

 <b>FLORENCE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS</b> THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF FLORENCE	<b>SYLLABUS</b>	Academic Affairs
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## DIVA – DIGITAL IMAGING AND VISUAL ARTS

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### DEPARTMENT OF PHOTOGRAPHY; ENGLISH COMPOSITION AND CREATIVE WRITING

#### COURSE TITLE: TINY FLORENCE: PHOTOGRAPHY AND WRITING

#### COURSE CODE: DIPHTF150; LACWTF150

#### 3 Semester Credits

### 1. DESCRIPTION

This course delves into contemporary photographic practices and technologies. By examining the multi-layered nature of photography today, students will develop a strong foundation in both technical and conceptual aspects of the medium. Core camera skills, including manual exposure and working with available light, are emphasized alongside critical thinking and visual literacy. The course also integrates writing exercises to enhance students' ability to articulate their visual ideas, analyze the work of others, and engage in critical discourse. The first part of the course focuses on building technical camera proficiency through hands-on practice, lectures, and readings. Students will learn camera functions and image processing techniques. In the second half, these skills will be applied to explore diverse photographic concepts and approaches, towards a culminating project, *Tiny Florence*, challenges students to create images of the city and fostering creative intimate expression and public engagement. Through writing, students will develop their ability to connect their technical skills with their conceptual understanding and develop a more nuanced and sophisticated approach to photography.

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

This course includes experiential learning hours with our Community Engagement Member Institutions (CEMI). CEMI are dynamic learning environments created to foster learning through a structured interaction with the community. In addition to regular lecture hours, students will be involved in learning by doing through real projects and integration with the local population and territory in order to remove cultural and learning barriers as well as to develop a strong likelihood for success in life. The experiential learning hours are fully supervised by instructors who track students step by step during their learning experience, monitor and advise according to student needs, and support student initiative. This unique learning model allows students to benefit from an all-encompassing educational experience based on theory and practice in real enterprises, learning of comprehensive operational processes, problem-solving, leadership, and management.

### 2. OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Understand how the following elements and techniques 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.
- Develop the ability to articulate photographic vision and intentions.
- Engage in critical discourse about photography and its role in society.
- Enhance visual literacy and understanding of photographic composition, narrative, and meaning.

### 3. REQUIREMENTS

There are no prerequisites for this course.

### 4. METHOD

The method used will be experimental by means of Interactive lectures, workshops, on-site visits, direct interaction with subjects for assignments, participation in special projects, collective critiques, and magazine readings.

### 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 successful completion of the course.

Where applicable, additional materials, handouts and/or notes will 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.

### LIBRARIES IN FLORENCE

Please consult the posted schedules for official opening times of the university library. Also note that the library is for consultation only and it is not possible to borrow materials. The library is equipped with a scanner and internet access so that you may save or email a digital copy of the pages needed.

Students may also utilize additional libraries and research centers within the local community:

BIBLIOTECA PALAGIO DI PARTE GUELFA

Located in Piazzetta di Parte Guelfa between Piazza della Repubblica and Ponte Vecchio. Please consult

the library website for hours of operation:

[http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca\\_palagio\\_di\\_parte\\_guelfa/](http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca_palagio_di_parte_guelfa/)

#### BIBLIOTECA DELLE OBLATE

Located in via dell'Oriuolo 26. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:

[www.bibliotecadelleoblate.it](http://www.bibliotecadelleoblate.it)

#### THE HAROLD ACTON LIBRARY AT THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FLORENCE

Located in Lungarno Guicciardini 9. Please consult the library website for hours of operation. This library requires a fee-based student membership. For information: [www.britishinstitute.it/en](http://www.britishinstitute.it/en)

### 6. FIELD LEARNING

Please consult your Official Registration for any mandatory field learning dates. Field Learning Activities cited in Official Registrations are an integral part of the course and also include an assignment that counts towards your final grade, details will be provided on the first day of class.

### 7. COURSE MATERIALS

A DSLR camera and a lens with a focal length of 55mm or wider is required for this course.

Must have a manual setting: ability to set ISO, aperture, and shutter speed.

Should students wish to store materials or equipment, lockers are available with a **10 Euro** deposit (given back after returning the key).

### 8. 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. The exact amount will be communicated by the instructor on the first day of class.

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.

### 9. EVALUATION – GRADING SYSTEM

10% Attendance

10% Participation

10% Assignments

15% Midterm Exam, Field Learning Project (if applicable), Special/Research Project (if applicable). Inclusive of the exam and a selection of images and texts.

30% Final Project

25% Final Exam

A = 93-100 %, A- = 90-92%, B+= 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B-=80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C=73-76%, C- =70-72%, D = 60-69%, F= 0-59%, W = Official Withdrawal, W/F = Failure to withdraw by the designated date.

### 10. ATTENDANCE – PARTICIPATION

Academic integrity and mutual respect between instructor and student are central to the academic policy and reflected in the attendance regulations. Student presence is mandatory and counts toward the final grade.

**Absences** are based on academic hours: 1 absence equals 3 lecture hours.

Two absences: 6 lecture hours, attendance and participation grade will be impacted.

Three absences: 9 lecture hours, the final grade may be lowered by one letter grade.

Four absences: 12 lecture hours, constitutes automatic failure of the course regardless of when absences are incurred.

Please note:

- The above hours refer to lecture hours. Please note that the contact / credit hour policy in the academic catalog includes additional distribution ratios according to delivery category. Ex: 1 absence equals 6 FL/SL/Lab hours or 9 EL hours.
- Hours may be distributed in different formats according to the academic course schedules.

#### LATE ARRIVAL AND EARLY DEPARTURE

Arriving late or departing early from class is not acceptable. Two late arrivals or early departures or a combination will result in an unexcused absence. Travel is not an exceptional circumstance.

#### TRAVEL (OR DELAYS DUE TO TRAVEL) IS NEVER AN EXCUSE FOR ABSENCE FROM CLASS.

It is the student's responsibility to know how many absences are incurred. If in doubt, speak with your instructor!

**Participation:** Satisfactory participation will be the result of contributing to class discussions by putting forth insightful and constructive questions, comments and observations. Overall effort, cooperation during group work, proper care of work space and tools, responsible behavior, and completion of assignments will be assessed. All of the above criteria also apply to Field Learning and site visits.

## 11. EXAMS – PAPERS – PROJECTS

The **Midterm Exam** accounts for 15% and the **Final Exam** accounts for 25% of the final course grade. The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.

Format: short-answer and essay-long questions.

The **Final Project** accounts 30% of the final course grade. Students will be assessed based on technique, composition, concept, and context, and writing. The portfolio seeks to assess students' capacity to merge storytelling and visual composition. Chosen materials will be presented in the exhibition.

In fact, the core concept is to generate materials and curate a "Tiny Florence" exhibition, where you will present a collection of photographs that capture the essence of Florence, accompanied by creative written pieces. Students choose a specific theme or narrative that resonates with them. For each photo, students will write evocative texts that dialogue with the visual world and create a powerful creative exchange. Students may compose poems, short stories, or other creative texts that complement the visual narrative.

## 12. LESSONS

<b>Lesson 1</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class

<b>Lecture</b>	<p>Course presentation.</p> <p>“Tiny Florence” book project: The Dialogue of Visuals and Words.</p> <p><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. Always bring your camera to class, charged, and ready.</i></p> <p><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 work you produce in class to you.</i></p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>By the end of this class students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Display knowledge of how a camera works (History/Camera Evolution)</li> <li>- Identify the characteristics of “Tiny Florence” book project.</li> <li>- Appreciate the dialogue between writing and photography through relevant illustrations.</li> <li>- Set up workstation and folders as per instructed</li> </ul>
<b>Reading</b>	<p><i>Handbook of Photography</i>, Recording Motion pp 31-47.</p> <p><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).</p> <p>Excerpts from photography and writing books, e.g. <i>Kissing the Sky: Poetry and Photography</i> by C. Olsen (2014), <i>Jonathan Livingston Seagull</i> by R. Bach (1970).</p>

The following lessons may be alternated according to the schedule of the semester and class section:

<b>Lesson 2</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<p>Manual mode camera settings:</p> <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</li> <li>- 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> <li>- Reciprocity: how f-stop, shutter and ISO work together</li> </ul>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>By the end of this class students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use manual mode camera settings effectively</li> </ul>
<b>Assignments</b>	<p>Manual Mode Test</p> <p>For the next several assignments you will have to know how to properly set your camera to achieve a <i>normal (N) exposure</i>.</p> <p>Set your camera to manual mode and properly expose (N) 40 images (short) 100 images in (semester).</p>
<b>Reading</b>	<i>Handbook of Photography</i> , re-read: Adjusting Exposure pp 31-35 & pp 296 – 303.

<b>Lesson 3</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Writing Methods: From Critical to Creative.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>By the end of this class students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and apply different writing styles and techniques, such as descriptive, narrative, expository, and persuasive.</li> <li>- Experiment with lyric language and generate a story based on visual images.</li> <li>- Write effectively in different genres and formats, such as photo essays, artist statements, and blog posts.</li> <li>- Analyze and critique their own writing and make revisions to improve clarity, coherence, and impact.</li> </ul>
<b>Assignments</b>	Write a creative piece about a Florentine building, location, or feature. Engage in pre-writing research, utilizing methods learned in class and decide the type of language you want to adopt. You should experiment with lyric language as well.
<b>Reading</b>	Read: Dobińska, G. <i>A Photograph as Material for Analysis and as a Creative Act. Visual Methods in Social Studies - Reflections and Dilemmas</i> . Theories – Research – Applications 7(1). 2020.

<b>Lesson 4</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Exposure (Reciprocity) Lesson 1: EV & Shutter and EV & Aperture Light Room: setting up your personal catalogue, editing using attributes (color and star ratings).
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>By the end of this class students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Set up Lightroom (LR) and first workflow (importing and tagging). Apply Exposure Values</li> <li>- Display knowledge of shutter speed and aperture. {motion and depth of field}</li> <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>Assignments</b>	<p>Part A) Effects of shutter speeds: Starting with a shutter speed of 1/500 of a second and finishing with a shutter speed of 1 second make 10 “good” images out of 30 total shots.</p> <p>Part B) Return with at least 6 “good” images out of 20 shots, showing shallow depth of field and deep depth of field.</p>
<b>Reading</b>	<i>Handbook of Photography</i> , Recording Motion pp.35-36. Grimm, Tom and Michele Grimm. <i>The Basic Book of Photography</i> . Pp. 81-87.

<b>Lesson 5</b>	
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<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Visual analysis and written description.
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>By the end of this class students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and describe the key elements of a photograph (e.g., composition, light, subject matter).</li> <li>- Write a clear and concise description of a photograph.</li> <li>- Write in different persons, lenses.</li> <li>- Write as a tool for self-expression, creativity, and critical thinking.</li> </ul>
<b>Assignments</b>	Choose a photograph. Analyze it by identifying the key elements of composition, light, and subject matter. These fit together to convey emotion. Describe if the image is descriptive, illustrative, ambiguous, or socially charged.
<b>Reading</b>	<p>Read: <i>Writing About Photography</i>, Duke University.  <a href="https://twp.duke.edu/sites/twp.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/photography.original.pdf">https://twp.duke.edu/sites/twp.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/photography.original.pdf</a></p>

<b>Lesson 6</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	<p>Exposure (Reciprocity) Lesson 3:  Part A) EV &amp; ISO  Part B) Principles of composition: thirds, halves, symmetry, dominant lines, positive/negative space. LR basic processing.</p>
<b>Objectives</b>	<p>By the end of this class students will be able to:</p> <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> <li>- Use LR basic processing 2</li> <li>- Apply knowledge of principles of composition to their photographs</li> </ul>
<b>Assignments</b>	<p>Part A) Shadows  6 “good” images out of 240 shots.  Part B)  Composition  12 “good” images out of 240 (due next lesson).</p>
<b>Reading</b>	<p><i>Handbook of Photography</i> (recap) pp 31-pp 47.  <i>Handbook of Photography</i>, Chapter 3.</p>

<b>Lesson 7</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class

<b>Lecture</b>	Midterm Exam. Selection of images from assignments, accompanied by creative writing texts.
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<b>Lesson 8</b>	
<b>Lecture</b>	<b>Academic Break</b>

<b>Lesson 9</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Storytelling: Writing a coherent story and adding depth.
<b>Objectives</b>	By the end of this class students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Select a series of photographs that tell a coherent story.</li> <li>- Write a compelling narrative to accompany their photo essay.</li> <li>- Add figures of speech and terminology to enhance the quality of the story.</li> </ul>
<b>Assignments</b>	Students will select a theme or topic for their photo essay (e.g., a social theme, a favorite place, a personal journey). Students will choose a series of tiny photographs that relate to their chosen theme and tell a compelling story, and then write a narrative that accompanies their photographs, explaining the context, meaning, and significance of each image.
<b>Reading</b>	Balabanovic, Marko & Chu, Lonny & Wolff, Gregory. (2000). <i>Storytelling with digital photographs</i> .

<b>Lesson 10</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Contact Sheets – how to use a contact sheet to make a single image.
<b>Objectives</b>	By the end of this class students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Be able to pre-visualize the entire nature of a structure.</li> <li>- Be able to present a coherent narration of a single building as assessed under a variety of lenses.</li> </ul>
<b>Assignments</b>	Choose an iconic Florentine structure. <i>This can be a building, piazza, or an iconic view of the city.</i> Breaking down the image into parts, photograph each part in a cohesive orderly manner so as to create an image out of a single contact sheet. You will assemble your contact sheet in the next class.
<b>Reading</b>	<i>Handbook of Photography</i> , Chapter 16.

<b>Lesson 11</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Deepening and refining the narrative. Finding compelling patterns.



<b>Objectives</b>	By the end of this class students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify recurring themes, motifs, or symbols within their photo essays.</li> <li>- Analyze how these patterns contribute to the overall narrative of their work.</li> <li>- Refine <i>Tiny Florence</i> photo project by strengthening the connections between the images and the narrative.</li> </ul>
<b>Assignments</b>	Students will review their photo essays from the previous class and consider the overall story they are trying to tell. Look for recurring themes, motifs, or symbols that appear throughout their photo essays. These might include color schemes, compositional elements, or recurring objects or people. Analyze how these patterns contribute to the overall narrative of their work. Do they reinforce the theme? Do they create a sense of tension or resolution?
<b>Reading</b>	Anne Darling, 2014. <i>Storytelling with Photographs: How to Create A Photo Essay</i> . Pages 1-35

<b>Lesson 12</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Printing final images and refining writing.
<b>Objectives</b>	By the end of this class students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Use editing techniques to enhance the visual impact and storytelling potential of their photographs.</li> <li>- Refine writing components through editing and format in an appropriate and visually appealing style.</li> </ul>
<b>Assignments</b>	Light, shapes, shadows, lines, textures, angles, patterns.
<b>Reading</b>	Anne Darling, 2014. <i>Storytelling with Photographs: How to Create A Photo Essay</i> . Pages 36-68

<b>Lesson 13</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Composition: Words and Images.
<b>Objectives</b>	By the end of this class students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Establish the progresses they have made so far and identify ways to further improve their photography skills.</li> <li>- Place images in a visually sound and culturally relevant order/scheme.</li> </ul>
<b>Assignments</b>	Prepare your final portfolio. In-class: Students will also write a comprehensive explanation of your exhibition, outlining your curatorial vision, thematic focus, and the stories you aim to convey. This text will provide context for the viewer and help them appreciate the depth of your work.

<b>Reading</b>	Selection of successful projects by famous writers/photographers.
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<b>Lesson 14</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Work overview and critique. Finalization of the Exhibition.
<b>Objectives</b>	By the end of this class students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Present their own work in a comprehensive and compelling manner.</li> <li>- Present an exhibition rationale, theme, and narratives to an audience.</li> <li>- Curate an exhibition in a professional manner.</li> <li>- Understand the overall significance of the exchange between photography and writing.</li> </ul>
<b>Assignments</b>	Submit: Final Project

<b>Lesson 15</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Final Exam.