

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Brief Course Description:

This yearlong course introduces students to the art of photography with an emphasis on the elements of art and principles of design. Students will develop a historical understanding of photography, looking back to Renaissance use of the camera obscura and the earliest permanent images created in France during the 1820s, while exploring artistic styles, movements, and philosophies, as well as a cultural significance of the medium. Students will study a survey of photographers and photographic styles from around the world to gain fluency in photographic movements as well as current trends. Students will develop technical proficiency with manual camera settings using point-and-shoot cameras and DSLRs as well as digital editing software to create images that reflect their artistic viewpoints and concepts. Goals for the course are that students demonstrate an understanding of composition, control elements of exposure (shutter speed, aperture, ISO), manage studio lighting, practice the foundations of digital editing techniques, create original artworks for digital and print presentation that address challenging creative prompts and express individual artistic goals, and analyze and respond to artwork during critique. Students may use artwork from this course to develop a portfolio for application into an advanced photography course. Students are encouraged to submit artwork for display in several art exhibitions throughout the year and all students will prepare work for presentation to the class at the end of each semester. This course satisfies Career Technical Education standards by teaching the skills and knowledge for creating, refining, and exhibiting works of art. Students will also be creating online personal art portfolios to share with various audiences as a step towards career development.

Context for Course:**List the State/District Standards addressed in this course.****California Arts Standards:**

CREATING—Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

Prof.VA:Cr1.1 Use multiple approaches to begin creative endeavors.

Prof.VA:Cr1.2 Shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present day life using a contemporary practice of art or design.

Adv.VA:Cr1.2 Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices, following or breaking established conventions, to plan the making of multiple works of art and design based on a theme, idea, or concept.

CREATING—Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.

Adv.VA:Cr2.1 Experiment, plan, and make multiple works of art and design that explore a personally meaningful theme, idea, or concept.

CREATING—Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.

Acc.VA:Cr3 Engage in constructive critique with peers, then reflect on, reengage, revise, and refine works of art and design in response to personal artistic vision.

PRESENTING—Anchor Standard 4: Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.

Prof.VA:Pr4 Analyze, select, and curate artifacts and/or artworks for presentation and preservation.

Acc.VA:Pr4 Analyze, select, and critique personal artwork for a collection or portfolio presentation.

PRESENTING—Anchor Standard 5: Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

Acc.VA:Pr5 Evaluate, select, and apply methods or processes appropriate to display artwork in a specific place.

RESPONDING—Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work

Prof.VA:Re7.1 Hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences.

Acc.VA:Re7.1 Recognize and describe personal aesthetic and empathetic responses to the natural world and constructed environments.

RESPONDING—Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

Prof.VA:Re7.2 Analyze how one's understanding of the world is affected by experiencing visual imagery.

Acc.VA:Re7.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of an image or images to influence ideas, feelings, and behaviors of specific audiences.

RESPONDING—Anchor Standard 8: Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

Prof.VA:Re8 Interpret an artwork or collection of works, supported by relevant and sufficient evidence found in the work and its various contexts.

CONNECTING—Anchor Standard 10: Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Prof.VA:Cn10 Document the process of developing early stage ideas to fully elaborated ideas.

Acc.VA:Cn10 Utilize inquiry methods of observation, research, and experimentation to explore unfamiliar subjects through artmaking.

CONNECTING—Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

Acc.VA:Cn11 Compare uses of art in a variety of societal, cultural, and historical contexts and make connections to uses of art in contemporary, local and global contexts.

CTE Standards:**A1.0 Demonstrate ability to reorganize and integrate visual art elements across digital media and design applications.**

A1.1 View and respond to a variety of industry-related artistic products integrating industry appropriate vocabulary.

A1.2 Identify and use the principles of design to discuss, analyze, and create projects and products across multiple industry applications.

A1.3 Describe the use of the elements of art to express mood in digital or traditional art work found in the commercial environment.

A1.4 Select industry-specific works and analyze the intent of the work and the appropriate use of media.

A1.5 Research and analyze the work of an artist or designer and how the artist's distinctive style contributes to their industry production.

A1.6 Compare and analyze art work done using electronic media with those done with materials traditionally used in the visual arts.

A1.7 Analyze and discuss complex ideas, such as distortion, color theory, arbitrary color, scale, expressive content, and real versus virtual in works of art.

A1.9 Analyze the material used by a given artist and describe how its use influences the meaning of the work.

A2.0 Apply artistic skills and processes to solve a variety of industry-relevant problems in a variety of traditional and electronic media.

A2.1 Demonstrate skill in the manipulation of digital imagery (either still or video) in an industry-relevant application.

A2.2 Demonstrate personal style and advanced proficiency in communicating an idea, theme, or emotion in an industry-relevant artistic product.

A2.4 Use visual metaphors in creating an artistic product.

A2.5 Compile a portfolio of multiple original two- and three-dimensional works of art that reflect technical skills in an industry-relevant application.

A2.6 Create an artistic product that involves the effective use of the elements of art and the principles of design.

A2.7 Create original works of art of increasing complexity and skill in a variety of media that reflect their feelings and points of view.

A2.8 Plan and create artistic products that reflect complex ideas, such as distortion, color theory, arbitrary color, scale, expressive content, and real versus virtual.

A2.9 Create a multimedia work of art that demonstrates knowledge of media and technology skills.

A3.0 Analyze and assess the impact of history and culture on the development of professional arts and media products.

A3.6 Investigate and discuss universal concepts expressed in visual media products from diverse cultures.

A5.0 Identify essential industry competencies, explore commercial applications and develop a career specific personal plan.

A5.2 Explore the role of art and design across various industry sectors and content areas.

A5.3 Deconstruct works of art, identifying psychological content found in the symbols and images and their relationship to industry and society.

A5.6 Prepare portfolios of original art created for a variety of purposes and commercial applications.

A8.0 Understand the key technical and technological requirements applicable to various segments of the Media and Design Arts Pathway.

A8.1 Understand the component steps and skills required to design, edit, and produce a production for audio, video, electronic, or printed presentation.

A8.2 Use technology to create a variety of audio, visual, written, and electronic products and presentations.

A8.3 Know the features and uses of current and emerging technology related to computing (e.g., optical character recognition, sound processing, cable TV, cellular phones).

A8.4 Analyze the way in which technical design (e.g., color theory, lighting, graphics, typography, posters, sound, costumes, makeup) contributes to an artistic product, performance, or presentation.

History of Course Development:

COURSE GOALS AND/OR MAJOR STUDENT OUTCOMES

COURSE OBJECTIVES

COURSE OUTLINE

Unit 1: What is Photography?

Students will learn about the science of optics and the history of camera forms through presentations created by the teacher, video segments featuring various artists working with camera obscuras and wet-plate collodion formats (Abelardo Morell, Ian Ruhter, Sally Mann), and hands-on activities that illustrate the functions of various camera parts. Students will begin the year by using cameras in automatic mode to focus on the act of seeing and framing scenes creatively while developing confidence in handling camera equipment. Lessons on digital file management introduce students to the basics of capturing images in jpeg or RAW formats and saving them to their individual computer stations with a focus on organization.

Unit Assignments:

Minor Assignment: A photography scavenger hunt is used as a formative assessment, providing students an opportunity to practice automatic camera functions, but also switch to manual or semi-automatic modes, depending on experience. Students gather images from a list of items, some concrete, and some abstract during daily photo practice.

Major Assignment: Alphabetography Collage

Students locate objects, lines, and forms that most resemble each letter of the alphabet, from A to Z. Letters can be discovered in natural and man-made forms, found in shadows, or made by cropping with the frame of the camera. Letter images are then edited in Photoshop and arranged in grid forms and presented to the class. (Adapted from photographer Susan Meiselas and *Learn to See: A Sourcebook of 101 Photography Projects by Teachers and Students, 1975*)

Unit 2: The Elements of Exposure

This unit introduces the three main elements of exposure: shutter speed, aperture, and ISO. Each component is explored both as a part of the “exposure triangle,” interacting with the others to create a balanced exposure, and then focused on individually to explore how it impacts an image, for example, how time and shutter controls allow for long-exposure experiments as well as high-speed freeze-frame captures. This unit marks the transition from using automatic mode to full manual settings, an essential skillset for future units and assignments.

Unit Assignments:*Minor Assignments:***Aperture Experiments**

Students will create a series of images that intentionally feature a wide depth of field, highlighting depth of space and sharp details throughout, focusing on appropriate subjects, such as landscape. Students will also create a series of images that feature shallow depth of field, a narrow range of focus, keeping a subject sharply focused, and blurring the foreground and background, particularly useful in portrait photography.

ISO bracketing is practiced so that students can view the effect of increasing ISO values to brighten an exposure when needed, with the side effect of added image noise once ISO levels exceed a value of 800.

*Major Assignments:***Spirit Photography**

The fraudulent work of 19th century spirit photographers who claimed to capture images of ghosts are explored and interrogated within a historical context. Students will respond to the question of how the new technology and multiple exposure as well as long exposure techniques allowed these photographers to create illusions for artistic, entertainment, and ultimately fraudulent purposes. Students will create their own ghostly effects using long exposure.

Light Drawing

Students will check out equipment and work with classmates, friends, and family to collaborate on long exposure light drawing experiments at night and in dark environments outside of the classroom. These images depend on practice with lighting equipment in class and experiments with shutter settings as the dominant camera control. Final images should incorporate multiple light sources (flashlights, light strings, fairy lights, ambient light, etc.) to create both “light painting” and “light drawing” effects.

Unit 3: The Art of Photography

This unit introduces the elements of art (line, shape, form, value, color, space, and texture) and principles of design (balance, unity, variety, movement and rhythm, emphasis, proportion, and pattern) with a focus on compositional tools such as the rule of thirds and leading lines. Slideshows are featured daily for visual reference and artistic inspiration. Students will build on their foundations in photo history and manual camera settings to create visually interesting compositions that draw a viewer’s eye to deliberate points, create a sense of balance and movement, and highlight spatial relationships. As students develop these in-camera compositional skills, more advanced editing lessons are introduced. Students will learn a basic image workflow for Photoshop edits including cropping, using levels and curves tools to control image contrast, adjusting brightness, hue, and saturation. Emphasis is placed on non-destructive editing. Students will also be introduced to the concept of texture layers that can be used to add depth and detail to an image.

Unit Assignments:*Minor Assignments:***Compositional Tools**

Students will create a series of photographs utilizing various compositional tools including the rule of thirds, lead room, leading lines, point of view (bird’s eye view, worm’s eye view, etc.), and framing devices while working in small groups to collaborate as photographer and subject.

Basic Image Workflow

Students will work in class to edit all photos captured for the composition assignment according to basic workflow guidelines that ensure images are edited in a way that is non-destructive, using multiple layers, preserving image data and values before being saved in jpeg format, and the non-lossy tiff format.

*Major Assignment:***Pictorialism**

Pictorialism was one of the first photographic art movements, beginning in the 1850s and continuing into the 1940s. Pictorialist images were made with soft-focus lenses and often printed in a way that resembled soft romantic paintings of the era. Pictorialist artists, such as Julia Margaret Cameron and Robert Demachy, were often self-taught. Many final images were out of focus, had dust spots, and embraced the marks of the hand and process involved, de-emphasizing the mechanical nature of photography. Students will create images in the style of the Pictorialists by using “greased” lenses and digital texture layers to add scratch and drip elements to final photos. Digital distressing of image surfaces is encouraged as students work, first to complete basic edits, then customize their images to be in color, black and white, or sepia tone. Students should select subjects that were commonly explored in Pictorialism. Images will be shared in a class presentation.

Unit 4: Black and White Photography and Selective Color

This unit advances beyond basic edits to teach students more advanced Photoshop editing skills. Students will learn three common methods for adjusting images to black and white: desaturation, black and white adjustment layer editing, and channel mixer adjustment layer editing. Class discussions and slideshows focus on the choice to work in black and white, why black and white images remain powerful and relevant in today’s art world, and when we should choose to edit a color image to black and white, rather than keep it in full color. The new concepts of selection tools and the layer mask are introduced following lessons on black and white edits to allow students to selectively reveal color in an image. The layer mask is a powerful editing concept that will be used to manipulate images in many ways in future units, allowing artists to edit selectively rather than globally.

Unit Assignments:

Minor Assignment:

Converting color images to black and white

Students will create a series of high contrast black and white images, featuring a true white value as well as a true black value to ensure there is a full range of values in the final image.

Major Assignment:

Selective Color

Students will create a series of four final images that are edited using layer masks to selectively reveal colorful elements in a largely black and white image. Selective color edits should add to the overall image and serve to further the artistic goals of students. These images will be presented to the class and discussed in critique. Students will describe their artistic process from manual camera settings and compositional choices to the editing process and end result.

Unit 5: Illusions

This unit introduces basic compositing of multiple images to produce a realistic illusionary effect. The layer mask technique is essential to both types of illusion styles. Surreal levitation illusions and multiplicity illusions are taught to students through artist-created videos, teacher-created slideshows, instructional tutorial videos, and in-class demonstrations. We look to the work of Denis Darzacq and Natsumi Hayashi to highlight an action-photography approach to levitation images, and to the work of many contemporary artists using a support method to create their levitation illusions. Multiplicity illusions are created by photographing a series of images where the background and camera stay in one position, while the subject moves throughout the frame.

Unit Assignments:

Minor Assignment: In class practice versions of levitation and multiplicity assignments. Students will create one version of each illusion at school, working with classmates and school equipment (tripods, stools for support) before editing each illusion in class with teacher-guided step-by-step demonstration.

Major Assignments:

At-Home Illusions:

Levitation (support method)

Students will check out school equipment or use their own to create a composited image based on at least two original photographs. The resulting image will be a surreal portrait which features a figure appearing to float, fly, or fall. Students will pose themselves or volunteer models on stools or ladders for support, then capture a background image with no model or support present so that a layer mask edit of the support can be hidden to reveal a perfectly aligned background image. Students will need to consider posing, composition, manual camera settings, and capture all images while using a tripod to ensure that photos will properly align when stacked together in Photoshop. Images must be captured outside of school.

Multiplicity

Students will check out school equipment or use their own to create a composition featuring at least five multiples of the same subject posed in a thoughtful and creative way. Layer masking will be used to reveal the figure in a Photoshop stack of images to create a surreal effect of multiplicity. Images must be captured outside of school.

Unit 6: Portraiture

Students will learn various types of portraiture: formal, candid, environmental, and self-portraiture. An introduction by the teacher discusses the history of portraiture as a genre in painting and how it was developed after the advent of photography. A teacher-created slideshow illustrates key examples of each type of portraiture, highlighting artists of historical significance as well as contemporary portrait artists. Examples include Richard Avedon, Annie Leibovitz, Jurgens Teller, Cindy Sherman, Rania Matar, and Rineke Dijkstra. Students will discuss distinctions between styles and types of

portraiture while identifying various contexts for the work including journalistic, fashion, advertising, and gallery-world art. Students will also analyze artistic purpose and perception of subjects based on lighting, point of view, backgrounds and settings, and consider the impact of communication with models. An initial assignment (explained below in the sample unit assignment section) will introduce studio lighting, emphasizing five key light arrangements. Students will then work collaboratively on a formal portrait assignment, each working both as a photographer and model for their classmates. Students will explore candid portraiture, debating the ethics of photographing subjects without their permission, and reference the work of Walker Evans' Subway Portrait series. Students will also view examples of environmental portraiture and create a series of images, required to be captured outside of class to ensure that settings reveal aspects of the model's character, interests, occupation, or are of significance to the subject overall. A demonstration on self-portrait techniques and camera set-up will be presented by the teacher before students also create a series of self-portraits using tripods, camera timer functions, and shutter release cables. Once students have created a substantial quantity of portraits, they will practice selecting the most effective and powerful images and then make artistic choices as they edit them in Photoshop before presenting them to the class. Other skills taught within this unit include digital retouching, white balance adjustments, and color correction.

Unit Assignments:

Minor Assignments:

Portrait Retouching

Students will learn to use three basic retouching tools in Photoshop to minimize distracting elements of portrait photos such as blemishes, flyaway hairs, and lint and scratches on camera lenses.

White Balance and Color Corrections

Color temperature of lighting environments will be studied in class and explored through this short-term in-class assignment. Students will pick one location to capture five images that represent common white balance settings in DSLR cameras (daylight, cloudy, shade, tungsten, fluorescent). These images will be corrected together as a class in a demonstration that illustrates the use of photo filter, color balance, and curves adjustment layers in Photoshop. This lesson supports the portrait unit to ensure that natural color qualities are found in final portraits.

Major Assignment:

Key Lighting

For our main assignment covering studio lighting, students will view and distinguish the five common key light arrangements: flat, butterfly/Paramount, loop, Rembrandt, and split lighting. Students will view a demonstration of lighting placement and shifting key light positions while practicing with student models. Students will then be assigned to capture a series of photos representing each key light position while working in small groups. Each student is required to practice modeling, setting up lighting, and photographing the series to ensure that they experience each aspect of studio portraiture and learn to communicate with lighting assistants and models to create the desired effect. Students will then decide which types of lighting arrangements they would like to use for their final series of formal portraits to be included in a class presentation.

Unit 7: Still Life

After working closely and collaboratively with models and lighting assistants in the previous unit, students will tackle the challenge of working alone with objects and lighting equipment to create a series of still life images. Students will be introduced to the still life tradition by reviewing works from art history in paintings and photographs. Slideshow presentations will focus on two main types of still life. Formal still lifes emphasize the formal properties of the subject depicted, such as the contrasting textural surfaces, colors and values, a sense of pattern or repetition of shapes of objects. Narrative still lifes tell a story through the objects pictured. Lighting techniques are reviewed and a class still life is arranged to emphasize certain elements of art to model the process for students and allow for in-class practice before students create their still lifes at home or bring in objects to photograph in class.

Unit Assignments:

Minor Assignment:

In class practice still life. Students will help set up an in-class arrangement and arrange studio lighting to create various effects. Certain lighting techniques will add drama and boldness to the composition, while some more tonal, soft lighting technique may be desired and explored as well. Images will be saved and edited with basic edits.

Major Assignment:

Still life series – Formal or Narrative

Students will research various still life photographers and identify at least one main artist to use as inspiration for their still life project. An emphasis will be placed on a creative exploration of shape and balance to guide arrangements of objects. Still lifes should explore formal and/or narrative subjects.

Students will follow the following steps to complete a final series of four images:

Step One: Research artists, sketch out ideas, explore with your camera and your design tools.

Step Two: Gather 100 photographs that explore various shapes, objects, and arrangements that are either focused on formal concerns or tell a story, or both.

Step Three: Edit your best shots using basic edits

Step Four: Present final images to class and participate in critique focusing on the element of shape and the principle of balance, as well as additional content explored by the artist.

An additional written critique response will be assigned to each student so that they closely observe a fellow artist's series without time constraints and respond to critical questions using the four-part critique model of describing, analyzing, interpreting, and judging artwork.

Unit 8: Photo Essay

The final project of the year is a photo essay or narrative series of images that tells a story or investigates a subject in a series of 12 images. Students will learn about various photojournalistic and story-telling techniques while referencing contemporary photographers who work largely in series. Students will first decide on a theme by practicing brainstorming techniques in class. Students are encouraged to work through multiple themes for the first week before fully narrowing down their subject so that they understand the challenges of photographing each subject they have in mind. In-progress critiques are introduced to illustrate the value of feedback early on in the creative process and to guide student work.

Unit Assignments:

Minor Assignments:

Students will create inspiration folders of artists whose style and storytelling techniques they admire.

Students will also create in-class brainstorms and develop themes to work on simultaneously before moving on to a final theme they'll explore in their final project.

Major Assignment:

One Story, 12 Photos -- Journalistic or Narrative

Each student will create 120 photographs to record the event or subject they choose. They will then write a three page story or expository piece that explores a central subject in MLA format to accompany their photo-essay.

Students will then prepare to present their projects to the class. They will edit the best twelve photographs, so that they are showing only the strongest elements that best represent their event or subject. Students will present their finished projects with the class. As a group, they will critique photographs using the four-part method of art criticism. This presentation and critique, along with written story serves as the class final.

TEXTS AND SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

Title, Author, Publisher, Edition:

Previously Adopted? Yes No (If no, provide information directly below)

Cost per book

Total Cost

Budget Source

Other:

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DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND/OR STRATEGIES

--

ASSESSMENT METHODS AND/OR TOOLS

--

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

--

HONORS COURSES ONLY

Indicate how this honors course is different from the standard course.