

STA 107, Introduction to Digital Photography
Department of Art History and Visual Culture, Fall 2018



Thomas Struth, *Aquarium*, Atlanta, Georgia, 2013, chromogenic print.

1. Course Information

Professor Johanna Fassl

Email: jfassl@fus.edu

Office Hours: MON 17.30-19.30 and by appointment / LAC 14

Class meeting times: MON/THU 14:30-15:45

Class location: LAC 11 / Lowerre Graphic Center

2. Course Description

This course in digital photography introduces the beginner to the elements of digital photography. There will be two areas of concentration: 1. Core Skill Exercises: photographic design, image capture, manipulation using digital imaging technology (composition, framing, lighting etc., cameras and editing software); 2. Project design: conceiving and seeing a project through to completion. Throughout the course emphasis will be placed on the artistic value of photographs rather than the technicalities of digital imaging. Photography is one of the various artistic media available for self-expression and much emphasis will be put on precisely that. Students will synthesize these elements to create a portfolio of work that reflects not only their newly developed skills but also an appreciation and understanding of photography as an art medium.

Make sure to bring your camera(s) to each class!

3. Rationale

The course fits into the overall Visual Communication Arts major as an introduction that studies photography with respect to creative production. It is focused on image capture and image composition, as well as image manipulation through camera functions and simple digital processing. It prepares students for higher-level photography courses and fulfills the studio component of the Art History and Visual Culture major.

4. Course Goals

The goals of this course include the following:

- to acquire visual literacy to be able to read and interpret the visual world with respect to signs, structures, colors
- to understand how meaning is produced in the visual world and especially in photography
- to develop an understanding of the main technological parameters of digital photography
- to gain visual literacy in contemporary photographic practices
- to develop a sense of the historical roots of the photographic medium
- to develop a creative photographic practice
- to develop critical thinking, analytical, and writing skills
- to critically synthesize information from classroom discussions, readings and further research
- to present these connections in a variety of formats, including class discussions, oral presentations, and in written assignments
- to acquire study and research skills to be applied in other subjects, classes and semesters
- understand how to analyze the visual world within an interdisciplinary model
- think and write analytically and critically on the visual world
- present ideas in a critical and analytical manner
- be able to use library, university, and electronic resources to complete papers and presentations

5. Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should:

- be aware of key material processes at the heart of digital photography
- have some knowledge of key historical developments of the photographic medium
- show awareness of a range of contemporary practices and historical developments of the medium
- have developed a coherent visual portfolio
- have designed a specific personal creative photographic series

- have acquired the visual literacy in order to read the visual world in terms of its formal organization and symbolic content
- be able to discuss and explain how cultures and cultural codes intersect in the production of symbols and meaning
- understand the role of signs and symbols in art and photography
- to acquire skills on how to document a subject visually
- be able to do empirical research in the visual world
- be able to analyze their empirical research and to structure and work it into coherent arguments
- to understand the difference between various types of photography (street photography, fashion photography, art photography, documentary photography) and to apply the differences in creative work

6. Required Texts and Materials

Course texts:

Tom Ang. *Digital Photography: An Introduction*. New York, 2018. (in FUS bookstore)

Further materials on the module website

7. Assessment Overview

Course requirements and grade composition:

➤ Individual class studio exercises – portfolio	35%
➤ Photo criticism & presentation	15%
➤ Academic travel project	15%
➤ Three choice photography projects	35%

Grade scale for assignments:

A	100-92	B	80-83	C	73-68	D	59-58
A-	91-88	B-	79-78	C-	67-64	F	57-0
B+	87-84	C+	77-74	D+	63-60		

8. How to do well in this course

Attendance and tardiness: It is essential that you come to every class session and that you participate in the discussions. This requires to have done the readings and to have uploaded your reading notes before class and to come with questions on the visual and written material. Up to two unexplained absences are allowed without affecting your final grade. After two absences, 5 points will be subtracted for each absence from the total of 100 points for your attendance grade. If you come to class after attendance has been taken, it will be counted as one-half of an unexplained absence. That is, two incidents of tardiness will be counted as one unexplained absence. Please be aware that missing classes also mean that you will not be contributing to class discussion/activities. If you are absent from illness and turn in a medical note indicating the exact dates under medical care, we will discuss appropriate arrangements

regarding how you can make up for the missed classes. Please also note that you will not be able to pass the course if you miss more than 8 class meetings regardless of your performance in other assignments. Please remember that on campus each session counts as two classes.

Deadlines: Hand in all your assignments on time, deadlines are indicated on the syllabus. Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are to be handed in as WORD documents, uploaded to the portals on the moodle website (by midnight of the due date). For every day your assignment is late without a valid excuse (such as a doctor's note), the letter grade of your assignment will drop by one (i.e. from "A" to "B" to "C"). If you need an extension, please communicate so in writing via email before the due day of the assignment.

Academic Support: If you have any questions regarding the course contents, discussion, or your assignments, please stop by my office during office hours or make an appointment. I am happy to help you in any way I can, I want everybody to do well in this course! Make sure to understand all course requirements and make a step-by-step plan how you can fulfill them. It is also essential to know how you work best and what kind of a researcher and writer you are. Also remember to use the Fowler Learning Commons in the LAC, make an appointment with Professor Gardiner (agardiner@fc.edu), or the students working in the WLC for further help.

Professional Behavior: Please treat this class as if you were in the professional world!

9. Academic Integrity and Professional Behavior

Please refer to Franklin University's Statement on Cheating and Plagiarism in the Academic Catalog for the full version, but to summarize here: you are to do your own work. Behaviors such as copying the work of others, using third-party services, or any other circumvention of doing your own work are dishonest and not acceptable in this class or at this institution. For papers and presentations, this includes proper use of references and citations. Copying text without the use of quotations or paraphrasing the ideas of others without proper citations are both examples of plagiarism and thus unacceptable. For testing situations, this includes the use of notes, talking to others, or copying off of the exam of others. The first case of academic dishonesty will result in an automatic grade of a zero on the assignment and a report to the Dean. The second case will result in immediate failure of the course and recommendation to the Dean for expulsion from the university.

10. (Tentative) Course Schedule (subject to change)

PART I: CORE SKILLS TECHNICAL EXERCISES

DATES	THEMES	FOCAL POINTS
AUGUST 27	no class	
AUGUST 30	introductions to the course discussion of TED talks and documentaries	
↓ Ang reading for week 2: 10-18, 98-102 Reading: G. Clarke. <i>The Photograph</i> . Chapter 6: "The Portrait in Photography."		
SEPTEMBER 3	portraits, architecture, landscape	picture composition
SEPTEMBER 6	photo-criticism exercise	framing, a/symmetry, geometry, golden section, golden spiral
↓ Ang reading for week 3: 18-28, 82-86, Reading: G. Clarke. <i>The Photograph</i> . Chapter 5: "The City in Photography."		
SEPTEMBER 10	portraits, architecture, landscape	focusing and depth of field
SEPTEMBER 13	action photography and panning photo-criticism presentations	lens aperture, lens focal length focus distance, manual/autofocus
↓ Ang reading for week 4: 29-44, 76-82, 92-94 G. Clarke. <i>The Photograph</i> . Chapter 4: "Landscape in Photography."		
SEPTEMBER 17	portraits, architecture, landscape	color composition, white balance
SEPTEMBER 20	abstract photography photo-criticism presentations	exposure control, low-key images, flash
↓ Ang reading for week 5: 58-62 Reading: Graham Clarke. <i>The Photograph</i> . Oxford, 1997. Chapter 8: "Documentary Photography."		
SEPTEMBER 24	documentary photography	visual story telling using all core
SEPTEMBER 27	photo-criticism presentation sept. 27 all photo-criticisms due!	skills
↓ Ang reading for week 6: 62-70 Reading: Clive Scott. <i>Street Photography from Atget to Cartier-Bresson</i> . New York, 2007. "Introduction."		
OCTOBER 1	street photography	optical unconscious
OCTOBER 4	no class - portfolio work	
↓ Ang chapters for week 7 Reading: Douglas Harper. <i>Visual Sociology</i> . New York: Routledge, 2012. Chapter 1: "Visual Ethnography."		
OCTOBER 8	discussion of travel projects	
OCTOBER 11	portfolio review october 11 digital portfolio due!	

week 8	
OCTOBER 15	presentations of portfolios
OCTOBER 18	
weeks 9 & 10	
ACADEMIC TRAVEL PERIOD	

PART II: PROJECT WORK

week 11		
NOVEMBER 5	presentations of academic travel projects	
NOVEMBER 8	discussion of final photography projects	
week 12		
NOVEMBER 12	project work	choosing your photos
NOVEMBER 15		image development photo editing (manual and digital)
week 13		
NOVEMBER 19	project work	photo editing (manual and digital)
NOVEMBER 22	no class - portfolio work	
week 14		
NOVEMBER 26	individual portfolio review	
NOVEMBER 29		
week 15		
DECEMBER 3	portfolio presentations	
DECEMBER 6	portfolios due December 7	
week 16		
DECEMBER 10 13:30 – 15:30	final discussion	

11. Available Resources

Make sure to make good use of all available resources on campus: the Grace library (make an appointment with Clélie Riat if you need assistance in your research), the Writing and Learning Center in LAC, the available electronic search engines and resources through the library web. For specialized material, you can also try the library at USI or, for books on architecture, the Architecture School in Mendrisio. I am happy to assist you, if you would like to venture off campus.

SIGN-UP FOR A PHOTO-CRITICISM PRESENTATION

3 students per presentation

Choose 2 photographs for a comparative analysis presentation, referring to the concepts in the assigned readings for each topic.

September 10

portrait photography

_____ / _____ / _____

September 13

architecture/city photography

_____ / _____ / _____

September 17

landscape photography

_____ / _____ / _____

September 24

documentary photography

_____ / _____ / _____

September 27

street photography

_____ / _____ / _____