test – physical portion due Friday, 9/1 by 5:00 p.m. with lab techs, online portion due Friday, 9/1 by 11:59 p.m. <u>Misc:</u> Flickr.com account creation due Friday, 9/1 by 11:59 p.m.	
F 8/25	<u>Lecture:</u> Camera & exposure basics <u>Hands-on:</u> Cameras & exposure (pending time) Assign: <u>Misc:</u> Camera simulation reflection due Friday, 9/1 by 11:59 p.m.	
Week Two		
M 8/28	<u>Topic:</u> The History of Photography	
W 8/30	<u>Topic:</u> Composition Assign: <u>Read:</u> What is Composition? <u>Read:</u> The 10 Elements of Composition	
F 9/1	<u>Hands on:</u> Composition & Perspective Assign: <u>Photos:</u> Composition and perspective due Wednesday, 9/6 by the start of class	<u>Misc:</u> Camera simulation reflection (11:59 p.m.) <u>Misc:</u> Camera test (online portion by 11:59 p.m.; physical portion by 5:00 p.m. with lab techs) <u>Misc:</u> Flickr.com account created (11:59 p.m.)
Week Three		
M 9/4	Labor Day – No classes	

W 9/6	<u>Critique:</u> Composition and perspective practice	<u>Photos:</u> Composition and perspective (start of class)
F 9/8	<u>Topic:</u> Language of the image Assign: <u>Read:</u> Photo Journaling Can Make you a Better Photographer <u>Read:</u> 10 Ways to Critique	
Week Four		
M 9/11	<u>Topic:</u> Language of the image	
W 9/13	<u>Hands on:</u> Think before you shoot	
F 9/15	<u>Topic:</u> Image editing Assign: <u>Read:</u> Basic Photo Editing <u>Read:</u> RAW vs. JPG	
Week Five		
M 9/18	<u>Topic:</u> Image editing Assign: <u>Misc:</u> Image editing practice due Wednesday, 9/27 by 11:59 p.m.	
W 9/20	<u>Hands on:</u> Basic image editing	
F 9/22	<u>Topic:</u> Working with light	
Week Six		
M 9/25	<u>Topic:</u> Working with light Assign: <u>Read:</u> How to Use Light in Photography <u>Photos:</u> Light as subject due Friday, 10/6 by the start of class	
W 9/27	<u>Hands on:</u> Working with light	<u>Misc:</u> Image editing practice (11:59 p.m.)

F 9/29	<u>Topic:</u> Color theory	
Week Seven		
M 10/2	<u>Topic:</u> Color theory Assign: <u>Read:</u> How to Use Color in Photography <u>Read:</u> What is Contrast in Photography? <u>Photos:</u> Color theory due Friday, 10/13 by the start of class	
W 10/4	<u>Topic:</u> Major project Assign: <u>Final project:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project pitch due Monday, 10/9 by 11:59 p.m. • Rough draft for final project due Friday, 11/10 by the start of class • Final project due Monday, 11/27 by 11:59 p.m. • Final project presentations on Wednesday, 11/29 and Friday, 12/1 	
F 10/6	<u>Critique:</u> Light as subject	<u>Photos:</u> Light as subject (start of class)
Week Eight		
M 10/9	<u>Topic:</u> Portraits Assign: <u>Photos:</u> Portraits due Friday, 10/20 by the start of class	<u>Major:</u> Project pitch (11:59 p.m.)
W 10/11	<u>Topic:</u> Portraits	
F 10/13	<u>Critique:</u> Color theory	<u>Photos:</u> Color theory (start of class)
Week Nine		
M 10/16	<u>Topic:</u> Capturing motion Assign: <u>Photos:</u> Capturing motion due Wednesday, 10/25 by the start of class <u>Major:</u> Project pitch resubmission – if required due Monday, October 23 by 11:59 p.m.	

W 10/18	<u>Hands on:</u> Capturing motion	
F 10/20	<u>Critique:</u> Portraits	<u>Photos:</u> Portraits (start of class)
Week Ten		
M 10/23	<u>Topic:</u> Nature Photography Assign: <u>Photos:</u> Nature photography due Wednesday, 11/1 by the start of class	<u>Major:</u> Project pitch resubmission – if required (11:59 p.m.)
W 10/25	<u>Critique:</u> Capturing motion	<u>Photos:</u> Capturing motion (start of class)
F 10/27	<u>Topic:</u> Close-up Assign: <u>Photos:</u> Close-up due Friday, 11/3 by the start of class	
Week Eleven		
M 10/30	<u>Hands on:</u> Close-up	
W 11/1	<u>Critique:</u> Scenic, nature, & wildlife	<u>Photos:</u> Nature photography (start of class)
F 11/3	<u>Critique:</u> Close-up	<u>Photos:</u> Close-up (start of class)
Week Twelve		
M 11/6	<u>Topic:</u> Advertising photography	
W 11/8	<u>Topic:</u> Advertising photography	
F 11/10	Final project meetings – No full class meeting	<u>Final project:</u> Rough draft (start of class)
Week Thirteen		
M 11/13	Final project meetings – No full class meeting	
W 11/15	Final project meetings – No full class meeting	
F 11/17	Workday for final project – No official meeting	

Week Fourteen		
Thanksgiving break – No class meetings Monday, 11/20 – Friday 11/24		
Week Fifteen		
M 11/27	Workday for final project – No official meeting	<u>Final project:</u> Final project (11:59 p.m.)
W 11/29	Final project presentations	
F 12/1	Final project presentations	
Week Sixteen		
Finals Week – No class meetings Monday, 12/4 – Friday 12/8		