



**Course Syllabus: ART 3013-101
Photography 1**

Fain College of Fine Arts
Fall 2025
T/TH 9:30 am to 12:20 pm

Contact Information

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

Course Description

This course introduces the fundamentals of photography through hands-on work with manual DSLR or mirrorless cameras. Students will learn digital camera operation, basic image editing in Photoshop, introductory lighting techniques, and methods of artwork reproduction. Alongside technical skills, the course emphasizes the aesthetic and historical dimensions of photography, examining its artistic and technological developments.

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.

Textbook

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

Course Schedule

Please note, the course schedule reflects expected class progress in the course subject matter and is considered tentative. It is subject to change in content and scope at the course Instructor's discretion.

Week	Date	Day	Level 1 Topic
1	08-26	Tuesday	- Introductions / Syllabus - Artist Lecture: A Brief History of Photography <u>Homework</u> - Read "Introduction" (p. 6 - 7) and "Exposure" (p. 30 - 59) from "Read This Is You Want to Take Great Photographs" - Source course materials/equipment - Bring DSLR or mirrorless camera to next class
	08-28	Thursday	- Lecture: Introduction to Exposure - Demo: Using a Tripod - Worksheet: Getting to Know Your Camera - Technical Assignment #1: Exposure - Introduce Project #1: Domestic Life <u>Homework</u> - Complete Technical Assignment #1 (due Sept.9) - Read "Composition" (p.8 - 29) and "Seeing" (p.100 - 123) from "Read This Is You Want to Take Great Photographs" - Bring hard drive to next class
2	09-02	Tuesday	- Shooting Day
	09-04	Thursday	ART CAMP - No class
3	09-09	Tuesday	- Review: Technical Assignment #1: Exposure - Demo: Intro to Lightroom <u>Homework</u> - Continue working on Project #1 - Bring hard drive and paper to next class
	09-11	Thursday	- Shooting Day
4	09-16	Tuesday	- Demo: Printing - Technical Assignment #2: Printing

	09-18	Thursday	- Screening & Discussion: "Gregory Crewdson: Brief Encounters"
5	09-23	Tuesday	- Small Critique: Review Technical Assignment #2
	09-25	Thursday	- Open lab time
6	09-30	Tuesday	- Open lab time
	10-02	Thursday	- Workshop with Libby Rowe
7	10-07	Tuesday	- Critique Day 1: Project #1
	10-09	Thursday	- Critique Day 2: Project #1 - Introduce Project #2: Motion <u>Homework</u> - Read "Light" (p.60 - 77) from "Read This Is You Want to Take Great Photographs"
8	10-14	Tuesday	- Lecture: Light - Technical Assignment #3: Light
	10-16	Thursday	- Shooting Day
9	10-21	Tuesday	- Flex Day TBD
	10-23	Thursday	Artist Talk: Marzena Abrahamik
10	10-28	Tuesday	- Open lab time
	10-30	Thursday	- Open lab time
11	11-04	Tuesday	- Critique Day 1: Project #2
	11-06	Thursday	- Critique Day 2: Project #2 - Introduce Project #3: Final <u>Homework</u> - Read "Lenses" (p. 82 - 99) from "Read This Is You Want to Take Great Photographs"
12	11-11	Tuesday	- Artist Lecture: Expanded Photography - Demo: Lenses <u>Homework</u> - Technical Assignment #4: What is a Camera?
	11-13	Thursday	- Shooting Day
13	11-18	Tuesday	- Share results from Technical Assignment #4

	11-20	Thursday	- Open lab time
14	11-25	Tuesday	- Open lab time

Thanksgiving Break - No class on Thursday, November 27

15	12-02	Tuesday	- Critique Day 1: Project #3
	12-04	Thursday	- Critique Day 2: Project #3

Assessment

Technical Assignments (4) = 45%

Miscellaneous (1) = 5%

Projects (3) = 50%

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
- External Hard Drive
 - 1 TB 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
- Archival matboard
 - white
 - one 24"x36" sheet recommended

- Acid-free linen tape
- Archival photo corners

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. You must shoot outside of class time so that you edit, compile, print, mount, and organize your photos during class time, unless otherwise instructed. Use your class time wisely.
- 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, 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 allowed 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 a death in the family.

Communication

I am always available to be reached by email but I ask that you are respectful and professional in your communication and don't use it as your first go-to for getting an answer to your question. Please refer to this helpful resource that outlines professional communication with your professor. Before you contact your professor ask yourself:

Have I 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 and Other Recording Devices

Cell phones must be silenced and put away completely out of sight and not looked at until the class is over. If at any point your cell phone is NOT put away and silenced, you will be asked to leave for the remainder of the day. The use of cell phones and other recording or electronic devices is strictly prohibited during class. The instructor may direct, from time to time, on the possible use of cell phones for legitimate class reasons. Recording the class is prohibited.

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.