



PHO 350: Advanced Digital Photography

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Leigh Merrill, Professor of Art

Office Location: Wathena Fine Art Building, Room 223

Office Hours: By appointment, 10:00 – 10:50 Monday and Wednesday by appointment

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 are no required textbooks for this course. Supplementary readings will be given throughout the semester.

Course Description

Students will learn post-production retouching, collaging, and manipulation of photographs. The manipulation of photographs in post-production is an important aspect of both commercial and contemporary art. Students will gain a greater understanding of both the technical and conceptual aspects of digitally manipulated and constructed imagery.

Student Learning Outcomes

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

1. General working knowledge of Adobe Photoshop
2. Basic editing of images in Photoshop
3. Retouching and image manipulation skills using Photoshop
4. Large format printing

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Minimal Technical Skills Needed

Using D2L learning management system, Digital Photographic capture, basics of digital asset management, Adobe lightroom.

Instructional Methods

This course will meet in person one day a week. Our face-to-face meetings will consist of:

- Lectures by instructor on photographic techniques and contemporary photographers
- Demonstration of techniques
- Peer reviews of work in progress
- Critiquing of course projects

This course will have assignments that students will participate in each week:

- Independent work towards course projects: making photographs, editing photographs, and printing work.
- Review of video tutorials
- Technical assignments
- Group Discussions

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Participation:

- Participation in class is critical to your success in this course. This course has weekly deadlines. **Although a face-to-face course, regularly logging into D2L will be necessary to keep up with course expectations, as assignment information, videos, readings, and submission folders will be available there.**

Critiques:

- Please be on time and ready to present and discuss your work and the work of your peers.
- Working on a project in class during a critique will result in an absence and a reduced score on your project and critique participation grade. If you have a late project, it is advised to attend and engage in the critique and submit your late work within a week of the original deadline. Being more than 10 minutes late on a critique day may result in a late grade on your project.
- Be respectful and thoughtful of your work and the work of your peers.

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Materials:

- **Camera:** Students will need to access camera equipment for course assignments (available via university check-out).
- **Adobe software:** Students will need to access Adobe Lightroom, Adobe Photoshop, and Adobe Camera Raw for all assignments. Adobe software is free for all students. It is encouraged to download and use the software on a personal computer to allow flexibility when you work on course assignments outside class time.
- **An external hard drive.** This should be mac compatible. If you work with a windows computer outside of class, you should find a hard drive that will work with both OS. Ideally your hard drive will have 1 to 2 TB of space.
- **Printing Costs:** students will be responsible for printing costs and paper. Prints will be large format. Students will buy paper from the university. Sizes of prints will vary.

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to regularly attend class. Attendance is required and is recorded at all class meetings.

Punctuality:

It is important to come to class on time and prepared to work. Being more than 10 minutes late four times will result in an absence. Being more than 10 minutes late on a critique day may result in a late grade on your project.

Please note:

A total of 4 unexcused absences from class meetings may result in a failing grade ("F") or being dropped from the class. Verifiable excuses for absences must be turned in to the instructor.

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

Your grade will be a combination of your projects, participation in class, and an exam covering the topics addressed in class.

Projects: 60%

Technical Assignments, Readings, quizzes, and class discussions: 40%

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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

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu

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@tamuc.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 TAMUC 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

Please contact me through email.

Email: leigh.merrill@etamu.edu

Office Hours: By appointment, 10:00 – 10:50 Monday and Wednesday by appointment. Please email one day in advance to schedule appointments.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures/Policies

Due Date: All assignments and exercises 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.

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.

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.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx).

<http://www.tamuc.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](http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx).

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

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

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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.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

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

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

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@tamuc.edu

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

<http://www.tamuc.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.

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Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce 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 ETAMU 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.tamuc.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.

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.tamuc.edu/counsel

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COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

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 via email or d2L.

Module 1

Digital Collage: constructing narrative

Week 1 – August 24

In Class:

Student and instructor Introductions, review course expectations, calendar

Lecture: *Project 1: The digital collage*

Demo: Shooting for basic collage (tripods, exposure, lighting, narrative), Lightroom to Photoshop, working with layers, masking

Coursework outside of class:

Begin photographing images for project 1

Review online videos (Instructor and Adobe videos)

Due: Technical Assignment #1 (photoshop, submit layered files)

Week 2 – August 31

In Class:

Demo: Working with adjustment layers, clone and heal tools

Review shooting for the basic collage, layers and masking

Coursework outside of class:

Continued photographing images for project 1 and begin collaging in photoshop

Review online videos (Instructor and Adobe videos)

Due: Technical Assignment #2 (photoshop, submit layered files)

Week 3 – September 7

No Class – Labor Day Holiday

Week 4 – September 14

In Class:

Demo: Image size, making large format prints

Coursework outside of class:

Due: Quiz – large format printing

Due: Technical Assignment #3 (printing)

Week 5 – September 21

In Class:

Printing in small groups.

Coursework outside of class:

Finalizing work for project 1. Printing

Week 6 – September 28

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

In Class:

Critique: *The digital collage*

Exhibition: Install *The Digital Collage* in the Wathena Project Space

Module 2

Additive and Subtractive

Week 7 – October 5

In Class:

Lecture: Additive and Subtractive image manipulations, project 2

Demo: Working with stock photos, collaging images from different times and places, resizing elements with smart objects, light and shadow, color manipulation,

Coursework outside of class:

Begin capturing, sourcing photographs for Project 2

Due: Technical Assignment #3

Week 8 – October 12

In Class: Image generation tools, selection and editing tools to manipulate and isolate elements, color manipulation

Coursework outside of class:

Watch: Review online videos (Instructor videos and Adobe videos)

Begin collaging/editing towards Project 2

Due: Technical Assignment #4 & 5

Week 9 – October 19

In Class:

Demo: Automated photo-merge, continued manipulation

Coursework outside of class:

Due: Technical Assignment #6

Week 10 – October 26

In Class:

Peer Review / Printing Lab

Due: Work for Project 2

Week 11 – November 2

Critique: *Additive and Subtractive*

Module 3

The expanded photograph

Week 12 – November 9

Exhibition: Install exhibition, *Additive/Subtractive*, in Wathena Project Space

Lecture: *The expanded photograph*

Demo: Text edit manipulation, color channel manipulations, amalgamations, anaglyphs, surface manipulation

Coursework outside of class:

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Begin working towards Project 3
Due: Technical Assignment #8

Week 13 – November 16

In Class:

Demo: TBA + Print surface manipulations

Discussion: Print for Wathena Hallway exhibition

Coursework outside of class:

Continued work towards Project 3

Week 14 – November 23

In Class:

Demo: Printing with roll paper

Coursework outside of class:

Continued work towards Project 3

Due: Technical Assignment #7: submit one file to print for the Wathena Hallway

Week 15 – November 30

In Class:

Printing / Framing + Hallway exhibition.

Coursework outside of class:

Continued work towards Project 3

Week 16 – December 7

Critique: *The expanded photograph*

Online final quiz / self-evaluation