Michigan Technological University

HU 2632: Fundamentals of Digital Photography
Summer 2013, Track B (CRN # 51975; online)

Instructor Information:
Instructor: Thomas Adolphs
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Course Identification:
Course Number: HU 2632
Course Name: Fundamentals of Digital Photography
Course Location: Walker, Room 134
Class Times: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
Class: 12:35 – 1:25
Lab: 1:30 – 1:55

Syllabus

Required Readings
Required readings for this class will be posted as PDF files on Canvas. These readings will be assigned in class, although they can also be seen listed in the ‘Tentative Schedule’ of this syllabus.

Recommended Reading:
* (Referred to as CDP in the Tentative Schedule of this syllabus)

Course Description:
In this class students will primarily explore the practice of taking and editing photographs. We will begin by learning the basics of taking photographs, and then editing those images in Photoshop CS5. As the seven weeks move forward we will progress into more complex photographing and editing techniques. Also, during the next seven weeks we will be investigating the historical and theoretical critiques that accompany this art form. During this time, I highly encourage students to provide their own digital camera, preferably a digital SLR.

This undergraduate level digital photography course is designed to help students explore the world of digital photography within the context of their lives. But what exactly does that mean?

As previously stated, much of this class will be geared towards learning the
practice of taking and editing photos. However, I believe that it is also important to gain a better understanding of what a ‘photograph’ is, and how photography has impacted our lives and the world we live in. In doing so, we will have discussions regarding the on-going conversations within photography’s history, aesthetics, and theory. This means that each week, readings that cover the technical, theoretical, and historic foundations of photography will be assigned.

As can be noticed in the ‘Tentative Schedule’ section of this syllabus, each of the four days that we meet during the week will be structured in a similar style throughout the course of this class. However, in the ‘Tentative Schedule’, note that the first two weeks do not follow this pattern. This is due to cancellations during the introductory week on the 3rd and 4th of July.

**Mondays** will primarily be reserved for discussing the reading(s) that were assigned over the weekend. This means that members of this course are strongly encouraged to voice their own personal opinions in response to the assigned reading. In order to have a productive and engaging discussion you **must** do the reading, and then come prepared to address not only me, but also your peers. During this time I will act as a facilitator of group discussion, which means that I want open discussion amongst all of you. Lastly, Mondays will also be a time to discuss various photographic techniques, some basic, some more advanced, as we prepare for our Tuesday field trips.

**Tuesdays** will primarily (dependent on the weather and transportation) be used as a field trip day. During this time you **must** bring your camera, and you also need to be safe while driving and exploring the site we visit. *I don’t want anyone to get hurt during these times, so please be careful!*

We will begin these days by briefly recapping the photographic technique or style that you are to be exploring during the given week. You will then have the rest of the hour to wander around the site and capture images. I highly recommend that you seek my help if you’re at all confused or frustrated with the technique or style; it’s what I’m there for. Again, remember to be safe, have fun, and be creative!

**Wednesdays** will primarily be reserved for spending time in the lab. During this time the class will be doing one of two things. We will either be exploring new concepts of image production and manipulation using Adobe Bridge and Photoshop, or you will be given time to edit the images that you captured on Tuesday’s field trip. My hope is to allow time for both of these activities.

**Note:** This would also be a great time for you to print and mount your images.

**Thursdays** will primarily be reserved for group presentations, and classroom critique of your finished image(s), which will then be turned in at the end of Thursday’s class.

Group presentations will be assigned during the first week of class, allowing all of you ample time to prepare for this assignment. Groups consisting
of two to three students will explore an influential photographer, and then give a presentation on their findings. The goal of this is to help students examine the influence that certain photographers have had on a number of social issues: war, fashion, politics, nature, race, class, gender, just to name a few. I also hope that through these presentations you will notice a number of different photographic styles that may ultimately help influence your final project for this class.

Classroom critiques will consist of you displaying your image, which is to be printed off and mounted before the start of class. I expect each student to briefly discuss the image they are displaying, and we will then discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the image as a class. Remember to address any weaknesses in a positive and helpful manner. Don’t bash your peer’s work.

Final Project:
Throughout this class, each student will be developing, and adding to their final project. This final project will consist of a photographic series of four to six images. As we will discuss in class, all of your images must have a unified theme and intent. I will meet with each of you individually, and as a class, to discuss and display the evolution of this project as we move throughout the next seven weeks.

This final project should be understood as the exam for this class. We will spend the final days of week seven displaying and critiquing your project.

Course Supplies:
- DSLR camera (digital single lens reflex capable of RAW capture with adjustable shutter speed and aperture)
- media card(s)
- DVDs, CDs or other media storage device to archive RAW and jpeg files
- digital media printing paper (Epson Premium Glossy highly recommended)
- 11 x 14 archival mats
- tape for matting
- portfolio for photographs

Attendance Policy:
Coming to this course is essential to you learning the material. Please plan on bringing required materials (your camera) to class with you and be ready to actively listen and participate by offering thoughts and ideas during our class reading discussions.

You are allowed up to three unexcused absences for the semester before it affects your grade. Anything after this will lower your overall grade. This is something I’ll be strict on so please show up to class and participate.

Assignments:
Assignments will be collected when they are due. Late work will not be accepted unless you have a university excused absence or a doctor’s note. If you know you will be absent, please arrange a time to turn in the assignment before your
missed day. It is not difficult to get a hold of me. Just inform me of any issues and we won’t have any problems.

**Respectfulness:**
Everyone has the right to his or her own unique perspective and opinions; that having been said, I expect us all to realize that some thoughts are not appropriate for an academic setting. The inability to respect others in the class will not be tolerated, and could potentially affect your grade.

**Grading Scale:**

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>92-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A/B</td>
<td>87-91.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82-86.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B/C</td>
<td>77-81.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>72-76.9%</td>
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<td>C/D</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>62-66.9%</td>
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**Academic Integrity**
MTU’s Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “knowingly copying another’s work and calling it one’s own or not giving proper credit or citation.” The penalties for plagiarism or other forms of cheating range from receiving a failing grade on work in question to **expulsion from the university**.

**MTU’s Policy on Discrimination and Harassment**
MTU complies with all federal and state laws regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (487-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action Office (487-3310).

*This course description and all schedules are tentative and may be changed.*

**Tentative Schedule**

*Note: Always bring your camera to class, especially on our field trip days.*

**Week 1**

*Monday, 1 July*
Discuss Syllabus and goals of this class
Question sheet (your expectations)
Hand out and discuss Final Project
* For Tues. July 2nd, read (skim) Chapters 4 - 5, pp. 138-190 in *CDP*.
**Tuesday, 2 July**
Discuss basics of the camera (shutter speed/aperture/ISO)
* Hand out first photo assignment, due on Wed. July 10th

**Wednesday, 3 July**
Class Canceled

**Thursday, 4 July**
Class Canceled

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**Week 2**

**Monday, 8 July**
Take images at “Prince’s Point.”
* Possible Lab Day (if time): Go over Adobe Bridge
Ways to manage your images
Camera and print quality

**Tuesday, 9 July**
Lab Day:
Discuss the basics of Photoshop
* Remember! First photo assignment due Wed. July 10th
* Also, 1st reading response due on Thurs. July 11th: read “The Origins of Photography” by Mary Warien, PDF on Canvas

**Wednesday, 10 July**
Critique and collection of first photo assignment

**Thursday, 11 July**
Group presentations: Louis Daguerre, and Henry Fox Talbot
Discuss reading and collect responses
Finish any loose ends
* Also, for Mon. July 15th, read (skim) Chapters 2 – 3, pp. 62-134 in CDP

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**Week 3**

**Monday, 15 July**
Discuss reading and collect responses
Discuss ISO and its relation to Quincy Mine trip (urban decay)
* Hand out second photo assignment, due on Thurs. July 18th

**Tuesday, 16 July**
Field Trip:
Meet at Quincy Mine in Hancock
ISO/Urban Decay

**Wednesday, 17 July**
Lab day:
Photo healing techniques
If time remains, work on your images
Thursday, 18 July

Group presentations: Alfred Stieglitz, and Ansel Adams
Critique and collection of second photo assignment
* 3rd reading response due on Mon. July 22nd: read “Looking at War” by Susan Sontag, PDF on Canvas

Week 4

Monday, 22 July
Discuss reading and collect responses
Discuss light(ing) and Dynamic Range
* Hand out third photo assignment, due on Thurs. July 25th

Important Due Dates:
- 500-word explanation of your final project due on Thurs. July 25th
- Two images from final project due Thurs. August 1st

Tuesday, 23 July
Field trip:
Chutes and Ladders in Houghton
Outdoor lighting

Wednesday, 24 July
Lab day:
Layers and layer masks (An excellent technique for controlling post-production lighting in Photoshop)

Thursday, 25 July
Group presentations: Robert Capa, and James Nachtwey
Critique and collection of third photo assignment
Collection of 500-word explanation of your final project
* 4th reading response due on Mon. July 29th: read “Judging Photographs: is it good?” pp. 127-152, PDF on Canvas

Week 5

Monday, 29 July
Discuss reading and collect responses
Discuss color vs. black and white/lens/portraits
* Reminder: Two images from final project due Thurs. August 1st
* No additional photo assignment due this Thursday!

Tuesday, 30 July
Field trip:
Campus or Mclean State Park?
Have fun experimenting with colors, lens length, and taking portraits

Wednesday, 31 July
Lab day:
Working with layer masks and colors
If time remains, work on final project images

Thursday, 1 August
Group presentations: Annie Leibovitz, and Richard Avedon
Critique of two images from final project
* 5th reading response due on Mon. August 5th: watch, and respond, to
the following Youtube clip on Cindy Sherman:  
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I6MyCErU2Y0

Week 6

Monday, 5 August  
Discuss clip and collect responses  
Discuss the possibilities of Photoshop and photo-manipulation  
Demonstration on HDR photography

* No photo assignment for this Thursday. **Keep working on your final project!**

Tuesday, 6 August  
Field trip:  
Meet in downtown Houghton (by waterfront at Ambassador restaurant)  
Capture images that will be used during tomorrow’s class

Wed, 7 August  
Lab time:  
Photo-manipulation (Cutting out images, blending, Liquefy tool)

Thursday, 8 August  
Group presentation: Cindy Sherman, and Chris Jordan

* For Mon. August 12th, read “Toward A Hyperphotography,” and “A Quantum Leap,” **PDF’s on Canvas, no response due!**

Week 7

Monday, 12 August  
Discuss reading  
Discuss what a photo is. Have your thoughts changed? What are the limits, and where is photography headed?  
Group presentation: NASA, and the Scanning Electron Microscope

Tuesday, 13 August  
Field trip:  
Meet in classroom – We will be turning a room into a camera obscura

Wed, 14 August  
* **Critique of Final projects**

Thursday, 15 August  
* **Critique of Final projects**