

Special Topics: Photography | ART 3310
Sul Ross State University, Fall 2026

Instructor:

Shea Carley

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Class Meets: Rooms 103 (classroom) & 109 (darkroom) in the IT Building

Tuesdays, 6:00 – 8:50 pm. Additional Lab hours: TBD

Office Hours:

Tuesdays 5:00 – 6:00 pm or by appointment

Course Overview:

This course is an introduction to black and white film photography and darkroom processes. Students will learn the basics of camera function, exposure, composition, film processing, and printing in the darkroom. We will examine the work of historical and contemporary photographers engaged in analogue photography processes and explore the relevance of analogue photography in the so-called digital age. There will be an emphasis on print quality, creativity, and on an ability to think and speak critically about your work and the work of others.

Blackboard will be used weekly for the distribution of readings, videos, PowerPoint lectures, and assignments. If you do not have reliable internet access, please talk to the instructor.

Required Course Materials

- Sketchbook/notebook for Artist Journal & class notes
- Binder for storing negatives, prints, and assignments
- 35mm camera (provided by the instructor)
- 35mm film (6 rolls provided by the instructor, acquire additional rolls on your own)
- Enlarging paper (25 sheets provided by instructor, acquire additional paper on your own)

Lab Fees

There is a \$100.00 lab fee for Photography. This fee will cover film, enlarging paper, chemicals, and other materials used for projects done for class only. All lab fees must be paid into the Art Stores Account at the Cashier's office in Briscoe Administration Building (BAB) and a receipt provided to the instructor no later than Tuesday, September 16. If you do not have the financial resources to cover the cost, please talk to your instructor.

Sourcing Film and Paper

As the semester progresses, you may need to acquire paper and film on your own so that you have enough materials to complete the assignments. I recommend purchasing either Ilford HP5 400 or Kodak Tri-X 400 Black & White 35mm Film and Multigrade RC 8x10 paper (Ilford, Arista, or Multitone) These items can be found at the following businesses:

- Precision Camera – www.precision-camera.com
- B&H – www.bhphoto.com
- Freestyle Photographic Supplies – www.freestylephoto.biz

Assessment & Grading Criteria

You will be assessed in each class on your progress and participation in lectures, discussions, assignments, and critiques. Your grade will be based on class participation and the quality of the effort you put into completing all assignments, including weekly reading assignments. Being in class is very important. Much of the work for this course cannot be done outside the lab. The knowledge needed to complete assignments will be gained through in-person lectures and demonstrations that will be difficult to repeat or for you to make up. If you miss class, catching up is your responsibility. Alert the instructor if you will not be in class. Come to office hours or schedule a time meet with the instructor following your absence.

How you are graded: Photo assignments - 40%. Class participation in critiques, presentations, and discussions - 20%. Artist Journals - 20%. Final Project - 20%.

Late assignments will be deducted 10 points out of 100 per class meeting.

Work Policy & Absences

Attendance is extremely important in this course. Because we will cover material in class each week that builds on the previous weeks, it is very easy to get behind. **DO NOT skip class**. If you must miss a class, you **must let the instructor know and come to office hours and lab to complete the work you missed**. Because we only meet once a week and attendance is so imperative for success in this course, if you have more than 2 unexcused absences, we will have a conversation about dropping you from the class. Any unexcused absence will negatively affect your participation grade. Emergencies, illness, and mental health struggles all qualify as excused absences – but you must communicate with me and make arrangements to make up missed work. I'm here to support you.

Class Environment

This class is structured to be accessible and enjoyable for everyone. I am more than happy to work with you on your individual needs. I aim to foster an environment that is supportive and collaborative. Come ready to work with others, ask questions, freely

express in a safe space, and, hopefully, decompress through artmaking.

Because of the emphasis on free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas, we must all help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. There will be zero tolerance for harassment, belittlement, or discrimination against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference.

AI & Plagiarism

All assignments should be fully prepared by the student. The majority of the work in this course, being with analog materials, is untouchable by AI. For the writing components of the course, AI usage is strictly prohibited. Developing strong competencies in communicating about your work and the work of others will prepare you for success in your academic career and beyond. Therefore, the use of generative AI tools to complete any aspect of assignments for this course are not permitted and will be treated as plagiarism. If you have questions about what constitutes a violation of this statement, please contact me.

ADA Statement:

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartz Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartz@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will be able to expressively communicate an original idea or concept visually through an original artwork.
- Students will demonstrate proficiency in writing within the art discipline.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of professional practices pertaining to their area of specialization.

Marketable Skills:

- Creating ideas with independence of thought.
 - Students will learn to produce work in a timely manner.

- Use of original concepts and non-clichéd ideas.
- Demonstrate the ability to create and curate a cohesive professional exhibition of well-crafted and thematic work with a defined technique or personal style.
- Ability to produce professional documentation including advertising (posters & postcards), artist statement, press release, resume, digital records.
- Faculty will integrate the information into lectures, workshops, etc.
- Communicating professionally through written and spoken presentation.
 - Students will demonstrate the ability to create a cohesive capstone with a defined technique or personal style.
 - Ability to produce a professional portfolio that meets current industry standards.
 - Faculty will integrate the information into lectures, workshops, etc.
- Solving problems through critical thinking.
 - Students will learn to produce work in a timely manner.
 - Use of original concepts and non-clichéd ideas.
 - Demonstrate the ability to create and curate a cohesive professional exhibition of well-crafted and thematic work with a defined technique or personal style.
 - Ability to produce professional documentation including advertising (posters & postcards), artist statement, press release, resume, digital records.
 - Faculty will integrate the information into lectures, workshops, etc.

Weekly Responsibilities

- **Class** **Meetings**

In addition to time allotted to work on photography projects, each class will consist of one or more of the following: lectures on photographic techniques, history, and practice, class discussions on reading materials and assignments, critiques, and/or demonstrations on image-making and darkroom processes.

- **Readings and Films**

Each week you will be assigned short readings and/or relevant films on photographic concepts, techniques, or history. These will be posted on Blackboard. Write a short response to the assigned material in your **Artist Journal**. I will provide prompts on Blackboard to serve as guides for your reflections. Be prepared to discuss your reflections in class.

- **Artist Journals**

Throughout the semester, you will keep a notebook dedicated to photographs and photographers that interest you, responses to readings/film assignments, and reflections on your progress throughout the course. 1-2 new entries should be added every week. Creativity is encouraged – feel free to include drawings, poems, maps, tokens of inspiration, etc!

At midterm and the end of the semester, we will take time for you to present one image/photographer with the class. Your journals will also be collected for a grade at these times.

- **Photo Assignments**

5 photo assignments and a final project will be assigned throughout the semester. Each week, you will take photographs with your film camera, develop film, and/or print photographs in the darkroom. In-class critiques of your work will be held on the due date of each assignment.

- **Lab**

Additional darkroom (lab) time will be scheduled most weeks. Work in the darkroom outside of the scheduled class time is often necessary in order to complete your photo assignments on time.

Tentative Class Schedule

August 25

Introductions & Course Overview

Lecture: Analog Photography & Camera function, Exposure, & Composition Basics

Camera Check Out

Assignments:

- Get to know your camera (explore functions, practice changing f-stop/shutter speed)
- Acquire notebook for Artist Journal
- Weekly reading/films on Blackboard
- Write reflections and/or add one photographer to your Artist Journal

September 1

Camera film loading, camera controls, camera practice walk

Introduction to Photo Assignment 1: Photogram

Darkroom process and photogram demonstration

Introduction to Photo Assignment 2: 4 Directions of Light

Assignments:

- Photo Assignment 1: Collect photogram materials
- Weekly reading/film on Blackboard
- Write reflections and/or add one photographer to your Artist Journal

September 8

Lab: Photograms

Film

rolling

practice

Assignments:

- Weekly reading/film on Blackboard
- Photo Assignment 2: 4 Directions of Light
- Write reflections and/or add one photographer to your Artist Journal

September 15

Photo

Assignment

1:

Photograms

due

Photogram Critique

Film Processing Demo

Lab

Develop

film

for

assignment

2

Assignments:

- Weekly reading/film on Blackboard
- Photo Assignment 2: First Pictures & 4 Directions of Light
- Write reflections and/or add one photographer to your Artist Journal

September 22

Introduction to Assignment 3: Depth of Field and Motion

Contact Sheet Demo

Lab – Contact Sheets & printing

Assignments:

- Weekly reading/film on Blackboard
- Photo Assignment 2: First Pictures & 4 Directions of Light
- Photo assignment 3: Depth of field and motion
- Write reflections and/or add one photographer to your Artist Journal

September 29

Lab: Printing Assignment 2, Developing film Assignment 3

Assignments:

- Weekly reading/film on Blackboard
- Photo Assignment 2: 4 Directions of Light
- Photo Assignment 3: Depth of field and motion
- Write reflections and/or add one photographer to your Artist Journal

October 6

Lab: Assignment 2 & 3

Introduction to Assignments 4 & 5: Portrait & Landscape

Assignments:

- Weekly reading/film on Blackboard
- Photo Assignments 2-5
- Write reflections and/or add one photographer to your Artist Journal

October 13

Due: Assignment 2: 4 Directions of Light

Critique – Assignment 2

Lab – Assignments 3, 4 & 5

Assignments:

- Photo Assignments 4 & 5: Landscape & Portraiture
- Weekly reading/watching on Blackboard
- Write reflections and/or add one photographer to your Artist Journal

October 20

Midterm - Artist Journals (part 1) Due – Class sharing and discussion

Assignments:

- Photo Assignments 3, 4 & 5
- Write final project proposal
- Work on your Artist Journal

October 27

Introduce Final Project

Lab – Assignments 4 & 5

Assignments:

- Photo Assignment: Final Project

- Photo Assignments 4 & 5: Landscape & Portraiture
- Weekly reading/watching on Blackboard
- Write reflections and/or add one photographer to your Artist Journal

November 3

Due: Assignment 3: Depth of field & Motion

Final Project Brainstorm discussion

Critique – Assignment 3

Lab – Assignments 4 & 5

Assignments:

- Photo Assignment: Final Project
- Weekly reading/watching on Blackboard
- Write reflections and/or add one photographer to your Artist Journal

November 10

Final Project Proposal Due

Lab – Assignments 4 & 5, Final Project

Assignments:

- Photo Assignment: Final Project
- Write reflections and/or add one photographer to your Artist Journal

November 17

Due: Assignments 4 & 5: Landscape & Portraiture

Critique – Assignments 4 & 5

Lab – Final Project

Assignments:

- Photo Assignment: Final Project
- Write reflections and/or add one photographer to your Artist Journal

November 24

Lab – Final Project

Assignments:

- Photo Assignment: Final Project
- Write reflections and/or add one photographer to your Artist Journal

December 1 – Last Class Day

Artist Journals due – Class Presentations

Lab – Final Project

Assignments:

- Photo Assignment: Final Project

December 7 – Final Project Due & Critique

Final Project – Presentation & Potluck!