

# PHOT 5H: HONORS INTRODUCTION TO PHOTOGRAPHY

## Foothill College Course Outline of Record

| Heading                            | Value                                                   |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Effective Term:</b>             | Fall 2026                                               |
| <b>Units:</b>                      | 4                                                       |
| <b>Hours:</b>                      | 3 lecture, 3 laboratory per week (72 total per quarter) |
| <b>Advisory:</b>                   | Not open to students with credit in PHOT 5.             |
| <b>Degree &amp; Credit Status:</b> | Degree-Applicable Credit Course                         |
| <b>Foothill GE:</b>                | Area 3: Arts & Humanities                               |
| <b>Transferable:</b>               | CSU/UC                                                  |
| <b>Grade Type:</b>                 | Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)                 |
| <b>Repeatability:</b>              | Not Repeatable                                          |

## Student Learning Outcomes

- Assess the contributions of photographers from diverse cultures and backgrounds in the historic and contemporary development of photography as an art form and social document
- Create photographs that demonstrate effective use of aesthetic principles, technical skills, and visual literacy

## Description

A survey of the historical and practical aspects of photography as an art form and social document. Students will be introduced to the use of light, composition, and communication through images. Significant photographers from a diversity of backgrounds will inspire students in the practice of photography and developing an understanding of the varied uses of the photographic image in our culture, including advertising, journalism, social concern, fine art, and scientific applications. The honors course offers an enriched and challenging experience for students who desire a more rigorous academic experience. The course includes more in-depth content, as well as more demanding and creative assignments requiring the application of higher-level thinking, writing, and communication skills.

## Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Recognize and describe works of photography which distinguish different applications of the medium to modern communication and culture.
2. Analyze how photographers use different equipment and photographic techniques to communicate by examining the work of great photographers throughout history in all genres of the medium.
3. Examine the development of photographic technology through the study of historical and contemporary important works of photography.

4. Identify the various uses of composition in photography and explain how composition is related to the overall meaning and purpose of the photograph.
5. Identify the importance of light, related light conditions, and composition to the overall meaning of the photograph.
6. Compare great works in terms of composition and how the composition contributes to our perception and meaning of the photograph.
7. Examine the content and context found in great works of photography via written responses.
8. Describe the evolution of photographic equipment throughout history, including how different media establishes the overall expressive and conceptual meaning of the work.
9. Evaluate and critique class projects using relevant terminology in oral or written formats.
10. Examine and describe contemporary developments, trends, materials, and approaches in photography.
11. Identify the various uses of lighting in photography and explain how lighting is related to the overall meaning and purpose of the photograph.
12. Describe the significant contributions that photographers from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, identities, genders, and cultures have made to the field of photography.
13. Understand the impact that photography has had on past and current social concerns and ideological beliefs.

## Course Content

1. Introduction to photographic history: journalism, documentary, fine art, scientific
  - a. Analyze the correlation between scientific discovery and photography, including improvements in chemistry and optics, especially the contributions of early practitioners, including Louis-Jacques-Mande Daguerre, Sir John Herschel, Nicéphore Niepce, William Henry Fox Talbot
  - b. Apply this understanding to the use of traditional and contemporary tools of photography
  - c. Evaluate the contribution of significant photographers from diverse backgrounds to photographic history, such as James Van Der Zee, Manuel Álvarez Bravo, James Presley Ball, Lewis Hine, Dorothea Lange, Gordon Parks, Ansel Adams, Hiroshi Sugimoto
  - d. Apply understanding of the historic use of images to communicate and persuade by creating projects that communicate about contemporary issues and concerns
2. History of composition and understanding of the tools of composition
  - a. Analyze the use and application of the rule of thirds, the golden ratio, and other visual design elements in photography
  - b. Study the use of repeating shapes and scale in the photographic images
  - c. Analyze the use of spatial perspective and foreground, middle-ground, and background in photographic images
  - d. Application of the concepts of composition to create photographs that effectively communicate ideas and concepts
3. Historic perspectives on camera technology
  - a. Analyze the contributors to the technical development of photography, from the camera obscura (with developers such as Aristotle, Leonardo Da Vinci) and its early use by Dutch painters and Frederick Douglass (the most photographed person in the

- 19th century), to the modern transformation of the camera by inventors and entrepreneurs (such as George Eastman, Edwin Land, Ren Ng), and new developments in photography through mobile technology and artificial intelligence
    - i. Film cameras and their uses
    - ii. Digital cameras and their uses
    - iii. Mobile cameras and their uses
  - b. Variations in opinions on the ability of photographs to depict the "truth" and the acceptance of photographs to be used as factual documents
    - i. Photography and propaganda
    - ii. Photography and journalism
    - iii. Photography as evidence
  - c. Analyze and apply the use of photographic tools in documentary, commercial, and artistic expression
4. Evaluate the creative use of camera controls looking at commercial and artistic expressions
    - a. Evaluate the control of motion through the use shutter speed
    - b. Create images that demonstrate control of focus and depth of field
    - c. Examine the use of metering and sensitometry tools and apply them to photography
    - d. Differentiate the different lenses and focal lengths and their effect on photographic space and compositions
  5. Seeing and controlling light
    - a. Analyze the use of natural light by practitioners such as Roy DeCarava, Gertrude Kasebier, Bernice Abbott, Sally Mann, Irving Penn, Margaret Bourke White
    - b. Analyze the work of well-known photographers who use flash and/or a studio, such as Nan Goldin, Robert Mapplethorpe, Richard Avedon, Annie Leibovitz and Yousuf Karsh, Kwame Brathwaite
    - c. Application and practice using light in images
  6. Printing and presentation of photographs
    - a. Demonstrate preparing and printing images
    - b. Analyzing professional presentation of images and demonstrate in final project
  7. Content and context
    - a. Analyze great works by legacy and contemporary artists, such as Jerry Uelsmann, Dawoud Bey, Ansel Adams, Robert Frank, Graciela Iturbide, Wolfgang Tillmans, Henri Cartier Bresson, Robert Capa, Gerda Taro, Walker Evans
    - b. Application and practice in using metaphor, personal meaning, and symbolism in a photograph
  8. Critique
    - a. Analyze and critique great works of photography from history in written formats
    - b. Examine and describe contemporary developments, trends, materials, and approaches in photographic artists, such as Carrie Mae Weems, Zig Jackson, Shirin Neshat, Lorna Simpson, Deana Lawson, Andreas Gursky, Diane Arbus, Cindy Sherman, Edward Burtynsky, Richard Misrach, William Eggleston, Lee Friedlander, Garry Winogrand, Zora Murff, Sarah Waiswa, Joshua Rashaad McFadden, Chris Johnson

## Lab Content

1. Assignments and exercises that explore the use of photographic equipment and techniques
2. Assignments and exercises related to composition and how to express with composition
3. Assignments and exercises that practice the use of light in photographs
4. Preparation of professionally presented photographs using both matting framing and digital presentation techniques
5. Visit and review photography exhibitions in museums and galleries
6. Exercises that have students make revisions or corrections and edit their photographs
7. Critiques and evaluation of assignments and exercises

## Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. A lecture room equipped for viewing motion pictures, slides, and videotapes; computer with projection ability, access to still cameras and other demonstration equipment as needed.
2. For all sections of this course, students will need access to a computer with internet connectivity and access to the college's learning management system.

## Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Portfolio review - photographs will be evaluated for technical ability, craftsmanship, and personal creative and conceptual approaches  
 Written or oral critiques  
 Quizzes  
 Written paper(s) on selected topics in photography  
 Assignments integrating photographs, writing, and analysis  
 Final project or final exam

## Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture presentations and classroom discussion using the language of photography, media, and art history  
 Electronic discussions/chat responding to visual and written prompts about history, issues, and techniques in photography and art  
 Laboratory practicing and applying concept from the lectures  
 Demonstrations of technical process in photography  
 Field trips to see photographs and artwork with discussion about application to class content  
 Demonstration of portfolio production (digital or physical)  
 Critique of presentations of projects with thoughtful commentary and clear evaluation methods

## Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Hirsch, Robert. Light and Lens: Thinking About Photography in the Digital Age, 4th ed.. 2022.

Supplemental lectures, handouts, videos, and tutorials delivered via the online learning system or as physical documents during in-person class.

## Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Photographer paper: 1-3 page paper (900-2700 words) about a photographer or topic in photography that inspires you. Biographical information and significance in history or techniques of photography should be discussed. Use the worksheet from the handouts page to help you gather information and know what questions to ask. You should use a minimum of three sources, one of which must be a book in researching this photographer. Your paper will be posted in the Discussion Area. Each student will read all other presentations and make thoughtful comments on at least two other students' papers.
2. Concerned photography assignment:
  - a. Our photographer of the week is Sebastiao Salgado. Do you find his work inspiring? Why or why not.
  - b. Review the Universal Declaration of Human Rights for inspiration on topics: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>
  - c. Think of two or three issues that concern you. Write about these issues. How would you photograph these issues in a way to make us care, in a way that would make us act?
  - d. Shoot thirty photographs (print, slide or digital) that begin to address one of the issues that concern you. Post eight (8) most effective images. Also write a short essay on what inspired you to take the images you took and post in the description of image 01. Refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the work of Sebastiao Salgado in your short essay.
3. Photography exhibition review assignment: Visit photography exhibition or gallery from instructor's approved list. Write a paper that analyzes presentation and artistic intent of the work and relates it to a historic context. Refer to examples from lectures and discussions and use the vocabulary from the readings to prepare this paper.

## Discipline(s)

Photography