



## Digital Photography (VA 180)

**Term:** Fall 2025

**Professor:** Alejandro Yoshizawa

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**Office Hours:** By appointment or online

**Course Dates:** September 3<sup>rd</sup> to December 3<sup>rd</sup>

**Course Times:** Wednesdays, 2:30pm – 5:20pm

**Classroom:** C1015

**Computer Lab:** C1120

## Course Description

This course emphasizes the basics of digital photography, beginning with digital camera controls, progressing on to editing fundamentals and techniques, and ending with the production of final prints. The functional and aesthetic impact of digital photography in today's society is also investigated.

## Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Apply digital camera controls and functions
2. Classify different file types used in digital photography
3. Use the basic features of photo imaging software
4. Prepare digital photographic files for print
5. Articulate the function of digital images in their historical and contemporary contexts
6. Explain basic vocabulary used in digital photography

## Required Resources

Course Website: Brightspace - <https://brightspace.ufv.ca/d2l/login>

Textbook: N/A

Application/Software: Students will be required to use Lightroom and Photoshop for VA 180. Both programs are available in the Mac labs C1120, C1122, and C1106.

## Required Equipment

Camera – Students are required to have access to a digital camera (DSLR or mirrorless) for all in-person classes. Any camera used for coursework in VA 180 must be able to operate in manual mode. Some cameras are available for borrowing through the SOCA equipment room. See details below.

Tripod – Students are required to have a tripod for VA 180. The tripod can be basic. If you need to purchase one, new tripods are relatively inexpensive, and used ones are readily available online.

Storage - Each student must have some way to store their files. Either a USB or external hard drive is a must.

## Course Structure

Basic photography methods and techniques, as well as camera operation, will be discussed in class. However, nothing beats hands-on practice. This course contains many in-class activities to give students the opportunity to practice what they've learned.

## Tips for Success

1. **Participate.** I invite you to engage, ask questions, and talk about the course content with your classmates. Participation can also help you articulate your thoughts and develop your artistic voice.
2. **Manage your time.** Students are often very busy, and I understand that you have obligations outside of this class. However, students do best when they plan adequate time that is devoted to course work. Block your schedule and set aside plenty of time to complete assignments including extra time to handle any technology related problems.
3. **Login regularly.** I recommend that you log in to Brightspace several times a week to ensure you don't miss any announcements, and so you are comfortable with the platform.
4. **Do not procrastinate.** Do your best to complete class work ahead of time. This will give you time to do any changes or adjustments you might need to make, as well as avoid the stress of trying to complete work at the last minute.
5. **Be creative.** This class offers a great opportunity to be creative and think outside the box. Students who take time to craft their projects and embrace creativity tend to do best in this class.

## Grading Structure

Task	Percentage %
Assignments (15/20)	35%
In-class activities	17%
Quiz	10%
Midterm presentation	5%
Final creative project	25%
Attendance/participation	8%
Total	100%

## Task Guidelines\*

\*Please check Brightspace for additional guidelines and details. The Brightspace guidelines will be considered final.

### Assignment #1 (15%) Digital photography and Lightroom Due week 5

- 1) Basic settings and raw photo capturing:
  - a) capture 10 raw photographs. You must use each of the basic framing techniques we discussed in class at least once (rule of thirds, frame within a frame, leading lines, symmetry, contrast). You must use the camera's manual mode setting.
  - b) Choose three of the images and explain why you chose the settings (aperture, shutter speed, ISO) and framing you did.
  
- 2) Lightroom: Chose 2 or 3 of the photographs you took in section (1) and edit them in Lightroom using the basic functions: cropping, exposure adjustment, white balance correction, and color grading. Explain why you chose the adjustments you made.

Do not use the 'auto' setting when capturing your images. Use the manual 'm' setting. Hand in the 10 raw images, and your 2 or 3 jpg images.

### Assignment #2 (20%) intermediate techniques and Photoshop Due week 9 before class

- 1) Intermediate settings and photo capturing. All photos must be taken as raw images.
  - a) capture a series of images changing the position of a person or object within a single frame using the camera's multi shutter drive setting. For this series, the camera must be in a fixed position.
  - b) Capture a single scene with your camera's AEB exposure bracketing setting. This must consist of at least 3 individual images. The camera must be in a fixed position.
  - c) Take an image using coloured light(ing).
  
- 2) Photoshop: create two photoshop compositions using the images you captured in section (1):
  - a) The first will be a single image encompassing your sequential movement series using (re)sizing, layers, masking and colour adjustments. This image must be exported/saved as a JPG.
  - b) The second composition will be an HDR image using photoshop. This image must be exported/saved as a JPG.

Make sure you take time on your photography and image processing. The standard must be higher than our usual in-class activities! In total, you must hand in 9-13 RAW images for part (a), and 2 JPGs for part (b).

Each student must complete their own assignment, with photos taken specifically for this assignment this semester. All photos from section (a) must be captured in RAW format and with the M 'manual' camera mode.

### Quiz In-class week 13

A short multiple-choice and short answer quiz covering technical course content.

### Midterm presentation In-class week 10

Choose from any of the work you have done to this point in the class (assignment images, or in-class activity images) and briefly discuss what you liked about it, your intentions when creating it, and the techniques you used.

### Final Creative Project: Moments and messages (25%) Due week 14 before class

Using any of the image capture and post processing techniques we went over in class, print a series of 4-8 images, or a 2-4 compositions made from multiple images, of your digital photography/art inspired by the theme of moments and messages. How you interpret the theme(s) is up to you; it could be a look into the past, the future, a personal reflection, or sociopolitical response. However you decide to engage with the theme, make sure your images are deliberate and created with diligence. Take this opportunity to use the digital tools at your disposal to say something; think about the ways in which images can be icons, reveal experience, relate ideas, and express oneself. Think about symbolism and visual storytelling and how these can be incorporated into your work. Consider how layering and transparency can create new meanings/readings.

All projects must be based on original content; all photographs should have been taken by you, specifically for this assignment. If you wish to incorporate an image which you didn't take (ie old family photo) please come talk to me.

#### Additional requirements:

A draft outline/treatment of the project is required. Feedback will be given before starting your final project. Include a ~300 word artist statement. Your statement should go over your inspiration and/or motivation for your project, what you are trying to say with your art, as well as notes on your process and technical methods.

Each student will print and present their final projects to the class, going over their intentions and methods. Digital versions of the projects must be uploaded to Blackboard as well.

Grade breakdown: draft outline 5%, presentation 2.5%, artist statement 2.5%, printed image series 15%.

**Your final project images must be brought by the start of class on the day of our final class and presentations. Failure to do so will trigger an automatic 10% late penalty.**

### Basic Evaluation Criteria

All projects will be graded based on:

- Content, concept, & progress

This includes your depth of exploration of the subject matter, progression of ideas, and the suitability of the work produced as a response to the assignment.

- Technique & presentation

This accounts for your general execution and technical skills proficiency shown in the production, preparation, and presentation of your final work.

- Creativity & originality

Besides the uniqueness of the artist's approach, there is a characteristic of concepts explored in the work that goes above and beyond the basic expectations and requirements.

**All submitted work must be produced during the semester in which the course is taken.** Sampling and use of old media for projects is only allowed when specified.

**You cannot take a picture of someone else's art (ie a painting, sculpture, installation, etc) without 'adding' to its meaning.** For instance, you cannot take a picture of a sculpture of a broken heart and then say, "I took think picture to represent a broken heart."

Inability to present work for scheduled group critiques will result in reduction of presentation marks and subsequent late penalties, however failure to attend critiques without a legitimate reason for your absence could result in a zero for that project. So, even if you did not manage to get your work done on time, do not skip the critique!

Unless otherwise specified, the deadline for assignments is the beginning of class on the day they are due. Extensions may be granted in case of extenuating circumstances, but these must be secured before the due date.

## Course Policies

Late work: Student work submitted after the deadline will receive a deduction of 10% per day. Extensions will be granted in cases of legitimate excuse, and documentation should be emailed to the instructor. Please contact the instructor in advance to arrange an extension.

### AI use course policy:

Students may use generative AI for brainstorming so long as the use of generative AI is referenced and cited. Use of generative AI outside the stated use of brainstorming without citation will constitute academic misconduct in accordance with Student Policy 70. You may not hand in any written work done by AI. It is the student's responsibility to be clear on the limitations for use for each assessment and to be clear on the expectations for citation and reference and to do so appropriately. It is the student's responsibility to ask the instructor for clarity should the need arise.

### Academic Misconduct

As stated in the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, 70, academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, impersonation, improper access to examination materials, falsification or unauthorized modification of an academic document/record, resubmission of work, improper research practices, obstruction of the academic activities of another, and aiding and abetting.

Any work deemed academic misconduct may result in a 50% mark deduction. The case may also be forwarded to the university for further investigation/penalty. For additional information on plagiarism, see: [https://www.ufv.ca/media/assets/office-of-integrity-and-appeals/Student-Academic-Misconduct-\(70\)\\_Regulations-and-Procedures.pdf](https://www.ufv.ca/media/assets/office-of-integrity-and-appeals/Student-Academic-Misconduct-(70)_Regulations-and-Procedures.pdf)

## Course Guidelines

### Communication with Instructor:

Email: If you need to reach out and communicate with me, please email me at [alejandro.yoshizawa@ufv.ca](mailto:alejandro.yoshizawa@ufv.ca). Please **DO NOT** email me with questions that are easily found in the syllabus or on Brightspace (i.e. When is this assignment due? How much is it worth? etc.) but please do reach out about personal, academic, and intellectual concerns/questions. Please ensure your email has a proper greeting, as well as your class and student number.

I will send announcements via Brightspace. You must make sure that your email & announcement notifications are enabled so you do not miss any messages. You are responsible for checking your email and Brightspace inbox with regular frequency.

### Communication with Peers:

With a diversity of perspectives and experience, we may find ourselves in disagreement and/or debate with one another. As such, it is important that we agree to conduct ourselves in a professional manner and that we work together to foster and preserve a classroom environment in which we can respectfully discuss and deliberate controversial questions. I will make every reasonable attempt to create an atmosphere in which each student feels comfortable voicing their argument without fear of being personally attacked, mocked, demeaned, or devalued.

Any behavior (including harassment, sexual harassment, and racially and/or culturally derogatory language) that threatens this atmosphere will not be tolerated. Please alert me immediately if you feel threatened, dismissed, or silenced at any point during our semester together and/or if your engagement in discussion has been in some way hindered by the learning environment.

### Attendance:

VA 180 requires attendance and participation. Poor or irregular attendance (late arrival/early departure) will directly affect your grade; much of your mark depends on good attendance and participation, such as critiques, in-class activities, etc. Please note that department policy states that 5 missed classes, whether avoidable or unavoidable, will automatically result in course failure.

### Accessibility:

Please notify me of any disabilities that you have which may interfere with your learning. I would also encourage you to see an access advisor from the Centre for Accessibility in B202 (Abbotsford Campus) to discuss accommodating services.

### Academic Freedom:

Art-making is a complex and controversial practice, which covers a broad range of topics from a variety of perspectives. The classroom/studio should be considered a place where open discussion of ideas and issues may take place. The points of view expressed by the instructors represent a professional perspective on historical or contemporary art-making practices.

## Publications:

Please note that by enrolling in this class you agree to any and all permissions to have your personal image and or images of works created (in progress or completed) included in UFV print and web-based publications. Students wishing exemption from publication should make their request known to the instructor.

## Course Schedule

Week #	Topic	Classroom / lab
1 (Sept 3)	Course introduction, icebreaker, camera types, digital camera background, why photography? In-class activity: basic image capturing (2)	C1015
2 (Sept 10)	Photography basics (exposure, focus, shutter speed) In-class activity: basic image capturing (2)	C1015
3 (Sept 17)	Basic camera settings, menus, digital image formats, white balance, basic framing and composition In-class activity: image formats and white balance (2)	C1015
4 (Sept 24)	Introduction to Adobe Lightroom (cropping, adjustments, white balance, and colour) In-class activity: Lightroom (3)	C1120
5 (Oct 1)	Intermediate camera functions and setup (shooting modes, drive settings, etc)	C1015
6 (Oct 8)	Introduction to Photoshop (cropping, resizing, colour, enhancements, masks) In-class activity: Photoshop (3)	C1120
7 (Oct 15)	Micro and macro photography, bracketing, HDR In-class activity: macro photography and HDR (2)	C1015
8 (Oct 22)	Intermediate photoshop techniques Lab time In-class activity: Photoshop (2)	C1120
9 (Oct 29)	Final project discussion. Going over project draft/outline. Midterm presentation	C1120
10 (Nov 5)	Digital images: analysis and context Final project draft outline/treatment due	C1015
11 (Nov 12)	Reading week – no class	
12 (Nov 19)	Preparing digital photo files for print; sizing, output, and colour modes Lab time	C1120
13 (Nov 26)	Lab time Quiz	C1120
14 (Dec 3)	Final presentations In-class activity: feedback (1)	C1120

Note: This is a tentative schedule, and subject to change as necessary – monitor the course Brightspace page for current deadlines

## Course materials, labs and equipment:

### Cameras and Audio-video recorders:

Many students may have their own cameras or access to one via a friend or family member. You may also choose to rent a camera or other equipment. There is no “minimum quality” requirement for this course; if you prefer, you can shoot your film on a smartphone. However, this may also be an opportunity to use a dedicated camera.

Modern DSLR or mirrorless cameras can shoot fantastic quality video. Also, there is equipment you can borrow from SoCA, including high quality cameras and other equipment.

The Media Equipment room will be open for regular equipment access. There is an updated registration and reservation system that is all online now. Students will need to first fill out and submit the Loan Agreement. Once that has been processed, students will get an email inviting them to setup their account. Once they have done that, they will be able to go onto the equipment website and reserve equipment.

### SoCA Equipment Loan Rules

#### Booking & Returns

- Equipment must be returned BY THE BOOKING TIME (not just the same day).
- Pickups/returns only: 9:30 am – 4:30 pm, Mon–Fri.
- Closed weekends.

#### Late Return Policy (Strikes)

- Strike 1: Late by 30+ minutes without notice.
  - Strike 2: First overdue notice (1 business day later).
  - Strike 3: Second overdue notice (2 business days later).
- If still not returned within 24 business hours: 1–2 week suspension.

Three separate late returns also = suspension.

Extensions are NOT automatic – case by case only.

#### Contracts & Responsibility

- You must sign the Equipment Loan Agreement.
- Check gear at pickup with staff before signing.
- Once signed, you are responsible for all items.
- Unreturned gear by semester’s end → escalation to Director/Registration.

#### Other Notes

- Normally only one camera per student at a time.
- Batteries, SD cards, lenses are maintained by staff.
- Misuse, neglect, or disregard of rules = suspension.

Detailed instructions are here:

<https://equipment.ufvsoca.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/How-To-Book-SoCA-Media-Equipment.pdf>

The loan agreement is here:

<https://equipment.ufvsoca.ca/soca-equipment-loan-agreement/>

Equipment can be reserved by selecting an equipment category on the sidebar here:

<https://equipment.ufvsoca.ca>

Basic camera and recording functions will be covered in class, but it is your responsibility to read operating manuals and instruction guides for the devices you use. Know how to use your tools!

Software & Laptop/Computers:

Students are free to use whatever editing software they wish. However, I use the Adobe Creative Suite and will demo several of the programs that come with the suite, including Premiere and Audition.

Adobe CC is running on all the iMacs in C1106, C1120, C1122. The door code for this semester is \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions or issues with the equipment borrowing, please contact [soca.equipment@ufv.ca](mailto:soca.equipment@ufv.ca)

**Space/room bookings:**

If you would like to book a room to shoot in, please check out the SOCA space bookings website:

<https://spacebookings.ufvsoca.ca/>