

Advanced Visual Journalism

MW 9 - 10:30 am

Instructors:

Eli Reed - elireed@mac.com; (512) 626-5259

Teaching Assistant:

Shelby Knowles - sknowles@utexas.edu

Course Description:

This syllabus should be viewed simply as a guide to this semester. A very serious guide as in – there will be occasional sudden changes in the schedule at times that are part of the learning curve. The stories that are heard in class are not because the professor likes the sound of his voice. They are real life experiences that are passed on in order to help the student prepare for real world experiences.

Method:

Today's photojournalist needs to be able to stand out and above the mass of would be photojournalists who have not learned to tell stories with their cameras. There are quite a few ways to accomplish this and this class is designed to help you learn how to do this and at the same time place your personal imprint on the work that you want to produce. In today's world, everyone thinks that they are a great photographer because of cameras that do the technical side pretty well but smart cameras are not always smart and they do not teach you how to get close to your subjects and create meaningful and quality work. One of the many things that you will learn is how to rid yourself of the fears that prevent you from making intelligent choices within the sphere of your work. Patience and understanding goes a long way in helping the photographer go beyond the obvious. A successful photographer needs to develop personal qualities that connect aesthetic value and clear crisp communication. The ability and the "PERSONAL EYE", matter. These personal POV's are the shot, the gesture, the story, the historic story telling visual. How one does that, will take the photographer on his and her journey.

Deadlines will be listed in an accompanying course schedule. Will be announced when each assignment is given. Late assignments will be accepted only in cases of extreme personal hardship and with prior approval from the instructor. In such cases, you will have one week to complete the work with my discretion. This is not an opportunity to barter. Late work will not be accepted without written approval from the instructor.

Techniques:

Used by newspaper, magazine, and on-line photographers to document and publish professional quality photographs of the personalities, relationships, events and scenes that inhabit and define our world.

Grading:

Each student will maintain a journal notebook that shall include the following:

- 1) Notes on lecture notes on assigned readings
- 2) Project outlines for each assignment
- 3) Captions for all photos in presentations (Loss of grades is the penalty)
- 4) Assignment Journals will be submitted for evaluation and graded during the semester at various times.

Grading Breakdown:

- 20% Journal notebook
- 20% Assignment Completion
- 20 % Contest participation
 - (COPY, POY, World Press, etc.), and photography journal files
- 40% Collective project work
 - Prints delivered in portfolio book form with corrected color and captions with one page word essay at project end.

Two absences are allowed during the semester. Any more than that and grades will be adversely affected.

THOUGHTFULNESS, INSIGHT AND CLARITY OF EXPRESSION are essential traits for all who work with media. Mastery of Photographic Reporting and Storytelling concepts should make your professional life much richer and more productive, whatever your ambitions may be regarding the pursuit of a professional career in communications.

POINTS TO REMEMBER: Valuable information is presented during critiques. Cultivate the habit of writing down points that are emphasized by the instructor that will aid retention whether or not you ever consult your notes. Often people with little or no prior photo experience make the most imaginative photos. In photojournalism, as in most areas of life, curiosity and enthusiasm are the keys that unlock the richest opportunities. Students with considerable prior photo experience who tend to imitate what they have seen others do make some of the more conventional photos. Duplicating pictures you've seen before can be instructive, like practicing musical scales. However, to become a virtuoso, seek inspiration in your own distinctive, personal experiences. Listen and learn to trust your own instincts at the right moments Students are expected to keep and maintain a digital file of their own outstanding images during the semester for possible contest entries and as reference in their continuing body of work. (To be discussed) Students are encouraged to have a continuing dialogue during the semester in order to keep on point as far as where they are regarding grades.

Recommended Reading

Dark Odyssey, Philip Jones Griffiths, Aperture
W. Eugene Smith, Shadows and Substance, McGraw Hill
Requiem, Horst Faas and Tim Page, Random House
Deeds of War, James Nachtwey, Thames and Hudson
Son of Bitch, Elliot Erwitt, Viking Press

California Trip, Dennis Stock
Leonard Freed, Photographs 1954-1990, Norton
Circus Days, Jill Freedman, Harmony
East 100th Street, Bruce Davidson
Koudelka/Gypsies/Aperture
Diane Arbus, Aperture
Under A Grudging Sun, Alex Webb
I, Will McBride, Konemann
American We, Eugene Richards, Aperture
Choice of Weapons, Gordon Parks (Any of his books)
Nicaragua, Susan Meiselas, Pantheon
Henri Cartier Bresson Photographer, New York Graphic Society
Helen Levitt, San Francisco Museum of Art
Homecoming, Don McCullin, St. Martin Press Inc., 175 Fifth Avenue
The Sweet Flypaper of Life, Roy DeCarava, Howard
Mary Ellen Mark, Twenty Five Years,
Magnum Stories, Phaidon
The Americans, Robert Frank, Aperture
Terra, Sebastio Salgado, Phaidon
Eyelids of Morning, Peter Beard & Alistair Graham, Chronicle Books
Moments in Time, Dirck Halstead, Harry N. Abrams, Inc. (Available at Barnes & Noble
and strongly suggested)
(A number of these books are out of print but there is enough out there
well worth checking out)

Class Schedule

All assignment presentations are to be presented with captions unless indicated otherwise by instructor. Grade points are subtracted with each failure to provide proper captions and there will be no exception to this rule.

ALL DIGITAL ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE: AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.

(*very much subject to change*)

Aug. 30: Course Introduction overview including your responsibilities for the semester. Every picture has a role in the different kinds of photographic narrative. Work of instructor viewed.

Sept. 4: Labor Day - no classes

Sept. 6:

20/20 Presentation of 10 of your photographs via flash drive or print in which you will have 20 seconds per photograph to discuss your work. Looking for the core of what you do.

Assignment Given: One page essay personal assessment of photo reportage viewed on websites (Lens Blog, Framework).

Sept. 11:

Work of Henri Cartier-Bresson, W. Eugene Smith, Annie Leibovitz, and others will be discussed.

Assignment Given: 'One moment of the world' in five photographs.

Sept. 13:

Discussion: Photojournalism in the real world.

Due: Written assessment of photo reportage including photography in NYTimes Lens Blog and LA Times Framework as well as others to be discussed.

Assignment Given:

Larger assignment. Starting on it immediately is advised. Photograph the effect of the changing economy in Austin. Shoot for multimedia presentation using 20 photographs inside the piece.

Sep 18 :

Presentation and discussion of 'One moment of the world' assignment.

Critique: photographs.

Sep 20:

Work of German photographer, August Sander presentation and lecture with comparative lecture regarding work by other photographers of note.

***** Assignment is in two parts: Create four B/W portraits in the same style of his work. The second part of the assignment is to create 4 modern contemporary portraits in available light in color in the style of August Sander. Use normal focal lengths. Total of 8 photographs.

Sep 25:

Visit to Magnum photos collection at Ransom Museum.

Assignment Given: Write a two-page essay on the archive work comparing it to current coverage in world at large.

Sep 27:

August Sander assignment due for discussion and critique.

Oct 2:

Due: One Moment of the World.

Oct 4:

Discussion of the work of Elliot Erwitt, known particularly for his photographic photos using humor, leave the pies at home.

**** Assignment Given: Make five interesting pictures that show broad scope of his photography. The grade depends on the successful depth of your sense of humor and of day to day life.

Oct 9:

Looking at significant photographic images through prospective in-depth projects that have had a strong journalistic and societal impact.

Assignment Given: Make a photograph toward finding the deeper and larger story (Planned discovery with “Every picture tells a story”). Shoot 36 photographs choosing one of the images.

Oct 11:

Discussion of an American 'Family'

Assignment Given: Make five photographs of an American Family. Write a short statement about this particular family and what makes them interesting to us. You can make a slide presentation for extra credit with you or someone of your choice reading the statement as the images advance/or music playing in the presentation that fits your particular family. (Google “An American Family, Loud Family” documentary. Perhaps the first ever reality television).

Oct 16:

Due, making one photograph that tells a larger story assignment for “Every picture tells a story”.

Oct 18:

Due: American Family portrait assignment.

Oct 23:

Viewing of Film documentary (America’s Children, Poorest in the land of Plenty) with strong use of still photographs. Possible: Fictional political film segment (Tanner 88, HBO Films)

Assignment Given: One page commentary on each of the two films.

Oct 25:

Long form photographic essays on the economy are due with critique and discussion during class.

Oct 30 :

Continued economy critique and discussion during class and Film documentary one page commentary.

Nov 1:

Lecture and discussion will deal with different kinds of short photographic essays. Essays will be newspaper stories about a senior citizen and her farm, professional wrestling, etc.

Nov 6:

Finding the internal core inside of the portrait.

Assignment Given: Portrait internal view of a person assignment. Set your camera to normal focal length and photograph the edge of light where things change. Make a multimedia essay using music.

Nov 8:

Due discussion and critique of “portrait: internal view” assignment.

Nov 13:

Elliot Erwitt photos due. Look at award winning photographs; what distinguishes them to contest judges, what is to be learned from them and what kind of impact they bring to job hunting. Discussion of: Life Magazine classic photographic essays.

Assignment: Simulation of difficulties of overseas work.

Nov 15:

Finding the assigned story and ‘making it yours’ discussion. Walking tour/Zen photographs on the hunt.

Assignment Given: Bring the various elements together into one photograph. Make three “Zen” or spiritual photographs from the heart while shooting as few frames as possible. Total of six photographs.

Nov 20:

Due overseas assignment.

Assignment Given: Shoot UT community activity without showing children. Five photos with one strong enough to make the possible front page/cover.

Nov 22:

Beginning of movie, “Once Upon a Time in the West.”

Discussion: work of William Allard. Discussion regarding the photographing of the entertainment industry and real life.

Nov. 24: Holiday

Nov 27:

Discussion about making interesting photographs out of nothing without getting yourself fired. Equipment use: Paring down to essentials for given stories/lens use/creative seeing to final conclusions.

Assignment: Bring photographs taken during semester for print portfolio production final. (no exceptions, no excuses)

Nov 29:

Due: PROCESS of choosing images from semester and designing the Mac Photo/Portfolio book final due on Dec 4. Twenty photographs including eight to ten photographs which are to be included in a picture story within the twenty. ALL PHOTOGRAPHS MUST HAVE CAPTIONS!

Dec 4:

Finished Final Class portfolio presentation. A time of celebration for your accomplishments of the semester.

***** ABSOLUTELY No Excuses! *****

All work done in this class must be original work done by you for this class alone. The goal is creation of images and text that are journalistically sound but represent your personal vision and voice. For information on academic integrity and plagiarism, see <http://www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/academicintegrity>

Class Policies and University Procedures:

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time before or after the absence.

Medical Emergency and Bereavement

With documentation, the only reasons for which a student may receive an excused absence. Please contact me immediately to let me know if you are seriously ill and/or must miss class for family bereavement. Do not wait to contact me. Let me know as soon as the situation arises and bring documentary evidence of your situation as soon as possible. You will need to make arrangements to make up missed work and discussion is crucial.

University Policies

Q Drop Policy

If you wish to drop a class after the 12th class day, you'll need to execute a Q drop before the

Q-drop deadline, which typically occurs near the middle of the semester. Under Texas law, you are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution. For more information, see: <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc/academic/adddrop/qdrop>

Student Accommodations

Students with a documented disability may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/about/>

Please request a meeting the first week of class to discuss any accommodations you will need.

Please notify me as soon as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible to you.

Please notify me if any of the physical space is difficult for you to navigate.

Academic Integrity

Each student in the course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code: "As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity." This means that work you produce on assignments, tests and exams is all your own work, unless it is assigned as group work. I will make it clear for each test, exam or assignment whether collaboration is encouraged or not.

Always cite your sources. If you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must make that clear otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. You are responsible for understanding UT's Academic Honesty Policy which can be found at the following web address: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

University Resources for Students

The university has numerous resources for students to provide assistance and support for your learning, use these to help you succeed in your classes.

The Sanger Learning Center

Did you know that more than one-third of UT undergraduate students use the Sanger Learning Center each year to improve their academic performance? All students are welcome to take advantage of Sanger Center's classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas. For more information, please visit <http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc> or call 512-471-3614 (JES A332).

The University Writing Center

The University Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT student, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing. The assistance we provide is intended to foster students' resourcefulness and self-reliance. <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

Counseling and Mental Health Center

The Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC) provides counseling, psychiatric, consultation, and prevention services that facilitate students' academic and life goals and enhance their personal growth and well-being. <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>

Student Emergency Services - <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

ITS Need help with technology? - <http://www.utexas.edu/its/>

Libraries

Need help searching for information? <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/>

Canvas

Canvas help is available 24/7 at <https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/633028/pages/student-tutorials>

Important Safety Information

If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or Professors, call BCAL (the Behavior Concerns Advice Line): 512-232-5050. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn't feel right – it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

Evacuation Information

(add any that are particular to your building) The following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the Office of Campus Safety and Security, 512-471-5767, <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/>

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when an alarm or alert is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside, unless told otherwise by an official representative. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. Link to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency