



PHO2357 Basic Photography COURSE SYLLABUS Fall 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Chad D. Smith, Professor Emeritus

Office Location: J-233

Office Hours: By Appointment

University Email Address: chad.smith@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: Email

Communication Response Time: Within 48 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

Due to the rising cost of photo textbooks that become outdated upon publication, no mandatory text is required. Instead, students are encouraged to look up online tutorials for software and photographic information.

Course Description:

A foundation course using a mixture of lectures, demonstrations, assignments, field trips and critiques; students learn elements of color photography through an investigation of the basic techniques and aesthetics of digital photography, with an emphasis on creative use of DSLR camera controls, raw file processing, digital imaging software, archiving, and an awareness of the critical issues in contemporary photography.

Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should be able to demonstrate the following abilities:

1. An understanding of the anatomy of a camera, light meter, and accessories.
2. An understanding of the relationships between aperture, shutter speed, and ISO, and their effects on photographic images.
3. Skills to edit, archive, and process RAW files using digital asset management software.
4. The ability to apply the rules of composition and design, demonstrating technical solutions in inkjet printing.
5. The capability to analyze and interpret photographic images through written essays.
6. Knowledge of photographic vocabulary and color theory, gained through critical evaluation of one's own work and the work of others.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments

This course will include a series of photographic assignments and exercises designed to help students achieve the course objectives. Each week, students will engage in a variety of shooting and written assignments, as well as critiques of both their own work and that of professionals.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Attendance is mandatory, and records will be kept for all class and lab meetings, whether they are held online or on campus. Each student is responsible for all information presented during scheduled class and lab sessions. Additionally, students must submit assignments, exercises, and written essays on or before their due dates.

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory for all class and lab sessions, and it will be recorded. Students are responsible for all information presented during these scheduled times.

Attendance is worth a maximum of 100 points. Each student will start with 100 points, but 10 points will be deducted for each unexcused absence. Additionally, if you arrive after roll has been taken, you will lose 5 points.

Please be aware that accumulating a total of 4 absences (whether from lectures or labs) may result in a failing grade ("F") or may lead to being dropped from the course, unless there are extenuating circumstances approved by the instructor.

Excused absences are outlined in the Class Attendance Policy (A13.02) in the A&M-Commerce Procedures. Students must submit verifiable documentation for excused absences to the professor in a timely manner.

Grading: "Grades are not given, they are earned"

Students will earn points based on their performance in critiques, exercises, quizzes, and participation in classroom and lab activities. At the end of the term, these points will be totalled to determine the final grade for the semester. The final grades will be calculated using the following percentages, and all grades will be posted on D2L.

Total Percentages corresponding to the final letter grades

A = 100 – 90%
B = 89 – 80%
C = 79 – 70%
D = 69 – 60%
F = 59 – 0 %

Assessments:

Assignments:	50 Points each
Written Essays:	20 Points each
Final Assignment:	100 Points
Attendance:	100 Points

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

WTEFA Classroom & Lab

Students will have limited access to a Macintosh computer, print lab equipment, and software, along with cameras and tripods, to complete photographic assignments and exercises. Students will need to provide the following: Students will have limited access to a Macintosh computer, print lab equipment, and software, along with cameras and tripods, to complete photographic assignments and exercises. Students will need to provide the following:

- **An external hard drive.** This should be Mac-compatible. Your hard drive will have 500 GB - 1 TB of space. YOU CANNOT SAVE YOUR FILES ON THE COMPUTERS IN THE DIGITAL LAB.

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

- **SD card - Class 10 card with a minimum of 64gb capacity.** I have had very good luck with SanDisk SD cards.
- **Printing Costs:** The University charges for the cost of ink
- **Red River Ultra-Pro Satin Printing Paper** – 11 x 17 (individual sheets can be bought from Checkout)
- **Materials/Props for assignments.** Optional. You may choose to purchase or bring materials and props from home for certain assignments.
- **Smaller Tripod.** You may decide to purchase a cheaper tripod that's lighter and smaller to use for your projects outside of class. It's optional, but helpful if you aren't able to get one from Checkout when you need one.

LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce 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@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>

Interaction with Instructor Statement

Please contact Mr. Chad Smith through email to set up appointments:

Email: chad.smith@tamuc.edu

Office Hours: by appointment

Response time: 24 – 48 hours during weekdays

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES

Course Specific Procedures

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Due Date: All assignments, exercises, and essays are due on the date and time specified by the instructor. Late submissions will incur a grade reduction. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of any issues that could delay a project well in advance of the due date, not just five minutes before class begins. If the work is not submitted by the "moratorium" date set by the instructor, that assignment will receive a grade of "0" points and cannot be resubmitted unless there are extenuating circumstances, as determined by the instructor. Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the work is submitted on time.

Please note: Although AI has valid and important contemporary uses, the use of AI in this course will not be permitted to complete coursework without the instructor's permission. Any use of AI should be discussed with the instructor in advance and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. If AI is utilized without the instructor's express permission, it will be considered academic dishonesty.

Incomplete Grades Policy. An incomplete grade may be granted if a student experiences difficulties completing an assignment. The student must inform the instructor of these difficulties before the assignment's due date to discuss the issue. To qualify for an incomplete grade, more than 60% of the assignment must be completed.

Students will have two weeks from the original due date to finish and submit the assignment. If the work is not submitted by the "moratorium" date set by the instructor, the assignment will receive a late grade, unless there are extenuating circumstances as determined by the instructor. It is important to remember that it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the work is submitted on time.

Resubmission of Assignments: All students are encouraged to enhance their work by redoing their assignments. At times, the instructor may suggest that a student reshoot their assignment. This should not be viewed negatively, as school is the best place to learn from mistakes.

Please note that resubmitting work will not guarantee a better grade.

Guidelines for resubmissions:

1. The assignment must have originally been turned in on time.
Note: Work handed in late or incomplete may not be resubmitted.
2. Resubmitted assignments will be accepted up to the "moratorium" date set by the instructor.
3. The new work must comply with the original project guidelines.
4. Make sure work is labeled with the assignment title.
5. Original work that was submitted initially must be included and marked clearly.

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>

TAMUC 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/academy>
The *syllabus/schedule* are *subject to change*.

[mic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf](#) Academic Integrity

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce 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](#)

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

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.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

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 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

Texas A&M University-Commerce 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 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 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.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.

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Pandemic Response Statements

Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. Faculty will work to support the student getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, 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

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Class Participation:

Students should always be prepared and participate in lectures and labs demos. There will always be time for questions during class.

Assignments and Exercises:

Student will have weekly visual assignments and exercises that are evaluated by not only how well the specific problem has been solved but also by the effort of the student. Each assignment will be grade using the point template online in this syllabus and exercises will be bonus points.

Assignments are as follows:

- #1 Color Contrast and Monochromic
- #2 Depth of Field
- #3 Motion and Time
- #4 Black & White image
- Final Assignment

Exercises for extra credit

- #1 Jpeg Contact Sheet
- #2 Panorama
- #3 Studio Lighting

Essays:

Students will write 5 essays after watching videos on five different photographers. These will have a maximum of 20 points each.

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