



**ART 215 - Photography: Portfolio of Perugia**  
**Course Syllabus**  
**Spring Semester 2024**

**Instructor:** Philippa Stannard, MFA ATR

**Credits:** 3

**Contact Hours:** 45

**Prerequisites:** none

**Class Meeting Days & Time:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:45am-12:15pm

**Office Hours:** by appointment, or before/after class

**Course Type:** Standard Course

**Course Fee:** \$35

**Course Description**

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

***Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures***

Below are the course's learning outcomes, followed by the methods that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- *Demonstrate* a thorough and functional knowledge of the essential mechanisms of a camera. (Quiz, Assignments, Critiques)
- *Create* photographs with interesting and effective compositions, lighting, and points of view. (Critiques and Assignments)
- *Apply* appropriate edits to digital images. (Assignments)
- *Understand* the visual language of photography, and how it can be used to express and communicate ideas. (Quiz, Community Engagement activities, Written and Oral Report)

**Course Materials**

Readings

A course reader, including all the indicated readings, will be available. The course's Moodle site is the primary location for readings and assignments.

Textbook

Joel Meyerowitz, *Seeing Things*, New York: Aperture, 2016

**Assessment**

Attendance

10%

One-to-One Professor Meetings	5%
Photographic Assignments (3x23% each)	69%
Quizzes	16%

## Grading

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to note the dates of exams and other assignments. No alternative exam dates will be offered and professors are not required to give partial credit for any late work (they do so at their discretion: the Institute's default policy is no extensions and a zero for any work turned in late). Students who book travel when they have an exam or other assessment will have to change their plans or accept a zero. 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%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	Satisfactory
C	73% - 76%	
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

**Please note:** Decimal and centesimal numerals between 1-4 are rounded down while 5-9 are rounded up: e.g., expect 89.4 to be 89.0 while 89.5 to round up to 90.

## Course Requirements

Grades are based on the following criteria.

### *Attendance (10%)*

Attendance is an essential part of this course. You are allowed 2 unexcused absences without penalty, per Institute policy. If you attend all the other meetings, you will receive 10% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

### *One-to-One Professor Meetings (5%)*

I strive to give as much one-on-one feedback as possible, within the confines of the time available. For this course you'll get 5% of your grade simply for making one office hours appointment to come and meet with me. It's low stakes: just come with some photos ready to show me and we'll talk through them.

In addition to looking at photos, we can also get to know each other a bit: Getting to know your professor makes you more comfortable with that person and therefore more likely to ask for help. It also might help for you to ask questions about the various assignments or get help choosing or editing your photographs. For instructions on how to sign up for this meeting and what you need to do to be ready for it, see the full prompt on Moodle.

### *Photographic Assignments (3x23% each = 69%)*

Students will have three photographic assignments due during the semester. Each assignment will consist of taking many photos, placing these photographs in a folder in your device which we can view, compare, choose, and edit your best work. The photographs for each assignment should be renamed in the following format: LastnameFirstname1.jpg, LastnameFirstname2.jpg etc. Please upload the 4 photographs to the appropriate folder on Google Drive. Please do not put your photographs in a folder. For each of the following assignments, there will be a full prompt in Moodle.

### Assignment 1: Rule of Thirds

- Four edited and optimized photographs.
- There are a lot of things to think about when taking a photograph. We're going to focus on the first and the most important, The Rule of Thirds. Each photograph you turn in should have important elements in the photograph that are on the Third Lines. This first assignment is your chance to put into practice all we've learned about your camera focus on what makes photographs memorable. Please pay special attention to composition, lighting, and point of view in order to draw the viewer into the scene. The subject matter is open.

### Assignment 2: Viewpoint and Focal Length

- Four edited and optimized photographs.
- In addition to getting a great composition (rule of thirds), the viewpoint or place where you are when you take the photograph can really add a lot of interest to a photograph. Photographs taken from below tend to make the subject appear bigger and more powerful, photographs taken from above can make the subject appear smaller and more childlike. Focal length can also make subjects appear bigger or smaller in relation to their backgrounds. Keep in mind how your subject is related to your background. Get creative and have fun!

### Assignment 3: Lighting

- Four edited and optimized photographs.
- In addition to great compositions, interesting points of view, and focal length effecting distortion and perceived distance and size of background objects, we have what can make every photo magical... Lighting! Photographers often go out and take pictures during the "golden hour" but the middle of the day with bright sunlight can give dramatic shadows... rainy days can make everything glow with reflections... cloudy days are great for portraits. This last assignment we will take into consideration everything... composition, viewpoint, focal length, and last but not least LIGHTING.

### Quizzes (16%)

Students will be assigned quizzes every week. The quiz will be on Moodle and it is not timed. Students can take the quiz as many times as they like, with the recorded grade being the highest grade they receive. There will be a combination of *technical*, *methodological*, and *content questions*. The content questions will help students zoom in on the most important ideas of the readings. The technical questions will help students learn the class's policies and administrative procedures. The methodological questions will test on skills that will pop up every week, like finding an author's argument and assessing sources.

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance is expected and mandatory for classroom times and co-curricular activities. All students are allowed 2 unexcused absences, which do not need to be justified. It is the student's responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity. i.e., sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class. More than 2 absences will affect your final grade by 2% per absence up to a maximum of 10%. Excessive unexcused absences (8 or more) may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the number of absences or late arrivals for each course, and to ask the instructor when in doubt.

If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important. Missing a mandatory field trip for a course, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to Umbra staff in a timely manner, will lower the students' grade by half a letter grade (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B).

Legitimate reasons for an excused absence or tardiness includes: death in immediate family, religious observances, illness or injury, local inclement weather, medical appointments that cannot be rescheduled. Absences relating to illness may be excused by the Director but only if a medical certification is provided.

Students who request an approved absence to observe a religious holiday must submit a formal request to the Institute's Director within one week after the add/drop period when course schedules, including any field trips, are finalized. No exceptions will be made after this deadline.

Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other

graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

### **Tardiness Policy**

Students are expected to attend all classes punctually. Any student arriving up to 15 minutes late or leaving up to 15 minutes earlier than the scheduled class end time will be marked as tardy. Each incident of tardiness (late arrivals to or early departures from class) is 0.5% off the final grade. However, should a student arrive more than 15 minutes late or depart more than 15 minutes before the conclusion of the class, it will be recorded as an absence.

Students are also expected to remain in class during the time of instruction except for a reasonable amount of time to use the restroom. Students who leave class and do not return during the class session will receive an unexcused absence or late penalty.

### **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.

Utilizing ChatGPT or other artificial intelligence (AI) tools for the generation of content submitted by a student as their own as part of any assignment for academic credit at the Institute constitutes a form of plagiarism. Should the Institute become aware of a student's use of such platforms and services, the student will be subject to the same consequences and judicial proceedings as are in place for plagiarism (defined above).

### **Classroom Policy**

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones must be turned off before the beginning of each class.

### **Laptop/Smartphone Policy**

An ever-increasing body of research shows that open laptops and telephones in the classroom create distraction (both visual and auditory) for those using them and those around them. You can type faster than you can write, and as a result you end up processing less when you're simply typing notes. For this reason, students are asked to keep computers and phones away and use a regular notebook or tablet of some sort with a pen. There are three exceptions: 1) if you have an accommodation; 2) if we have an in-class tutorial about online research tools, 3) if you use a tablet to take notes, but one that is not connected to the internet, or 4) if you make an office hours appointment with me to discuss the use of a computer.

### **Communication Outside of Class**

I prefer talking face-to-face about assignments and other questions as I know that method of communication is richer and can address things I can't 'read' in an email. That said, when you have questions, first check the Moodle site and the syllabus, as many are answered there. I check and respond to emails during the week between 10am and 4pm. It might take me 72 hours to respond to an email so it's often best to come see me before or after class. I'm also happy to make an office hours appointment.

1-on-1: I would love to be able to work extensively with each student on a 1-on-1 basis, but the amount of class time does not permit that. That said, we'll have some 1-on-1 time during class and also during the 1-on-1 professor meetings.

TRIGGER WARNING: Photographs capture part of our reality, but are they reality or an editorial? Some of the photographs we see may be upsetting; please understand that I don't endorse the messages of photos we see: I am using them in class so you can see how certain photos create messages through powerful use of juxtaposition, lighting, viewpoint, and composition.

TRIGGER WARNING: Fine Arts classes involve shared viewing, discussion, and critique of your work. It's not done privately and it's a great opportunity to learn from each other. With that being said, it's important to be respectful. Always expect an "I like this because..." and a "If I could, I might do ..... to make it better." This is how we learn in Fine Arts Class. It's an inherently collaborative, rather than individual, learning approach.

## Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

### WEEK 1

#### **What Makes a “Good” Photograph?**

Meeting 1 *Introduction to your Photo Taking Device, Presentation and Discussion of Images.*

Meeting 2: *Photowalk: How to get a great composition in every photo you take...*

#### Readings for the week:

Meyerowitz, Joel, 2016 *Seeing Things* Aperture, New York pp.1-19

### WEEK 2

#### **Aperture, Shutter ISO, Composition and the Rule of Thirds**

Meeting 1 *Using your camera: How does it work?*

Meeting 2: *Light sensitivity, depth of field, and motion*

#### Readings for the week:

Meyerowitz, Joel, 2016 *Seeing Things* Aperture, New York pp. 20-24

### WEEK 3

#### **Exposure Triangle, How to Choose Your Best Images, Straightening, Cropping, Distortion**

Meeting 1 *Photo Walk: How to change depth of field and motion in your photographs*

Meeting 2: *Identifying your best images, editing*

#### Readings for the week:

Meyerowitz, Joel, 2016 *Seeing Things* Aperture, New York pp. 25-31

### WEEK 4

#### **Histograms and Curves: Setting a Black Point, White Point, and Changing Midtones. White Balance**

Meeting 1 *Choosing and editing best images*

Meeting 2: *Basic Editing Photo challenge, working in groups.*

#### Readings for the week:

Meyerowitz, Joel, 2016 *Seeing Things* Aperture, New York pp. 38-43

### WEEK 5

#### **Assignment 1 Due: Focal Length - How Camera Lenses Change and Distort What You See**

Meeting 1 *Critique and Grading*

Meeting 2: *Focal Length on Your Camera, viewpoint and why it's important.*

#### Readings for the week:

Meyerowitz, Joel, 2016 *Seeing Things* Aperture, New York pp. 44-49

### WEEK 6

#### **Selective Editing: Dodging, Burning, Adjusting Contrast in Highlights, Shadows, and Midtones**

Meeting 1 *Photo Walk - Practice using our cameras to make objects (or subjects) in the background appear bigger or smaller, nearer or further away. Using viewpoint to make photographs more interesting and infer meaning.*

Meeting 2: *SelectiveEditing*

#### Readings for the week:

Meyerowitz, Joel, 2016 *Seeing Things* Aperture, New York pp. 50-55

## Semester Break

### WEEK 7

#### **Photo walk using different Focal Lengths and Viewpoints**

Meeting 1 *Photowalk: Playing with Viewpoint and Focal Length*

Meeting 2: *Selective Editing on Assignment 2 Photographs*

#### Readings for the week:

Meyerowitz, Joel, 2016 *Seeing Things* Aperture, New York pp. 56-61

### WEEK 8

#### **Critique and Grading. Lighting, the “Golden Hour” and other times of day...**

Meeting 1 *Assignment 2 Due*

Meeting 2: Discussion of Assignment 3: Lighting

### WEEK 9

#### **Final Touches: Healing Tool, Details, Noise, and Sharpening**

Meeting 1 *Photowalk*

Meeting 2: *Editing*

#### Readings for the week:

Meyerowitz, Joel, 2016 *Seeing Things* Aperture, New York pp. 62-67

### WEEK 10

#### **Photowalk, Preparing Photographs for Printing**

Meeting 1 *Photowalk*

Meeting 2: *Better Editing, one-on-one help and peer feedback*

### WEEK 11

#### **Photowalk, Assignment 3 Due**

Meeting 1 *Photowalk*

Meeting 2: *Critique*

### WEEK 12

#### **Printing Photographs for End of Term Art Show**

Meeting 1 *Printing*

Meeting 2: *Printing*

### WEEK 13

#### **Final Exams and Special Academic Events Week**