Photography: Introduction to Film Photography and the Darkroom

ART 232
Credits: 3
Fall 2026
Office: Art and Journalism Building AJ238
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Course Description:

Introduction to film photography, darkroom printing, and the conversion of film to digital as an expressive art form. Emphasis is on the basic techniques and visual literacy of fine art photography from an analog perspective.
Prerequisite: ADS 101

Course Overview:

This is a three-credit introduction to creative black-and-white darkroom photography class. It consists of lectures, demonstrations, lab time, regular class critiques, and many hours of your own time spent exposing, processing, and printing film. We also learn how to scan negatives to produce digital files which can be used for alternative processes or digital output.

Course Objectives:

- *Principles of exposure & camera operation using your own 35-mm analog*
- *camera*
- *Experimentation with principles of optics and time (depth of field, aperture,*
- *shutter speed, ISO settings)*
- *Qualities of light and types of lighting available to photographers*
- *Composition and editing strategies for photographs.*
- *Fundamentals of image editing through selection, sequence, and presentation*
- *Scanning negatives on Epson printers*
- *Exposure to common photography genres/philosophies*
- *Critically evaluating content and meaning of your photographs and your*
- *classmates' during in-class critiques*
- *Articulating your visual aesthetic through artist statements about your work*

Course Modality / Structure: The format for this class will combine lecture, demonstration, studio work time, group discussion, and critique. There will be a Course Calendar located on the Canvas course site, which includes all weekly tasks, assignments, and due dates. This calendar may change in extenuating circumstances but for the most part is accurate.

This course is required to have field work done as well as most processes to be in dim or completely dark rooms and working with chemicals. If this might be a problem for you, please contact your professor.

Material and Supply list:

***Equipment: 35mm camera capable of full manual operation (you must be able to manually set the film speed, shutter speed and aperture)** You can purchase your own or check them out at the crypt located in the Photography Area on Floor 2 of the Art and Journalism Building. You can also check out additional equipment for project needs such as lighting kits, tripods, etc. Check with family members as well, you don't know what film cameras could be lurking in their attic!*

Cell Phones will not be used for ANY project or assignment unless stated by the professor.

Materials:

- One three ring binder or Negative box for negative storage. The enclosed photo box style is more suitable for student travel and abuse.

-Negative holding sheets for binders. (35 mm)

Suggested:

-Negative cleaning cloth.
-Scissors and waterproof pen
- Latex gloves (not surgical gloves) such as for dishwashing.
- Anti-Static Cloth
- An apron.
- Towel

Technology and Software Requirements: *No software is needed for this course other than a computer or access to one that can run Canvas and the Adobe Suite (Adobe provided by Ball State.)*

Course fees *will be paid at the start of the semester to cover lab maintenance, darkroom chemistry, and digital lab areas. As well as 35 mm film and darkroom paper to complete to course. It will cover most required materials to complete the course. This is taken out of your course fees.*

Approximate course fees: $272

Attendance and Late Work Policies:

For Studio Art courses, it is extremely important to make it to every class period to make sure you do not miss any demos. You are allowed up to 5 unexcused absences and every absence after that will need to be excused before the missed class period or it will be counted as an unexcused absence no matter the reason. In addition, for each unexcused absence afterwards, you will get a letter grade docked off the project for the module where the absence occurred.

Excused absences will be only accepted under extreme circumstances. You will more likely than not be required to submit a doctor's note or documentation for it to be excused. All material covered in missed classes are up to the student to catch up on.

As always, please email me first if you have an emergency or something unexpected happen.

Late Assignment Policy:

All assignments and projects not submitted at the start of class on the day they are due will automatically be considered late. Every day after will doc one letter grade off the assignment total (post grading). So, if you turn it in a day late and get a B, you will get a B- due to the late policy. As always, please email me if you foresee any difficulties with assignments. You will have a week after the due date to turn in the assignments for the docked points, anything turned in after a week will be an automatic 0.

Participation and expected out of class work time:

Participation: *You will be graded on your participation throughout the course. It is a significant part of your final grade. Participation will be graded first and foremost on respect and professionalism, as well as critique participation, lab and classroom clean up, quality of assignments, attendance, and classroom participation. This will also include limiting cell phone usage during class hours.*

Expected out of class work time: *Since this is a 3-credit course, it is expected that each student spends at least 6 hrs. of out of class time on this course to be successful.*

This studio requires a lot of on campus work due to the nature of the medium. Keep this in mind. It will be a mostly non digital course to be performed in our darkroom/labs.

You have 24 hr. access through card swipe to get to the labs required for this course. Please keep in mind that you will need supplies from the crypt to work in them. So, plan to get your required equipment before they close. The crypt hours will be posted on canvas.

Class Structure and Assignments:

This course will include 4 major projects, as well as critiques, demos, readings, class discussions, lectures, and in class workdays. This will include both lecture times as well as in lab hours. Course calendar subject to change under extreme circumstances. See schedule on Canvas or at the end of this syllabi.

Grading Policy:

All assignments and projects will be graded based on quality, effort, and participation. To get an A – or higher in the course, the student is expected to go above and beyond what the project calls for. For an example rubric for how the assignments are graded will be provided on Canvas. All projects will get a rubric and feedback, I read all smaller assignments, but they may have the same level of feedback as projects. You can always set up a meeting for further feedback.

Your final grade is determined according to the following point scale:

A = 100-94 B = 86-84 C = 76-74 D = 66-64
A- = 93-90 B- = 83-80 C-= 73-70 D- = 63-60

B+ = 89-87 C+= 79-77 D+= 69-67 F = 59 or lower

Ball State Grading Scale:

A: (4.0), A- (3.667), B+ (3.33), B (3.0), B- (2.667), C+ (2.333), D+ (1.333), D- (.667), F (0.00)

Percentage Weight of Assignments:

Projects 1-3: *40%*
Project 4: *20%*
Participation: *10%*
Readings and Assignments: *20%*
Artist Presentation*: 10%*

Email and feedback policy:

I will respond to all emails within 24 hrs. during the school week. I also do not check my emails often at night, so please try to send them before 5 pm to hopefully get a response that day. On weekends, I rarely if ever check my school email. It is best to get all questions sent by Friday at 5 pm to hear back before Monday.

Syllabus Statement:

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Learning Center:

The Learning Center offers free tutoring for many courses. We also provide writing and study skills tutoring. Students can make appointments for virtual (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments. To make an appointment, visit my.bsu.edu and click on "Navigate" in the Additional Tools section, or just go directly to https://bsu.navigate.eab.com. You can

also download the Navigate Student app. The Learning Center also has drop-in tutoring (no appointment necessary) for math, chemistry, and biology. Check our website for more information. Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are available for students who have received the appropriate documentation from Disability Services. Tests may be administered in the Learning Center.

For more information about all of our programming visit www.bsu.edu/learningcenter or call 765-285-1006. Email us at learncenter@bsu.edu.

Counseling Center

The Ball State University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to all students. The Counseling Center is located in Lucina Hall, Room 320. To schedule an appointment, you can contact us at 765-285-1736. Ball State also offers a 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached at 765-285-HOPE (4673). The Crisis Line is a mental health resource for those who are struggling with any mental health concerns, including thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide.

At the Ball State Counseling Center, we see students for a variety of reasons, some of which include homesickness, relationship concerns, anxiety, and depression. At your first appointment, you will work with a therapist to create a plan that will connect you with resources that best fit your needs. We assist students with getting connected to therapy at our Center as well as connecting students to self-help resources, other on-campus resources, and community-based resources. All Ball State students also have access to several on-demand, self-help resources through a variety of different platforms. All of these resources, including a direct link to our website, can be found here.

Writing Center

All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center (in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays, Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings, or online during any of our regularly scheduled hours) to get additional feedback on your writing. The Writing Center offers free planning, feedback, and accountability sessions (in person and online) to all students composing essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. To schedule a free appointment to discuss your writing, go to http://www.bsu.edu/writingcenter. Online and in-person appointments are available; however, plan ahead because appointments book quickly!