



AUF

The American  
University of Florence

## SYLLABUS

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Academic Affairs

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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: EXPLORATORY DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY**  
**COURSE CODE: DIPHEP410**  
**3 semester credits**

### 1. DESCRIPTION

Using specific exercises and readings students will confront/tackle daily problems of “making art.” Observations are drawn from personal experiences that relate more to the need of the “artist”. Students will be engaged in the production and critique of images. There will be discussions and readings for each class. Both will help the student to describe, interpret, evaluate, and to synthesize technical information in order to correlate theory with practice. The coursework is a preparation for the Solo Exhibit and Publication of Solo Work course. Exercises and assignments will culminate into a final project. This course that requires students to thoughtfully examine their work and strive to refine an artistic vision, vocabulary, and voice

This class includes experiential learning with CEMI.

Prerequisites: Advanced Digital Photography or equivalent.

### 2. OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Encourage creative and systematic investigation of formal and conceptual issues.
- Emphasize making photographic art as an ongoing process that involves the student in informed and critical decision making.
- Develop technical skills and become familiar with the functions of the visual elements.
- Become independent thinkers who will contribute inventively and critically to culture through the making of art photography

### 3. REQUIREMENTS

Advanced Digital Photography or equivalent. Unofficial transcript submission required.

A DSLR or viewfinder camera with 24+ megapixels (minimum) is required 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):

- David, Bayles. *Art and Fear*. Capra, 1993.

- Barrett, Terry. *Criticizing Photographs: An Introduction to Understanding Images*. McGraw-Hill, 2012.

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

## **FURTHER READINGS**

- Adam, Roberts. *Beauty in Photography*. Aperture Foundation, 1996.
- Bate, David. *Photography*. Bloomsbury, 2016.
- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida*. Vintage Books, 2000.
- Beaumont, Newhall. *The History of Photography*. Doubleday, 1964.
- Berger, John. *Understanding a Photograph*. Penguin Books, 2013.
- Calvino, Italo. *The Invisible Cities*. Vintage, 2002.
- Clarke, Graham. *The Photograph*. Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Freeman, Michael. *The Perfect Exposure: The Professional's Guide to Capturing the Perfect Digital Photographs*. Focal Press, 2009.
- Hirsch, Robert. *Exploring Color Photography*. Focal Press, 2015.
- Horenstein, Henry and Russel Hart. *Photography*. Prentice Hall, 2004.
- Johnson, Chris. *The Practical Zone System for Film and Digital Photography*. Focal Press, 2012.
- Mante, Harald. *The Photograph: Composition and Color Design 2nd Edition*. Rocky Nook, 2008.
- Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977.

## **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**

A DSLR camera and a lens with a focal length of 55mm or wider is required for this course. A digital 35mm viewfinder camera (20+ megapixels minimum) is also acceptable.

Some courses may require specific materials. Please refer to your enrollment information.

## **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 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 due on Lesson 6. The instructor will provide specific information on the content and format at due time.

**Final Exam:** The final exam accounts for 20% of your final course grade. The instructor will provide specific information on the content and format of the exam at due time.

The final exam is cumulative.

**Final Project:** The final paper topic is related to the final project. The instructor will provide more information at due time. Make sure your paper conforms to academic standards in terms of style and register. Your paper must include citations and quotations from scholarly books, journals, or articles. Ensure your paper is properly referenced and includes a bibliography. Word limit: 3000 words. Include a word count at the end of the paper (you may go 10% above or below the word limit).

**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 philosophy, objectives, requirements. Self-expression, Self-exploration. The difference between value statements and preferences. Value statements are much stronger and need to be defended. There is no need to defend preferences.
Objectives	Understand the core philosophy, objectives, and specific requirements of the course, and explain how these elements will guide their learning and participation. Be able to employ self-expression and self-exploration techniques to identify, describe, and reflect upon their personal beliefs and desires.
Readings/ Assignments	“In Plato’s Cave” in Sontag, Susan. <i>On Photography</i> . Penguin Books, 2002. Pp. 3-24. Preface of Danto, C. Arthur. <i>What Art Is</i> . Yale University Press, 2013.

Lesson 2	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Initial Project Formulation. Discussion: Creative seeing – engaging with and responding to the world around you. Notes: specific assignment given. Four-paragraph proposal due next class.
Objectives	Be able to synthesize initial concepts into a structured, executable project idea by identifying key themes, potential challenges, and necessary resources.

	Demonstrate "creative seeing" by actively engaging with and critically interpreting observations from their surrounding world as potential source material for their work.
<b>Readings/Assignments</b>	Bayles, David and Ted Orlando. <i>Art &amp; Fear. The Image Continuum</i> , 1993. Pp.1-22.

<b>Lesson 3</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Review each proposal for criteria and method. Discussion: view work by contemporary artists relevant to your next assignment. Monitor Calibration, Printing / Materials Equipment Project Visualization
<b>Objectives</b>	Be able to assess peer and self-generated project proposals against established criteria. Analyze and discuss the strategies and themes used by contemporary artists relevant to the current assignment.
<b>Readings/Assignments</b>	David, Bayles. <i>Art and Fear</i> . Capra, 1993. Pp.23-36. Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>“inner exposure” or “challenging your fears”. Have ready for lesson 5 six perfectly printed images. Your images should reflect your fears and confronting them. May sound trite but you have to know your fears and face them. This is an excellent point from which to begin developing a studio practice.</li> </ul>

<b>Lesson 4</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Discussion: Truth has the power, and therefore gives your work strength. In the world of PR, image-makers, shifting identities and media consultants people are trying to hide, cover up, and project a false image.
<b>Objectives</b>	Be able to critically evaluate the concept of "truth" within the context of creative practice. Analyze the tactics employed by PR professionals, image-makers, and media consultants to construct, hide, or project false or shifting identities, understanding the ethical and cultural implications of these practices.
<b>Readings/Assignments</b>	David, Bayles. <i>Art and Fear</i> . Capra, 1993. Pp.37-48. Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shock and Awe. In the creative world, stirring others out of their complacency can be a wonderful thing. The role of the creative is to disturb, question and unsettle. Have 3 to 6 images printed by lesson 6. Start to reconsider your 4-paragraph proposal. This is a chance for you to change or tweak your proposal using the criteria we have discussed up till now.</li> </ul> <b>FINAL PROJECT OVERVIEW.</b>

<b>Lesson 5</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Assignment 1 due.
<b>Objectives</b>	Analyze and articulate the strengths and areas for improvement in Assignment 1. Be able to conduct a systematic self-evaluation of their creative and technical

	progress to date. Be able to organize, select, and articulate the conceptual and technical rationale for their work in a professional manner.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	David, Bayles. <i>Art and Fear</i> . Capra, 1993. Pp.49-62. MIDTERM ASSESSMENT ASSIGNED, due prior to next class meet.

<b>Lesson 6</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Assignment 2 Critique. Preparation for Individual Critique and Midterm Progress / Evaluation. Bring to next class the work you have done so far for progress evaluation and project proposal.
<b>Objectives</b>	Analyze and articulate the strengths and areas for improvement in Assignment 2. Be able to conduct a systematic self-evaluation of their creative and technical progress to date. Be able to organize, select, and articulate the conceptual and technical rationale for their work in a professional manner.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	David, Bayles. <i>Art and Fear</i> . Capra, 1993. Pp.65-77. During the break read: David, Bayles. <i>Art and Fear</i> . Capra, 1993. Pp.79-118.

<b>Lesson 7</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Go over project costs, materials and timeline.  Discussion: abject. Project proposal and review in class. Go over project costs, materials and timeline. Types of techniques/tools to employ. Begin to write your critical essay to accompany your final project. Due Lesson 9.
<b>Objectives</b>	Be able to define and critically analyze the concept of the abject. Be able to review and confirm the viability of their project proposal.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Berger, John. <i>Understanding a Photograph</i> . Penguin Books, 2013. Pp. 3-34. Foster, Hal. <i>Bad New Days</i> . Verso, 2015. Chapter 1.

<b>Lesson 8</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Individual critique and progress evaluations.
<b>Objectives</b>	Be able to articulate the conceptual intent and technical challenges of their current work.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Berger, John. <i>Understanding a Photograph</i> . Penguin Books, 2013. Pp.35-48.

<b>Lesson 9</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Discussion: Tackling visual problems. First Draft Critique Essay due.
<b>Objectives</b>	Identify strategic solutions for complex visual problems encountered in their project development. Be able to translate the discussed visual problem-solving techniques into tangible actions.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Berger, John. <i>Understanding a Photograph</i> . Penguin Books, 2013. Pp.49-60. FINAL PROJECT DUE

<b>Lesson 10</b>	
<b>Meet</b>	In class
<b>Lecture</b>	Progress evaluation. Presenting your work in a professional manner. Conservation and preservation etiquette. Final Execution Materials
<b>Objectives</b>	Be able to systematically evaluate the status of their project against the established timeline and objectives. Select appropriate methods for the professional presentation of their creative work.
<b>Readings/ Assignments</b>	Berger, John. <i>Understanding a Photograph</i> . Penguin Books, 2013. Pp.61-98. Review all reading assigned so far in view of the final exam.

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