Instructor

Kirk Murray
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Departmental Information

The School of Journalism & Mass Communication
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Course Overview

Class meeting times: Mondays 5:30-9:00 p.m. W332 AJB
Lab Hours: TBD

Photojournalism: The art or practice of communicating news by photographs.

Workshop: A meeting at which a group of people engage in intensive discussion and activity on a particular subject or project.

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to digital still photography and provide the necessary skills to conceive and execute photographic projects of a varying nature. Besides covering basic photographic techniques, the course is intended to expand student understanding of photography as a means of visual communication. This is an intensive course that challenges all participants, including those who might have previous photographic experience. Weekly critiques include discussion of student work as well as analysis of the work of contemporary photojournalists and editorial photographers, when applicable. Students are expected to participate in class, complete weekly shooting assignments, and produce an extensive final project of their choosing (with instructor’s approval).

Required Materials

The participants must have the following photographic equipment:

Camera: Digital SLR camera or advanced point-and-shoot with RAW and manual capabilities (approval of instructor required for all cameras)

Lenses: Lenses, or lens, that cover(s) wide angle to moderate telephoto (for example, 28-70 mm zoom lens or 28mm, 50mm, 90mm fixed focal length lenses)

Digital Storage: Memory card(s) compatible with your camera–minimum 4GB. External hard drive with minimum 250GB storage space (current price range is $40-60). Appropriate cables to connect hard drive to computers in W332 AJB (USB 2, Firewire 800, etc.).

*The school does offer the opportunity for students taking this class to check out a Canon 60D SLR camera outfit for the entire semester. Reservations online at: http://research3.its.uiowa.edu/film
Assignments

There will be five weekly shooting assignments beginning the third week of the semester.

For the last 6-7 weeks of the term students will be working on a single documentary photographic project of their own selection (with instructor’s approval).

Evaluations

Evaluations of student work will be done on a weekly basis. Students will present their work to the class for an in-depth critique by the instructor and fellow classmates. In addition, there will be individual midterm critiques with the instructor to discuss your progress in the class and ideas for a final project. If there are any questions regarding your work, or you wish to know how you are performing in the course, you may consult with me anytime during my office hours or by appointment.

There will be a critique of everyone’s final project during our allotted exam time during final’s week (the specific time and date will be announced later in the semester).

Grading

Final grades will be based on the five weekly assignments, the final project, class participation and a few quizzes. The following breakdown is approximate:

- Weekly assignments - 30%
- Final Project - 50%
- Class Participation - 10%
- Quizzes - 10%

The above percentages are a guideline, not a rule. I say this because much of the work throughout the semester has to be judged subjectively. When the shooting assignments begin, I will give grades and feedback based on the previous week’s work. At midterm, I will also provide detailed feedback on where you stand and what you can do to improve.

Final grades will be:

A: EXCELLENT  Over the course of the semester, the student will:
- Go above and beyond the minimum requirements for each assignment
- Exhibit distinguished work in both technical and aesthetic value
- Actively participate in class, providing constructive criticism of his/her own work as well as his/her classmates
- Progress markedly from the personal knowledge and skill set from which they began
- Have no more than one missed class AND/OR have no more than one late assignment

B: ABOVE AVERAGE  Over the course of the semester, the student will:
- Do more than the minimum requirements for each assignment
- Exhibit very good work in both technical and aesthetic value
- Moderately participate in class, providing good criticism of his/her own work as well as his/her classmates
- Progress steadily from the personal knowledge and skill set from which they began
- Have no more than two missed classes AND/OR no more than two late assignments
C: AVERAGE  Over the course of the semester, the student will:
- Meet the minimum requirements for each assignment
- Exhibit competent work in both technical and aesthetic value
- Minimally participate in class providing basic criticism of his/her own work as well as his/her classmates
- Progress minimally from the personal knowledge and skill set from which they began
- Have no more than three missed classes AND/OR no more than three late assignments

D: BELOW AVERAGE  Over the course of the semester, the student will:
- Do less than the minimum requirements for each assignment
- Exhibit poor work in both technical and aesthetic value
- Rarely participate in class providing no criticism of his/her own work or his/her classmates
- Have the same personal knowledge and skill set from which they began
- Have no more than four missed classes AND/OR no more than four late assignments

F: FAILURE  Over the course of the semester, the student will:
- Do far less than the minimum requirements for each assignment
- Exhibit poor work in both technical and aesthetic value
- Never participate in class
- Have the same personal knowledge and skill set from which they began
- Miss five or more classes AND/OR have five or more late assignments

For example, a student with two absences over the course of the semester cannot receive higher than a B for the final grade. A student with no absences, but three late assignments cannot receive higher than a C for the final grade.

I will grade with a plus/minus option.

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory! You will not succeed in this class if you are not present for instruction and critiques. Yes, there are circumstances that may keep you out of class, but if you miss FIVE classes you fail the course. The same goes for not completing FIVE assignments on time. Leaving the class early or showing up later than 30 minutes will count as half an absence.

Class Schedule

The semester will be broken down into three sections.

The first section will be devoted to learning about basic photographic techniques. We will examine how to properly use your equipment and how to take technically accurate photographs. We will go over the processes for editing and adjusting those images using Lightroom 3.
The second section will be spent honing your photographic techniques. You will have five or six unique assignments where much of the direction will come from your own interpretation. During this section you will be learning how to constructively critique each other’s work as well as your own.

The last section will be devoted to one project of your choosing (with my approval). During this section we will be looking solely at everyone’s project as it progresses and examples of relevant work from contemporary and/or legendary photojournalists when applicable. *Failure to complete a final project will result in an automatic F for the class.*

What follows below is an estimated timeline for the class. It is not set in stone and may change or evolve as the semester progresses, or as I see fit.

| Introduction | August 20 | -Introduction to class  
|              |          | -Overview of policies and procedures  
|              |          | -Camera approval |
| August 27 |          | -Basic camera techniques/terminology (minor assignment)  
|              |          | -Introduction to Lightroom 3  
|              |          | -Creating a digital workflow |
| September 10 |          | -Advanced camera techniques  
|              |          | -Advanced Lightroom 3  
|              |          | -Technical/theoretical discussions  
|              |          | -Quick critiques of minor assignment work  
|              |          | -Assignment #1 given |
| September 17 |          | -Assignment #1-first major critique  
|              |          | -Continued technical/theoretical discussions  
|              |          | -Assignment #2 given |
| September 24-October 15 |          | -Same structure as the week of February 7 |
| October 15 |          | -Final project idea(s) due |

Final project ideas must be approved by me by October 15. After the critique session on October 15, the rest of the semester will be devoted to the final projects and critiquing each other’s work.

Assignments will be due by 4:00 p.m. on each and every Monday. Anything turned in after that will be considered late with a full letter grade deduction for every hour that it is late. The minimum requirement for each assignment is 100 photos taken. You will upload those RAW and unedited photos to
your dropbox on the J-school server. You will edit and adjust 15-20 of those photos and post those 15-20 images on the class website (instructions for uploading are on the website).

The class website (accessed from any web browser) is:

www.jschoolphotoiowa.com

The server address for your dropbox (accessed by holding the ⌘ key and pressing K on a mac) is:

afp://jmcserver.iowa.uiowa.edu/Student_Dropbox

The RAW and unedited photos in the dropboxes allow me to look at all of your work for grading purposes. The 15-20 edited and adjusted photos on the class website allow all of the class to critique the images you choose.

Class Participation
Participation is vital to this class. Without feedback for/from your classmates, this class - and your work - will flounder. As with other aspects of grading, I will look at this part of your grade over the course of the semester. I understand shyness, but this class will require you to step out of many of your comfort zones. To do well you will have to challenge yourself while taking pictures and in communicating the thoughts behind your work. How I determine participation will mostly be subjective based on each individual student. Using Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube or any other form of social media not yet invented, or aware of by me, during class on computers or phones, however, will be objectively determined as wretched participation (so don’t do it!).

The Iowa Dozen
This class is part of the School of Journalism & Mass Communication’s assurance that each of its graduates meets the following standards:

We learn to ...
1. Write correctly, clearly and well.
2. Conduct research and gather information responsibly.
3. Edit and evaluate carefully.
4. Use media technologies thoughtfully.
5. Apply statistical concepts accurately.

We value ...
6. Free speech and First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups.
7. A diverse global community.
8. Creativity and independence.

We explore ...
10. Theories and concepts.
11. The history, structure and economy of media institutions
12. The role of media in shaping cultures.
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Policies and Procedures

Administrative Home
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Electronic Communication
University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (Operations Manual, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11.)

Accommodations for Disabilities
A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See www.uiowa.edu/~sds/ for more information.

Academic Fraud
Plagiarism and any other activities when students present work that is not their own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is a serious matter and is reported to the departmental DEO and to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum. Instructors and DEOs decide on appropriate consequences at the departmental level while the Associate Dean enforces additional consequences at the collegiate level. See the CLAS Academic Fraud section of the Student Academic Handbook.

CLAS Final Examination Policies
Final exams may be offered only during finals week. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. Students should not ask their instructor to reschedule a final exam since the College does not permit rescheduling of a final exam once the semester has begun. Questions should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum.
Making a Suggestion or a Complaint

Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Understanding Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather

In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Public Safety web site.

*These CLAS policy and procedural statements have been summarized from the web pages of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and The University of Iowa Operations Manual.