COMM 4390.003, Spring 2017
Instructor: Robert Muilenburg
Time: Wednesday, 7:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m.
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Advanced Photojournalism

Mission and outcome

Advanced Photojournalism is a rigorous program of practical exercises and academic study.

Weekly workshops will give students an advanced and comprehensive understanding of photojournalism. Personal photo essays, picture stories, and personal documentary projects will be self-assigned with deadlines. We will also investigate other photojournalist’s work that led to social or political change.

During the semester, students will develop a strong sense of style, content, and design.

Presentations, discussions, and exercises will also cover ethics, truth, and honesty in photo reporting.

At the end of the semester, students will be able research issues and subjects, overcome technical problems, and bring their own personal vision to photo stories and essays. Students will be able to tell stories with their cameras with an enhanced understanding of camera functions, basic digital media, presentation methods, and ethical concerns.

Photo assignments will be given, with deadlines. Three picture packages/photo essays of publication quality images will be produced during the term.

Recommended Reading


Various handouts provided throughout the semester. You will be required to report on an approved photojournalist of your choice.

You should be aware of local and national news, and read a newspaper of record every day, such as the Caller-Times, New York Times, the Los Angeles Times. National Public Radio and various news websites provide important news as well.

Additional Reading

Newsmagazines, photo websites, photography books and catalogs, Biographies of photographers and photojournalists. Associated Press Stylebook.
**Topics**

The goal of the class is to provide you with an advanced understanding of photojournalism. We will explore complex composition, content and form with an emphasis on shooting storytelling photos.

You will learn how to research issues and subjects and overcome technical problems while bringing your own personal vision to the assignment.

We will explore the basic question of what you are interested in, what you have access to and how to tell the story with your camera.

Emphasis will be placed on improving your technical expertise in basic digital media, existing light photography, and developing your shooting style.

**Attendance**

Good attendance is mandatory if you expect to pass the class. Tests and assignments cannot be made up except in the most serious medical situations.

You may not make up quizzes and all assignments must be turned in on time. If there are religious holidays you observe or unusual situations that require you to miss class, please let me know about them as far in advance as possible, preferably at the beginning of the semester.

**Current Events**

Please read local newspapers and newsmagazines. Almost every week there will be some type of exercise or quiz about current events.

**Portfolio**

At the end of the semester, I will review your portfolio. This could be your class work or your real working portfolio.

**Grading**

I look at several factors when grading. I estimate your experience and then measure your improvement. Not all grading can be from tests. As photographers, I look for your technical ability, your ability to "see" photographs, the creative insights you have for photography. The amount of effort you expend on your class work will have a direct positive relationship to your grade.

65% Weekly assignments and portfolio/essay project  
25% Final Project  
10% Class Participation
A = Excellent. Professional quality work. Flawless technique. Relevant and insightful photos.

B = Good. Competent simple images that are storytelling. Good technique.

C = Acceptable. Average composition, technique and message.

D = Poor. Unsatisfactory and flaw-filled. This work is not publishable.

F = Unacceptable. Thoroughly unprofessional. A total failure to execute the assignment.

All pictures will be critiqued in class

Please note that successful photojournalism is not about perfection, it is about problem solving, being proactive, and investing your time wisely. Your out-of-class time usually includes 8 hours of homework and assignments per week. I will hold you to professional standards because I know you are capable of them.

Assignments

- **Personality:** Photograph at least two people you find interesting. It should be obvious to the viewer from seeing the image what you found interesting about the subject. This is the time to start leaving your comfort zone. No images of family, friends etc.

- **SPOT NEWS** – Keep this assignment in mind throughout the semester. Get to a news situation and produce a story-telling photograph. It should be spot news (unplanned, such as a fire, a car accident, shooting, etc.). Capture the emotion of the event or a representative moment.

- **Two-Picture Combo:** Two photos of the same event or subject that will compliment one another. One will be the obvious dominate image

- **The Entertainer:** A feature story with an entertaining angle.

- **Portrait** – Make a portrait of someone. It doesn’t matter who the person is or what they do. All that matters is that the photograph deepens the viewer’s understanding of the individual. The newspaper asks for two photos and that one of them be a detail. As always, you may not photograph family, friends or roommates for journalistic work. Go on the hunt. Find someone and spend enough time with to get comfortable. Get to know them. You might find a photo story.

- **The Sports Profile:** An athlete with a story: a portrait, them in action and a package from the game for general game coverage.

- **Final Audio Slideshow Project:** You will be required to turn in a final photo story. It will account for 25% of your final grade. You will shoot the story over the course of the class. It must have news value and explore current social/political issues. I recommend narrowing it down sooner than later. A photo story involves a lot of moving parts, many of which are out of your control. You need to have a back up plan in case the original idea falls through. Keep it simple. Find something that lends itself to photos. Focus on a topic that you are passionate about. Something that you are relatively familiar with. Your best friend, roommate, co-worker or family member isn’t what I’m looking for. A non-profit organization that simply operates out of an office probably isn’t the best choice. Look through a list of the various campus departments and see what you can find. Many of them are involved with field studies and experiments that might give you ideas. We will talk about
more ideas for the project in class. The photo story needs to be tightly edited but there is not minimum or maximum number of images.

- **This Week in Photojournalism:** Each Tuesday will start with one of you giving a recap of last week’s visual news of the world.
- **The Portfolio:** Bring it together, just 20 frames to show how you have grown.

### Minimum equipment and supplies

Digital camera (6 megapixel or bigger) with manually adjustable shutter speeds and apertures.

USB thumb drive for turning in assignments and storing photos.

**Courtesy** Please keep cell phones and pagers set to “vibrate” or “off” during class. Please leave the classroom to handle emergency business without disturbing others. Make sure the computer lab and classroom are clean before you leave. Respect your colleagues and friends by keeping your community workspace neat. Sorry, but no food or drinks are allowed in the computer lab/classroom.

### Deadlines

Deadlines are not a goal: A late assignment WILL affect your final grade.

Even if you can't come, someone else can deliver your assignment by deadline.

### Additional information:

Photojournalists are expected to have their equipment with them at all times. Get in the habit now! You are expected to have your camera with you at all times.

Keep original unaltered digital files original; ALWAYS do a “save as” for photographs you work on.

**WARNING:** When shooting assignments, use common sense photographing in situations where people may not want to be photographed. Getting injured or arrested is seldom worth the trouble.

The University takes a firm stand on dishonest work. Cheating of any kind is not tolerated and I am obligated to report violations to the Honor Court.

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who will then provide this documentation with me.

### National Press Photographers Association Code of Ethics

Be accurate and comprehensive in the representation of subjects.

Resist being manipulated by staged photo opportunities.
Be complete and provide context when photographing or recording subjects. Avoid stereotyping individuals and groups. Recognize and work to avoid presenting one's own biases in the work.

Treat all subjects with respect and dignity. Give special consideration to vulnerable subjects and compassion to victims of crime or tragedy. Intrude on private moments of grief only when the public has an overriding and justifiable need to see.

While photographing subjects do not intentionally contribute to, alter, or seek to alter or influence events.

Editing should maintain the integrity of the photographic images' content and context. Do not manipulate images or add or alter sound in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects.

Do not pay sources or subjects or reward them materially for information or participation. Do not accept gifts, favors, or compensation from those who might seek to influence coverage.

Do not intentionally sabotage the efforts of other journalists.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism.**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one's own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a 0 on the assignment.

**Academic Advising.**

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Dropping a Class**

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. **April 8**, is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.
Preferred methods of scholarly citations

Classroom/professional behavior
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor's ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Statement of Civility (can be in place of classroom/professional behavior)
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Grade Appeals*
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean's Office.

Disabilities Accommodations*
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 believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.
Statement of Academic Continuity
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

*Required by SACS or HB2504

Course Outline

Class One – Introduction
Course overview
Choosing a photographer for a presentation
Intro to the digital SLR
How to file assignments
Technical class
Assignment #1

Class Two – Post production tools and the pro camera bag
Review of assignment #1
Examples of student work
Technical class
Tips for success in photography
Camera equipment: What’s in a pro camera bag (and what does the school have)?
Post-production tools
Importance of Captioning
Assignment #2

Class Three – The environmental portrait and more on post-production software
Review of assignment #2
Photographer of the day
The vocabulary of photography and photo critique
Technique and technical review
Shooting the environmental portrait
Shooting the self-portrait.
Assignment #3
Class Four – Photographing Places, Object and Events

Review of assignment #3
Photographer of the day
Photographing objects, places and events
Working with reporters
Finding stories
Navigating access
Making the agreement to move forward with a subject
In-Class Lighting Workshop
Assignment #4

Class Five – The Photo Essay and Working with Flash (Strobe)

Review of assignment #4
Photographer of the day
Identifying photo essay projects
Assignment #5
Idea for an essay due
SPEAKER: TBA

Class Six – Editing photographs

Review of assignment #5
Photographer of the day
Editing your own work
Editing stories for publication
Talk about Web-based photo platforms
-Flickr
-Instagram
-Tumblr
-Jux
-WordPress
-Soundslides

Assignment #6

Class Seven – On Assignment: From Local News to Travel Photography

Review of assignment #6
Photographer of the day
SPEAKER: TBA
Writing For Photographers
Assignment #7
Ideas for first photo essay

**Class Eight – Developing themes and personal style**

Review of assignment #7 and #8
Photographer of the day
Professional style and personal vision
Ideas and contact for First essay/series due
First photo essay shoot to begin

**Class Nine – Field Trip (?) to shoot or Exhibit or Agency Visit &/or some class time.**

Review of First photo essay shoot
Begin shoot 2 of first photo essay

**Class Ten – Photography in a Multimedia Context and with Audio in Particular**

Review of first photo essay/part one and 2 of assignment
Examples of audio slideshows
Collecting sound for use with photos
Review of basic audio tools in the context of use with photos and audio editing
-Relevant audio recorders and microphones

Photo essay/part three of assignment
Talk about ideas for second photo essay and confirm choices

**Class Eleven – Studio Lighting**

Review of photo essay/part three and whole assignment
Use of class time for workshop with students shooting, either in studio or we will go on location.
Review of basic three-point lighting and other photo techniques
Specialized lighting equipment, tethering and other studio techniques
Other options:
- Photo in interactive graphics, maps, polls and text
- Photo and video
- Crowd-sourced photography

Final long-term assignment (Multimedia/photo essay), Second photo essay started/Part one
Ideas due and contact made for second essay

**Class Twelve – Planning the multimedia piece. Class based photo project?**
Individual or group?
Presenting the multimedia piece
Review of final first photo essay/part one
Review of completed final first photo essay. FINAL IMAGES DUE, MUST BE IN SEQUENCE.
Final long-term assignment (Multimedia/photo essay), Second photo essay started/Part two
Go over multimedia components
Speaker TBA

Class Thirteen – The professional world of photojournalism

Review of Final photo essay/part two
Final Photo Essay/Part 3
Confirm multimedia components
The Photo Portfolio
Copyright and fair use of photographs
Photojournalism ethics
What editors are looking for
-Developing the portfolio site, ‘The look’, Presentation tools

Class Fourteen – The future of photojournalism

Emerging tools
Experimental photo projects
Mobile photography
Changing pattern of distribution
Speaker: TBA
Final part 3 for story due and final project fully edited due

Class Fifteen – Review of final projects