ART 215: Photography: Portfolio of Perugia

Course Syllabus

Summer Semester 2019

Instructor: Philippa Stannard, MFA
Credits: 3
Contact Hours: 45
Prerequisites: None
Class Hours: TBA
Office Hours: TBA
Course Type: Standard Course
Lab Fee: TBA

Course Description

This course will introduce students to the fundamentals of photography. No previous photographic experience is required. Students will capture and record their experience in Italy through weekly photo walks around Perugia, an ancient Umbrian hilltop town, and create a portfolio of these images. Students will learn basic concepts, processes, and techniques, including camera usage, exposure controls, manipulating and printing digital photographic images, and print presentation. The class will also explore the cultural phenomenon of photography and the role it plays in society. At the end of the semester, selected photographs will be displayed at the Umbra Art Show.

"The question is not how to take a good picture, but how not to miss one." - Harold Feinstein

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will be able to:
– develop an understanding of photographic language;
– acquire a more critical eye in evaluating and reading photographic images;
– achieve proficiency in editing and optimizing digital images; and
– gain insight into the creation, use, and presentation of photographic images.

Course Materials

Readings
Course reader available at local copy shop. See "Umbra Institute Course Materials - Textbooks and Readers" handout provided in the orientation folder for more information.

Digital Camera
Point and shoot, single lens reflex and cell phone, and GoPro cameras are welcome.

Assessment

Photographic Assignments (3)	75% (25% each)
Quizzes and Class Participation	5%
Oral Reports and Presentations	10%

Written Reports   10%

Grading
Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% -89%	
B	83% - 86%	Superior
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	
C	73% - 76%	Satisfactory
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	
D	63% - 66%	Low Pass
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Course Requirements
Grades are based on class attendance, class participation, quizzes, the quality and punctuality of turning in written and photographic assignments, and overall improvement. Assignments are due on the assigned date. For every class that an assignment is late, the grade on the assignment will drop by one letter, unless the student has a written note from a doctor.

Three Photographic Assignments (75%)
Students will have three photographic assignments due during the semester. Each assignment will consist of taking at least 300 photographs, from which they will choose the best six images and then edit and optimize them. Students will post all the assignments on Facebook.

Assignment 1: *Photographic Impressions of your new home: Perugia, Italy, and Europe*
  – Six edited and optimized photographs.
  – Explore your surroundings with your camera, and photograph anything that you find particularly interesting. Are there things that strike you as new, odd, or funny? Things that are similar or different from where you come from? What are these things and how can you take interesting photographs of them? Put into practice the different techniques that we discussed during class that can be used to make a photograph more interesting: composition, point of view, motion, depth of field and exposure compensation... and *LIGHTING!*

Assignment 2: *The Selfie*
  – Six edited and optimised photographs.
  – You know yourself better than anyone else in the world. We all have a self-identity that includes how we see ourselves and expectations of how we want the world to see us. Here is your chance to show us something about you. Tell us about yourself in six self-portraits. Each self-portrait should be in a different location. What meaning does the location give to each photograph? Your heritage, personality, hobbies, dreams, and hopes for the future are all launching pads for generating images that say something real about you. You could include parts of yourself that you are proud of as well as other parts that you may not like! Each self-portrait does not have to say everything, but each image should reveal important information about you. Imagine how content in each image could imply meaning and how your audience could interpret the image. Think about how composition, perspective, and lighting can complement the content in each photograph.

Assignment 3: *Open Assignment*
  – Six edited and optimized photographs.

– You may choose your own subject for this assignment, or choose from a list of possible assignments at the end of the syllabus

Sample Grading Sheet
To make the criteria and grading standards for assignments clearer, I have come up with the following system/grading sheet. This will help you understand what you are doing correctly and what you can improve upon. If you disagree or would like a better explanation of any grade, I encourage you to come and discuss it with me.

Each assignment is worth 60 points (10 points for each photograph). Each photograph will be graded based on: composition (5 points), lighting (1 point), viewpoint (1 point), editing (3 points), focus (-1 point if not in focus), and exposure (-1 point if not exposed correctly).

Re-grade Policy
If you are not happy with your grade for Assignment 1, you can rework it and resubmit it for a better grade. In

Photograph	Composition / 5	Lighting / 1	Viewpoint / 1	Editing /3	Focus y/n	Exposure y/n	Total /10
1							
Notes:							
2							
Notes:							
3							
Notes:							
4							
Notes:							
5							
Notes:							
6							
Notes:							
Total:	/30	/6	/6	/18			/60

60-56 points = A Exceptional   55-54 points = A- Excellent
53 points = B+ Superior   52-50 points = B Superior   49-48 points = B- Superior
47 points = C+ Good   46-44 points = C Satisfactory   43-42 points = C- Acceptable
41points = D+ Low pass   40-38 = D Low pass   37-36 = D- Very low pass
35 and Below = F

NOTES:

doing so, my hope is that besides raising your grade, you will become a better photographer and improve your skills and "critical eye." You can choose to redo and rework one or all of the photographs that you originally turned in, or you can choose new photographs to work on. It is up to you! My concern is that you are learning and improving. When I re-grade your Assignment 1, both projects should be side-by-side for easy comparison.

Quizzes and class participation (5%)
Students will be given quizzes on the readings and on what they have learned in class. Class participation refers to active participation during critiques, discussion or readings, photo walks, and any other activity during class time.

Oral reports and presentations (10%)
Everyone will research a photographer and give an *oral and written report* on their chosen photographer. I suggest researching a photographer that photographs something that you are interested in. For example, if you are interested in cooking, type "food photographer" into Google to help you familiarize yourself with popular food photographers. You can also use the websites listed at the end of the course syllabus as a good starting point.

Make sure the photographer that you choose has enough information available to write a six-page paper. **The paper and oral report are both due on the day that you sign up to give your presentation.**

The *oral report* will be given as a PowerPoint, Keynote or other type of visual presentation in which you explain the life and work of your photographer, what you think about their work, and show 20 examples of their work. The images should be of a higher resolution, as they will be enlarged on the TV monitor. (Google→ Image search→ tools→ image size→large) Please talk about your photographer's life, artistic style, compositional techniques, etc. We are interested in your creative analysis and interpretation. The oral report should last about 15-20 minutes.

Be prepared to give your oral presentation at the beginning of class. Your preparation will be included as part of your grade. You may either put your presentation on a thumb drive, which can be used to open the file on the classroom computer, or you may use your own computer if it has a HDMI port. Do not count on e-mailing your presentation to yourself to open minutes before you give your presentation as internet can be unreliable.

Written reports (10%)
Everyone will research a photographer and give an *oral and written report* on their chosen photographer. The written paper on your chosen photographer should be at least six pages long, typed, and double spaced. *I am interested to know what YOU think about their work.* Tell me why you chose them, describe their photographic career. I do not want to read a paper that is half quotations. Limit the number of quotes to a minimum, including no more than three. How did they get into photography? What contributions did they make to the world of photography? What genre of photography do they practice? What is unique about their images? Is there a subject or theme that ties their work together? I am interested in your creative analysis and interpretation. Try to summarize their photographic style. Your bibliography should include at least five sources.

Additional Course Information
The class will be using Facebook to post assignments and Instagram to post individual photos.

Photo Editing Software
We will be learning to use *iphoto, Snapseed, and Instagram.* iPhoto is the photo organizing and editing program that you probably already know if you have a Mac computer. Snapseed is a wonderful photo editing app for mobile devices. You are probably already familiar with Instagram, we'll be using the editing mode instead of the filter mode. Once you understand the basics of these programs, you can pretty much get the hang of most simple photo-editing software. There are many wonderful apps out there that are excellent for photo-editing. Please feel free to explore and share any that you find interesting.

Here is a short list of some interesting ones:
- *Snapseed*
- *Camera +*
- *VSCO Cam*
- *Photoshop Express;*
- *TouchRetouch*
- *Color Splash*
- *AfterLight*
- *Mextures*
- *Instagram*
- *Polarr*
- *Fotor*

List of Possible Assignments
One object many angles – Choose an interesting object; it could be anything. Take at least 200 photos of it. The idea here is that it will force you to be creative and take as many different photos of the object from as many different angles as possible.

Portrait without a face – Choose a person that you know well, if possible, and try to tell as much about them as possible in the photographs without showing their face so that perhaps we can understand who they are, their personality, their values, etc.

Juxtaposition – Take photos placing two objects together that somehow give a greater meaning being side-by-side than separately.

Birds' eye view – Take 200 photos from above, as if seen from a bird in flight.

Dogs' eye view – Take 200 photos with the camera no more than 12 inches from the ground.

Zoom – This is a fun one if you have a zoom lens. Take photos while the shutter is open; zoom into or away from your subject matter. This method is a great way to imply motion photographically.

Reflections – They are everywhere: glass, water, metal, etc.

Old Perugia vs. New Perugia – This little hilltop town is full of dichotomies and juxtapositions between the old and new. How can you best distill this and show this through photos? This project could apply to any city…not just Perugia!

Framing devices – Take photos using elements to "frame the photo." Try taking photographs through a doorway, window, fence, etc. The object is to frame the photo with an element in the photo itself.

Repeating shapes – Repetition is one of the strongest compositional elements. Capitalize on this and pay attention to all the repeating patterns and shapes that exist. Capture them in your photos.

Diagonal horizon line project – Take your whole project with your horizon line going diagonally through the picture plane. It gives a sense of vertigo and gives the viewer another element to figure out and think about.

In the style of a chosen photographer – Choose a photographer whose work you like and admire. Research what makes their photographic style unique. This does not mean re-creating the photos that they took but understanding their work and subject matter. Take 200 photographs using their style, reflecting upon what makes their work unique, and taking photos that look like they might have been taken by your chosen photographer.

Create your own assignment.

Online Resources
www.fstopmagazine.com – *F-Stop Magazine* is an online photography magazine featuring contemporary photography from established and emerging photographers from around the world. Each issue has a theme or an idea that unites photographs to create a dynamic dialogue among the artists.

www.lensculture.com – This site is one of the most authoritative resources for contemporary photography. *Lensculture* highlights work from every continent and from diverse points of view: documentary, fine art, nature, photojournalism, activism, street photography, sports, fashion, poetic, personal, abstract, and human.

www.magnumphotos.com – *Magnum Photos* is a photographic cooperative of great diversity and distinction owned by its photographer members. With powerful individual vision, *Magnum* photographers chronicle the world and interpret its peoples, events, issues, and personalities.

www.photo.net – *Photo.net* is a site for photographers to connect with other photographers (photo.net/community), explore photo galleries, discuss photography, share and critique photos (www.photo.net/gallery), and learn about photography.

www.epa.eu – As a leading global news photo agency, *epa* transmits an average of 1000 pictures per day, generated by a network of more than 400 photographers worldwide. Its image production covers news, sports, entertainment, arts, and culture.

www.worldpressphoto.org – *World Press Photo* aims to support professional press photography on a wide international scale. Promotional activities include an annual contest, exhibitions, stimulation of photojournalism through educational programs, and creating greater visibility for press photography through a variety of publications.
www.lenscratch.com – *Lenscratch* is considered one of the ten photography-related blogs students should be reading by *Source Review*, *Wired.com*, *Rangefinder*, and *InStyle Magazine*.

www.photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography – *National Geographic*!

www.masters-of-photography.com – This site allows students to browse through a list of well-known photographers, read related articles, and resources, as well as view photographs. Those not overly familiar with many of the photographers will find the Photographer Summaries helpful in browsing the site.

www.digitalcamera-hq.com/digital-cameras – *Digital Camera* offers unbiased, informative reviews from camera experts and everyday users looking to share their own experiences. It is not a store, but this site can help students find a great camera at the best price.

www.rleggat.com/photohistory/index.html – In addition to pen-portraits of many of the most important photographers of the period, *rleggat* contains information on some of the most significant processes used during the early days of photography.

www.nytimes.com/multimedia – This site has a diverse collection of some of the most recent photographs, videos and slide shows in *The New York Times*.

www.lens.blogs.nytimes.com – The photojournalism blog of *The New York Times*.

Attendance Policy
Class attendance is *mandatory*. Students are allowed one "free" absence during the summer semester, which they do not need to justify. Each additional absence, unless it is for a very serious reason, will lower your final grade by one grade level (e.g., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B). It is also the policy of the Institute that any student who has three or more absences automatically fails the class. If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. Furthermore, times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important for student performance in class. Missing a mandatory field trip, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to the professor and Umbra Academic Director in a timely manner, will lower students' final grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

Academic Integrity
All forms of **cheating** (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and **plagiarism** (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

Classroom Policy
The class will be using computers, cell phones, Facebook and Instagram to edit and post photographs. Students will be using them during dedicated editing and photo taking times. Students should refrain from using these devices etc. when the class is doing other activities such as photography reports or demos. Participation in class is part of students' grade. Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate **respect** for the historical premises that the school occupies.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments
NOTE: This is a preliminary schedule that is subject to change.

WEEK 1

What Makes a Photograph "Good"? Introduction to Your Photo Taking Device, Presentation and Discussion of Images.
– Introduction in pairs
– Introduce partner
– Ball name game
– Go over syllabus
– Add new members to our Umbra Eye Perugia *Instagram* and *Facebook* accounts (*Instagram*: umbraeyeperugia, pw: photography; *Facebook*: Umbra Eye Perugia, ask to be a member)
– Slide show: Aperture, Shutter, and ISO
– Discuss compositional and camera techniques that can make photographs more effective

To do before next class:
   o Research a photographer that you might be interested in doing your report on
   o Bring camera to next class with the battery fully charged!

<u>Readings</u>
Joel Meyerowitz, *Seeing Things*, 2016

How Do Cameras Work? Aperture, Shutter, and ISO
– Name game
– Sign up for photographers and report dates
– Quiz and discussion of reading
– Discuss compositional techniques, WB, +/-, lenses, distortion and DOF, flash, icons, iPhone photography, etc.
– Tips and tricks for achieving depth of field and blurry motion with point and shoot and cell phone cameras
– PHOTOWALK.

To do before next class:
   ◦ Research a photographer that you might be interested in doing your report on
   ◦ Take lots of photographs and familiarize yourself with your camera and its functions
   ◦ Bring camera to next class with charged battery and questions you have about any functions/use
   ◦ Finish taking at least 200 photos for Assignment 1: Photographic Impressions of Perugia: What is Your Experience?
   ◦ Bring your computer with the photographs that you have taken already uploaded.
   ◦ Pick your best images for Assignment 1

<u>Readings</u>
Ben Long, *Basic Photography: A Quick Primer*, 2012

WEEK 2

Picking and Editing Your Best Images
– Name game
– Sign up for photographer and report dates
– Quiz on reading
– View *Instagram* photos
– Basic edits: exposure, contrast, and saturation
– Problem photos and how to fix them
– Histograms: How can they help us? What do they tell us?
– Choosing and editing best images

To do before next class:
- ◦ Upload one photo to Instagram account "Umbra Eye". We will view and critique them next class
- ◦ Continue to take lots of photographs and familiarize yourself with your camera and its functions
- ◦ Upload your Assignment 1 photos to our Facebook page

<u>Readings</u>
Ben Long, *Finding and Composing a Photograph*, 2012

*Photographic Impressions of Italy: What is Your Experience? Six Photographs, Optimized as Needed, Posted to Facebook (*Assignment 1 due*)*
- – View Assignment 1 photographs on *Facebook*
- – Class discussion and critique
- – Grading
- – Better editing
- – History of the Selfie

To do before next class:
- ◦ Take at least 200 photographs for Assignment 2 selfie and upload them to your computer before next class
- o Bring your computer with the photographs that you have taken uploaded and be prepared to pick your best images for Assignment 1
- o
- o Upload one photo that you would like feedback on to *Instagram*

<u>Readings</u>
David duChemin, *It Means Something*, 2012

WEEK 3

Better Editing
- – Quiz on reading
- – Reports by _____
- – View images on *Instagram*
- – Demo: Better editing of selected photographs from *Instagram*
- – Work on Assignment 2

To do before next class:
- o Keep taking photos for Assignment 2, as needed
- o Edit and upload your Assignment 2 selfie photos to our *Facebook* page
- o Think about what you would like to photograph for Assignment 3 (Open to your creative interpretation or you can choose from a list at the end of the syllabus.)
- o Bring your camera for next class's PHOTOWALK!

Critique of Assignment 2: Selfie
- – Reports by _____
- – Grading
- – Better editing
- – Problem images and how to fix them
- – Discuss Assignment 3 ideas
- – PHOTOWALK

To do before next class:
- o Upload a photograph to *Instagram*

- Take at least 200 photographs for Assignment 3. You may choose a project from the list of assignments or you may create your own project. Pick your best six images.
- Bring your computer to edit Assignment 3

WEEK 4

Working on Assignment 3
– Reports by _____
– View and discuss *Instagram* photographs
– Better editing, sharpening, noise, definition, and structure
– Work on Assignment 3

To do before next class:
- Keep taking photos for Assignment 3, as needed.
- Edit and upload your Assignment 3 photos to our *Facebook* page.
- Bring your camera for next class's PHOTOWALK!

Critique Assignment 3 Photographs
– View Assignment 3 photographs on *Facebook*
– Class discussion and critique
– Grading
– Better editing
– PHOTOWALK

To do before next class:
- Choose photographs that you would like to consider printing and be prepared to review photographs and tweak edits necessary for printing
- Upload a photograph that you would like to print to Instagram
- Bring computer to class with ORIGINAL HIGH-QUALITY images to prepare for printing

WEEK 5

Photo Reports and Preparing for Printing
– View photographs on *Instagram*
– Reports by _____
– Prepare photographs for printing
– Printing

To do before next class:
- Keep taking photographs for Assignment 2
- Upload Assignment 2 photographs to your computer and pick your best six images
- Upload a photo to *Instagram*
- Bring your computer to class

Printing and Preparation for Art Show
– Reports by _____
– Printing
– Hang work for Art Show

Art Show