

**AUF***The American  
University of Florence***SYLLABUS**Rev. 8  
April 2025  
Academic AffairsFormat revised 2025  
Syllabus reviewed in 2025

Florence University of the Arts (FUA) is an academic institution for study abroad in Florence, Italy. FUA collaborates with The American University of Florence (AUF), an international university offering US-style undergraduate and graduate degrees, in a cooperation to offer study abroad programs with a diverse breadth and depth of academic curriculum.

FUA study abroad programs may include AUF offerings, which are US-aligned in terms of higher education standards as per the university's institutional structure. Common courses offered by FUA and AUF have been jointly selected by both institutions as eligible for mutual recognition and delivery. As such, equal academic standards, credibility, and outcomes are vetted by the Academic Offices of the institutions for all courses and syllabi offered in the study abroad program.

**SCHOOL OF DIGITAL IMAGING AND VISUAL ARTS**  
**DEPARTMENT OF PHOTOGRAPHY**  
**COURSE TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY**  
**COURSE CODE: DIPHD180**  
**3 Semester Credits**

**1. DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces contemporary technologies for producing photographic images. Approaching the medium in its current complex and pluralistic state, students explore a variety of photographic concepts and techniques. The fundamentals of using a digital camera including manual exposure and lighting are stressed. The course also introduces seeing, thinking, and creating with a critical mind and eye in a foreign environment (Italy) to provide understanding of the construction and manipulation of photographic form and meaning. During the first half of the course assignments, lectures, readings progressively build on each other to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of camera functions (manual mode) and processing techniques. The second half of the course will focus on weaving the techniques with specific photographic concepts via assignments.

NOTE: This course is for beginners. The first half of the course will be devoted to understanding camera functions. During this period, assignments will emphasize basic camera functions in manual mode.

**2. OBJECTIVES**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Understand how the following elements and technique's function: F-stop; shutter speeds; ISO (gain); types of lenses; formal rules of composition.
- Demonstrate self-confidence working with people in the street.
- Display basic history of photography knowledge.
- Display knowledge of genre types of photography.
- Set up lab station correctly.
- Use basic Lightroom and Photoshop.
- Make, edit and process images (intro level).
- Collaborate and critique with peers as active participants in public dialogue and discourse.
- Acquire and develop intellectual, technical and analytical skills to make photographs that communicate.
- Display understanding of what makes a good photograph in terms of technical quality, light, composition and storytelling.
- Demonstrate effective problem-solving skills.
- File formats.

**3. REQUIREMENTS**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

#### 4. METHOD

This course consists of lectures, class discussions, projects, and interaction with the local community. Mediums for instruction used will include, but are not limited to, interactive and hands-on activities which challenge thought processes, integrate relevant academic sources, may include multimedia references, propose creative problem-solving, and other appropriate forms of delivery as deemed appropriate to the course's purpose.

#### 5. TEXTBOOK – FURTHER READINGS – RESOURCES

TEXTBOOK (Copy available at the university library):

- Foltz, James, Ronald P. Lovell and Fred Zwahlen. *Handbook of Photography* (sixth edition). Thompson Delmar Learning, 2005.

The textbook is mandatory for course participation and completion. Where applicable additional materials may be provided by the instructor.

#### FURTHER READINGS

- Ang, Tom. *Fundamentals of Photography*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2008.
- Freeman, Michael. *The Complete Guide to Digital Photography*. Silver Pixell Press, 2001.
- Modrak, Rebekah. *Reframing Photography*. Routledge, 2011.
- Webb, Alex, Rebecca Norris Webb and Teju Cole, *Street Photography and the Poetic Image: The Photography Workshop Series*. Aperture Press, 2014.

#### LIBRARY

Course participants may access the campus library. Please consult the library site for resources such as collections, borrowing, scanning and wifi connection, and research: <https://www.auf-florence.org/Library/the-library/>

#### 6. COURSE MATERIALS

No additional course materials are necessary.

#### 7. COURSE FEES

Course fees cover course-related field learning activities, visits, and support the instructor's teaching methodologies. Book costs are not included in the course fee. If this course requires a fee, the exact amount is communicated prior to enrollment.

In addition, students may be required to leave a **deposit** for equipment loaned to them during the session. The deposit will be returned at the end of the course, provided the equipment has been returned in the same condition it was loaned.

#### 8. GRADING AND EVALUATION & ATTENDANCE

10% Attendance  
10% Participation  
20% Assignments  
15% Midterm Assessment  
25% Final Portfolio and Paper  
20% Final Exam

The above grade breakdown percentages reflect the grading scale standards in the "Grading and Evaluation System" section of the catalog.

## Attendance

Class participation is mandatory. Based on the hours defined in the Academic Catalog's attendance policy, students may miss up to 2 class encounters delivered as lecture hours. A third absence constitutes a course failure.

Please note that absence hours may vary according to the learning methodology, as per the academic catalog policy on credit hours: [https://catalog.auf-florence.org/standard\\_regulation](https://catalog.auf-florence.org/standard_regulation)

## 9. EXAMS / PROJECTS / ASSIGNMENTS

**Midterm Assessment:** The midterm assessment accounts for 15% of the final course grade. It consists of an online submission including definitions, short-answer and open-ended questions.

**Final Exam:** The final exam accounts for 20% of the final course grade. It consists of an in-class test comprising short-answer and essay-long questions.

**Final Portfolio:** The final portfolio accounts 25% of the final course grade. Students will be assessed based on technique, composition, concept, and context. Specific details will be provided by the instructor at the beginning of the course.

**Assignments:** This course requires at least 3 assignments as per the course outline in the syllabus. Further details are provided in the course portal.

## 10. COURSE OUTLINE

| Lesson 1             |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Meet                 | In class  |
| Lecture              | Course presentation. Technical history of photography.<br><br><i>NOTE 1: Bring your camera manual for next class. If you do not have your manual, you will be able to find a pdf version online. Also, always bring your camera to class, charged, and ready.</i><br><i>NOTE 2: Please consider purchasing a storage device so that you may take home your images on the last day of class. The school is not responsible for mailing any form of the work you produce in class to you.</i> |
| Objectives           | By the end of this class students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Display knowledge of how a camera works (History/Camera Evolution)</li><li>- Set up workstation and folders as per instructed</li></ul>  |
| Readings/Assignments | Read: <i>Handbook of Photography</i> , Recording Motion pp 31-47.<br>Read: <i>The Digital Zone System</i> pp. 95-99, pp 150-182, pp. 187-188 (pp. may vary from eBook edition to hardcopy edition, please check with your instructor).  |

| Lesson 2   |  |
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| Meet       | In class   |
| Lecture    | Manual mode camera settings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Color space, customizing your DSLR</li><li>- File format used for class, jpeg, RAW, DNG</li><li>- Manual mode in camera light meter</li><li>- Aperture: control light intensity</li><li>- Shutter speed: controlling exposure length</li><li>- ISO: controlling gain (or film speed)</li></ul> Reciprocity: how f-stop, shutter and ISO work together |
| Objectives | By the end of this class students will be able to:   |

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|                                  | - Use manual mode camera settings effectively  |
| <b>Readings/<br/>Assignments</b> | Read: <i>Handbook of Photography</i> , re-read: Adjusting Exposure pp 31-35 & pp 296 – 303.<br>Assignment #1 assigned, due by next class meet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manual Mode Test: For the next several assignments you will have to know how to properly set your camera to achieve a <i>normal (N) exposure</i>.</li> <li>• Set your camera to manual mode and properly expose (N) 40 images (short) 100 images in (semester).</li> </ul> |

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| <b>Lesson 3</b>                  |   |
| <b>Meet</b>                      | In class  |
| <b>Lecture</b>                   | Exposure (Reciprocity) Lesson 1: EV & Shutter   |
| <b>Objectives</b>                | By the end of this class students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set up Lightroom (LR) and first workflow (importing and tagging).</li> </ul> Apply Exposure Values <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Display knowledge of shutter speed</li> </ul> |
| <b>Readings/<br/>Assignments</b> | Read: <i>Handbook of Photography</i> , Recording Motion pp.35-36.   |

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| <b>Lesson 4</b>                  |   |
| <b>Meet</b>                      | In class  |
| <b>Lecture</b>                   | Exposure (Reciprocity) Lesson 2: EV & Aperture<br>Light Room: setting up your personal catalogue, editing using attributes (color and star ratings).  |
| <b>Objectives</b>                | By the end of this class students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand the correlation between f-stop, shutter and ISO</li> <li>- Use Exposure Values chart</li> <li>- LR: setting up your personal catalogue, editing using attributes (color and star ratings)</li> </ul>         |
| <b>Readings/<br/>Assignments</b> | Read: Grimm, Tom and Michele Grimm. <i>The Basic Book of Photography</i> . Pp. 81-87.<br>Assignment #2 assigned, due by next class meet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return with at least 6 “good” images out of 20 shots, showing a shallow depth of field.</li> </ul> <b>FINAL PROJECT OVERVIEW.</b> |

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| <b>Lesson 5</b>                  |  |
| <b>Meet</b>                      | In class   |
| <b>Lecture</b>                   | Exposure (Reciprocity) Lesson 3: EV & ISO  |
| <b>Objectives</b>                | By the end of this class students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Add drama to their images by controlling the intensity of highlights and shadows</li> <li>- Open an image from LR to PS</li> <li>- PS: basic processing 1 (development) using adjust layer curves</li> </ul> |
| <b>Readings/<br/>Assignments</b> | Read: <i>Handbook of Photography</i> (recap) pp 31-pp 47.<br><b>MIDTERM ASSESSMENT ASSIGNED, due prior to next class meet.</b>   |

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| <b>Lesson 6</b> |  |
| <b>Meet</b>     | In class   |
| <b>Lecture</b>  | Principles of composition: thirds, halves, symmetry, dominant lines, |

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|                             | positive/negative space. LR basic processing.  |
| <b>Objectives</b>           | By the end of this class students will be able to:<br>- Use LR basic processing 2<br>- Apply knowledge of principles of composition to their photographs |
| <b>Readings/Assignments</b> | <i>Handbook of Photography</i> , Chapter 3.  |

| <b>Lesson 7</b>             |  |
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| <b>Meet</b>                 | In class   |
| <b>Lecture</b>              | Qualities of Light: Intensity, contrast, specularity, direction. Light Room: working with the mask brush. Discuss the work by influential street photographers (Henry Cartier Bresson, Garry Winograd, Bruce Gilden, Joel Meyerowitz). |
| <b>Objectives</b>           | By the end of this class students will be able to:<br>- Use LR: selective image exposure with mask brush<br>- Display knowledge of key street photographers  |
| <b>Readings/Assignments</b> | Read: <i>Handbook of Photography</i> , pp161-174.<br>Assignment #3 assigned, due by next lesson:<br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Street assignment: Between 6 and 8 “good” photographs out of 240 shots.</li> </ul>          |

| <b>Lesson 8</b>             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Meet</b>                 | In class  |
| <b>Lecture</b>              | Lens types, advantages and limitations of digital technologies. Light Room: noise, retouching, soft proof. Discussion on seeing portrait photography. The four key elements: face, pose, clothing, location, and props. Does a portrait image tell you more about the subject of the photograph or about the person who took the photography?<br>Discuss the work by influential portrait photographers (Richard Avedon, Mary Ellen Mark, Diane Arbus).<br>Digital Workflow for presenting your portfolio. We will discuss the proper method for presenting your portfolio in class and how to archive it in the university server.<br>Discuss the work by influential portrait photographers (Cindy Sherman, Nan Golden and others). |
| <b>Objectives</b>           | By the end of this class students will be able to:<br>- Use LR: noise, retouching, soft proof<br>- Display knowledge of key portrait photographers  |
| <b>Readings/Assignments</b> | Read: <i>Handbook of Photography</i> , pp.194-199.  |

| <b>Lesson 9</b>             |   |
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| <b>Meet</b>                 | In class  |
| <b>Lecture</b>              | The four elements of critique: technique, composition, concept, context.<br>Light Room: exporting your work to take home.                                       |
| <b>Objectives</b>           | By the end of this class students will be able to:<br>- Apply knowledge of critique to their own and others’ work<br>- Use LR: exporting your work to take home |
| <b>Readings/Assignments</b> | Read: Freeman, Michael. <i>The Complete Guide to Digital Photography</i> . Chapters 11-13.<br>FINAL PROJECT DUE   |

| <b>Lesson 10</b> |
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| <b>Meet</b>                      | In class   |
| <b>Lecture</b>                   | Work overview and critique.<br>NOTE: If there are less than 12 students enrolled in this class, the critique will take place on lesson 14. A substitute lesson will be assigned for this lesson. |
| <b>Objectives</b>                | By the end of this class students will be able to:<br>- Establish the progresses they have made so far and identify ways to further improve their photography skills                             |
| <b>Readings/<br/>Assignments</b> | Read: Freeman, Michael. <i>The Complete Guide to Digital Photography</i> . Chapters 14-16.<br>Final Project Presentation   |

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| <b>Lesson 11 Final Exam</b> |            |
| <b>Meet</b>                 | In class   |
| <b>Lecture</b>              | FINAL EXAM |