

Photography in the Contemporary World

JU Course Code:	ART 377
SIS Course Code:	ART 377
Subject areas:	Art, Photography, Audiovisual Studies, Mass Communication and Media, Artistic Expression, Cultural Studies, Gender Studies
Language of instruction:	English
Contact hours:	45.00
U.S. semester credits:	3
Appears in JU transcript as:	ART 377: Photography in the Contemporary World

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an approach to photography and photographic language. A theoretical and practical exploration of the uses of photography and how we can use it as a tool for artistic expression, for documentary purposes, or as a key to self-discovery and reaffirmation of personal identity. In this course, we will study existing referents and projects, with a new perspective that, in addition to the standard classic ones, includes authors and projects whose work treats issues that include gender, LGBTBI+, colonialism, and race.

One of the objectives of the course is for students to become familiar with and discover the different sides of Barcelona through photography, so during the course we will attend exhibitions, museums, workshops, and they will be asked to develop a series of photographic reports, with the purpose of bringing them closer to the city, its culture, and its inhabitants, at the same time that they put into practice technical issues of composition, light, color theory, and artistic criteria.

The other objective is the students of the course become able to build a critical exploration of the image, that they learn to read and to generate a complete analysis of the photographs. Throughout the course, each student will work on a personal project of their own choosing, which will be developed as the classes progress, with the help of some guidelines, the corresponding theory and personalized feedback.

*****No prior training required.***

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

Knowledge:

- Comprehend the photographic language in all its forms. How an image is made by choosing what we put in the frame.
- Develop an understanding of composition.

- Learn about the different kinds of light and how to use it to achieve the results that better reflect the concepts they want to express.
- Acquire a general culture on photography, from classic authors to new photographers.
- Becoming familiar with the creative process from the search of references to the presentation of the results.

Analytical:

- Explore and experiment with the various uses of photography, from its documentary and artistic applications to its role in fashion, advertising, content creation, and as a tool for self-discovery.
- Become more critical about the uses of images, as well as their purposes depending on their context.

Affectives:

- Exploring with photography and getting to discover each one's particular point of view and way of seeing what surrounds them.
- Becoming aware of a new culture in a different city and all the different parts that constitute it.
- Learning on how to develop a long-term project that allows each one of the students to express themselves through images.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Digital camera or smartphone with a good quality camera.

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

This course employs a blended teaching methodology to ensure a student centered approach.

- **Lectures:** On one hand, students will learn about theory on the image capture and reading of the image: lighting and exposure, color theory and composition. On the other hand, we will explore different authors who work in different genres within photography.
- **Photo Assignments:** Students are asked to complete a concrete number of assignments, in each of which they will take photographs putting in practice the theory seen in class.
- **Field Study Reports:** During the course, we will visit photography related museums and exhibitions.
- **Photo hunting:** During each **field study** outing, students will be tasked with creating a small photo report after each visit, whether it's to a public place or a museum, to capture the essence of the activity. The teacher will provide a list of generic photos to be taken, turning it into a kind of game.
- **Readings:** During the course, the students are asked to read several texts about theory of the image by different known authors.

COURSE EVALUATION

The evaluation of this course is based on continuous assessment, and students are provided with different assignments throughout the course to ensure constant learning. The breakdown of the final grade is as follows:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| • Class participation | 20% |
| • Field Study Assignment x 4 | 20% |
| • Photo Assignment 1 | 5% |
| • Photo Assignment 2 | 10% |
| • Midterm exam | 20% |

- Final project

25%

FORMS OF ASSESSMENT

Class participation: Class participation in this course involves a positive and respectful attitude, active engagement in discussions, asking questions, contributing ideas, collaborating with peers, and demonstrating preparedness through reading and assignments. It reflects a student's commitment to learning and enhances understanding by integrating diverse perspectives within the classroom environment. Class participation will be evaluated based on these five (5) skills: attitude, engagement, preparedness, and frequency and quality of contributions.

Field Study Assignment: Students will participate in four field study sessions designed to put into practice the concepts and techniques discussed in class. After each session, students must submit short feedback (visual or written) following the in-class guidelines and deadlines.

Midterm exam: The mid-term exam is designed to establish and communicate your progress toward meeting the course learning objectives listed in the syllabus. It consists of three sections: a multiple-choice questions section, a short answer section, and a final analytical section, which could consist of a short essay, an analysis, a reflection, etc. depending on the course content. The exam will test your abilities in 3 important areas of competency: the amount of information you master; the accuracy of the information you present; and the significance you ascribe to the facts and ideas you have integrated across your study in this course.

Photo Assignments:

- **Photo Assignment 1:** Students will complete a first photographic assignment as an initial approach to the city. The subject and guidelines will be provided in class. The assignment must be submitted on the date indicated by the instructor.
- **Photo Assignment 2:** Students will complete a photographic assignment and an accompanying written reflection on a subject selected by the instructor. Specific guidelines will be provided in class. The assignment must be submitted on the date indicated by the instructor.

Final photo project: Students are expected to develop a final photographic project on a theme of your choice. The work should demonstrate both technical and visual skills acquired during the course, while also reflecting your individual interests and perspectives. A written proposal will support the project, outlining your concept, method, and references. A moodboard will also be developed in class to support the visual approach. The final project will be presented to the class during the last sessions of the course.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: FIELD STUDIES AND GUEST LECTURES

Field studies at SIS are crucial as they provide immersive, hands-on learning experiences. They enhance cultural understanding, bridge theory with real-world practice, and foster global perspectives. This experiential learning deepens subject knowledge, develops critical thinking, and enriches personal and academic growth, making education more impactful and memorable. The following field study trips may be organized during this course:

	Field Study Site	Description of activity on site
Field Study Visit 1	MACBA	Exposure Practice
Field Study Visit 2	La Boquería	Light and Color + Composition Practice

Field Study Visit 3	Arc de Triomf	Street Photography
Field Study Visit 4	El Born	Portrait Practice
Field Study Visit 5	Gallery Visit 1: Foto Colectania	Museum visit / Photography exhibition.
Field Study Visit 6	Gallery Visit 2: KBR Fundació MAPFRE	Exhibitions: <i>Helen Levitt</i> and <i>Flama '25</i>
Field Study Visit 7	Gallery Visit 3: CCCB	Exhibition: <i>World Press Photo 2025</i>

N.B. Field study trips may be subject to modification based on the semester, the number of participants, and/or the availability of the activity.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

As a member of the BSAE community, you are expected to be present and on time every day. Attending class has an impact on your learning and academic success. For this reason, **attendance is required** for all your SIS classes, including sessions with field studies. Students should immediately notify their instructor and the Academics Team of any past or future absences, and any accommodations for missed classes, if any, will be determined by the course instructor and the Academics Team. **If a student misses more than 3 classes in any course without justification, 3 percentage points (a third of a letter grade) will be deducted from the final grade for every subsequent absence. If a student reaches 6 absences, this will result in a failing grade.** Students may apply to excuse absences due to hospitalizations, religious observance or family emergencies using this form. [Please see the Academic Student Manual for more information.](#)

LATE-WORK SUBMISSIONS

Students are expected to submit all due assignments in a timely manner to ensure fairness to all students and faculty. Assignments submitted after the deadline may incur a penalty of 10% per day late, up to a maximum of three days. After three days, late work may not be accepted and could result in a grade of zero. Exceptions can be made for documented emergencies or significant personal circumstances, but students must communicate with the instructor as soon as possible. This policy aims to promote good time management skills, accountability, and consistent academic performance while accommodating unforeseen challenges.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

SIS programs foster critical thinking and intellectual development of its students. In doing so, SIS requires that students introduce their original thoughts, opinions, and ideas in all of their assignments with the support of cited sources. Any violations of academic integrity – such as cheating, plagiarism, self-plagiarism, academic misconduct, fabrication, misuse or misrepresentation of research, and noncompliance – may result in an automatic “F” or immediate dismissal from the program if the student falls below the minimum number of credits required for the term; 12 credits during the semester, or 3 hours during the summer.

DEFINITIONS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Use of AI without permission or acknowledgment: A growing concern is the use of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots to write entire essays and articles. While students may use AI tools to enhance learning, such as for research, study

aids, or improving writing skills, please be aware that when this AI-generated information is copied directly to academic assignments, it is considered a form of plagiarism. At SIS, the use of AI to complete assignments, exams, or any form of assessment is strictly prohibited unless explicitly allowed by the instructor. This policy aims to balance the benefits of AI with maintaining academic standards.

Students using AI should be transparent about their use and make sure it aligns with academic integrity. They must disclose any AI assistance used in their work and ensure it complies with course guidelines. Passing off any AI generated content as their own (e.g., cutting and pasting content into written assignments, or paraphrasing AI content) constitutes a violation of SIS Academic Integrity and will result in disciplinary actions.

It is important to note that tools that check writing are okay to use. Examples can include the autocorrect feature in Google Docs and the app Grammarly. These tools, which scan pieces of writing for errors and/or make suggestions for edits, are very different from AI programs that write entire papers. The key difference is that it is the student's own writing that is being scanned for possible mistakes versus AI doing all the writing.

If plagiarism is suspected, a faculty member may need to speak with the student and may ask them to defend their work and/or ask them to complete an alternative assignment to verify the content of your assignment is their own.

Cheating: the act of obtaining credit, attempting to obtain credit, or assisting others to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means:

- Copying, in part or as a whole, from another's test or other evaluation instrument
- Submitting work previously graded in another course or simultaneously presented in two or more courses
- Using or consulting sources, tools, or materials prohibited by the instructor prior to or during an examination;

Plagiarism: Using someone else's words, art, data, or ideas and passing them off as one's own. Cutting and pasting is so easy that many people plagiarize without meaning to. A student may be plagiarizing if they:

- Submit someone else's work as their own.
- Buy a paper from a papermill, website, or other source.
- Cut and paste together phrases, ideas, and sentences from a variety of sources to write an essay
- Copy words, art, or data from someone else's work--published or unpublished--without giving the original author credit.
- Use an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot to write their paper for them.

Self-Plagiarism: Submitting a piece of one's own work to receive credit for multiple assignments in one or more classes.

Academic Misconduct: Any act that impedes or threatens the open exchange, expression, or flow of information or fair evaluation of students. This includes intimidation and complicity in any acts or attempts to interfere with the ethical and fair submission and evaluation of student work.

Fabrication: Providing inaccurate or false information, including research findings, quotes, and cited sources, etc.

Non-Compliance: Failure to comply with the values, objectives, and procedures contained in this policy.

As SIS is accredited by Jacksonville University, students are held accountable to JU's Academic Integrity and Code of Conduct. You are expected to read and understand the JU terms and regulations of Academic Misconduct.

FINAL GRADES REVIEW AND GRADE APPEAL

It is understood that students may have questions about their grades. Most can easily be answered through consultation with the instructor. In the event that a student feels they have been treated unfairly, in that an instructor has deviated from their prescribed formula for grading in an arbitrary or punitive manner, the student may appeal the final course grade. For more information, please consult the [Student Academic Manual](#).

Please note, **grade appeals are not intended as a means for students to improve or negotiate their grades**. They are reserved solely for cases involving administrative errors, calculation mistakes, or grading that is inconsistent with the stated course policies or criteria. Appeals must be based on evidence of such errors and not on dissatisfaction with the outcome or a desire for a higher grade.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Within the School for International Studies (SIS), students, faculty, and staff are committed to working together to create and maintain an inclusive and equitable learning environment. This environment – which may be understood as both in the classroom and associated class excursions/field studies, as well as online course activities – is one in which the diversity of identities, lived experiences, and backgrounds of all learners are treated with dignity and respect at all times (including but not limited to: sex, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, genetics, language, religion, political affiliation, mental or/and physical disability, age, and sexual orientation).

Furthermore, an inclusive and equitable learning environment recognizes the need for resources and reasonable accommodations for all learners to fully participate and be positioned for academic success. As such, the following are available to students at SIS:

- Academic accommodations
- Mental health: mentors + professional services
- Bias reporting form

Participants are encouraged to complete this [bias form](#) to report any incidents they witness, and will be guided through support options.

TENTATIVE COURSE CONTENT

N.B. Course schedule and field studies are subject to change. The final duration and distribution of content and assignments will be determined and presented to students at the onset of the course.

COURSE SESSIONS AND CONTENT	
SESSION	CONTENT
1	Introduction to Course. First inspirations and photography references.
2	How has photography changed? New visions in contemporary photographic culture
3	The camera: history, functioning and formats. The focusing modes. The editing software: basic information

4	Histories of photography and critical debates
5	Gallery Visit 1 – Foto Colectania
6	Critique 1: Analysis and feedback: Photo Assignment 1
7	The capture of an image. Metering modes. Exposure modes. Using Manual Mode and the Exposure Triangle
8	Field Study 1 – Exposure Practice
9	The light. Color and black-and-white photography
10	Framing. The rules of composition. Photo-analysis
11	Gallery Visit 2 – KBr Fundación MAPFRE
12	Field Study 2 - Light and Color + Composition Practice
13	Midterm Exam
14	Street Photography. Exploring the urban space.
15	Gallery Visit 3 – CCCB
16	Field Study 3 - Street Photography Practice
17	Critique 2: Analysis and feedback: Photo Assignment 2
18	Portrait Photography. Representation of the human condition
19	Field Study 4 - Portrait Practice
20	Photography Project: Moodboard / Photography & AI
21	Tutoring: Individual meetings to discuss the final project
22	Guest speaker. Presentation by a professional photographer sharing insight into the work's creative and practical decisions
23	Final Personal Project: Presentations I
24	Final Personal Project: Presentations II

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Required Readings:



Available in PDF on Moodle

- Barthes, R., *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2010, pp. 10-15, 25-28.
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