

## Course Syllabus

A photographer is someone who combines the compositional skills of an artist, the analytical mind of a scientist and the observational soul of a poet. In this introductory course you will become all three as you study traditional photographic composition and interpret the images you captured with your digital camera in the darkroom of Adobe PhotoShop™.

Competencies: Choose two of the four below. Specific assignments will be issued of each.

- A-1-A Can interpret works of art and relate them to one's own experience.
- A-2-D Can create an original work of art using an electronic medium and discuss the creative.
- A-5 Can define and analyze a creative process.
- S-3-X Student-designed. On the proliferation of digital imaging technology and its effects on our daily lives and the culture as a whole.
- FX By arrangement.

Guidelines for each "Comp" will be issued.  
Reading and Writing Assignments will be required for each Competency.

Each Competency in this class is a separate and free-standing project which adds the equivalent of one additional assignment to the workload of the course. Posted on the class BlackBoard site under *Assignments* you will find guideline sheets describing the three main assignments which are to be completed by everyone. Also on BlackBoard's *Assignments* there is a folder named *The Comps*. It lists the specific projects for the five offered Competencies and the work they will require. Because this is essentially an art class, the Competencies parallel class assignments but may not always tightly integrate with them...an necessary approach which may differ somewhat from other classes you have taken at SNL

### Please Note:

All students must be registered and listed on the class roster by the beginning of the second week of the term. Students not on the roster by this time cannot stay in the class under any circumstances. Please contact the SNL Advising Center ([snladvising@depaul.edu](mailto:snladvising@depaul.edu)) or the Office of Financial Aid ([finaid@depaul.edu](mailto:finaid@depaul.edu)) to work out your particular situation.

Students who need to withdraw from the course must do so by the end of the second week of the quarter. After that point is reached, 100% tuition is charged. It is possible to withdraw from a course or competence through the end of the seventh week of the quarter, but there is no tuition refund after the end of the second week.

In certain circumstances (such as illness, death of family members, natural disasters, etc.), a late withdrawal will be refunded tuition. These circumstances must be documented, and presented to the University through the SNL Exceptions Committee ([snlexceptions@depaul.edu](mailto:snlexceptions@depaul.edu)). In no case is such a refund allowed more than once during a student's career at DePaul.

( syllabus – continued )

## A General Goal for the Course...

...to gain greater awareness of the visual messages of everyday life. This is accomplished by making images where ideas are communicated through arrangement, chance juxtapositions and with the human elements of facial and body language. To do this we will 'image capture' (photographing) with a digital camera. Further interpretation will be accomplished in the digital darkroom (of Adobe PhotoShop™). In the process we may make what some would call Art.

### Expressive Photography / Two Events United

**Taking Pictures** (or 'image capture'....making negatives or files) is a **Creative Event**.

**Processing and Outputting** (in the darkroom or with the computer and ink-jet printer) is an **Interpretive Event** ..... and likewise is *a part of the Expressive Process*.

Being expressive with a camera is ridiculously easy and excruciatingly difficult. A photographer is someone who combines the compositional skills of an artist, the analytical mind of a scientist and the observational soul of a poet. The visual skills you learn in this course will apply to whatever technical evolutions cameras take.

Taking pictures with a camera can be compared to composing music. What the photographer *creates*, the photographic, whether negative or image file, is analogous to a musical score. Photons of light formed into an image by a lens are projected and activate a charged coupled device (the imaging chip). This chip sends an electronic portrait of these excitations to a digital storage vehicle, the flash card. The flash card is the digital camera's 'film'. Images as recorded in fragments of different colors and grey values, called pixels. The Digital Photographer opens the stored image of pixels in Adobe PhotoShop™ program. Pixels are displayed and re-arranged and our edits strengthen the image. The musical composer arranges the notes on a page. The digital photographer arranges imaging pixels in the file in the taking of the picture. And like any musical score, the image file is a cold and dead thing (just numbers) until opened and manipulated .....realized by the *interpretive* art of the performer, or in our case-the digital darkroom printer. In music the composer and the performing musician can both be worthy of the name artist. Likewise so can the photographer and the digital darkroom printer. In this class you will assume both roles. The line between them will continue to blur as each interacts and strengthens the other. We compose music through our cameras. Our rehearsal studio and concert hall is the vast landscape of PhotoShop™.

Historical Digressions.....Photography is unique in its ability to record literal fact. But the once popular assumption (never true), "The camera cannot lie", is heard ever more faintly today in a world where ethicists from the university, editors in newsroom, and advertising executives debate the extent to which the montage and morphing tools of the computer should blur truth and authorship. These issues which have surfaced in advertising and journalism are nothing new. 'Combination printings' (photos made from multiple negatives) were made in the darkrooms of art photographers as early as the 1850's. In the 1890's, when cheap off-set printing made pictures a mainstay in magazines and tabloids, 'doctored' Artistic

( syllabus – continued )

pictures became a daily consumable.. The 'National Inquirers' of past years and even some mainstream newspapers routinely used altered images to sell and to editorialize. Special interest groups and governmental agencies used 'trick' photographs to mold public opinion.

Like in the counterfeiting of money, the modern computer's entry into the domain of the darkroom has made altering of photographs easier, cheaper, more precise and more accessible through the proliferation of Adobe PhotoShop™. Any photograph viewed today should be look at with greater scrutiny.

As seductive as are the options within PhotoShop™ ...please save the "putting your face on a giraffe" approach for the later assignments. Start off by presenting (and enhancing) the real world.

Express your interpretations through more subtle choices. Much can be expressed through the choice of camera angle, timing, juxtaposition with backgrounds and objects in them, In the darkroom of PhotoShop™ we can shade or lighten areas, strengthen contours and contrast. Colors, local areas or overall can be corrected, amplified or toned down. We can re-compose the picture through cropping. All are powerful effects with great expressive potential. If these departures from reality be lies....they are white lies. Sometimes an artist must lie to tell the truth.

Most important, by documenting and interpreting the world through photographs you become more connected with it. (The late Susan Sontag would disagree.) As remarked by Dorothea Lange, "The camera teaches us to see-without the use of the camera.

### On Grading

Assignments ONE, TWO, & THREE will contribute 25% each.

Work to demonstrate fulfillment of the Competencies will add another 20%

Participation at the critiques will earn you the remaining 5%.

Attendance (or lack of it) will have a negative effect over your grade (see below).

### Attendance Policy

Missing a Critique will lower your grade on that critique by one letter.

An absence at the Final Critique will lower your final grade by one letter.

## Criteria for Grading Photography

Each assignment will be evaluated on Composition/Concept and on Technical Merit.  
And like adjustable rate mortgages, the standards will increase throughout the quarter.

Concept / Composition: How do the lines and shapes within the picture grab your eyes leading them around the print in a sort of guided tour? Was the idea for the picture interesting or creative? Did you succeed in communicating your idea? What else could the photograph be saying? (I have to be the final arbiter on this but I could sure use some help. It doesn't hurt to explain yourself in class critiques and at individual meetings.)

( syllabus – continued )

Technical Merit: Does your image use the complete grayscale and correctly (or creatively interpreted) color balance? Does it accurately portray the details of the original image file? Is the choice of contrast effective? Have your use of PhotoShop™ tools strengthened the composition? Is the final image free of extraneous and distracting artifacts?

*Always claim your accidents when they work and your failures when well-conceived.  
The good idea behind an unsuccessful image should be recognized.  
Point this out to me if I seem to forget.*

## MATERIALS.....

Provided: Computers, Imaging Software, blank CD-ROMs  
Printers, Scanners, Chairs, Air, Gravity, etc.

You'll need to supply: A Basic “point-and-shoot” Digital Camera  
capable of at least a 4 mp file size. More advanced cameras  
are welcomed but not necessary. A USB Flash Drive (also  
called a ‘Jump Drive’). 512 mb or larger.

*(Tripods are not required but useful for many assignments.)*

## TEXTBOOK OPTIONS ..... (take your pick or look for others)

Joseph Ciaglia: Introduction to Digital Photography (2<sup>nd</sup> edit); Prentice Hall (short & sweet)  
Ben Long: Complete Digital Photography (3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> edit); Charles River Media (big & meaty)

Note: Much of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Long’s book is available in a free on-line version at Google Books.

[http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=reGXnDKlKPoC&dq=complete+digital+photography+long&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=SpqNO2lqm1&sig=rKg4lzxd8BaM0zW9iOVkbKOFg8o&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&resnum=1&ct=result#PPA21,M1](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=reGXnDKlKPoC&dq=complete+digital+photography+long&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=SpqNO2lqm1&sig=rKg4lzxd8BaM0zW9iOVkbKOFg8o&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result#PPA21,M1)

ADOBE IMAGING SOFTWARE Recommended for working at home..... ...(some options)

PhotoShop™ Elements™.....versions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (around \$70, used cost less on Amazon)  
-OR-  
PhotoShop™.....versions 7, CS, CS2 (\$\$) ....versions CS3, CS4 (\$\$\$\$)

Note: Adobe will let you download a 30 day trial copy of CS3 or CS4. This will get you started.

( syllabus – continued )

Instructor-Supervised Open Lab and One-on-One Sessions...*may be arranged toward the end of the Quarter...provided our lab with installed Adobe Photoshop™ is available. I can stay later (the afternoon after class) most weeks.*

## Class Calendar

### Session One / September 14<sup>th</sup>

- Introduction and Syllabus explained. Competencies discussed; guidelines issued. Comparison of Digital Imaging to conventional Film-based Imaging with Class Portraits. Downloading and storage of images, Adobe Photohop™ and Photoshop Elements™ demonstrated. BRING YOUR DIGITAL CAMERAS TO CLASS.
- Assignment ONE: Environmental Portraits (see handout). The word *Portrait* comes from the verb *Portray*. Environmental Portraits adds to facial expressions and body language the descriptive tools of foreground, background, the space around the subject and the objects within to portray. Take photographs of at least 4 different persons. These can be family and friends or strangers in a public place. You will only need to select 6 final images. Edit down from at around a *minimum* of 50 images. Pictures taken before this class began can be used but limited to 3 of your 6 final images. Use the “stuff” within the scene, the angle of view, lighting and composition to reveal their interests and character. Some of your images can be close-ups. But remember to give the environment its due....step back. By the next class session (September 21) return with your cameras and your first images. Downloaded these images to your class computer for PhotoShop™ enhancing. At the end of each class session, suck them up to your flash drive.
- First Technical Reading Packet issued

### Session Two / September 21<sup>st</sup>

- Bring in your first images from Assignment ONE you shot over this week. You also may bring in and work on older images (taken before this quarter). Demo and discussion of image downloading and enhancing techniques using the basic tools of Adobe PhotoShop™: cropping, re-sizing, color adjustment, brightness / contrast, dodging and burning and the saving of files.
- Xeroxed Handouts on the Competencies issued. Discussion of the ‘Comps’.

### Session Three / September 28<sup>th</sup>

- Class Lab. Work on your initial and next generation Environmental Portraits in the ‘digital darkroom’. PhotoShop™ demos of ‘Select-Copy-Paste’ and Layers.

( syllabus – continued )

## What's Due for Assignment ONE: Environmental Portraits? ( Critique on October 5<sup>th</sup> )

Two PowerPoint Presentations.... to be shown in class critique from a burned CD-ROM.

- PP #1 contains at least 6 Environmental Portraits with accompanying text explaining how these images the interaction of figure with backgrounds say about the human subject(s).
- PP #2 should contain the 'Before and After' versions of the chosen 6(+) images. Added text should describe the PhotoShop™ enhancements you've made and the tools used.

.....also contained on the CD but not presented at the critique....

- One folder for your "Keepers" and "Near Keepers" images...full & uncompressed. 8 images *minimum*.
- One folder for your "Outtakes". Pictures taken but not used. You will need at least 50 outtake images. These show the extent of your exploration, pain and suffering.

*Hand in your CD-ROM for grading after the Critique.  
No Prints will be needed for this assignment.*

### **Session Four / October 5<sup>th</sup>**

- Lab Time. Prepare for Class Critique of Assignment ONE.
- Individual meetings with instructor to show work-in-progress.
- Assignment TWO: A Photo-Narrative "How-to Outline" (a xerox) will be issued and discussed.
- Second Technical Reading Packet issued.

Note: All S-3-X (and other "X'ers") should finalize their topics and produce a one-half page written Synopsis. Hand in at class today.

### **Session Five / October 12<sup>th</sup>**

- Critique of Assignment ONE: Environmental Portraits. Bring a burned CD with the assignment to class. The critique experience in an art course can take the shape of a light-hearted 'show-and-tell' or a public flogging. Our critique will be the former (or is it the latter....I mix this up).

### **Session Six / October 19<sup>th</sup>**

- Critique of Assignment One.....(continued, if necessary).
- Assignment TWO: The Photo-Narrative.....*Explained with examples.*

( syllabus / calendar – continued )

## What's Due for Assignment TWO: A Photo-Narrative ? ( Critiqued on November 9<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> )

Two PowerPoint Presentations.... to be shown in class critique from a burned CD-ROM.

PP #1 contains your 10 finalized images, added text will explain content, composition and why you chose them.

PP #2 should contain the 'Before and After' versions of the chosen 10 images. Added text will describe the PhotoShop™ enhancements you've made and the tools used.

.....also contained on the CD but not presented at the critique....

- One folder for your "Keepers" & "Near Keepers" images...full & uncompressed. 10 images, *minimum*.
- One folder for your "Outtakes". Pictures taken but not used. You will need at least 50 outtake images. These show the extent of your exploration, pain and suffering.

### **Session Seven / October 26<sup>th</sup>**

-Lab Time to work on Assignment TWO: The Photo-Narrative. One-on-one meetings with instructor to discuss your progress on the Competencies.

-Demo of Layers and Collage/Montage Techniques in PhotoShop™ of Flatbed Scanning. A flatbed scanner will be available for student use during this and all remaining class sessions. You will need to use a scanner for the Photo-Restoration project of Assignment THREE.

### **Session Eight / November 2<sup>nd</sup>**

- Catch-up day: Lab Time to work on images for Assignment TWO: The Photo-Narrative. One-on-One conferences with instructor. Progress check for the competencies with instructor.
- Assignment THREE: Final Portfolio / Images in Hardcopy explained. Handouts issued.

( *syllabus / calendar – continued* )

## What's Due for Assignment THREE: Final Portfolio?

( Critiqued on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, our last class session. )

6 **Prints** with accompanying CD are due:

- Three prints made from any digital image you've taken within the past year.  
Provide "before / after" image files on the CD for any printed images taken before this class began (to show PhotoShop enhancements).
- Two Prints should represent an Image Restoration Project of an older existing photograph badly in need of repair. Originals will be scanned, restored in PhotoShop™ and printed. One *before* restoration and one *after* restoration print are needed. Also bring in the original photograph to the Critique. The "before / after" digital files should be burned to the CD-ROM you hand in. If layers were used in the restoration save the *after* image file as a PhotoShop .psd.  
( See the Image-Restoration Project handout for more on this requirement. )
- At least One Print should be a Collage/Montage\* combining images from multiple sources. Your Collage or Montage can be realistic, surrealistic, abstract or a graphic design. Include this image as a PhotoShop™ .psd document on your burned CD. Also include your source images.

\*For A2D'ers... display your three Collage/Montages (a competency requirement) at Assignment THREE's critique. You may substitute another digital image in place of the one collage / montage required for the Final Portfolio.

### **Session Nine / November 9<sup>th</sup>**

- Critique of Assignment TWO: A Photo-Narrative
- Discussion of Assignment THREE

### **Session Ten / November 16<sup>th</sup>**

- Critique of Assignment TWO (*Continued, if necessary*).
- Demo of Ink-Jet Printing
- Lab Day. Work on image files for your Final Portfolio
- One-on-one conferences with instructor after class...Noon to 1:00.

***Due to the BlackBoard by Saturday, November 21<sup>st</sup>...a 100-300 word self-critique of Assignment TWO.***

### **Final Critique / November 23<sup>rd</sup>**

- Class Critique of Assignment THREE: Final Portfolio / Images in HardCopy.

*Post any outstanding written competencies components to Blackboard by Monday, November 28<sup>th</sup>.*