

Course Title: COM 325 / 425, Photography for Social Change

Schedule: Tues/Thurs., 10:00am -11:20am

Room Assignment: Eiben Hall 110 & 127

Instructor:

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Course Description:

The course examines the role of photography within culture and society and how photography can be employed as an instrument of social change and a means of discovering and exploring one's unique identity. The course surveys the various ways photography can be used in making a difference in the fabric of one's community.

Learn the fundamentals of photography and digital image editing in Adobe Photoshop. Covers basic camera operation, creative camera controls, and the visual elements: the frame, light, tonality and color, the moment, and the subject. Learning to see with a camera will be emphasized.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand fundamentals of photography including camera operation and creative controls.
2. Gain a basic hands-on understanding of post-processing techniques in Lightroom/Photoshop for tonal and color correction, sharpening, and creative controls.
3. Understand the basic visual language and principles of making effective photographic images. View work of historic and contemporary photographers and explore the range of ideas and approaches to the medium.
5. Develop a critical vocabulary for evaluating images based on the principles of photographic visual expression and examine cultural conditions through images.
6. Discover and cultivate the seeds of your own personal, unique vision.
7. Explore the use of photography as a means of making a difference in your environment, community, or society.
8. Gain a deeper appreciation and engagement with the world around you through the photographic medium.

Class Requirements and Grading:

Completion of weekly assignments and readings (30%). Participation in class critiques and projects (30%). Completion of individual portfolio of 12-20 images on a theme approved by the instructor that relates to the broader aims of the class. This will be discussed prior to mid-semester and the final 6 weeks of the class will be devoted to reviewing ongoing student portfolio work (40%).

Attendance and Participation:

Due to the hands-on nature of the subject matter and the need to learn all aspects of class content, ALL class time is significant to your understanding of the learning objectives. More than two unexcused absences will result in the drop of one-half a letter grade for each absence. Showing up for class is essential for a good grade. If you are not present within 10 minutes of the start of class, you will be considered absent.

PLEASE NOTE: Since class participation and critique of each other's work with full attention is an important aspect of class content, CELL PHONES SHOULD BE STOWED AND ON SILENT MODE. You will be marked absent for any class period for excessive cell phone use.

Written Material

You will be required to write three short essays:

1. A review essay on a photographer or photographic exhibition, the exact content depends upon what is exhibited in Honolulu this semester.
2. A two-page document outlining your portfolio goals: what you want to accomplish, why, and how you intend to go about the production.
3. An artist's statement — one to two page — expressing your artistic intent. This is due at the end of the semester with the final portfolio.

Weekly Schedule (subject to change based on field trips and student progress)

Week one:

Basic camera operations explained and demonstrated. Check out cameras. First assignment to make images.

Week two:

Review/critique of student work. Slide lecture on visual aspects of photography. Review of contemporary and historic images. Assignment.

Week Three

Review/critique of student work. Introduction to Adobe Photoshop for image editing. Tonal and color correction. Assignment

Week Four

Introduction of Camera Raw format for high-quality image-making. Use of Photoshop for local correction and sharpening.

Week Five

Review/critique of student work. Introduction of critical vocabulary for evaluating images. Written and photographing assignment.

Week Six

Slide show on various approaches to photography. Emphasis on the use of photography as a tool for self-discovery and a means of social contribution.

Week Seven

Review and critique of student work. Use of masking and channels in Adobe Photoshop. Hands-on session.

Week Eight

Initiation of portfolio projects. Due at end of the semester. Slide lecture on the creative process.

Week Nine

Review/critique of ongoing portfolio work. Slide lecture on photographic projects and meaningful social change.

Week Ten

Review/critique of ongoing portfolio work. Image refinement and enhancement in Adobe Photoshop to strengthen and reinforce your visual statement.

Week Eleven

Review/critique of ongoing portfolio work. Written paper due on individual photographer or photographic “movement.”

Week Twelve

Review/critique of ongoing portfolio work and field trip.

Week Thirteen

Review/critique of ongoing portfolio work. Exploration of sequencing and editing images. Presentation methods.

Week Fourteen

Hand-on lab session for completing and printing images.

Week Fifteen

Final review of portfolio. FINAL for class is during finals week.

Notes on the Final Portfolio

Class portfolios should relate to a unified theme and consist of 12-20 images, edited from a larger body of work. Themes are chosen in advance and approved by the instructor.

Your choice of project theme should grow out of your unique interests and strive to make a statement about the world or oneself in such a way that contributes or communicates to others. Cultural diversity, tolerance, the ability to empathize with the realities of others, and greater self-knowledge are all possible outcomes of the portfolio project.

Field Trips

During the course of the semester, we will schedule at least one field trip, which will be a photography session at a location determined jointly by members of the class.