

Western University • Faculty of Arts and Humanities • Department of Visual Arts**VAS 2246B DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY**

Course time: Mondays & Wednesdays 2:30pm - 5:30pm

Location: 134/135

Instructor: Gabriella Solti (gsolti@uwo.ca)

Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 5:30pm - 6:30pm

Office: VAC 213

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an introductory course to 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 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.

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 make a formal presentation of a selected digital photography topic and write two technical exams/tests. 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.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students who come to classes well prepared, actively participate in discussions, critiques and in-class technical exercises and complete all assignments successfully will be able to:

- Effectively use a digital SLR camera in manual and semi-manual shooting modes
- Understand and use various software applications for image processing, organization and manipulation
- Understand the historical development of fine art photography in order to contextualize and locate their own contemporary art practices
- Engage in critical issues surrounding both historical and contemporary photographic discourses
- Articulate their ideas and intents 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 photographic imagery

CLASS FORMAT:

Each class will meet in room 135 in the Visual Arts Building prior to working in other production and/or seminar spaces. Classes will normally begin with group screening responses, followed by technical lectures, workshops, reading/viewing responses and discussions, as well as project consultation/development sessions. Although a certain amount of time will be allotted for in-class project work, students will also be required to spend a *minimum of 10 hours/week* developing techniques and strategies introduced in the course, conducting independent research, completing assigned projects, and preparing for discussions and presentations.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance in all classes is mandatory. Students taking this course will be expected to arrive on-time at the start of each class, and be sufficiently prepared to work on projects and participate in class activities. Each unexcused absence without proper medical documentation will result in the participation/attendance component of the semester grade being penalized by 10%. Requests for accommodation must be processed through the Academic Counselling office of the student's home Faculty. Students arriving more than 20 minutes late for class will be marked as absent.

Work will not be accepted from students who are absent 15%, or more class time (i.e. four classes per term) without documented medical or bereavement reason and may be debarred from participating in final studio evaluations. **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.**

Students may not submit a project completed for another course unless special permission is obtained from both of the course instructors involved, and arrangements have been made to ensure that a sufficient quantity of new production has occurred for both courses.

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 expected to demonstrate an attitude of respectful criticality and active engagement at all times, and contribute to the creation of a collegial and productive learning environment.

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 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 use of cellphones, text messaging, and/or social media sites during class time will not be tolerated.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & MATERIALS:

- Access to and knowledge of OWL. Students are responsible to take the necessary training to use OWL effectively. OWL Sakai training and documentation: <https://owl.uwo.ca/portal/site/owldocs>
- Active UWO e-mail address (communications outside of class will be done via e-mails)
- Active Western ID Card for access to the labs
- Access to a DSLR camera or other higher-end digital camera with creative control functions such as manual focus and exposure (of 6 megapixels or greater and capable of shooting RAW images) is required. A few digital DSLR cameras are available in the Visual Arts sign-out office, though they are often in high demand, especially during mid term and at the end of term, thus their reservation well in advance is highly recommended. Cameras can be reserved at: <http://uwo.ca/visarts/resources/signout.html> **camera should be acquired, and brought to the second class in week one together with its manual.** Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the particulars of their camera's interface, as individualized instruction in this area is not provided
- A binder for consolidating course USB flash drive or portable external hard drive (recommended minimum: 16GB).
- Recordable DVD's for final outputs (you can purchase these when needed).
- Students are expected to produce their own digital files, and buy their own paper and other materials and prints. High quality digital printing is available on the Visual Arts Epson printer for approximately \$7 per square foot. Printing of small format prints are available at: Imprint at UCC; Forest City Image Works, Kinko's, Blacks, Mercury Printers, Costco, some Shoppers Drug Mart stores and Walmart among others.

EQUIPMENT BOOKING AND PRINTING:

Please make sure that you book the necessary equipment for feedback sessions and presentations. Class time will not be used for set-up, and students will be expected to have any necessary technology installed, tested and running smoothly beforehand. Students are responsible for the costs of printing for project feedback sessions, and - when required - images must be in a hard-copy form in order to be considered complete.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignments are designed to incorporate ideas and approaches learned both in class and through independent research, practice and experimentation. Students are encouraged to challenge themselves to explore, personalize, and expand on the creative potential of these skill sets.

Project descriptions will be posted on OWL, and in each course module, students will be expected to present project work at three key points: (1) Proposal Due dates; (2) In-Progress Critique dates; and (3) Project Due dates. These dates are outlined on the Course Schedule, and information as to what is required at each stage will be explained in class and can be accessed on OWL

Student performance will be evaluated in terms of technical proficiency, conceptual focus, synthesis/presentation, as well as work ethic/development. Emphasis will be placed on the serious engagement with relevant and challenging ideas. Furthermore, students will be expected to think critically and respond to the historical and

contemporary issues presented in class. Successful projects will clearly demonstrate effort in three key areas: research/planning, experimentation/development, and refinement/resolution. For more information on the assessment of project work, see the departmental rubric included with this syllabus. A more course-specific outline of instructor expectations will be posted on OWL.

A one-time, late penalty of 10% shall be applied to all late submissions or those not presented in the required format. Studio projects, presentations, and written work will be considered incomplete and late if items on the Due Date Checklist included with each assignment description are missing from the submission package. It is the student's responsibility to remain informed as to submission details and requirements. Assignments submitted more than 10 days late without official documentation (see UNDERGRADUATE POLICIES section for details) will not be accepted, and will receive a grade of zero.

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 printing parameters
- demonstrates considered editing of images
- composition is carefully considered and engaging
- demonstrates overall technical 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

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

In class exercise portfolio: 5%
Mini Project Portfolio 10%
Module 1 Project 15%
Module 2 Project 20%
Module 3 Project 25%
Research Presentation 10%
Quality of class participation/attendance: 15%