

Photography: Design – ARTS 2350

Instructor: Brenda Vega

Term: Fall 2025

Course Title: Photography: Design

Course Number: ARTS 2350

Meeting Time: Thursdays, 4:00 PM – 6:45 PM

Location: ATC 3.904

Class Location and Times

Starts: Monday, August 25, 2025

Ends: Tuesday, December 9, 2025

Professor Contact Information

Email: Brenda.vegamora@utdallas.edu

Office Location: JO 5.206

Office Hours: By appointment (in person or via Teams)

Description of Course:

This studio art course provides instruction in digital photography, including camera operation, image capture, lighting techniques, and digital workflow. Emphasis will be placed on the study of design elements and principles as they relate to the generation of photographic images. The class will also discuss the relationship between photography and issues in contemporary art. Examination of the functions of light and color, crucial elements in the context of image capture, will be central to the course.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

- Students will interpret photographic concepts and apply photographic methods to create artworks, with an emphasis on design elements and principles.
- Students will assess and evaluate the creative work of their peers through both written and verbal critique.
- Discuss and write about both historical and contemporary examples of visual art.
- Students will develop their ideas and approaches to generate a proposal for an individual photography-based portfolio.

Class attendance policy

Class attendance is crucial to learning. Any student who misses more than 3 class meetings will fail the class. Students who miss class are still responsible for all material covered in class.

Attendance and participation during critique are considered in the grade for the assignment being critiqued. See assignment rubric for further information. Students unable to come to class due to illness must make arrangements with the instructor to

make up assignments. Being on time to class is extremely important; **if a student is late to class 3 times and/or leaves early 3 times, that equals one absence. If a student misses more than 15 minutes of the class by being late or leaving early, the student is marked absent.** Please be on time and ready to work. Be prepared for each class meeting. **If a student comes to class unprepared (without the appropriate material to work on or present during class time) or does not work on the assignment or project during specified class time, that student will be marked absent.** Students should expect to spend up to 5 hours outside of class working on assignments or projects. Active participation in class critique/discussions is expected. Failure to consistently be prepared for or participate in class will affect your final grade. Students will be respectful toward the instructor and their classmates. **Students are expected to arrive on time and stay until dismissed. Use of cell phones is strictly prohibited in the classroom.** Students must turn OFF cell phones and all electronic devices once class has started. Students will not be permitted to use the Internet or check email during class time (unless it is relevant to the class). Students must show evidence of on-going work-in-progress throughout the semester. It is assumed that all students will conduct themselves in accordance with the Honor Code. Academic Dishonesty will not be tolerated. Students may not plagiarize the work of others.

Images or prints made outside the context of this course are not admissible for credit nor are images that are created and submitted for more than one course.

Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

All written and visual work must be your own. Any plagiarism, including AI-generated writing, images or using others' images without permission, will result in academic penalties and possible failure. Turnitin will be used to verify originality. Refer to the UTD Student Code of Conduct for full policies.

Course Requirements/Evaluation Criteria:

Command of general computer skills and file management skills for a MAC or PC operating system is expected. Course Requirements to be announced.

Required Materials

- DSLR or Mirrorless Camera (RAW capable)
- SD Card(s), USB or External Storage
- Adobe Photoshop and/or Lightroom (student discount available)
- Optional: Tripod, flash, filters

Students must supply their own DSLR or Digital single lens reflex camera or micro 4/3rds or mirrorless camera for use in this course (i.e., Sony A6300, Panasonic Lumix G7, Canon EOS R100, Canon EOS Rebel, Nikon D5600, etc.). Questions regarding cameras should be directed to the instructor. Students may obtain Adobe Photoshop or Adobe Creative Suite CC--see UTD technology store for UT discount--OR Adobe Lightroom for use on

their home computer and will be responsible for the costs of storage media.

*We can discuss how to use any other add-ons if you have them. If not, it's ok.

Required Texts:

Technical Handbook: provided by instructor, available online. Other textbooks to be announced.

Suggested Readings/Texts

*To be posted on the class website via UTD's eLearning and Box or distributed during class.

The Photographer's Playbook: 307 Assignments and Ideas

Roland Barthes "Camera Lucida"

Susan Sontag "On Photography"

Movie: Finding Vivian Maier

Academic Calendar & Weekly Schedule

***You are responsible for bringing your camera to every class with fully charged batteries and the SD Card, except critique days. Also, take notes during lectures, record the photographer's names, and make notes about their work.

Week	Date	Topic & Activities
Week 1	Thursday, August 28	Intro to the course Photography 101: What is Photography? Camera Basics/Exposure Theory/ Bring camera, accessories to the class. Class exercise: get to know you and your camera Reading 1: Barthes, Roland, Camera Lucida, Part 1 only, next class.
Week 2	Thursday, September 04	Camera Basics Exposure Theory/Focal Length/ Lenses/ Resolution. Assignment #1 for next class Reading 1: bring your copies with handwritten annotations ONLY. You must write any thoughts about the book, not a summary, <i>your own thoughts</i> .
Week 3	Thursday, September 11	Elements of Design & Composition Exposure Theory/Elements of Design & Composition/Rule of Thirds/Gaze/Camera Shots/Angles.

		<p>Line, shape & form, space, pattern, value, texture, color.</p> <p>Camera operation & in-class shooting exercise</p> <p>Review of Assignment #1.</p>
Week 4	Thursday, September 18	<p>Digital Workflow/Basic Editing</p> <p>Photography in the Digital World/How We See Exposure/Image Resolution/File Saving/Bridge/PS Introduction/RAW vs JPEG/Workflow</p> <p>Learn how to make a print strip</p> <p>In class exercise: Capture images taken in RAW to edit on class.</p>
Week 5	Thursday, September 25	<p>Color as Subject/ Color Theory & Management</p> <p>Meaning of color, image adjustment in PS, in-class editing.</p> <p>Class exercise: Explore Different color schemes</p> <p>Prepare for Critique #1. 5 digital images + artist statement of the project.</p> <p>Reading #2: Sontag, Susan. <i>On Photography</i>. Read the first chapter, In Plato's Cave.</p>
Week 6	Thursday, October 02	<p>Abstraction</p> <p>Formal/ Perception/Historical approaches</p> <p>Work on a Project. Need to make photos of familiar subjects in a new way using the elements and principles of design.</p> <p>Critique #1: Color assignment</p> <p>Reading #2: bring your copies with handwritten annotations ONLY. You must write any thoughts about the book, not a summary, <i>your own thoughts</i>.</p>
Week 7	Thursday, October 09	<p>Midterm review and quiz</p> <p>Prepare for Presentation #1: Choose one artist from the given list to make a presentation for the class, choose date to present.</p>
Week 8	Thursday, October 16	<p>Portraiture & Light</p> <p>Studio lighting introduction, lighting kit demo, In-class Studio Shoot: Continue portrait work, composition and emotion.</p> <p>Assignment 2: Portrait assignment in groups, TBC, for 10/30 class.</p>

Week 9	Thursday, October 23	Workday: Test prints, editing for large format. Peer review of final project concepts, pairing by draw.
Week 10	Thursday, October 30	Advance Editing Photoshop Techniques, tools (before/after) Practice with own images. Students Presentations Part 1.
Week 11	Thursday, November 06	Street Photography Introduction to the genre. In-Class exercise: Campus Project and Editing Students Presentations Part 2.
Week 12	Thursday, November 13	FINAL PROJECT Examples of Projects/Sequencing & Meaning/Narrative in Photography.
Week 13	Thursday, November 20	FINAL PROJECT In-progress critique of the final project. Peer critique by draw. Each person will critique a classmate and vice versa. In-class review of final project proposals Check the prints in class and prepare for large prints. Examples of Titles, Artists Statements.
No Class	Thursday, November 27	THANKSGIVING BREAK
Week 14	Thursday, December 04	FINAL PROJECT Mandatory final presentation in class.
Week 15	Thursday, Dec. 11 – Tuesday, Dec. 16.	Final exams week Upload your Final Project with its Statement. (approved beforehand), if needs to be reshoot, retaken, do all changes before uploading the final version to eLearning.

Evaluative Criteria for Creative Work

1. Concept: what's the idea? Does it solve the problem posed in the assignment?
2. Relationship between content and form: how does the idea for the work influence the selection of the media and process of execution?

3. Creativity & Experimentation: has this image been seen before? What risks with materials, conventions, content, design, or execution have been taken?
4. Presentation: what kind of effort, care, and attention has been devoted to the creation of the work?

Grading Policy

Weekly Assignments, readings, photo prompts 35%
Artist Presentation 5%
Midterm Quiz 15%
Class attendance, Critique and Participation 15%
Final Project with in-progress work and statement 30%

A+ 97–100
A 94–96
A- 90–93
B+ 87–89
B 84–86
B- 80–83
C+ 77–79
C 74–76
C- 70–73
D+ 67–69
D 64–66
D- 60–63
F 0–59

Grades in the A range are exceptional, B range are above average, C range are average, D range are below average, and F is failure.

Course & Instructor Policies

Late work is accepted but with adjusted point values. Detailed rubrics will be provided and discussed.

Critique (**This is a Studio Art Class**), therefore, all students are expected to participate in critique by having their work critiqued and by critiquing other students' work. **No work on an assignment or project is to be done during critique.** Remember that the purpose of critique is to learn from other students.

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same: "As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."

UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please review the catalog sections regarding the [credit/no credit](#) or [pass/fail](#) grading option and withdrawal from class. Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

******The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.***