



ART 489, Independent Study: Portfolio

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2025

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Leigh Merrill, Professor of Art

Office Location: Wathena Fine Art Building, Room 223

Office Hours: 10:00 – 10:50am T&R (and by appointment via zoom)

University Email Address: leigh.merrill@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: email

Communication Response Time: 24 – 48 hours during weekdays

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

There is no mandatory text. Supplementary readings may be assigned throughout the semester

Course Description

This independent study will focus on building a photography portfolio to extend the student's current practice and area of interest. The independent study is designed for advanced students who have a special area of focus that does not necessarily align with an assignment driven photograph course

Student Learning Outcomes

At the conclusion of this course students should be able to demonstrate the following:

- A portfolio demonstrating proficiencies and craftsmanship in a specific area of interest.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Students should be familiar with ETAMU's d2L Brightspace learning management system.

Instructional Methods

This course will consist of a bi-monthly meetings to discuss the students progress. During the first week of class the student and professor will determine a bi-weekly meeting schedule. During the first 6 meetings, work in progress will be discussed, critiqued, and evaluated. During the final meeting, the final portfolio will be reviewed and discussed.

Projects:

Portfolio Work

Students will create photography toward a specific professional direction. Students will present a proposal at the beginning of the semester and create well-crafted, conceptual-strong photographs for their portfolio.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Active class participation is critical to your success in this course. **This course will meet face-to-face but will utilize ETAMU's d2L Brightspace to share information about the course and for students to submit assignments.** Grades will be posted to d2L. Students should regularly log into D2L for this course.

The ability to work independently will be critical to success in this course.

GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%. B = 80%-89%. C = 70%-79%. D = 60%-69%. F = 59% or Below

Assessments

Progress Meetings: 50%

Final Portfolio: 50%

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TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Interaction with Instructor Statement

Interaction with Instructor Statement:

Please contact me through email.

Email: leigh.merrill@etamu.edu

Office Hours: 10:00 – 10:50 am T&R (and by appointment)

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Attendance:

Attendance is required and is recorded at all class meetings.

Arriving to class 15 minutes late or leaving early may result in an absence. Being more than 10 minutes late on a critique day will result a late grade for the project being critiqued. Please note that working in the print lab while critique is being held in the computer lab will result in both an absence and a late grade.

A total of 4 absences from any class meetings will result in a one-letter grade reduction and may result in a failing grade ("F") for the course. Excused absences are listed under Class Attendance (A13.02) in the A&M-Commerce Procedures. Verifiable excuses for absences must be turned in to the instructor.

Due Dates: All assignments, discussion, and projects are due on the date and time given by the instructor. Any work that is late will be reduced by one full-letter grade. Assignments will not be accepted if they are more than one week late.

Coursework: All work must be completed during this semester for this course only.

AI usage: Although AI has valid and important contemporary uses, the use of AI in this course should be discussed with the instructor. If AI is used for content generation, it should be properly acknowledged. Unacknowledged use of AI for content generation will be evaluated as academic dishonesty.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

University Specific Procedures

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.etamu.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.etamu.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.etamu.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

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Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.etamu.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

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ETAMU Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at ETAMU, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.etamu.edu/counsel

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

Week 1 Review of Syllabus | Determine meeting schedule

Week 2 Independent work

Week 3 Review of Proposal

Week 4 Independent work

Week 5 In-progress review #1

Week 6 Independent work

Week 7 In-progress review #2

Week 8 Independent work

Week 9 In-progress review #3

Week 10 Independent work

Week 11 In-progress review #4

Week 12 Independent work

Week 13 In-progress review #5

Week 14 Independent work

Week 15 Final Review

Week 16 Self-Evaluation

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