HU 2631, Section OIR & OIL: Fundamentals of Photography

Instructor: Michael J. Shupe
Office: Walker 147 or Darkroom, Walker 111
Office Hours: T, Th 9:30-11:00AM, Th 12:30-1:30PM
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Course Description:
This course is designed to give you a solid foundation in photography from which to build a hobby or, with a whole lot more study, a career. During this course, you will become familiar with basic photographic equipment, with what to look for in a composition, what factors to consider when taking a picture, how to develop negatives and how to take a negative through a final print ready for exhibition. To participate in this course you must own or have available a camera with fully adjustable f-stops, shutter speeds, focus, and have a manual mode for setting each of these. Point and shoot cameras are not acceptable for this course, nor are automatic cameras that do not allow fully manual operation. See me if you are not sure if your camera qualifies.

You may not use on-camera flash for this course. Be sure you know how to turn off your camera's built-in flash if it has one.

Goals and Objectives:
1. To be able to visualize a scene in terms of an achievable final photograph before ever exposing a frame, and to consider composition and lighting to help you achieve your goals.
2. To learn basic film developing and darkroom processing.
3. To learn to distinguish between a good photo that is worth the effort of a fine print from a more typical "snapshot".
4. To learn how to make initial prints and make decisions on how to improve them until they become final prints which will receive a good grade when turned in.

Methods:
During this course, you will be attending lectures, viewing demonstrations, reading about photography and its practices and performing the processes of photography. These combined methods of learning will give you a strong foundation in photography from which you can branch out into more complex or specialized processes of photography with confidence.

Books:

Bring your book to class every day.

Additional Materials Required:
You will need to purchase:
a. Ilford XP-2 Super, Kodak T400CN or Kodak Black & White+ chromogenic black and white film (process C-41). Expect to use 1 roll per assignment and 2-3 rolls for your final photo essay.
b. At least one roll of traditional black and white negative film.
c. 8x10 (you can also use 5x7 for your images, but you will need 8x10 for your contact sheets) Ilford Multigrade IV Resin Coated Deluxe paper (MG IV-R) with matte, pearl or glossy surface. (Fiber based paper is not acceptable). Expect to use a minimum of 3-5 sheets per photo that you turn in. Only 1 sheet of 8x10 should be necessary for a contact sheet.
d. Print-File negative holders, one per roll.
e. Seale Colormount Drymount Tissue (for Photo Essay only—you can split a 25 sheet pack)
f. Mat Board for mounting photos (for Photo Essay only)
g. Materials for your special project

Grading:
You must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this course. Students are allowed to miss two classes per quarter; subsequent absences will affect your final grade:
10% Weekly Reading Responses/Photo Critiques, Class Participation and Attendance  
15% Composition Principles Photo Series and Paper  
15% Special Project and Presentation  
20% Individual Photo Assignments and presentation of your work  
20% Photographer Profile Presentation and Portfolio  
20% Final Photo Essay and Portfolio (including written essay)

**MTU’s Policy on Discrimination and Harassment:**
MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. If you have a disability and need reasonable accommodation for equal access to education and services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (7-2212). For other concern about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action Office (7-3310).

**MTU’s Policy on Academic Integrity:**
Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses. MTU’s Academic Integrity Policy defines it as “knowingly copying another’s work or ideas and calling them one’s own or not giving proper credit or citation,” and it covers copying sections or entire papers from printed or electronic sources as well as handing in papers written by students for other classes or purchasing academic papers. Plagiarism and cheating not only are dishonest but cheat you out of learning, the primary reason you are here. If you ever have any questions about this issue, please talk with your instructor or consult a coach in the Writing Center (7-2007).

**Detailed Syllabus: Course Schedule:**
(note: I reserve the right to revise this syllabus and course schedule to better serve student needs.)

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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| Week 1 | • Assignment: Photographer Profile  
Intros, Camera Requirements, Material Requirements, Syllabus.  
Read: Chapter 1 and 2 (pp. 3-57)  
 | Discuss: Basic Camera Mechanisms, Camera Controls.  
Read: Chapter 3 (pp. 59-91)  
 | Week 2 | Discuss: Metering and Exposure Control  
Read: Chapter 6 (pp.0153-189)  
 | *Proposals Due: Photographer Profile  
Discuss: Depth of Field, Shutter Speeds and Blur, Focusing  
Read: Chapter 5 (pp. 119-151)  
 | Week 3 | *Return Proposals  
Discuss: Composition and Basic Lighting  
Bring Photos to Next Class  
Read: Chapter 8 (pp. 227-259)  
 | *Assignment: Composition Principles  
Group Analysis of Photos for Composition and Lighting; informal presentation  
Read: Chapter 9 (pp. 261-295)  
 | Week 4 | Printing in class discussion  
 | Printing Demo–Darkroom  
Read: Chapter 7 (pp. 191-223)  
 | Week 5 | Film Developing in class discussion  
Read Chapter 10 (pp. 297-323)  
 | Day off: Work on composition assignment/printing options assignment  
 | Week 6 | *Printing Options Assignment due  
*Photographer Profile Presentations  
Read Chapter 12 (pp. 355-379)  
 | *Photographer Profile Presentations  
 | Week 7 | *Composition Assignments Due  
*Photographer Profile Presentations  
 | *Photographer Profile Presentations  

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| Week 8    | *Landscape and Architecture Photos Due  
Discuss: In Depth Metering                                                | Day off: work on still lifes/product shots                      |
| Week 9    | *Still Life and Product Shots Due  
Discuss: Lenses                                                           | Discuss: Film  
Read Chapter 4 (pp. 93-114)                                    |
| Week 10   | *Portraits Due  
Discuss: Filters/colors of light                                        | Discuss: On Camera Flash/Fill Flash                             |
| Week 11   | *Assignment: Special Projects  
*Presentations of work from individual assignments                      | *Presentations of work from individual assignments               |
| Week 12   | Peer Critiques                                                          | No Class: Work on Special Projects outside of class              |
| Week 13   | *Special Projects Due  
*Assignment: Photo Essays  
*Present Special Projects                                                 | *Present Special Projects                                       |
| Week 14   | *Present Special Projects (if needed)                                    | *Present Special Projects (if needed)  
Drymount Demo                                                      |
| Week 15   | No Class: Work on Photo Essays                                           | No Class: Work on Photo Essays  
*Photo Essays Due Friday, Week 15, 3pm  
(drop off location will be announced)                               |
HU2631 Assignments:

Note: Be sure to make duplicates of all your photos as I may ask to keep a print, or, perhaps more likely, your print may be damaged during the grading process. Remember, it is easy to make duplicate prints once you’ve “got it” and it is much harder to set up again later. Also be sure to keep good printing notes so you can reproduce your work if necessary.

Weekly Reading Responses/Photo Critiques
One page about the weeks readings. What surprised you? What will be useful? What changed your way of thinking about what you are doing in photography? Or, if you would rather, you can find a photograph from a magazine or wherever (not from the book) to critique and analyze. If you choose this option, make sure you include the photo or a copy of the photo with your response. Your choice of one of these is due per week will be due from weeks 1 through 5. Late papers will not be accepted.

Photographer Profile
During the first weeks of the course you will be submitting a proposal to study a famous photographer who you would like to learn more about. You will then conduct research and create a Photographer Profile. This assignment will be due in the form of an 8-10 minute presentation in front of the class (so that we can all learn about the history you have researched and hear your opinions on what your photographer contributed to photography and society) during weeks 6 and 7. You will also need to prepare a formal, point by point outline (prepared on a word processor) that you will turn in prior to your presentation. Finally, you will be required to assemble a portfolio of the photographer’s work which you will present and analyze for the class. I will keep one copy of your Image portfolio, so make extra copies if you would like to have a set.

Proposal: Which photographer are you interested in researching? What do you already know about this photographer? Why is this photographer worthy of your interest?

Presentation:

a. What is this photographer known for? What other kinds of photography did your subject engage in? How wide were their interests? Why are they not known for the other kinds of photography they did?
b. Research the historical circumstances that surrounded your photographer. What changes happened in photography during your subject’s career? How did they contribute to or resist these changes? What was happening outside of the photographic milieu and did this contribute to your photographers work or attitudes?
c. Analyze and present a broad portfolio of this photographer’s work (try to include a few examples of their lesser know kinds of photography as well!). What themes concerned this photographer? What different genres did this photographer contribute to? What ideologies or prejudices are evident in or are challenged by this photographer’s work? What sort of critical reception did this photographer’s work receive? What are your opinions on their work? I will expect at least 10 images to make up this portfolio.
d. The best way to present these images is to make several folders of printouts of your photographers images that groups of 3 can share in class (6 or 7 folders). You should use overheads in addition to these so that you can refer to specific characteristics of the photos in your presentation. Part of your grade will be based on how you organize your presentation so that all students can see the work clearly (overheads usually do not work well as a primary illustration because they are too dark and lose detail. Often they become unrecognizable).
e. Note: If you miss your selected presentation time, you will receive a “0” for this assignment.

Composition Assignment
With a partner, you will complete a set of prints illustrating the compositional concerns and ideas that we discussed during week 3. Topics may include, but are not limited to, Leading Lines, Implied Leading Lines (including Gaze), Rule of Thirds, Balance, Rhythm (and breaks in Rhythm), Repetition of Shape, Depth and Distance (consider perspective, atmosphere, overlapping, size, and placement in frame), Frame Within A Frame, Foreground elements, Organic vs. Artificial Forms, Point of View, Selective Focus, Visual/Psychological Contrast. You will also write approximately 3 pages explaining the Primary and secondary compositional elements in each image. Make sure your images are consistent in size, printing style, paper choice, etc. so that your partner’s and your images look like they belong together in the same assignment. Photography (as well as many other areas of life) is all about the presentation and how it affects your reader/viewer’s opinion of your knowledge, etc.

You should go shooting with your partner and meet your partner at the lab to print this assignment.
If you shoot and/or print separately, you will not be able to synchronize your work or help each other, and your joint project (and therefore both of your grades) will suffer. You will both receive the same grade.

Printing Options Assignment

This assignment is intended to help you explore the possibilities that are available in the darkroom when you print your photos. This assignment will be due one week before you complete composition assignment. You should select one negative from your composition assignment shots and print it with contrast grades 0, 1/2, 1, 1 1/2, 2, 2 1/2, 3, 3 1/2, 4, 4 1/2, 5. You should then select the contrast grade that maximizes the range of tones available on the paper (prints from paper black to paper white without losing detail in either the shadows or highlights) and print it for maximum affect by controlling your printing times very carefully and applying dodging and burning as needed. Write up a one page summary of your experiences and the choices you made for this photo. Expect to spend a good deal of time and paper on this assignment. This will serve as your introduction to fine printing, and doing a good job of exploring your options here will save you a huge amount of time and paper on your later assignments.

Weekly Photo Assignments

You will be doing weekly photo assignments during the middle of the semester. You will then shoot 3 photo sets in an established genre of photography, and complete a group of fine prints of your photos for each, weekly. These photo styles include Landscapes and Architecture (3 of each) for the first assignment, Still Life and Product Photography (2 of each) for the second assignment, and Portraits (5 portraits) for the third assignment. You will be expected to shoot approximately 1 roll for each assignment and turn in a contact sheet with each photo set. You will also need to turn in a 1 page account of the printing techniques you used on each the photos. Mounting is not necessary for these assignments. Simply turn in your fine prints in a folder or envelope. Late weekly photo assignments will not be accepted.

Special Project

Ideas: Build and shoot a pinhole camera, use a Holga camera, shoot and evaluate some color slide film (at least 2 rolls), illustrate a topic with your own photos (not composition), explore filters, Explore the zone system, shoot some Macro photography, use Farmer's Reducer to bleach areas of your prints, try toning, try handcoloring, work with digital manipulation of your photographs, try double exposures or photomontage, experiment with solarization (Sabbatier effect), use off-camera manual flash... All projects will require a portfolio of your images, a presentation to the class of your work and techniques, and a 1 page write-up of your experiences. You must discuss your ideas for the special project with me before starting.

Photo Essay

A photo essay will be due in the last week of class along with a portfolio of 5 of your best images from your previous classwork. The Photo Essay should consist of 8-12 ordered shots that are mounted (dry mounted or hinged—dry mounting is much easier) on a single topic or theme or in a single style. These should all be mounted borderless on the same size boards, to make your presentation more consistent (remember presentation quality is an extremely important aspect of your grade). The photo essay should be accompanied by 5 pages discussing your subject, your shooting techniques, and anything else of interest pertaining to the photographs. View this project as if you were writing and photographing an article, but don't forget to include your shooting techniques, printing techniques and reasons for these, as well as a discussion of any problems that you encountered. Be creative! Your essays will be graded based as a photographic demonstration of your learning, but also based on how interesting and entertaining they are. Remember, I have graded lots of these—keep me interested. Your essay shots must be mounted, but it is not necessary to mount your 5 portfolio images. Just submit these in an envelope.