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ARTZ 284A.01: Photo I - Techniques and Processes

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ARTZ 284a; Photo-I

instructor: **Matt Hamon**

office hours: **Tuesdays 9 -11am, and by appointment**

email: **matthew.hamon@umontana.edu**

phone: **360.789.9727 (this is my personal number so please only use it for emergencies.)**

Course Syllabus

Meetings: M/W, 10:10am – 12:00pm

Classroom: FA-415 and/or FA210

Course Description and Objectives:

From the course catalog, "Introduction to photography as an art form. Exposure, camera basics, composition, developing, printing, print finishing techniques. Focus on technical expertise and issues of content and personal expression."

This 3 credit course offers an introduction to basic photography techniques and aesthetic issues. Scheduled demonstrations are integral to the course, and are supplemented by impromptu demonstrations based on student need. Students should expect to gain an awareness of the expressive and creative possibilities of photography as well as developing a personal vocabulary utilizing the photographic medium.

The objective of this photography course is to provide a basic understanding of the visual and technical skills necessary to pursue and appreciate photography as a Fine Art. This course will cover all aspects of digital photography involving camera operation, exposure control, image processing, output, and print finishing. In addition, the class will introduce a variety of historical and contemporary photographers as well as issues and theories within photography. The student will strive to bring technical control into accord with artistic vision. It should be noted that this photography course is a fine-art course: it does not address itself to vocational skills and results... *Individual creativity, visual problem solving and precise craftsmanship will be stressed.*

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to: Understand the basic technical aspects of digital photography involving camera operation, and exposure control, selecting appropriate f-stops and shutter speeds for different picture taking problems, interpret in-camera reflected light meter readings, arrive at appropriate exposures in a variety of lighting situations, bracket exposures. Additionally, students will be able to critique the form and content of photographs in a class peer setting, state significant historical contributions and technical innovations pertinent to the development of photography, use photography as a medium of personal expression, and demonstrate the creative process through class discourse.

Projects

Various assignments will be delivered throughout the semester. The total number of assignments will be based on the pace with which the group moves through the curriculum. Each assignment will be designed to address both technical and conceptual aspects of photography. We generally conclude the semester with a project that you design for yourself. It will be helpful to begin thinking about the project you will design early in the semester. Keep this in mind.

Grading

You will be expected to attend all classes, complete all projects, and participate fully in class discussions. I have a very strict late policy, so make special note of the project due-.

Your overall grade will be based on a percentage of the total available points that you earn in addition to any bonus or penalty you receive based on attendance. Each project will include a rubric with pass/fail elements each worth one point each. While I do not assign traditional letter grades to the work you turn in, I will be frank with my assessment during critique. Additionally, I am available to discuss your work before and after critique if you have further questions.

Final Grading Scale:

93-100 A
90-92 A-
87-89 B+
83-86 B
80-82 B-
77-79 C+
73-76 C
70-72 C-
60-69 D
<60 F

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation is essential to academic success. Therefore, I include attendance and participation in my grading. Missing class will cause you to quickly fall behind on the techniques and concepts. I see participation in class discussions and critiques as providing the wonderful benefit of peer-to-peer learning.

Whereas participation is a factored percentage of your overall grade, attendance has the ability to raise or lower your final grade from your calculated score. Poor attendance will result in a lowering of your overall grade, but I will also reward good attendance with bonus points, as follows:

- If you do not miss a single class during the entire semester I will increase your grade by 2/3 letter grade (from X- to X+)!
- If you miss only one class, I will increase your grade by 1/3 letter grade (From X- to X)!
- Missing up to three classes is acceptable and will result in no penalty.
- Every class missed beyond three will result in a drop of one letter grade.
- Additionally, three late arrivals to or early departures from class count as an absence.

Excused absences are absences none-the-less... I make no differentiation. I have no qualms about failing you for poor attendance. This policy is not flexible, so be in class and be on time!

Texts:

There are no required texts for this course. If you are the type of person who would benefit from a technical manual of photography throughout the semester, please see me. I have several I can loan you.

Other readings may be provided during the semester, including handouts, on-line readings, or downloadable/emailed PDFs via the course Moodle site.

How to be successful in this course:

The way to earn an "A" in this class is to arrive at class on time with an open mind, participate in the dialogue,

complete assignments on time, and make contributions to the learning community.

You can guarantee yourself the grade of “A” in this course if you do the following; attend and participate in all scheduled classes, actively participate in critiques, complete all assignments on time, keep notes on technical information, and help maintain a safe, clean, and organized photography lab.

Please silence your cell phone. No cell phone calls are to be taken or made during class. Reading your incoming text messages or responding to text messages during class is particularly rude and will result in zero credit for that class meeting. I understand that cell phones occasionally ring unexpectedly. In such cases, simply turn your phone off as discretely as possible, or leave the room for *emergency* calls.

Equipment & Supplies:

REQUIRED:

Camera:

- A digital camera that allows for manual adjustment of shutter-speed and aperture. (This is a must, so don't even ask). Ideally, your camera will also allow you to shoot in the RAW file format. While a camera does represent a significant expense, it is an indispensable piece of equipment for all art majors and an obvious necessity to any photo enthusiast. Make the best investment you can afford at this time.
- A folder with pockets for turning in projects (contact sheets, etc.). This must be a flat folder (no 3-ring binders) that secures your work for transportation to and from school. The Itoyo folders in the bookstore are the best option.
- Several 8.5 x 11 clear sleeves to protect finished prints
- A box of 50 sheets of premium, Red River, 8.5 x 11 inkjet photo paper. You'll find the best deals in the UM bookstore. The Red River papers are the only papers that we have custom profiles for.

Storage:

- A “thumb,” or “flash” drive with several Gigs of space for moving and transporting files
- A Dropbox account (I will send you an invitation via email), or another cloud based storage option
- Two SD memory cards for your camera
- Not required but recommended: An external USB drive of 250 Gigs or more
- Not required but recommended: A sturdy tripod and a long cable release or camera remote

It wouldn't hurt to have:

- any version of Adobe Photoshop installed on your personal computer
- lens cleaning cloth or tissue
- permanent pen—for marking contact sheets
- black permanent ultra fine point—to write on back of prints

Paper & Output:

Initially, you will be printing via external sources (Paw Print, Target, Walmart, Costco, or your personal inkjet printer). Later in the semester we will transition to utilizing printers in The School of Art, Fab-Lab. For the latter portion of the semester, you might choose to purchase personal paper stock in the surface and weight you desire. I recommend Red River or Arista as quality and affordable options available online.

Course text:

In an effort to reduce student expenses, there is no required text for this course. Much of the technical

information I offer will be accompanied by handouts. Careful note taking will also aid in your understanding of the material. If you feel your learning style benefits most from access to a text book, please contact me... I do have some options for you to pursue.

Sources for output, equipment and materials:

- The UM bookstore - reasonable selection and decent prices)
- www.freestylephoto.biz - awesome selection of Arista papers, great prices and quick delivery)
- www.redriverpaper.com - excellent paper selection, affordable, quick delivery
- Paw Print (In the Mansfield Library) - quirky but affordable printing option. Don't wait to the last minute though!
- Target - great local source for quality prints, ICC profiles available for many locations
- Costco - local source for affordable, large prints and prints of coffee mugs
- Walmart - the unmentionable store, but a decent source for prints
- Staples & Office Max - quick turnaround of affordable prints

The Fine Print:

Students With Special Needs:

It is not at all out of the ordinary for various students to have unique needs and learning styles. Students with disabilities or unique needs should meet with the instructor immediately. Though requirements for the course will not be adjusted for individual needs, I am happy to assist each individual in meeting the requirements for the course.

Academic Misconduct and the Student Conduct Code:

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/Index.cfm/page/1321.