Instructor

Kirk Murray
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Departmental Information

The School of Journalism & Mass Communication
Director: David Ryfe
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clas.uiowa.edu/sjmc/

Course Overview

Class meeting times: Mondays 5:30-9:05 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. 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 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. 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, and three quizzes. The following breakdown is approximate:

- Weekly assignments - 35%
- Final Project - 35%
- Quizzes - 30%

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.

Grades for the photographic work will be calculated by the following criteria:

**A: EXCELLENT**  The student will:
- Go above and beyond the minimum requirements
- Spend 3-4 hours taking photos
- 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

**B: ABOVE AVERAGE**  The student will:
- Do more than the minimum requirements
- Spend 2-3 hours taking photos
- Exhibit 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
C: AVERAGE  The student will:
- Meet the minimum requirements for each assignment
- Spend 1-2 hours taking photos
- 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

D: BELOW AVERAGE  The student will:
- Do less than the minimum requirements
- Spend less than one hour taking photos
- 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

F: FAILURE  The student will:
- Do far less than the minimum requirements
- Exhibit poor work in both technical and aesthetic value
- Never participate in class

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 SIX classes you fail the course. Leaving the class early or showing up later than 30 minutes will count as one absence. Absences will result in the following grade adjustments:

3 Absences = One full letter grade deduction from final grade
4 Absences = Two full letter grade deductions from final grade
5 Absences = Three full letter grade deductions from final grade

For example, your final grade is a B- based on the work and quiz results, but you have missed four classes. Congratulations, you have passed the class with a D-.

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 5.
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**  
January 25  
- Introduction to class  
- Overview of policies and procedures  
- Camera approval

February 1  
- Basic camera techniques/terminology (minor assignment)  
- Creating a digital workflow

February 8  
- Advanced camera techniques  
- Lightroom 5  
- Technical/theoretical discussions  
- Assignment #1 given

February 15  
- Assignment #1-first major critique  
- Continued technical/theoretical discussions  
- Assignment #2 given  
- Quiz #1

February 22-
March 7  
- Same structure as the week of September 23

March 7  
- Final project idea(s) due

Final project ideas must be approved by me, in writing, by March 17. After the critique session on March 10, the rest of the semester will be devoted to the final projects and critiquing each other’s work.

Assignments will be due by 5:30 p.m. on each and every Monday. Anything turned in after that will be considered late with a full letter grade deduction for every 30 minutes that it is late. The minimum requirement for almost every assignment is 75 photos. You will upload those RAW and unedited pho-
tos to your dropbox on the J-school server. You will edit and adjust a small selection of those photos and post those adjusted images to the server in a separate folder.

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 edited and adjusted photos allow all of the class to critique the images you choose.

Class Participation
Participation is vital to this class. Without feedback from your classmates, this class - and your work - will founder. 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. All computers will be turned off for most of the class sessions during the semester. Anybody using the computers or any electronic devices (other than your camera) during class time will be asked to leave and it will count as an absence. Yes, the class is long, but I will typically provide one or two short breaks so that you can catch up, stretch, get a snack, etc.

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.5.2. 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 Harrasment 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.