

INTRODUCTION TO DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

(MPPH-301/MPPH-501/NC0301-01)

Massachusetts College of Art & Design | Summer 2021 | Online: Tuesday/Thursday 6-10PM
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COURSE BLOG: <https://blogs.massart.edu/ramorrison/>

Course Description:

Students are introduced to the creative and technical possibilities of digital photography while exploring photographic history and current practices. They learn how to use a digital camera and computer imaging software to create photographs using RAW file formats. Topics covered include camera operations (aperture, shutter speed, ISO, focal length) as well as photographic concerns such as lighting and composition. Assignments target the weekly lesson and aim to push students' creativity by applying the tools learned. Our goal is to discover new ways of looking at the world by heightening our awareness of the subtleties of light and color, as well as the formal, and narrative, potential of photographs to tell stories and evoke emotion.

Course Structure:

Class meetings will take the form of **classroom lectures** / **technical demonstrations** (relating to the camera and Adobe post-production software) / **lab/work sessions** /and **critiques**. Assignments involve shooting with the DSLR, with each week focusing on a particular technical or conceptual photographic premise. Lecture slideshows will present relevant work from the history and contemporary canon of photographic art. Labs sessions (conducted via Zoom one-on-one and in small groups) will focus on processing and exporting of images using a standardized workflow. Critiques will be conducted with onscreen images, due via Google Drive 24 hours before each critique session. The course will culminate in a final project of 10-15 images, focusing on a subject of each student's choice.

Required Equipment

- DSLR or Mirrorless camera with full manual exposure control and RAW format capa
- Minimum 16GB memory card for storing images in-camera.
- External HD (minimum 500GB, 1TB+ suggested) for course image files.

Course Objectives/Goals:

- Gain technical proficiency in DSLR photography, using manual camera settings and the RAW image format.
- Develop digital post-production skills using Adobe Bridge, Camera RAW, Lightroom, and Photoshop.
- Experiment with formal and conceptual invention
- Develop a technical and conceptual photographic language
- Use the works of others as resources and inspiration
- Use external critique for self-evaluation
- Develop the ability to critique peers' work and to speak thoughtfully about the work of others

Course Grading:

60% 5 Project Assignments [***4 final images each**] (*DoF, Motion, Color I, PoV, Color II*)*
20% Final Project
20% Class Participation

SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Class 1: 6/8/21: INTRODUCTIONS

- Lecture:** Introductions, group review of syllabus, the path of light, manual exposure, Aperture/shutter speed/ISO, intro to the histogram, focus on lenses (focal length, zoom vs. prime, fast vs. slow). Suggestions for purchasing external HD for the course. A deliberate approach: “Making images” rather than “taking pictures.”
- Demo/Lab:** Introduction to DSLR settings, RAW capture, RAW format, focus.
- Assignment:** **Shoot 40-100 images in RAW format using manual settings, comprised of subjects of your choice. Have images ready for offload at start of 6/10 meeting.**

Class 2: 6/10/21: DEPTH OF FIELD, INTRO TO POST-PRODUCTION

- Q&A from week 1 shooting, Review and expansion of Metering,
*Histogram, ISO/Aperture/Shutter Speed**
- Lecture:** **Depth of Field: definition, usage, examples in both an historical and a contemporary context.**
- Demo/Lab:** Introduction to basic digital workflow. Formatting hard drives. Image offload, Basic introduction to Adobe Bridge, Camera RAW, Lightroom, and Photoshop workflow (Interface and tools overview). Create Lightroom Catalog.
- Assignment:** **Shoot 100 images in RAW format using manual settings: 50 using minimal DoF and 50 using maximum DoF. Have images ready for offload at start of our 6/15 meeting (we’ll meet as a group to start, and you’ll sign up then for 1:1 lab time.)**

Class 3: 6/15/21: RAW POST-PRODUCTION CONTINUED

- Demo/Lab:** **Group:** RAW processing expanded. Begin processing of DoF Assignment in Adobe Lightroom // **Individual** assistance with camera functions and post-production.
- 1:1 sessions:** Sorting, editing, and processing of DoF Assignment in Adobe Bridge and Lightroom.

Class 4: 6/17/21: DIGITAL 1:1 LAB SESSION (DoF) / MOTION LECTURE

Demo/Lab: **1:1 sessions**: Continued sorting, editing, and processing of DoF and Motion Assignments in Adobe Bridge and Lightroom.

Lecture: **Motion: the focal plane shutter, freezing motion, creative use of motion, challenging the definition of a photograph's "success." (Group)**

Assignment: Shoot for next class: approximately 100 images in RAW format using manual settings, in some combination of the following, covering all four approaches:

- Images that freeze motion
- Images that render motion creatively
- Images that involve motion of the camera
- Images that involve motion of the subject

Class 5: 6/22/21: TECH DEMO / DIGITAL 1:1 LAB SESSIONS (Motion)

Demo (Group): Lightroom expanded. Exporting JPEG files in preparation for Critique 1 / Uploading to Google Drive. Exporting JPEG files, preparation for Critique 1.

Lab: **1:1 sessions**: Work on sorting, editing, and processing of Motion Assignment in Adobe Bridge and Lightroom. Finalize both DoF and Motion images (4 final selects for each assignment).

Assignment: Export 8 final jpeg images (4 DoF / 4 Motion) and upload to Google Drive (in the appropriate assignment folder) by 5pm on Thursday, 6/24.

Class 6: 6/24/21: CRITIQUE 1 (DoF/Motion) / COLOR 1 LAB

Critique 1: **DoF and Motion**

Lecture: **Color I: The color of light: color temperature, basic photographic color theory.**

Assignment: 2.) Shoot for next class: 50-100 images of a single subject in at least four (more if possible) different lighting / color temperature environments. These can include:

- tungsten (incandescent) or Warm LED lighting
- midday sun
- "golden hour"
- open shade
- cloudy day
- non-continuous spectrum emitters (fluorescents, street lamps, etc.), as discussed in class.

Class 7: 6/29/21: CRITIQUE 1 (DoF/Motion) / COLOR 1 LAB

Demo (Group): Lightroom expanded: HSL Tab, Local Tools, Color Grading.

Lab: **1:1 sessions**: Work on sorting, editing, and processing of Color I Assignment in Adobe Bridge and Lightroom.

Assignment: 1.) Continue processing Color I Assignment.
2.) Export 4 final jpeg images (Color I Assignment) and upload to Google Drive (in the appropriate assignment folder) by 5pm on Thursday, 7/1.

Class 8: 7/1/21: COLOR I CRITIQUE / PoV

Critique 2: *Color I*

Lecture: **PoV: Point of View**

Assignment: 1.) Shoot 60 images in RAW format: minimum of 30 images of a single *object*, Each from a different point of view, and a minimum of 30 images of a single *subject*, each from a different point of view. Have images offloaded and ready to process in Lightroom during out one-on-one lab sessions next week
**Remember: you will convert these images to B&W in Lightroom during our one-on-one lab sessions next week.*
2.) Watch pre-recorded demo:
[Virtual Copies and Black & White conversions in Lightroom.](#)

Class 9: 7/6/21: PoV LAB: VIRTUAL COPIES, and BLACK & WHITE CONVERSIONS

Demo (Group): Virtual Copies, B&W Conversions

Lab: **1:1 sessions**: Work on sorting, editing, and processing of PoV Assignment in Lightroom.

Assignment: 1.) Continue processing PoV images in B&W using virtual copies and B&W Conversion processs in Lightroom.
2.) Export 4 final jpeg images (PoV) and upload to Google Drive (in the appropriate assignment folder) by 5pm on Thursday, 7/8.

Class 10: 7/8/21: PoV CRITIQUE | LECTURE: COLOR II: ADVANCED COLOR THEORY AND EXPRESSIVE USE OF COLOR

Critique 3: *PoV (ONSCREEN – B&W)*

Lecture: **Josef Albers on Color / Expressive Color & The Limited Palette**
Topics Covered: Color relativity and perception, Pre-visualizing color: psychological impact and metaphor, “The Limited Palette” (streamlining), Discussion of color from other visual mediums including film and painting.

Assignment: Choose an artist of any medium (from the Expressive Color handout or on your own with instructor’s approval). Shoot a minimum of 50 images using a similar limited palette (and, if desired, a similar overall approach). Have RAW images ready to work with for next week’s individual lab sessions.

Class 11: 7/13/21: EXPRESSIVE COLOR LAB

Demo (Group): Advanced Color Processing / LR<>PS Workflow.

Lab: **1:1 sessions**: Work on sorting, editing, and processing of PoV Assignment in Lightroom.

Assignment: 1.) Continue processing Color 2 images in Lightroom.
2.) Export 4 final jpeg images (Color 2) and upload to Google Drive (in the appropriate assignment folder) by 5pm on Thursday, 7/15.

Class 12: 7/15/21: EXPRESSIVE COLOR LAB 2 / DISCUSSION OF THE FINAL PROJECT

Critique 4: *Expressive Color*

Lecture: *The Photographer's Project (viewing of historical, contemporary, and student projects as inspiration for your own final projects).*

Assignment: 1.) Draft a final project proposal for feedback/discussion. Email to ramorrison@massart.edu by 5pm on Sunday 7/18.

Class 13: 7/20/21: FINAL PROJECTS WORK SESSION

One-on-one sessions only, no group Zoom meeting:

Individual Work sessions re: final projects [additional out-of-class time offered by sign-up]

Assignment: Shooting/processing final project / Upload Final Images to Google Drive by 3pm on Thursday 7/22.

Class 14: 7/22/21: FINAL CRITIQUE

Critique 5: FINAL

COURSE AND SCHOOL-WIDE POLICIES

Classroom Policies

In addition to their physical presence, students are expected to be engaged and actively participate in all class sessions. Use of cell phones is strictly prohibited in class. If a personal situation or emergency will require you to check your cell phone during class meetings, you must let the instructor know prior to the start of class.

Course Attendance

During the first week of classes, faculty members state clearly their expectations for performance and attendance, their method of recording attendance, and their expectations for makeup work and examinations.

All students must attend the first day of classes for which they are registered to reserve a place in the course. If a student cannot attend because of illness or other emergency, they must email faculty before the first class meeting to inform the faculty member of their absence. The instructor may drop a student who misses the first meeting of a class without notice from the roster.

Students are expected to attend all classes. Faculty have the right to assign an “F” or “NC” grade to a student who attends less than 80 percent of the meetings of a course.

There are no formally excused absences for any reason, including illness. However, a student who will miss one or two classes may be able to make up missed work, at the discretion of each instructor. If a student will miss one or two classes due to illness, he or she should notify all current faculty members by e-mail. For absences of two or more class meetings due to illness, the student may contact the director of counseling to request a leave of absence.

Students with Disabilities

Massachusetts College of Art and Design is committed to fostering the academic, personal, and professional growth of our students. We are especially committed to ensuring that students with documented disabilities, as defined under the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), are provided equal access to all campus resources and opportunities. If you believe you have a disability that may warrant accommodations, I urge you to contact the Associate Dean of the Academic Resource Center (617-879-7280) Tower 811. The Academic Resource Center provides academic support to all matriculated MassArt students through access to academic advisors, academic coaches, professional writing and subject tutors, and training on assistive technology.

Grading System

Two grading systems are used at the college:

Letter grades (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, D, F, Incomplete) are given in the following courses: Liberal Arts, Art Education, Fashion Design, Graphic Design, Industrial Design, Animation, Illustration, Architectural Design and History of Art

Pass/No Credit/ Incomplete grades are given in the following courses:

First year studio courses (Studio Foundation – SFDN), Film/Video, Photography, Studio for Interrelated Media, Fine Arts 2D – Painting, Printmaking, Fine Arts 3D – Ceramics, Fibers, Glass, Jewelry/Metalsmithing, Sculpture

Grades are defined as follows:

A	Exceptional work in all respects.
B	Above average work, distinguished in certain but not all respects.
C	Average
D	Below average work. This is the lowest passing grade; individual departments may set standards for the application of “D” grades toward progress in the major.
F	Failing work. No credit is given.
Pass	Work meeting all expectations for successful completion of the course.
NC	No Credit. Work that does not meet the expectations of the course.
Inc.	Incomplete. A temporary designation assigned when the student cannot, for reasons beyond his/her control, complete the course obligations by the end of the semester. Careful consideration must be given by the faculty to allow one student more time than all other students in a course to complete the required work. The remaining work must be completed within four weeks of the beginning of the following semester with a grade submitted by the faculty member or the incomplete converts to an “F” or “NC”.
W	Withdrawn from the course. No credit earned. W grades do not appear on the student’s transcript.

Plagiarism

In creative work, plagiarism is the inappropriate and unethical representation of another’s work as one’s own. In those instances where a significant portion of a creative work is intentionally “appropriated,” plagiarism is the failure to note, orally or in writing, the source of the appropriation. In expository or academic writing, whenever your work incorporates someone else’s research, images, words, or ideas, you must properly identify the source unless you can reasonably expect knowledgeable people to recognize it. Proper citation gives credit where it is due and enables your readers to locate sources and pursue line of inquiry raised by your paper. Students who do not comply may be penalized.