

CDES 206: Introduction to Photo Communication and Digital Imaging

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

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

WEB SITE http://byronwolfe.typepad.com/cdes_photography/
LECTURE TIME Mondays, 4:00-5:50, Tehama 106
MIDTERM EXAM Monday, March 12, 4:00-5:50, Holt 170
FINAL EXAM Monday, May 14, 6:00-7:50, Holt 170

BYRON WOLFE Instructor for the lecture and Wednesday lab
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OFFICE HOURS Tuesday 1 - 2 and 4 - 5 PM
 Wednesday 3 - 4 PM
 Thursday 2 - 3 PM

RON DEJESUS Instructor for the Tuesday lab sections
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OFFICE HOURS Monday, 10:00 - 11:50

JOHN GRANT Instructor for the Thursday lab section
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OFFICE HOURS Tuesday / Thursday, 9:30 - 10:30 and by appointment

We are in the midst of a major revolution in how we conceive of and represent our visual world. The tools that are available to us as photographers change quite literally week by week and it has never been easier to make *technically* successful pictures. With that in mind, this class is an introduction to the fundamental vocabulary and techniques of digital photography with an emphasis on developing your **skills of perception** and your **visual competence** in the creation and consumption of lens-based imagery. This will require you to quickly master the basics of camera use and techniques. In addition to the creation of original photographic imagery, you will explore the basics of digital production techniques and practices for both color and black and white photographs that will be viewed as exhibition quality prints and on-screen imagery. Perhaps most importantly, you will explore the complex relationship between composition, technical execution, and visual ideas that communicate with intent.

While these course objectives look to the future, there's much to be learned from the past. Therefore we will look at and discuss a wide selection of photographs since photography's inception over 160 years ago and consider the broad and powerful impact of the most widely seen and used form of visual representation yet invented.

This class has been classified and listed as a "Sustainability Class." It isn't. We consume energy that we do not replenish. We use equipment and supplies that require rare and precious resources. The electronics we use are harmful to us and to others when manufactured and discarded. We make things, prints primarily, that consume materials which aren't sustainably produced.

Like you, we are interested in working towards a sustainable way of life. To that end, we are conducting an ongoing audit of energy and material consumption to find out exactly what we do use in this class. With tangible information, we can make more informed choices about what we should and shouldn't be doing. We can even apply pressure on the companies that make the things we use. During the course of the semester, we may experiment with a variety of materials and approaches that might move us to a more sustainable practice. I'll talk about many of these issues more fully throughout the semester, but if you ever have any ideas that can help make this class sustainable while maintaining a rich and rewarding educational experience, please let us know.

Attendance

“f–8 and be there,” attributed to [Weegee](#)

Your attendance and active participation in class is a basic expectation for adequate performance in both the lecture and lab. Your success in this course will be directly proportional to the effort and energy you put forth.

Attendance records will be kept in the lab sections and used as part of your lab evaluation. **A late arrival in the lab will be automatically considered an absence. More than four unexcused absences in the lab can constitute an automatic failure.** 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 your instructor and your classmates) and unrealistic to expect a personal re-presentation of material to every student who is late or absent.

In addition to attending every lecture and working for the full time period in every lab, you should spend a minimum of three hours outside of class (on average) to adequately complete your projects.

Grading

You may access your grades online at any time during the semester. This course uses the standard University grading scales found on page four of [this document](#).

The lecture portion of this course accounts for 40% of your overall grade with 60% based on your laboratory work. A more specific breakdown is as follows:

FINAL GRADE = (LECTURE GRADE x .4) + (LAB GRADE x .6)

lecture	QUIZZES & LECTURE ASSIGNMENTS	10%
	MIDTERM EXAM	15%
	FINAL CUMULATIVE EXAM	15%
.....		
lab	ATTENDANCE & EXERCISES	10%
	PROJECTS & CONTACT CRITIQUES	50%
.....		
		TOTAL = 100%

Other important grading items:

Late work will not be accepted **without explicit prior approval from your instructor.**

Failure to take the final exam can constitute an automatic “F” in the class.

Extra credit

There are adequate opportunities for success in this class. It is extraordinarily rare for us to offer extra credit as a last-minute means to bolster sagging grades. **If at any time you are concerned about your performance in the course, please talk to your instructor.**

COURSE SUPPLIES

We 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! Today your course fees cover *all* printing expenses for the entire semester. 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.

You will need to supply your own digital camera for the duration of the semester (sorry, digital video cameras aren't appropriate for this course). The camera must have a minimum resolution of 5 megapixels and have manually adjustable shutter speed 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 for the camera AND at least one gigabyte of portable storage (such as a "USB thumbdrive" or a portable firewire drive).

Required

Itemized list of required supplies:

- 8 megapixel (minimum) digital camera with manual aperture and shutter controls
- An additional digital camera storage card (one gig minimum)
- At least one gigabyte (minimum) of portable memory storage (USB or Firewire)
- At least five blank recordable CD-R or DVD discs
- A Sharpie style pen for labeling discs

The required text is *A Short Course in Digital Photography, 2/E*, London & Stone.

Please consult the [FAQs](#) for more specific camera information and recommendations.

Though not required, you might find the following resources to be especially helpful during the semester.

Recommended

Itemized list of recommended supplies:

- A relatively new computer with high speed internet access (DSL or cable modem).
- Access to a printer to print this and other course documents.
- A computer with Adobe Photoshop CS4 or CS5 (check the bookstore for best pricing).
- One three-ring binder with pockets.
- A basic camera cleaning kit or a [mini lens pen](#).

SUPPLIES contd

STRUCTURE & CONTENT

Lecture

The lecture is where you will be introduced to basic concepts and photographic techniques and you'll be exposed to a wide range of photographic imagery. You will be assigned weekly tasks that you are expected to complete during the week they are assigned. Readings will come from the assigned text, works placed on electronic reserve at the library, and web sites provided through the course web page. The course content is dynamic by necessity and design and learning modules sometimes change. I will notify you of changes in lecture and on the [course web site](#) but you should consult the web-based [schedule](#) on a regular basis.

You will have a midterm and cumulative final exam, plus a number of scheduled and unscheduled quizzes and in-class assignments. Regular attendance in the lecture is expected. **Missed quizzes, assignments, and exams can't be made up without prior arrangements.**

Lab

The lab is the "hands-on" portion of the class where you engage in the creation and production of imagery. You will encounter more thorough demonstrations of techniques that will always be reinforced with practice exercises. The techniques demonstrated in lab are intended to be applied directly toward your photography projects. The lab is also the setting where you will have extensive editing and critique sessions. Achieving visual competence demands that you think about and discuss pictures and the lab is where this takes place.

LAB USE

The computers in the Plumas 002 lab are reserved for your exclusive use during the scheduled class periods and are available on a first-come, first-serve basis during class and any open lab times. The Plumas digital photo lab is truly “state of the art” with completely new equipment this semester. 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.