Course Description:

We swim in an ocean of photographs. They’re constantly flickering in and out of our vision, on our phones, our computers, in magazines, and on billboards. They shape and define the way we see ourselves and the world around us. There’s an old adage, “A picture is worth 1000 words,” and in some ways it’s true. Describing the unimaginable beauty of a sunset in the mountains or the vast openness of the sea is far more difficult than showing a photograph of the same. Photographs communicate great detail in an instant.

Photographs also lie. That image of untouched nature and majestic mountains doesn’t show the crowd of people behind you making the same photograph, or the pile of garbage left by someone just outside the frame, or the highway rest area guard rail you’re standing on to get the shot. Photographs easily mislead—we cram together and smile at the holidays, looking happy even while we’re dying to leave and be away from these people.

Pictures of people laughing frequently look like those of people crying. I might think you look great in a photograph, and you might only be able to see your imagined flaws. Photographs are fickle at best.

A single image can contain an entire world of endless possibilities and truths. So, what happens when we stick another photograph next to that? And another? And then another? We begin to stitch together a fuller, more complex story. If one photograph is worth 1000 words, then are 30 in a sequence worth a novella?

This course is an introduction to the art and craft of photographic storytelling. Over the next four weeks we will dive deep into the history of the medium, work through technical considerations, and explore how to transform the world around us into more than the sum of its parts.

We will examine the functions of the camera—how to use the tool of the trade, we’ll look carefully at our images, and we’ll think deeply about how to link images together to tell a story.

Learning Objectives

- To learn how to think critically and creatively about photographs
To see the world transformed by the act of photographing
To develop storytelling skills using images
To understand the basic mechanics and operations of our digital cameras

Text:

There is no required text for the class. I’ll distribute readings, videos, and podcasts via Blackboard.

Class Resources:

Check out the resources tab in Blackboard, I’ll like to a variety of resources for your viewing pleasure. You’re not required to use an editing software, but we will cover some general editing tips. If you’d like to use Adobe Lightroom or Photoshop, subscription plans for students start at $9.99/month. I will link to tutorials and helpful tips for these programs, and I’m happy to answer questions about their use.

E-Mail:

I will respond to your emails within 24 hours Monday-Friday. Typically, I’ll respond much faster, but sometimes I’m super busy answering other emails, but don’t worry, I will respond. If you email me on Friday afternoon you might not hear back until Monday morning. I’m often away from internet access over the weekends.

Assignment Submission:

All assignments are submitted through Blackboard. In general, you shouldn’t need to email me your assignments—it’s easy to lose track of emailed assignments. When you submit through Blackboard it keeps everything nice and tidy and makes life easier for everyone.

Student Learning Accommodations

In keeping with University policy, any student with a documented disability interested in utilizing accommodations should contact SAS, the office of Disability Services on campus. SAS works with students and faculty in an interactive process to explore reasonable and appropriate accommodations, which are communicated to faculty in an accommodation letter. All students are strongly encouraged to meet with their faculty to discuss the accommodations they plan to use in each course. A student’s accommodation letter lists those accommodations that will not be implemented until the student meets with their faculty to create a plan. Contact SAS: A170 Living/Learning Center: 802-656-7753.

Contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS):

A170 Living/Learning Center
802-656-7753
access@uvm.edu
https://www.uvm.edu/academicsuccess/student_accessibility_services

Religious Holidays:

Students have the right to practice the religion of their choice. If you need to miss class to observe a religious holiday, please submit the dates of your absence to me in writing by the end of the second full week of classes. You will be permitted to make up work within a mutually agreed-upon time.
Academic Integrity:

The policy addresses plagiarism, fabrication, collusion, and cheating. https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/acadintegrity.pdf

Grade Appeals:

If you would like to contest a grade, please follow the procedures outlined in this policy: https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/gradeappeals.pdf

Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities:

https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/studentcode.pdf

FERPA Rights Disclosure:

The purpose of this policy is to communicate the rights of students regarding access to, and privacy of their student educational records as provided for in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974. https://www.uvm.edu/policies/student/ferpa.pdf

Center for Health and Wellbeing:

https://www.uvm.edu/health

Counseling & Psychiatry Services (CAPS):

Phone: (802) 656-3340
If you are concerned about a UVM community member or are concerned about a specific event, we encourage you to contact the Dean of Students Office (802-656-3380). If you would like to remain anonymous, you can report your concerns online by visiting the Dean of Students website at https://www.uvm.edu/deanofstudents.
Counseling and Psychiatry Services: https://www.uvm.edu/health/CAPS

Class Structure//Grades

You’ll be graded on the following things:

Major Assignments: 40%
  There will be four major assignments, these will be photograph-based opportunities for you to practice storytelling, each worth 10%
Minor Assignments: 10%
  There are two minor assignments in the first week, these are short completion based projects.

Image Research & Analysis Paper: 10%
  You’ll write a short paper about an image by a photographer

Discussion Board Posts: 20%
  We’ll have a weekly discussion board circulating around reading, interviews, and/or images
Class participation: 20%
Do the reading, participate in discussion boards & blog posts, show that you’re focused and attentive.

A+= 100-95  A=90-94  B+=89-85  B=84-80  C+=79-75  C=74-70  D=69-60  F=59-0
Late work will be considered on a case by case basis.