



Course Syllabus

ART 2013-201: Photography 1

Fain College of Fine Arts
Spring 2026
T/TH 9:30 am to 12:20 pm
Room C115

Contact Information

Instructor: Ashley Gillanders
Office: C115A
Office hours: T/TH 12:30 pm - 1:30 pm (C115A)
 W 9:45 am - 12:45 pm (C104E)
Office phone: 940-397-4412
E-mail: ashley.gillanders@msutexas.edu

Course Description

An introduction to the fundamentals of photography using a DSLR 35mm camera. Students will become technically proficient in camera controls, digital capture, introductory lighting, printing and presentation techniques. Students will learn how to interpret and discuss the visual language of photography. Students must own or have use of a DSLR camera.

Course Expectations

This is a demanding, practice-based course that requires substantial time outside of scheduled class meetings. Students are expected to produce a minimum of 100 new digital images each week. Like learning a language, photography requires daily engagement; regular practice is essential for developing both technical ability and creative vision. Thoughtful, well-crafted work is expected for critiques, which means allocating extra time to refine ideas and resolve technical challenges. Technical failures are an unavoidable and valuable part of the process, so plan accordingly and make use of lab hours. Only new work created during the semester will be accepted for assignments; previously made photographs may not be submitted.

Course Schedule

Please note that the course schedule reflects expected class progress in the course subject matter and is considered tentative. The content and scope of this course are subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

Week	Date	Time	Topic
1	01-20	9:30am–10:55am	- Introductions / Syllabus <u>Homework</u> - Source course materials/equipment - Bring DSLR or mirrorless camera to next class
	01-22	9:30am–12:20pm	- Lecture: Introduction to Exposure - Demo: Using a Tripod - Worksheet: Getting to Know Your Camera - Technical Assignment #1: Exposure <u>Homework</u> - Complete Technical Assignment #1 - Read "Composition" (p.8 - 29) and "Seeing" (p.100 - 123) from "Read This Is You Want to Take Great Photographs" - Bring hard drive, camera, and inkjet paper to next class
2	01-27	9:30am–12:20pm	- Shooting Day / Open Lab Time
	01-29	9:30am–11:30am	- Review: Technical Assignment #1: Exposure - Demo: Intro to Lightroom - Demo: Printing from Lightroom - Introduce Technical Assignment #2: Printing - Introduce Project #1: Domestic Life - Artist Lecture: Domestic Life <u>Homework</u> - Begin working on Project #1: Domestic Life - Technical Assignment #2: Printing
3	02-03	9:30am–12:20pm	- Shooting Day / Open Lab Time
	02-05	9:30am–12:20pm	- Review: Technical Assignment #2: Printing

4	02-10	9:30am–12:20pm	- In-progress meetings to discuss Project #1
	02-12	9:30am–12:20pm	- Shooting Day / Open Lab Time
5	02-17	9:30am–12:20pm	- Critique Day 1: Project #1
	02-19	9:30am–12:20pm	- Critique Day 2: Project #1 - Introduce Project #2: Mimetic Desire <u>Homework</u> - Read "Light" (p.60 - 77) from "Read This Is You Want to Take Great Photographs" - Begin working on Project #2
6	02-24	9:30am–12:20pm	- Shooting Day / Open Lab Time
	02-26	9:30am–12:20pm	- Shooting Day / Open Lab Time
7	03-03	9:30am–12:20pm	- Lecture: Light - Demo: Continuous Light - Technical Assignment #3: Light - In-Progress Meetings to Discuss Project #2 <u>Homework</u> - Technical Assignment #3: Light
	03-05	9:30am–12:20pm	- Screening: I am Martin Parr
Spring Break: March 9th to 15th			
8	03-17	9:30am–12:20pm	Ashley @ SPE Conference
	03-19	9:30am–12:20pm	Ashley @ SPE Conference <i>School Field Trip to Dallas!</i>
9	03-24	9:30am–12:20pm	In-Progress Meetings to Discuss Project #2
	03-26	9:30am–12:20pm	- Shooting Day / Open Lab Time
10	03-31	9:30am–12:20pm	- Critique Day 1: Project #2

	04-02	9:30am– 12:20pm	- Critique Day 2: Project #2 - Introduce Project #3: Final <u>Homework</u> - Begin working on Project #3 - Read "Lenses" (p. 82 - 99) from "Read This Is You Want to Take Great Photographs" - Project #3 Proposal
11	04-07	9:30am– 12:20pm	- Shooting Day / Open Lab Time
	04-09	11:05am– 12:20pm	- Review: Technical Assignment #3: Light - Discussion: Lenses - Artist Lecture: Expanded Photography
12	04-14	9:30am– 12:20pm	- Shooting Day / Open Lab Time
	04-16	9:30am– 12:20pm	- Open lab time
13	04-21	9:30am– 12:20pm	- Project #3 In-Progress Critique
	04-23	9:30am– 12:20pm	- Shooting Day / Open Lab Time
14	04-28	9:30am– 12:20pm	- Shooting Day / Open Lab Time
	04-30	9:30am– 12:20pm	- Shooting Day / Open Lab Time
15	05-05	9:30am– 12:20pm	- Critique Day 1: Project #3
	05-07	9:30am– 12:20pm	- Critique Day 2: Project #3

Textbook

"Read This If You Want To Take Great Photographs" by Henry Carroll

Evaluation

Reading Discussions (1) = 5%
Technical Assignments (3) = 30%
Projects (3) = 60%
Miscellaneous (1) = 5%
TOTAL = 100%

Grading

A = 90 – 100%
B = 80 – 89 %
C = 70 – 79%
D = 60 – 69%
F = 59 % OR LESS

Required Materials

- Access to Adobe Lightroom Classic and Adobe Photoshop
- DSLR OR mirrorless camera with full manual capabilities
- Tripod
- Notebook & Pen
- SD Card
- External Hard Drive
 - 500MB or greater (consider what kind of computer it is formatted for, and know that the computers you will be working on during class time are Mac)
 - A small thumb drive will NOT suffice
- Red River inkjet paper
 - Choose from either [UltraPro Satin](#) or [UltraPro Luster](#)
 - 8.5" x 11"
 - Box of 50 or 100 sheets
- One inkjet cartridge for Canon or Epson printers (to be assigned by instructor)
- Portfolio for storage of prints and course materials
 - I recommend finding a flat storage solution that can accommodate the paper size you will be printing on this semester
 - A portfolio or archival box will be ideal

Classroom Conduct and Policies

- As a student at MSU Texas you are expected to conduct yourself in a courteous and mature manner.
- It is imperative that you work in a way that keeps the lab clean and organized and is respectful of other students. You must realize that your actions will affect others. Please be conscientious of your fellow students and be kind.

- General studio cleanup will be the last 15 minutes of each class session. Students will maintain discipline in studio safety precautions, maintenance and upkeep throughout the semester. The instructor will drop students not willing to take active part in those goals.
- Classroom behavior that interferes with either the instructor's ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to benefit from the instruction will result in the instructor's removing the disruptive student(s) from the class.
- You are expected to come to class prepared, having completed all reading assignments and arriving with any required materials.
- Late assignments will NOT be accepted. All work is due on the assigned day.
- Preparation for Critique: I highly recommend that you print 1-2 days before critique. Printing is part of the process, not just the end point. Technology is fickle—printers jam, ink runs out, IT issues, etc. Please give yourself plenty of time to print. You must have your photos printed BEFORE the start of class. You will NOT be allowed to print during class on critique day.
- You are expected to contribute to critiques of the assignments and final projects, offering constructive criticism to their peers, and providing useful commentary about the work under discussion.
- Help each other, as you will learn as much from each other as you will learn from your instructor. I will do my best to create a safe and fun environment where you feel excited to make work.
- Disruptive and disrespectful behavior will not be tolerated. Tardiness is disruptive, so be on time.
- Be mindful of the lab schedule; you are not permitted to work in the lab during other classes (unless you have permission from that instructor in advance).
- Active participation and involvement during class includes:
 - Giving your full attention to the instructor and your classmates
 - Having an open-minded outlook
 - Participating in exercises and assignments
 - Giving feedback during discussions and critiques, verbal or written
- All work must be made specifically for this class during this semester. No previously taken photos may be used. Failure to do so will result in an "F."
- A grade of "Incomplete" is granted only with a written doctor's excuse or under emergency circumstances such as illness or a death in the family.

Inclement Weather

In the event that the university closes due to inclement weather, our class will not shift to an online format. Any assessments, assignments, or deadlines that coincide with the closure dates will be adjusted as needed once campus reopens. I will communicate any changes or updates via D2L and email. Please monitor official university announcements during severe weather events.

Communication

I am always available to be reached by email, but I expect that you are respectful and professional in your communication.

Before you contact me, please ask yourself: *Have I first looked on D2L, in the syllabus, or reached out to a fellow student for assistance?*

If you have a private question, please contact me via email and I will respond within 24 hours on weekdays. Please do not expect a response over the weekend.

Cell Phones, Laptop Computers, and Recording Devices

Phones: Must be silenced and completely put away (out of sight) for the entire class. If a phone is out or audible, you may be asked to leave for the day.

Laptops/Tablets/Other electronics: Do not use devices during lectures or discussions unless I explicitly direct their use for a class activity.

Recording: Audio/video recording of class is not permitted.

Exceptions: Students with documented accommodations may use approved devices. Please inform me early in the semester.

Gallery Attendance

Students enrolled in studio or art history courses must attend every gallery opening and sign in at the reception desk. If the student cannot attend the gallery opening, they are required to write an exhibition review.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

In this class, you're welcome to use AI tools like ChatGPT to help with research, idea generation, and polishing your writing. Think of it as a conversation partner - a way to brainstorm, clarify, or refine your thoughts. But remember: your projects, statements, and critiques will ultimately come from you. AI can support your process, but it can't replace your perspective, creativity, or lived experience.

You may not use AI to generate photographs or images for assignments in this class. The visual work must come from your own camera, materials, and artistic process.

Use AI to sharpen your voice, not substitute for it.

Attendance

Attendance in all classes is required, unless otherwise instructed. You are allowed two unexcused absences without it negatively affecting your grade. After two unexcused absences, Your final grade will be lowered by ½ letter grade (5%) for each class meeting you miss.

A tardy is arriving 10 minutes after the beginning of class. Three tardies will constitute an unexcused absence. Leaving class before dismissal will constitute an unexcused absence, as well as arriving at least 30 minutes after class has started.

If you have an unexcused absence or arrive to class late, it is not the responsibility of the instructor to let you know what you missed. It is up to you to ask a classmate.

Missed critiques will result in an automatic score of 0 on the project, regardless of whether or not the work was completed on time. Arriving late on a critique day will also result in an automatic score of 0 - NO EXCEPTIONS.

Content Disclaimer

Content in the arts can sometimes include works, situations, actions, and language that can be personally challenging or offensive to some students on the grounds, for example, of sexual explicitness, violence, or blasphemy. The Fain College of Fine Arts is devoted to the principle of freedom of expression, artistic and otherwise, and it is not the college's practice to censor these works or ideas on any of these grounds.

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook-2025-26](#)

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Clark Student Center, Room 168, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

College Policies

[Student Handbook-2021-22](#)

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage.

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

Midwestern State University seeks to provide a safe, healthy, pleasant environment for its faculty, staff, and students. To this end, the use of tobacco products, including smoke and smokeless tobacco, and the advertising, sale, free distribution, and discarding of tobacco products shall be prohibited in all indoor and outdoor facilities and in all university vehicles. The policy extends to faculty, staff, students, vendors, guests, and visitors.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Student Privacy Statement

In accordance with Federal Privacy Laws a student's personal information is protected. As an instructor it is unlawful for me to share your personal information (including grades) with anyone unless I have written consent. This means I will not be able to discuss your grades with parents. If you have questions about your grades or have forgotten the grading policy for the course, please come by during office hours.