

## Basic information

**CDES 396: Intermediate Photo Communication and Digital Imaging**

This document provides a general description of course content, objectives, structure, required resources, and basic expectations for successful performance. For more specific questions about equipment, please access this [FAQs](#) document the internet.

This course consists of a two hour lecture and three hour laboratory combining for a total of three units.

**BYRON WOLFE** Instructor for the course  
**CONTACT** [bwolfe@csuchico.edu](mailto:bwolfe@csuchico.edu), 898-4079, Tehama #267  
**OFFICE HOURS** Tuesday 1-2 and 4-5  
 Wednesday 3-4  
 Thursday 1-2

**MEETING TIMES** Tuesday 2:00 – 3:50, Thursday 2:00 – 4:50, right here in Plumas 002.  
**WEB SITE** [http://byronwolfe.typepad.com/cdes\\_photography2/](http://byronwolfe.typepad.com/cdes_photography2/)  
**FINAL EXAM** Thursday, May 17, 12 - 2

The course web site is a critical method for us to communicate as a class. Please subscribe to the site so that you get e-mail updates on postings and comments.

## Pre-requisites

You must have successfully completed a college level photography course with a strong digital imaging component in order to take this class. I will assume that you have mastered the basics of digital camera use and techniques (especially proper exposure techniques in a manual mode and basic digital darkroom techniques). If you are uncertain if you are qualified to take this course, please discuss it with me immediately.

## Description and objectives

This course addresses photographic perception, creative process, and a more thorough investigation of narrative editing practices and techniques related to digital photography. Technical concepts include advanced systems of exposure and digital imaging processing for high-quality digital output.

The principle objectives for this course are to help you to refine your visual ideas as a photographer and to become more conscious of your particular creative process (or to put it another way, to learn HOW to come up with visual ideas). We will work on a number of photographic projects, each requiring you to think about specific visual problems and work toward innovative solutions. Each project is unique and will challenge you in very different ways.

## COURSE SUPPLIES

You will need to supply your own digital camera for the duration of the semester. The camera must have a minimum resolution of 8 megapixels and have manually adjustable shutter and aperture controls in 1/3 stop increments. A very basic digital camera with these specifications will start at around \$200 and go up from there. You will not be able to use an automatic “point and shoot” in this class. **Digital SLRs are very popular and effective for this course.** In addition to the camera, you will likely need to purchase an extra memory card or two for the camera AND at least two gigabytes of portable storage (such as a “USB thumbdrive” or external USB hardrive).

I understand that this class requires a significant financial investment and have done everything possible to minimize your expenses while providing the fullest possible learning experience. While it may provide little consolation as you ponder upcoming purchases, it is worth knowing that it has never been cheaper to learn photography. In the very recent past, students taking chemistry-based photography courses had to supply their own camera, pay a hefty lab fee, then spend up to \$200 on film and paper! Your course fee covers *all* printing expenses for the entire semester - and we print a lot. The best way to mitigate your expenses is to actively find ways to apply the skills you learn in this class to the rest of your academic and professional careers.

SUPPLIES cont'd	Required	<p>Itemized list of required supplies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 megapixel (minimum) digital camera with manual aperture and shutter controls</li> <li>• An additional digital camera storage card (or two)</li> <li>• Two gigabyte (minimum) thumbdrive or comparable device</li> </ul> <p>The required text is <i>The Elements of Photography</i> by Angela Faris Belt. Any additional readings will be provided for you, generally through the course web site.</p> <p>Please consult the <a href="#">FAQs</a> for more specific camera information and recommendations.</p> <p>Though not required, you might find the following resources to be especially helpful during the semester.</p>
	Recommended	<p>Itemized list of recommended supplies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A relatively new computer with high speed internet access (DSL or cable modem).</li> <li>• Access to a printer to print this and other course documents.</li> <li>• A computer with Adobe Photoshop CS4 or CS5 (check the bookstore for best pricing).</li> <li>• A basic camera cleaning kit or a <a href="#">mini lens pen</a>.</li> </ul>
STRUCTURE & CONTENT	Lecture & lab	<p>Although this class is structured as a lecture and a lab, I generally don't make a distinction between when material is presented and when you have time to work. Show up every day, on time, and be ready to work. From time to time, I may ask that you bring your camera to class for fieldwork and it's generally a good idea to have your camera with you at all times. I typically outline our daily schedule 2 - 3 weeks in advance.</p>
PERFORMANCE & EVALUATION	Attendance	<p><i>"f-8 and be there," attributed to <a href="#">Weegee</a></i></p> <p>Your attendance and active participation in class is a basic expectation for adequate performance. Your success in this course will be directly proportional to the effort and energy you put forth. I normally take roll at 2:00 sharp, sometimes surreptitiously, then begin. Please be on time.</p> <p>If you miss a class or arrive late you will need to talk to a fellow student, find out what happened, and get caught up. It is unfair (to me and your classmates) and unrealistic to expect a personal re-representation of material if you are late or absent.</p> <p>In addition to attending every session, you should spend a minimum of three hours outside of class (on average) to adequately complete your projects.</p> <p>I regularly threaten to have pop-quizzes in the the course. Sometimes I follow-through.</p>

PERFORMANCE & EVALUATION cont'd

Areas assessed

This course uses the standard University Grading scales found on page four of [this document](#).

The relative percentages for grading in this class are as follows:

ATTENDANCE, CRITIQUES (written and oral), PARTICIPATION	15%
EXERCISES	15%
QUIZZES & EXAMS	20%
PROJECTS	50%

**More than five unexcused absences can constitute an automatic failure.**

Late assignments and projects will not be accepted without prior approval. In-class exercises and assignments cannot be made up for credit. We work fast and hard in this class. Do everything you can to keep up and if you fall behind, talk to me immediately.

Feedback and grades

I find that assigning grades for much of what we do to be highly problematic and often counterproductive. It is typical for the entire semester to pass without receiving a grade for coursework other than quizzes or tests. Exercises are generally credit/no credit. That doesn't mean you won't receive feedback on your work. On the contrary, this is a class where the feedback is constant and ongoing.

The majority of feedback in this course comes from critiques, formal and informal discussions, and frequent one-on-one conversations with me. When I pull up a chair beside you, it's to provide perspective and guidance. It is your responsibility to act on this feedback and to solicit more if you require it.

At the end of the semester I will assign a final grade. It will be based heavily upon a self-evaluation of your projects and performance and will include the various assessment areas outlined above.

If at any time I believe that your performance in the class is inadequate, I will let you know. Otherwise, it is safe to assume that your performance up to that point has been satisfactory (C or higher) and that you will pass the course.

GRAPHIC DESIGN

This course is often taken by students who want to further their photography experience prior to entering the Graphic Design portfolio review. While this is a good idea, you should be aware that assignments for this course aren't designed to result in portfolio-ready pieces. You may find that you will need to take on self-assigned projects to fully prepare for the review. I'm always happy to provide feedback at appropriate times for any work you're preparing for the review, but you have to take the initiative to ask.

LAB USE

The computers in the Plumas 002 lab are reserved for your exclusive use during the scheduled class periods. Once the semester is well under way, I will provide you with lab access outside of course times. I will provide details about this soon.

The Plumas digital photo lab is truly "state of the art." Please take proper care of the equipment and never bring food or drink to your work station. There are designated areas in the classroom for beverage breaks.

ADDS & DROPS

There will be no adds or drops after the second week of class without a documented serious and compelling reason. Drops are NOT automatic. Please refer to page three of [this document](#) for more information.

This is a list of potential projects we'll work on this semester. Each will take anywhere from one class session to four weeks to complete. A full description for each project will be available on the day the work is assigned. Historically, we've only been able to get through six of the seven listed. I generally choose to spend longer on projects than most students prefer because an important aspect of this class is refining both idea and technique. That takes time.

**PROJECT INDEX**

- 01** GETTING UP & RUNNING: A technical exercise to master exposure and color fundamentals.
- 02** REPHOTOGRAPHY: Looking for details, advanced image editing, fine printing.
- 03** PROBLEM SOLVING: Working in the studio, staging an idea, lighting, advanced image editing, fine printing.
- 04** POETIC NARRATIVES: Deriving meaning from editing and relationships, advanced image editing, fine printing.
- 05** TALKING BACK & THE SINGULAR IMAGE: making a visual response to an existing image, image editing, fine printing.
- 06** THE WILDCARD: a creative exercise
- 07** SEE: a self-published magazine, usually from the POETIC NARRATIVES project

During the semester we will have a series of weekly demonstrations and exercises which will introduce you to a number of advanced production techniques. Some will be more formal than others and many will often arise from a spontaneous question. Some of the topics we will cover are:

- Advanced use of curves
- Advanced use of masks
- Advanced use of hue/saturation layers
- Advanced selection techniques
- Layer blending modes for image interpretation
- The use of RAW format image files
- Color calibration and management
- Advanced sharpening techniques
- Studio lighting techniques
- Custom printing papers and configurations
- File management practices
- Photo stitching software
- The use of HDR processing

If there's something you want to learn that's not on this list, please ask.