

Photography at Fort Burgwin, Summer 2012

By 1850, only years eleven years after the invention of photography, important photographs were being made in Northern New Mexico. Many of America's greatest photographers, Timothy O'Sullivan, Edward Curtis, Ansel Adams, Paul Strand and Elliot Porter, have been fascinated and inspired by the unique beauty of the Taos landscape and people. Students will become acquainted with this rich art historical tradition through fieldtrips to galleries and museums, lectures, readings and research projects. Emphasis will be placed upon the student's own creative response to Taos through the medium of photography. Beginning students will learn basic camera operation while intermediate and advanced students hone their photographic technique and conceptual understanding through more individualized instruction. The course is designed to take full advantage of the land, light and peoples of the Taos/Santa Fe area within the context of past and current photographic art practices.

ASPH 1300 fulfills the GEC Arts Perspective requirement.

Draft Syllabus ASPH 1300, 3306, 4306, 5306 Photography

This syllabus will be revised and a daily schedule created when the class roster is finalized. The makeup of the class varies greatly summer to summer. Factors taken into consideration in the structure of the class include the number of students enrolled, their individual levels of experience, the number of students working with film or digital cameras and gallery exhibition schedule.

For ASPH 1300, The Basics of Photography

Course Aims and Rational:

Photography, both still and moving, has been called the major art form of the 20th Century. The invention of photography in 1839 has revolutionized our visual experience of the modern world and our understanding of it. We are constantly exposed to, surrounded by, bombarded with, delighted and appalled by photographic images. Photography appears in fine art galleries, museums, and publications; popular art of greeting cards and calendars; newspaper journalism; advertizing; fashion; portraiture; magazine editorial; scientific data; medical technology; identification systems of driver's license and police mug shots; historical records, family albums, erotica; online; and most recently social networking sites. Everyone see and uses photographs daily and increasingly everyone has a camera. We are both consumers of and creators of photographs.

Photography is a two dimensional illusion of three-dimensional space. Much of the magical power of the photograph lies in the ability to represent visual reality much like the eyes see it. Yet the photograph is obviously not the same as the "real thing." What is the process by which this translation of objects in real space is made into a flat rectangle of shapes, line and color? Photography has its own visual language and conventions, which allow use to "read" a photograph. Just as we think with words, we also think visually and communicate visually. The best of photographs reveal sophisticated and important ideas about our experience of living. What are the formal elements of this visual language? What do they share with other forms of visual communication like painting, drawing and graphics?

In this class, which fulfills an Arts Perspective of the GEC, we will examine the phenomena of photography. We will engage in three separate but related activities. First, we will carefully observe our world visually, seeking to see what things really look like, not what we think they look like. Second, we will look closely at photographs made by others and seek to understand what and how they communicate. Finally, we will craft and compose our own photographs, understanding how camera settings and choices create the photograph.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate and master basic photographic techniques of camera operation which include the use of aperture and shutter speed, law of equivalent exposure, exposure compensation, depth of field, focusing, focal length of lenses, ISO, White Balance, resolution, pixel dimension, file format. (Exposure and White Balance Assignment #1 and Depth of Field and Shutter Speed Assignment #2)
2. Students will be able to demonstrate mastery of compositional strategies for the creation of successful organization of shapes on a flat surface. (Framing Assignment #3)
3. Student will be able to demonstrate sensitivity to and control of a variety of lighting conditions. (Lighting Assignment #4)
4. Students will be able to create successful portraits and by understanding both the technical issues, such as background foreground relationship, as well as the social dimension to the photographic encounter with another human being.
5. Students will gain knowledge of the multiple uses of photography in our culture, with added emphasis on the history of photography as a fine art by examining the variety of ways in which photographs are used. They will be able to identify, and analyze the components of a good photograph both in terms of form and content.
6. Students will demonstrate an understanding of photography as a distinct visual language that communicates ideas and is a tool of inquiry.
7. Students will identify formal elements present in all two-dimensional work, build a vocabulary to describe those elements and evaluate how those elements work to create a successful image.
8. Students will gain an appreciation for and sensitivity to both the visual world and the photographic image and the relationship between the two.
9. Students will become acquainted with the history of the medium, its technology, aesthetic traditions, approaches, genres, and artists.
10. Students will apply those techniques to a creative end, seeking to develop their own particular vision and distinctive voice, rather than relying on clichéd and overused subject matter and approaches.
11. Students will create images that are successfully expressive, communicative and creative.
12. Students will post images online and share their work with others.
13. Students will become acquainted with the written literature on the medium of photography.

Topics covered include:

- Camera Basics: law of reciprocity, ISO, exposure Modes, ISO, focal Length, shutter speed, depth of field, hyperfocal distance, white balance, bracketing, color palette, resolution, pixel dimension, file formats, use of tripod, more.
- Shooting Techniques: framing strategies.
- Lighting Basics: intensity, direction, color.
- Postproduction considerations: Photoshop use of layer adjustments, curves, hue saturation, and selection tools, more. Also inventory considerations, printer settings, printing paper, scale of prints. Portfolio creation.
- Artists: W. H. Jackson, Timothy O'Sullivan, Adam Clark Vroman, John Hillers, A. J. Russel, Edward Curtis, Ansel Adams, Elliot Porter, Paul Strand, Laura Gilpin, Alex Harris, David Leventhall, Mark Klett, Craig Varjabedian, Skett McAuley, Terry Falke, John Pfahl, Peter Goin, Chris Jordan, Roni Horn, others.

Field Trips to some of the following:

The High Road to Santa Fe, Chimayo Church, Santa Fe, Photo-Eye Gallery and Bookstore, Garcia Street Bookstore, Verre Gallery, Monroe Gallery, Andrew Smith Gallery, Ghost Ranch, Abiquiu, Christ of the Desert Monastery, Dar al Islam Mosque, the White Place, Chuck Hemmingsten Gallery, Barry Norris Studio, St. Francis of Assisi Church, Site Santa Fe, more.

Readings:

Held on reserve in the Fort's library.

- "Chapter 4, Landscape in Photography," *The Photograph* by Graham Clark, Oxford University Press, 1997, pps 54-73.
- "The Southwest," *A Sense of Place, a Sense of Time*, John Brinckerhoff Jackson, Yale University Press, 1994, pps 12-67.
- Photography, A Critical Introduction, edited by Liz Wells, Routledge, 4th edition, 2009, readings page 303-310, Case Study: Landscape as Genre.
- "Introduction to the Photographer's Eye," John Szarkowsk, from *The Photography Reader* edited by Liz Wells, Routledge, 2003.
- "Seeing Photographically" by Edward Weston, from *The Photography Reader* edited by Liz Wells, Routledge, 2003.
- Catalogue from exhibition "True North" at Deutsche Guggenheim, text by Rebecca Solnit and Jennifer Blessing, 2008.
- *Thoughts on Landscape, Collected Writings and Interviews*, by Frank Gohlke, Hol Art Books, Tucson, 2009.

Requirements and Evaluation:

Education at Fort Burgwin is a special experience, different from that on our Dallas campus. Students have the opportunity to work intensely without the distractions and demands of normal life in Dallas. The opportunity to study in such a fashion does not often occur. Concern for grades is normal, but let's not think too much about numbers on individual assignments. Instead work consistently and carefully throughout our time here. I think it more productive to give longer verbal evaluation than assign a specific grade. I will be clear when I suggest you do more or redo part of an assignment, However, below is a general idea of how I weight the assignments.

- 5% Shooting Assignment #1: Camera Operation
- 5% Shooting Assignment #2: Time and Space
- 20% Shooting Assignment #2: Framing

- 20% Shooting Assignment #3: Lighting
- 20% Shooting Assignment #4: Personal Vision will also include a 1000-1500 word artist statement.
- 10% Taos Research, presentation to class with written paper. Research on a non-art topic related to student's major and Taos. Previous topics have included: geological history of the area, alternative architectural technology (i.e., earthships, hay bale), water rights, recent demographic trends, Native American mythology.
- 10% Artist Research, presentation to class with written paper. Research on an individual photographic artist with an analysis of style, technique, conceptual basis, etc.
- 10% Student's involvement demonstrated by intelligent and lively verbal participation in discussions and critiques, attendance (mandatory), preparedness (meeting deadlines), workspace courtesy and cleanliness, and participation in final public exhibition.
- Attendance and timeliness (coming to class on time and being prepared) are very important. For every unexcused absence the final grade will drop by half letter grade. Tardiness will be recorded and taken into consideration and may be considered an absence.

For ASPH 3306, 4306, 5306, Intermediate and Advance Photography

Students beyond the 1300 level will attend most of the lectures, critiques, presentation and fieldtrips along with ASPH 1300 students. They will not, however, be required to do the above four shooting assignments. They will instead develop a coherent body of work around one or two self-defined topics and produce a final titled portfolio of approximately 20 photographic prints (or their equivalent) along a single theme, boxed creatively and accompanied by a written statement of 1000 to 1500 words.

Course Aims:

To continue to develop and refine photographic and conceptual skills for artistic expression.

Learning Outcomes:

Students will demonstrate:

- Sensitivity to issues related to landscape, both natural and cultural
- Knowledge of the cultural, artistic and historical aspects of Northern New Mexico
- An increased refinement in use of color, light and compositional strategies
- An ability to make high quality color inkjet prints
- Mastery of Photoshop controls of color, contrast adjustments, selection tools, layers and masks
- Continued refinement of camera controls
- A conceptual approach to each assignment
- A knowledge of photographic artists who have worked in the Southwest
- An acquaintanceship with photographic galleries and museums
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Topics covered include:

- Camera Basics: law of reciprocity, ISO, exposure Modes, ISO, focal Length, shutter speed, depth of field, hyperfocal distance, white balance, bracketing, color palette, resolution, pixel dimension, file formats, use of tripod, more.
- Shooting Techniques: framing strategies.
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Requirements and Evaluation:

- 70% final portfolio.
- 10% Taos Research presentation and short paper.
- 10% Artist Research presentation and short paper.
- 10% Student's involvement demonstrated by intelligent and lively verbal participation in discussions and critiques, attendance (mandatory), preparedness (meeting deadlines), workspace courtesy and cleanliness, and participation in final public exhibition.
- Attendance and timeliness (coming to class on time and being prepared) are very important. For every unexcused absence the final grade will drop by half letter grade. Tardiness will be recorded and taken into consideration and may be considered an absence.

Additional Notes:

Professor Debora Hunter

You are welcome to stop by my faculty casita anytime between 8am and 10pm. Feel free to call me if you want to schedule an appointment.

Cell: 214-335-5289

dhunter@smu.edu

My website: www.deborahhunter.com

To download handouts for class:

http://public.me.com/debora_hunter

no password is needed

Flickr submissions:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/smuphotostudents/sets/>

Sign into flickr account by using smuphotostudents and password of photohunter. Make sure always to submit work in a set with your last name and assignment name.