Introduction to Digital Photography and

photo by Jerry Swope

Visual Storytelling

:: learning online and in the real world

Course Content

MJD 209 is an online course that introduces students to the art and craft of digital photography as a means for visual storytelling. Students will learn to create thoughtful digital images using whatever digital camera they have available (camera phone, point and shoot or digital SLR) and learn to edit and manipulate images using Adobe Photoshop or GIMP, an free open-source image editing program. While assignments will span a range of genres, emphasis will placed on documentary photography.

This course is a great opportunity to learn new storytelling skills and develop applicable critical thinking and problem solving skills. Have fun and challenge yourself.

Learning Objectives

* Recognize and understand the key artistic elements of successful storytelling photographs
* Critique and analyze the role of documentary photographs in our world
* Understand the basic workings of digital cameras including manual exposure controls
* Create thoughtful storytelling images using any kind of digital camera
* Develop proficient digital editing skills using Adobe Photoshop or GIMP, and understand ethical guidelines and acceptable professional norms for digital manipulation in documentary photography
* Understand the storytelling potential of a thematic photo essay

Readings

Text Book: Warren, Bruce. Digital Photography. Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. 2013.

The College will provide you free access to the ebook. Other readings throughout the spring session will be posted on Canvas. In addition, each student is also required to view online a daily newspaper/magazine/ news source of their choice. I recommend, *The New York Times, The Boston Globe*, *The Washington Post, NPR, National Geographic.* It is important to see images and good design at work in a variety of publications.

Equipment & Supplies

The Camera: You need to provide your own digital camera device. This could be the camera built into your cell phone, a digital point and shoot, or a digital SLR. The camera you use will not make much difference for what we are doing in this class. My goal is to help you learn how to make the best pictures you can that are true to your vision no matter what device you use. Remember, "It's the carpenter not the tools." Please do **not** go out and buy a camera just for this class.

Software: If you already have access to Adobe Photo-Shop, you will use this. If you do not have PhotoShop, you will use GIMP a free (easily downloadable) open-source image editing program.

Online Course Format

Content and instruction will be delivered online in an asynchronous way using a variety of tools and techniques including: readings; discussion threads; quizzes;

and video recordings. In addition, much learning will occur as you explore and take pictures in the real world. During this spring session, due to COVID-19, how far you are able to physically "explore" will depend on where you live and your state's current health and safety guidelines. Please do not feel like you have to put yourself in harms way to complete any assignments. Assignments will be designed in a way so all students can complete them safely while following appropriate guidelines.

Grading

The photography part of each assignment receives two grades. One is based on content, creativity, graphic organization, and uniqueness of vision. The other is based on technical ability (camera, lighting and toning). In addition, you will be graded on your caption, the number of frames shot and your self-critique.

Assignments are worth a total of 100 pts. The grading scale is as follows:

Content

uniqueness of vision	10pts
newsworthiness	10pts
fits assignment	10pts

Photo Technique

rapport and timing	10pts
composition	10pts
use of light	10pts
background	10pts
caption	10pts
# of frames shot	10pts
self-critique	10pts

Names are an essential part of captions. You will automatically receive 0 points if you have unidentified prominently featured people in your picture. As for the number of frames shot, depending on the requirements for the assignment, you could receive 10, 5 or 0 points. Random images just to add to the number of frames shot will not be counted.

It is essential to the group critique process that your assignments are turned in on time. Late work will be penalized. Extensions may be granted for legitimate reasons only if you contact me in advance of the date the assignment is due. You may re-shoot any assignment as long as the original was turned in on time. You will have one week from when you get an assignment back to complete the re-shoot. Your final grade will be the higher of the two shoots.

photo by Jerry Swope

The break-down for the semester grade:

40%	Photo Assignments
20%	Discussion Board / Critique Exchanges
15%	Quizzes
25%	Final Essay and Design Presentation

This equals 100% of your preliminary grade. I also consider consistent improvement, attendance and other factors.

Academic Honesty

St. Mike's has a strict policy regarding plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Your work should be your work and no one else's. Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive an automatic F in the course and be reported to the Dean. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration ask your professor.

ADA:

If you have special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and you need assistance, please notify immediately. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate your special needs.

Submission of Photo Assignments

All photography assignments will be submitted on Microsoft One Drive. I will share a personal folder with each of you. With in this folder, please create a folder for each assignment. In that assignment folder, turn in the following:
- final toned images with a thorough and accurate caption
- A "full shoot" folder of all digital images shot for the assignment
- A thoughtful self-critique discussing the successes and challenges you faced in doing the assignment. What went well? What you would do differently if you were shooting the assignment again. The ideas behind your photographs count even if they do not always come through successfully in the actual images. Tell me what you were thinking. This is a learning process.

photo by Mackenna Nguyen

photo by Crystal Bissett

Photography Assignments

1. Scavenger Hunt
2. Depth of field / Perspective
3. Light Study
4. Motion
5. Seeing Color
6. Visual Contrast
7. Self Portrait
8. Environmental Portrait
9. Final - Photo Essay and Design Presentation

photo by Jessica Johnson

overview of assignments

" A great photograph is a full expression of what one feels about what is being photographed in the deepest sense, and is, thereby, a true expression of what one feels about life in its entirety. "

– Ansel Adams