

Digital Photography Syllabus & Course Objectives

SUMMARY OF COURSE:

My objective for this course is to give you knowledge necessary for you to feel as comfortable with digital photography by understanding how the camera works and using darkroom techniques in Adobe Photoshop.

Attending class on time is not only professional courtesy but will also affect your grade. Always take notes. Be prepared for class and bring all necessary materials for assignments. It's important to turn projects in on time and within the guidelines.

I like to have as much flexibility as I can with this introductory course. As such, there will be times in the term where I may slow down the class or move a faster pace depending on the needs of the class. You will have three assignments and that will build from one another. I will also have practical Photoshop days in which we will discuss common retouching and effects used with digital photography.

Grading will be done on perceived development from project to project of each individual student. Seventy percent of the grade is following directions and twenty percent is creative problem solving on the projects. The final 10 percent is based on class participation in critique.

SUMMARY OF PROJECTS

Project # 1

Documentation. Decide on a subject you would like to explore. We will use the BBC's photo essay guidelines found on their web site for the structure of the essay. This does not need to be an extravagant essay. Keep it very simple, such as a day in the life of my dog, or documentation of painted murals in your neighborhood. Pick something that will keep your interest.

This assignment aims at getting the student adept at using the file browser, batch commands, actions, naming conventions and other organizational features of Photoshop.

Project #2

Environmental Portrait. Pick a person(s) to photograph in their surroundings, or in surroundings that you think represent their personality or their profession. The final image must have some of the environment as part of the composition.

The purpose of this project is to understand how your camera captures color, how to control it through white balance or through RAW capture. This will also be an introduction to color correction in Photoshop and tools to use to color balance photographs in mixed lighting situations.

Digital Photography Syllabus & Course Objectives

Project #3

360° (U) Natural Landscape. Photograph either a suburban landscape, urban landscape, or natural landscape by taking up to 36 images in a circle and combining them in Photoshop.

This is an introduction to layers, compositing, transform tool, and selection tools to create final composite landscape image.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

1) Digital SLR

A digital single lens reflex is recommended for this class. You can participate in my class without one, but I am presuming that you have one if you are taking my class. I frequently get asked what camera I recommend for purchase. Buying a digital camera is large investment, so I do not recommend one camera over another, but I do have a list of suggested features that I think are necessary to invest in.

- a) Menus are the backbone of a digital's camera CPU, so make sure you get a camera that has easy access to menus and features. You do not want to buy something that has important features, such as, card formatting or ISO settings, buried in menu options.
- b) Manual adjustments to F-stop and Shutter speeds should be just a button away. You will not be able to make quick adjustments to exposure if you have to move through menus.
- c) The camera must be able to sync to an external flash through either an internal PC (power cord) terminal or through a hot shoe adapter.
- D) You should invest in a camera that can make at least a 18 MB image file. This will enable you to submit your digital photos to some stock agencies (stock agency requirements vary but Micro Stock companies require at 1 MB files).
- e) The camera should have interchangeable lens' or lens adapters for zoom, telephoto, wide angle, and close up photography.
- f) Your new camera must be able to shoot RAW files. This is the digital equivalent of negatives and you want the control it has to offer.
- g) Comparison shop at a web site like www.dpreview.com and look at reviews of cameras you are interested in.

Digital Photography Syllabus & Course Objectives

2) Compact Flash Cards

You should get as many of these as you can afford. You can purchase compact flash cards from camera stores, electronic stores (like Fry's) or bulk purchase stores (like Costco). Some flash cards read data to the disk faster than others. The Lexar Professional cards are some of the fastest on the market. I don't know the specs on all cards, so do research on the web. Some popular companies to look at are Lexar, Hitachi, and Sandisk.

RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT BUT NOT NEEDED

1) Compact Flash Card Reader. There are so many to choose from, so I will suggest a high end and low end model. You can get a 12-1 Sandisk USB card reader that is a little slow to download images or you can get a Lexar Firewire or USB3 CF Card reader. If time is not an issue, then get a reasonably priced model, but if speed and dependability is preferred then purchase a firewire/ USB3 reader.



2) Backup. You will eventually need a way to back up your digital photos. Either with a CD/DVD burner or an external harddrive.



3) Media to shuttle your projects from home, school, or office. You can either burn disks for this, or you can use a Zip Disk, Jump Drive, external hard drive, or even your iPod. (you can use your iPod as a portable hard drive only if the computers you are using are the same operating system).



Digital Photography Syllabus & Course Objectives

4) Tripod. You may want to invest in one if you do not own one. You will use it for assignment # 3, but it will come in handy for your entire photographic career. Make sure tripod is sturdy. If you are going to invest in a tripod, make sure you get one that accepts different tripod heads. If you purchase a Bogen tripod, you can buy the legs and a 35 mm tripod head; as you acquire more cameras, you can buy other heads meant for specialty functions or sturdier adjusts without buying new legs.



5) Current Version of Adobe Photoshop CS, Adobe Creative Suite CS (all Adobe desktop publishing programs in one package), or and upgrade package to Current Adobe Photoshop CS. This is a heavy investment, but worth it to keep up with software trends. It will also make it easier for you to practice what we learn at home. Upgrades can be found at Adobe's web site or shop around on the internet for the best deal. (check out www.creativengine.com for student discounts).

6) Photoshop CS books. I recommend *Photoshop CS* (fill in latest version numeral) *for Digital Photographers* by Scott Kelby and *Adobe Photoshop CS* (fill in latest version numeral) *for Photographers* by Martin Evening.