

Las Positas College
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Course Outline for PHTO 72
DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY
Effective: Fall 2015

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

PHTO 72 — DOCUMENTARY PHOTOGRAPHY — 3.00 units

This course deals with the photographer as a journalist, focusing on theory and practice in press and publications photography, with emphasis on using the camera as a reporting and communications tool. Covered are news and feature photography and photographic essays, including composition, impact, and creativity, for newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and other mass communications media. Understanding and applying photojournalistic and basic technical and visual skills in the making of successful reportage photographs. Consideration of the work of major 20th and 21st century photojournalists. Course is cross listed with MSCM 72. Student will receive credit for taking either MSCM 72 or PHTO 72.

1.50 Units Lecture 1.50 Units Studio Lab

Strongly Recommended

PHTO 50 - Introduction to Photography
and/or

GDDM 53 - Photoshop I
and/or

PHTO 56 - Introduction to Digital Photography
and/or

Grading Methods:

Letter or P/NP

Discipline:

	MIN
Lecture Hours:	27.00
Studio Lab Hours:	108.00
Total Hours:	27.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

Before entering this course, it is strongly recommended that the student should be able to:

- A. PHTO50
- B. GDDM53
- C. PHTO56

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- A. Explain in writing the role of photojournalism and photojournalists.
- B. Describe the history and development of photojournalism.
- C. Identify career options and processes in photojournalism.
- D. Practice using elements of photo composition and lighting to produce photographs
- E. Practice capturing peak action or storytelling composition.
- F. Demonstrate a working familiarity with the camera.
- G. Prepare effective cutlines for photos.
- H. Practice using hardware and software used in photojournalism.
- I. Analyze legal and ethical situations in photojournalism.
- J. Explain elements of a good news photograph and produce good news photographs.
- K. Edit and store photos on a computer.
- L. Create storytelling images, slideshows, or videos for the web.
- M. Practice using different electronic photo storage formats.

V. CONTENT:

- A. Role of photojournalism and press photography in modern mass media
- B. History and development of the camera as a reporting tool
 - 1. Early pioneers, their equipment, and their work
 - 2. Major photojournalists of the 20th and 21st centuries
 - 3. Social impact of photojournalism as communication medium
- C. Careers in photojournalism
- D. High impact photography: the decisive moment
- E. Photo composition and lighting
 - 1. Understanding the camera/film system's response to light
 - 2. Understanding fundamentals of composition, visual design, and cropping for final image
 - 3. Understanding the technical and visual circumstances of typical photojournalistic situations
- F. Camera and photography basics
 - 1. The digital single-lens reflex camera
 - 2. Aperture, shutter speed, and equivalent exposure
 - 3. Film speed and image characteristics
 - 4. Panning, stop action, blurring to show motion
 - 5. Depth of field and selective focus for creative controls
 - 6. Light meters and exposure calculation
 - 7. Lenses, their effects and appropriate use
 - 8. Mastering the electronic flash
 - 9. Basic processing procedures
 - 10. Negative processing/push processing, digital scanning, and software manipulation for fully paginated images
- G. Outlines: The photographer as writer
- H. The tools of photojournalism: hardware and software
 - I. What makes a good news photo?
- J. Ethics and legal issues of photojournalism
- K. Introduction to electronic editing of photos
- L. Introduction to web images and video
- M. Electronic photo storage formats

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Field Trips** - to galleries and publishers
- B. **Lecture** -
- C. **Audio-visual Activity** -
- D. **Discussion** -
- E. **Lab** -
- F. **Demonstration** - of effective techniques in class
- G. **Guest Lecturers** - visiting professionals
- H. **Projects** -

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Photographically illustrate a chosen human subject in the course of a day's work
- B. Document from a variety of viewpoints the physical situation at a given location.
- C. Create a photographic essay to accompany a short non-fiction narrative.
- D. Read and report on articles from at least three photojournalistic publications.
- E. Choose an article from *Double Take* magazine that you can emulate, and reexamine this topic in a local setting. Shoot at least 100 exposures, editing them down to ten for final presentation. Write up a descriptive summary to accompany your work.
- F. Give students the topic: "Oakland's Chinatown." Capture the outdoor street life of the area. Write up descriptive captions for each of the photographs submitted to accompany your work.

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. **Methods**

- 1. Exams/Tests
- 2. Quizzes
- 3. Portfolios
- 4. Projects
- 5. Field Trips
- 6. Class Participation
- 7. Lab Activities

B. **Frequency**

- 1. Final examination covering all elements in the class.
- 2. Weekly quizzes on reading.
- 3. Semester Project on Extended Photo Story, including portfolio of images.
- 4. Weekly shooting projects to shoot photos for news, spot news, feature, portrait, photo-illustration, and picture story.
- 5. At least once a semester field trip for local shooting assignment.
- 6. Weekly class participation in discussions and performance of tasks.
- 7. Weekly lab activities.

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

- 1. *Witness in Our Time: Working Lives in Documentary Photographers*. 2d ed., Smithsonian Institution, 2010.
- 2. Kobre, Kenneth *Photojournalism: The Professional's Approach*. 6th ed., Focal, 2008.
- 3. London, Barbara and Jim Stone *A Short Course in Digital Photography*. 2nd ed., Prentice Hall, 2011.
- 4. Ritchin, Fred. *Bending the Frame: Photojournalism, Documentary, and the Citizen*. . 1 ed., Aperture, 2013.
- 5. Freeman, Michael. *The Photographer's Story: The Art of Visual Narrative*. 1 ed., Focal Press, 2012.
- 6. Double Take magazine, current and back issues to 1998.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS:

- A. DSLR or 35 mm film camera with a lens, built-in light meter and manual control of focus, aperture, and shutter; one that accepts interchangeable lenses preferred.
- B. Photographic film, paper, and mounting materials
- C. A USB drive, External Hard Drive or DVD to transport digital files.