



Koyasu Suma Shrine, Kyoto, Japan

**Western University
Department of Visual Arts
Digital Photography
VAS2246b
NCB-120D/135
Monday 14:30-17:30, and Wednesday, 14:30-17:30**

**Professor: Kelly Wood
Office: JLVAC 119
Office Hours: Monday 12:00-14:00 or by appointment
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Digital Photography

“the image is just an empty word” ; “the image is no longer a representation, it is pure information”; “This is the infographic age”–Paul Virilio (1987)

This course is a survey of various technical and artistic approaches to digital photography in contemporary artistic practice. This class will be organized around various technical demonstrations and tutorials of digital photographic techniques and practices. Through a series of assignments, workshops and tutorials the student will learn the mechanics and functions of the digital, single-lens reflex camera: the processes of image evaluation tools and development; and, the production of the digital photographic print. Lectures and exemplary material will be organized thematically. Students will benefit from exposure to a diverse and wide-ranging field of approaches to digital photography and are presented with productive evaluative modes of interpretation. Studio production and experimentation will be complimented by a series of lectures, readings, discussions and viewings aimed at developing critical response skills, conceptual foundations, language appropriate for image evaluation and analysis; understanding of historical and contemporary discourses surrounding the photographic image in the context of the fine arts.

Introductory visual presentations and lectures will be offered in this class. Students will engage in a critical discourse on the subject of digital photography in art, and will be expected to draw on this discourse in their discussion during critiques of their own assignments. Students of this course will be required to respond to a reading assignment in a reading report and/or summary. This course will also involve the production of a number of photographic projects that will expand and practically inform the theoretical discussions based in the student presentations.

Students are expected to demonstrate an attitude of respectful criticality and show active engagement at all times and contribute to the creation of collegial and productive learning environment. It is recommended that the student read the "Critique Strategies document posted on OWL resources important docs> critique_strategies.pdf).

The Use of cell-phones, text messaging and/or social media sites during class time will not be tolerated. Focused engagement with the content of the course will be encouraged and appreciated.

Note:

An aim of this course is to expose the student to a very broad range of photographic art. Some of the most canonical or universally esteemed works depict what is nowadays called 'mature subject matter.' Be forewarned that a small percentage of the visual material students will be expected to view is of an explicit nature, containing for example, scenes or depictions of sexual and/or violent acts. Students must accept that by taking this course they have consented to viewing such material. If this poses a problem for a student, for whatever reason, it must be BROUGHT TO THE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION OF THE INSTRUCTOR (DURING THE FIRST CLASS).

Course Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to independently formulate and realize visual ideas with appropriate technical competence in fundamental digital photographic practices. The student will be introduced to image capture techniques with digital, single-lens reflex cameras, as well as image development techniques and studio practices in the digital lab. The student will also learn to critically assess and discuss their own work and the work of their peers with reference to recent professional practices and theoretical models of digital photography-based art making presented and discussed in class.

After successful completion of this course students will be able to

- effectively use their digital SLR camera in manual and semi-manual shooting modes
- understand the various software applications for image processing, organization and manipulation
- understand the historical development of digital photography in the fine art context
- engage in critical issues surrounding both historical and contemporary practice
- articulate their ideas in a clear and effective manner
- analyze and provide constructive and critical feedback on the work of others.
- demonstrate appropriate vocabulary and strategies of assessment for digital photographic imagery

Course Materials:

A small-format, digital, single-lens reflex camera (D-SLR) is required for this course (minimum 6MB image file adequate). In some cases, a higher-quality, point-and-shoot camera with creative control functions may be acceptable. **Some** digital cameras are available at the Visual Arts department sign-out office. Students will find it useful to have a 'memory stick,' or, external hard drive, for the storage and transfer of larger digital files. A USB card-reader may be useful for transferring images from the camera's memory card to lab computers, especially if your DSLR uses a proprietary memory card (eg. Sony, Olympus). Students should expect to produce their own digital files, and, buy their own paper and other materials and prints.

Current charges for digital printing with the Visual Arts Epson digital printer is approximately \$\$ per SQUARE FOOT. We have 44" wide roll of paper with lustre and matte finish. The large-format printer is reserved for Graduate use, however, some exceptions can be made if negotiated in advance. Cheaper, and faster, printing for small format prints can be obtained from: Imprint at UCC; Forest City Image Works, Kinko's, Blacks, Mercury Printers, and even Walmart.

Learning Outcomes:

Students of this class will gain the ability to use a basic range of established techniques in the field of digital photography. Students will acquire a general knowledge and understanding of many key concepts, methodologies, and theoretical approaches in digital photography. While engaging in creative activity in the primary area of study, students will foster, where appropriate, an ability to gather, review, evaluate and interpret information relevant to digital photography. Students will gain transferable skills necessary for further study, employment, community involvement and/or other activities.

Course Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated according to the following criteria: Understanding of assignment concepts, level of ambition, resourcefulness and creativity, technical facility, conceptual development and complexity of ideas, completion and quality of assignments as well as attendance and participation.

For example*****

- demonstrates a firm understanding of camera functions
- demonstrates considered editing of images
- composition is carefully considered and engaging
- demonstrates overall technical and artistic knowledge
- project presentation is well considered and suits the concept of the work
- project guidelines have been followed and material requirements have been fulfilled
- overall the photographs are visually engaging, thoughtfully considered, and well done

Course requirements:

Each student is responsible to meet the requirements of all project assignments, procedures and due dates. Attendance in all classes is mandatory. Work will not be accepted from students missing 15%, or more, of class time (i.e. three classes) without documented medical or bereavement reason and may be debarred from participating in final studio evaluations. Students who are consistently absent from a portion of a four-hour course will be considered absent from the class, and when the 15% limit is reached, they may be similarly disbarred. **Class contact hours will be crucial for this course. Be on time! Technical workshops, presentations, critiques, lectures and discussions will happen during class time and will not be repeated.**

Class time will be devoted to lectures, tutorials, demonstrations, presentations, critiques and studio work time (work-sessions). In-class assignments, like the shooting-spree, must be completed during class time. Time will be allotted to the students of this class to occupy the media lab exclusively for their own purposes to complete assignments. The student is expected to spend an amount of time equivalent to the courses' assigned, 6 hour, course weight working towards meeting course requirements.

Students are required to observe all specified mandatory safety protocols governing media lab use. Students consistently failing to meet these requirements will have their media lab privileges suspended. Students are not permitted to work in labs outside the open hours of the department.

You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that you have not taken an anti-requisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as a basis of appeal. If you are not eligible for a course, you may be removed from it at any time, and you will receive no fee adjustment. These decisions cannot be appealed.

The last day to drop this course without academic penalty is March 7th, 2016. All assignments must be handed in by the last day of class.

At the end of the course, all work must be removed from lockers and workspaces. The department cannot guarantee the security of any work or materials left unattended after April 23rd.

Academic requirements:

Over the course of this class, 4 formal photographic projects will be assigned. These projects will generally be due three weeks after assignment and consist of a presentation of your completed study in the form of digital photo prints.

A reading report and/or summary will be assigned in class. In addition, short studio projects will be handed in to the instructor at the end of some specific tutorials.

Failure to attend all classes and complete all assignments by announced deadlines is unacceptable without documented excuse for medical or other legitimate reasons. **A one-time, late penalty of 10% shall be applied to all late submissions.** The presentation and the studio assignments are due at the commencement of the class for class discussion and critique; late assignments will include those assignments handed in on the due date after the class has ended. Extensions, granted for valid reasons, must be negotiated before assignments are due. Late assignments should be submitted to the office of the department of Visual Arts. Documentation for students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed assignment worth less than 10% should be submitted directly to the instructor.

Medical Policy on Unfinished Course Work

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to their home Dean's Office and provide documentation. The instructor or department cannot grant academic accommodation.

A student who cannot complete assignments totaling less than 10% for the whole course, due to medical reasons, may speak with the instructor and arrange an extension of no more than two weeks to complete the assignments along with presenting medical documentation.

A student who cannot complete assignments totaling less than 10% for the whole course, not due to medical reasons, will not receive any accommodations or extensions.

Accommodations

Students with disabilities, or students who require accommodation in course requirements or scheduling should talk with the instructor as soon as possible during office hours or by appointment.

Mental Health:

“Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.”

Policies and Conduct

I will make every effort to foster a class environment that is comfortable for all students and where students respect all class members. We do not always have to agree with one another, however, it is important that we respect each others' viewpoints. Behavior that is disruptive or discriminatory will not be tolerated. It is the responsibility of every student to read the Code of Student Conduct and familiarize him or herself with its contents. The Code is available at "<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/board/code.pdf>" www.uwo.ca/univsec/board/code.pdf.

Academic Honesty:

All course work must be entirely your own. All sources that you use for your assignments must be accurately cited. If you have doubts about how and when to cite sources, visit the Writing Centre, or talk to me before the assignment due dates. **All course work must be completed specifically for this course. Submitting the same work for credit in more than one course is considered cheating.** Plagiarism and cheating are the most serious of academic offences and they will be dealt with strictly.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism, which may be defined as “The act or an instance of copying or stealing another’s words or ideas and attributing them as one’s own,” will not be tolerated. (Citation excerpted from Black’s Law Dictionary, 1999, 7th ed., p. 1170). “All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).”

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf .

Student Services

There are many organizations and offices on campus designed to assist students with the challenges of university life. Please see the web site for a description of the full array of services:

http://communications.uwo.ca/western/current_studservices.html

THE USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

All cellular telephones must be turned off during class time.

In addition, while laptops are useful classroom tools, specifically for taking notes, using laptops and cellular telephones for personal enjoyment (i.e. Facebook, email, texting) during the class is unacceptable and could negatively affect your participation mark. Furthermore, usage of computers for purposes that are not related directly to class participation during class time (i.e. note-taking), could result in restricting the use of computers in class.

Finally, students are not permitted to record lectures using any electronic recording devices. Lectures are the intellectual property of the professor. Students who require assistance with note-taking should consult the Student Development Centre.

Grading Breakdown:

Photographic projects (4)	65%
In-class studio projects	10%
Reading report/summary	10%
Quality of class participation/attendance	15%

Photographic assignments constitute the majority of the final grade at 65% of the total. Approximately 4 photo assignments will be required of the student of this class. Failure to hand in an assignment would obviously result in a substantial loss of potential academic grade. Late penalties shall also apply. Assignments not present at the due date affect the scope of the critique we are able to accomplish as a group; and effectively, the student's work, even if completed late, will not be critiqued at all. The quality of the concept, the level of ambition and execution, the aesthetic success and the technical achievements of the students' projects shall always be considered first and foremost when grading is considered. Photographic projects will typically involve the production of about 3 final proof prints per assignment.

A reading will be assigned on an agreed upon time during this course and is worth 20% of your total mark. Students must complete a reading report and/or summary of this reading and hand in a copy of the report to the professor (we may be using OWL for this submission). Details of the report requirement and length will be posted and discussed in class.

Lastly, class participation is considered for a 15% portion of your total grade. This means, again, not just the quantity of your participation, but the quality also. Do you participate in the reading or critique discussions? Is it evident that you have contextualized either the reading, or, the photographic works with other source material such as books, photo exhibits, lectures, etc.? Non-preparedness, absenteeism, tardiness and other forms of non-enthusiasm shall be interpreted as non-participation.

OWL / Sakai Documentation

<https://owl.uwo.ca/portal/site/owldocs>

Visual Arts Studio Grading Rubric

90-100 (Outstanding, A+) - The **studio work** shows significant originality and exhibits a high degree of critical engagement. Sophisticated analysis and synthesis involving complex theoretical and conceptual thinking are demonstrated. Mastery of complex ideas is immediately evident. The studio work has originality, clarity and ambition. The project is treated with sensitivity and subtlety of thought. The quality of the background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is exemplary.

80-89 (Excellent, A) - The **studio work** shows originality and exhibits a high degree of critical engagement. The work is clearly focused and intelligently presented. Mastery of complex ideas is demonstrated. The studio work has clarity and ambition. The quality of the studio production immediately engages the viewer. The studio work has been sufficiently developed and demonstrates mastery of techniques so that results are compelling. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is impressive.

75-79 (Very Good, B+) - The **studio work** shows above average analysis, critical thinking and independent thought. It demonstrates a clear awareness of the parameters of the assignment and a very good attempt to respond creatively to them. The work demonstrates reasonable depth and/or breadth and engages in a production that is appropriate to the level of the course. The quality of studio work engages the viewer and demonstrates above-average mastery of techniques. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is very good.

70-74 (Good, B) - The **studio work** shows a satisfactory attempt at analysis and critical thinking. It shows a good attempt to respond to assignment parameters. The work demonstrates some depth and/or breadth, making references to appropriate course material/art context. The studio production engages the viewer and demonstrates a sufficient mastery of techniques. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is satisfactory.

60-69 (Competent, C) - The **studio work** demonstrates adequate engagement with the project. It shows an attempt to respond to assignment parameters but does so at a very basic level that lacks creativity. Engagement with studio production demonstrates basic mastery of techniques. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is competent.

50-59 (Marginal, D) - The **studio work** shows less than adequate engagement with the topic and with the material covered by the course. The studio work waivers in its attempt to respond to assignment parameters and tends to be simplistic. Engagement with studio production demonstrates less than a basic mastery of techniques. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is less than satisfactory.

Below 50 (Unacceptable, F) - The **studio work** demonstrates a failure to comprehend/engage the topic. The studio work is incomplete and lacks redeeming creative merit. The work clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of the assignment. Background preparation and research, engagement with process and outcome of the studio production is unacceptable.

**The University of Western Ontario
Visual Arts Department**

POLICIES

Student Conduct:

All students will conduct themselves in a manner that will be consistent with the maturity and academic integrity expected of university students. Student conduct shall be consistent with the general laws of the community and with University regulations. Students shall show regard and respect for the rights, safety, and property of all members of the University community and are expected to act in a responsible manner within the University and the community at large.

Attendance:

A student who misses more than 15% of the course hours, without written corroboration for health or bereavement, can be debarred from writing final exams, or participation in final studio evaluations. Note that if a student consistently is absent from a 3-hour class for 1 hour, they will exceed the 15% cutoff and can be debarred.

Prerequisites:

You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that you have not taken an antirequisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as basis of appeal.

If you are not eligible for a course, you may be removed from it at any time, and you will receive no adjustment to your fees. These decisions cannot be appealed.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism, which may be defined as “The act or an instance of copying or stealing another’s words or ideas and attributing them as one’s own,” will not be tolerated. (Citation excerpted from *Black’s Law Dictionary*, 1999, 7th ed., p. 1170). (Refer to <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2015/pg113.html> or the 2015/2016 Western Academic Calendar, with regards to academic penalties for plagiarism.)

Medical Policy:

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. See course outline for specific arrangements regarding less than 10% of assignments.

Building Access:

The John Labatt Visual Arts Centre will be closed at 10:30 pm each night. There will be no after-hour access for undergraduate students. The Centre is open weekends 12:00 noon-5:00 pm. Students should be prepared to vacate the building promptly at 10:30 pm and 5:00 pm. You must also sign-in with the building monitors when working in the workshop areas outside of regular office hours.

Please remember:

One of the most important resources for course counselling, special permissions, course changes, grade appeals, etc., is the Undergraduate Chair of Visual Arts, Prof. David Merritt (tel. 519-661-3440; vaugc@uwo.ca). Please note, however, that should you encounter any serious difficulties due to illness, family emergency, etc., you should consult the Academic Counselor for your Faculty, IGA Building, Room 1N20 (Ms. Amanda Green and Mr. Ben Hakala are the counselors for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities).

The Student Development Centre (WSS room 4111; tel: 519-661-3031; www.sdc.uwo.ca) offers a wide range of useful services to students including workshops on learning skills, career and employment services, and an effective writing program, amongst many more.

The D.B. Weldon Library offers orientation tours from the first week of classes until Thanksgiving, where you will get acquainted with the numerous research resources available. As well, the University libraries have an extremely useful website where you can search the library system, the databases, view your circulation record, renew materials, access your UWO e-mail account, and much more. Check it out at: www.lib.uwo.ca.

Financial Aid Services is your main source of information for OSAP, bursaries, loans, scholarships, and the work-study program which offer part-time positions on campus for Western students.

Tel: 519-661-2100; e-mail, finaid@uwo.ca; or check out their website at http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/student_finances/financial_counselling.html

June 17, 2015