

**Western University  
Department of Visual Arts  
VAS2246B - Digital Photography**

Term/Session: Winter 2018  
 Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30 - 11:30am  
 Location: VAC 134/135  
 Professor: Colin Carney [ccarney@uwo.ca](mailto:ccarney@uwo.ca)  
 Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:00 - 1:00pm - Rm 241B

**Course Description**

This is an introductory course examining a variety of technical and artistic approaches to digital photography in the context of contemporary artistic practice. This course will offer students a technical foundation for using DSLR cameras as well as for using Adobe Photoshop. Students will learn about output preparation, print production and archival maintenance. A combination of demonstrations, in-class exercises, thematic lectures and slideshows will introduce students to the relationship between technical skill and critical thinking in contemporary photography. This class will be an opportunity for students to experiment and discover ways to express themselves in digital photography. It will also be a class concerned with various theoretical discourses which inform artistic practices in digital photography. Students will be making thoughtful work which responds to these considerations in 4 major projects over the term.

Note: Through this course, students will be exposed to a very broad range of photographic art. Some of the most canonical or universally esteemed works depict what is commonly 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).

**Learning Outcomes**

*Depth and Breadth of Knowledge*

Students will acquire the range of skills required to engage in the material practice being studied, and will have a thorough understanding of the genesis of those skills historically

*Knowledge of Methodologies*

Students will gain an understanding of the critical potential of the medium, be able to identify various ways works in that medium operate critically, and will apply their understanding, in creative ways, to the realization of their projects

*Application of Knowledge*

Students will use their capacities with the medium as a critical, discursive and expressive tool to develop creative works; understand the potential viability of their works, and will utilize their reflections on their works to explore and develop further projects

**Materials:**

- A small-format, digital, single-lens reflex camera (D-SLR) is **required** for this course
- A memory stick or external hard drive (preferred) , 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 prints, and, buy their own paper.

## Course Requirements

### Attendance

Attendance, punctuality and preparedness for class are critical, as the teaching methods used will include class critiques, lectures and studio work. Under University regulations, if a student misses 15% of their classes, without written corroboration for health or bereavement, they can be debarred from participation in final evaluations and/or critiques.

### Studio Work

Class time will be devoted to lectures, tutorials, demonstrations, presentations, critiques and studio work time, allotted to the students of this class to occupy the Lab exclusively for their own purposes to complete assignments. The student is expected to spend an amount of time equivalent to the courses' assigned 3 hour weight working towards meeting course requirements outside of class time. Students are required to observe all specified mandatory safety protocols governing lab and studio use.

### Assignments/Late Assignments

Students are expected to complete all assignments on time. Failure to complete assignments without prior arrangements with the instructor will result in a failing grade. With prior discussion, students may hand in late work with a 10% deduction from the assignment. Extensions will be given upon official notification from the student's faculty advisor due to documented serious health and bereavement reasons.

### Medical Policy

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed assignments, presentations or participation components worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counseling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

A student who cannot complete coursework totaling less than 10% of their final grade, due to medical reasons, may speak with the instructor and arrange an extension of no more than one week to complete the assignments without presenting medical documentation.

For more information on accommodations for medical reasons, refer to [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

### Mental Wellbeing

"Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Wellbeing [http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental\\_health/](http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help."

### Course Evaluation

All grades will be based on the student's ability to clearly demonstrate:

- Understanding of project concepts and ability to express that understanding
- Ambition, resourcefulness, creativity
- Technical development
- Completion and quality of assignments
- Development and maturity of ideas
- Attendance and participation in class activities

## **VISUAL ARTS Undergraduate Grading Guidelines – Studio**

These guidelines are benchmarks, not to be followed as rigid regulations. They will be adjusted as appropriate to take into account the level of the course and any specific instructions given by a professor. For example, grades at the first year level are generally lower than at fourth year.

### **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.

**Evaluation Breakdown:**

10% In-Class Exercises  
15% Project 1  
15% Project 2  
20% Project 3  
20% Project 4  
10% Presentation  
10% Attendance & Participation