



F O U N D A T I O N S O F
P H O T O J O U R N A L I S M

180 Syllabus

Hello & Welcome

Course Information

Room CA 60
180.2 MW 9:20 - 11:05AM
180.3 MW 3:35 - 5:20PM

Professor

Ligaiya Romero
ligaiya@unc.edu
ligaiya.com

Office Hours

Office // CA 79
Tuesdays 1-5PM

Please try and meet with me during office hours, but if you cannot I will be happy to schedule an appointment.

Required Text

Photojournalism: A Professional's Approach
by Ken Kobre

Grade Breakdown

A = 93-100% / A- = 90-92%
B+ = 87-89% / B = 83-86%
B- = 80-82% / C+ = 77-79%
C = 73-76% / C- = 70-72%
D+ = 67-69% / D = 60-66%
F = less than 60%

Your final grade will be determined out of a 1000 point scale:

Assignments - 550 points
Final Project - 350 points
Participation - 100 points

Courtesy

BE ON TIME.
Please turn off and put away phones.
Please use laptops and class computers for in-class exercises only.

This syllabus is flexible.
Be prepared for change.

“The single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.... Show a people as one thing — as only one thing — over and over again, and that is what they become.... How [stories] are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told — are really dependent on power.... Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.”

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

The Danger of a Single Story

F O U N D A T I O N S O F P H O T O J O U R N A L I S M

180 Syllabus

Welcome to Foundations of Photojournalism. In this course we will seek to strengthen your foundation of technical and journalistic skills, and help guide you into leveraging the power of visual storytelling to engage and affect your community.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To help you learn how to effectively use your 35mm cameras.
2. To help you understand what makes a good photograph in terms of (1) content; (2) composition/aesthetics; (3) ethics.
3. To help you acquire and develop the intellectual, technical and analytical skills of visual journalism communication.
4. To help you understand the all-important contribution of the idea to the photograph - the critical element that separates the picture taker from the picture maker.

MAJOR TOPICS

Camera Mechanics
Equivalent Exposure
Idea Generation
Caption Writing
Depth of Field
Light
Composition/Design
Portraits
Picture Stories
Story Research and Proposal
Action/Motion
Ethics, Laws
Building a Portfolio
Photojournalism History

In addition to these subjects, guest speakers may visit to talk about their work in the communications photography field. Some flexibility in the schedule has been worked in to accommodate speakers and other events that may arise.

EXPECTATIONS

It is a tremendous privilege to be able to share people's lives and tell their stories. With this privilege comes a responsibility for accuracy, accountability, commitment and hard work. Deep listening and critical thinking are essential to challenging systems of oppression and narratives of power.

Effective documentary storytelling is impossible without a commitment to get beyond the surface – to spend time, do the research, build relationships and design an impact strategy. The “quick-hit” approach, projecting an incomplete and stereotypical understanding of a given subject, is sadly prevalent in today's media. The antidote is time and an unselfish commitment to truth – and this is what it will take to succeed in this class.

I am here as your guide. My goal is to create an environment in which your potential can explode. I will facilitate discussion, offer difficult questions and feedback, challenge weak or oppressive narratives, and support your learning process.

Take ownership of your work and your process. Be open, be a humble learner. Be actively involved in class conversations and exercises.

I expect professionalism in all areas including presentation, caption writing, and **ethics**. More than anything, I hope you leave this class with the ability to think critically about everyday narratives of power – and how visual storytelling can feed systems of oppression, or dismantle them.

Finally, the key to success in this class is consistency. Keep working and working hard. Push the boundaries. And keep

up with all assignments. This is a labor-intensive course. Learning through action.

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

- 35mm Single Lens Reflex (SLR) digital camera that allows you to manually set the f/stops and shutter speeds
- A lens (35mm or 50mm lenses are good and relatively cheap, but others are possible)
- The school has some equipment available for checkout (a Canon Rebel kit). Other equipment may be available. Checkout will be done by Matt Bachman (office on the second floor, 239): hours are posted.
- Portable harddrive to archive your photography
- Camera Flash Card, at least 16 GB (these are not available from Checkout)

NOTE

It is required that you have your own DSLR camera body and basic lens by the time you take the advanced courses.

PHOTOGRAPHY ASSIGNMENTS

You will complete two shooting exercises, six shooting assignments, a written picture story proposal, and your final project: The Picture Story. Each assignment will have written captions and a written self-evaluation.

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on their due date. You must be present to receive a grade. Any assignments turned in after that will receive a grade of 0. This will be strictly enforced with no exceptions. You will have the opportunity to reshoot 2 of your assignments.

Weekly photography assignments receive the most weight toward your final grade. Take them seriously. One zero on these assignments could be disastrous. If you must miss a

“What we often miss in character-driven films designed to build empathy towards individuals is an understanding of the structures and narratives that shape our attitudes and behaviors towards entire communities....

It is time those in the documentary film community concerned with social change move beyond using film to simply build empathy, and instead think about how film can serve the harder, messier, but ultimately more transformational work of building solidarity.”

Sonya Childress

Beyond Empathy

class (for legitimate excuses cleared by me first) you must turn in your assignment the day it is due to receive a grade.

Each assignment will be discussed in class and critiqued (See Critiques below). When appropriate, a handout will be provided outlining the requirements for the assignment. And, when feasible, practical demonstrations will be performed to guide you along the way.

IMPORTANT

No photographs taken before the semester begins will be accepted. You cannot begin shooting an assignment until I give out the assignment sheet in class. Also, this is a documentary and journalistic photography class. That means - except for still lifes and portraits - you may not “set up” or “stage” pictures. No “posing” subjects.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

It is critical that you attend every class. You CANNOT miss a class in order to shoot an assignment. You must be in class to present your work for critique. Turning in an assignment on the server does not count as a turn-in. Part of your completion of the assignment is the critique.

You will be allowed 2 un-excused absences – after that 2 percentage points will be deducted from your FINAL GRADE. If your semester average is 91% and you miss 3 classes, your final average would be 89% and so on. Use your 2 wisely. The exception to this policy will be a serious medical condition.

PHOTO NIGHTS

PhotoNight is a monthly speaker series that is held usually on the last Tuesday of every month. Presentations are from 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Attendance at PhotoNight is considered part of the class and is mandatory and will be recorded. Attendance will count according to the guidelines above.

FINAL GRADE BREAKDOWN

Exercises		Possible Points
01 Vision	In Class	NA
02 Depth of Field, Motion and Flash	In Class	NA
Assignments		
Portfolio 1		
03 F22	In Field	50
04 Composition	In Field	100
05 Light	In Field	100
06 Moment	In Field	100
Portfolio 2		
07 Feature	In Field	100
08 Sports Package	In Field	100
Final Project		
09 Story Ideas		50
09 Story Edit		50
09 Final Picture Story		200
09 Impact Evaluation		50
Participation		
		100
Total		1000

GRADE DETERMINATION

The grading will be rigorous. You will turn in full shoots, and it will be quite easy to see how much effort you put into the assignment. How much you experiment, explore and try will be considered in the grading. If you shoot for only 30 minutes your grade will reflect that. If you do multiple shoots, varying angles, lenses, locations, trying to improve, your grade will reflect that as well.

For the purposes of this class, I am the photo editor, and I will evaluate your work based on image quality, technical skills, content, ethics and aesthetics.

I will do my best to be fair and accurate, but to do this there must be some very specific guidelines and boundaries. Here they are:

1. Assignments are due at the minute class begins (and on the server by the designated time) on the due date!
2. Any assignment not turned in will receive zero points.
3. Class participation is critical to success in this course.

Remember this is a journalism course, and the key is communication and connection. We will define all of this during class.

CRITIQUES

Our goal: to discover what makes a good picture, to uncover the highs and lows, the good and bad, to prepare you to go out time after time and make images that communicate.

Critiques are essential to growth. I want active participation from everyone. We all owe each other our full attention, honest feedback, and thoughtful discussion.

The critiques need to be constructive. You can be tough without tearing each other apart. Find the balance, and, when

in doubt take the higher road. When receiving a critique of your work, you need to maintain a similar balance. There is a fine line between defending your position and making excuses. Don't be so connected to your work that you lose sight of how it could be better.

QUIZZES

There may be quizzes covering information discussed in class and from your text. These quizzes will be given at the beginning of class and cannot be made up. I will not always announce the quizzes, so you need to be prepared for each class by going over the class/lab materials and readings from the previous weeks. Knowing and understanding this material will better prepare you to make better pictures.

HOW DO YOU SUCCEED IN THIS CLASS?

- Be on time • Be prepared to learn, listen, participate and contribute • Listen and respect what I and your fellow students say • Manage your resources - your money and your time. • Be honest. Admit your errors. No excuses • Be positive • Bury your pride. Now is the time to learn, and most learning occurs in difficult times. Do not fear failure • Help each other

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM ME?

- I will be honest and direct • You will have my full attention and thorough feedback in class. • I will be available during office hours and flexible for other appointments • I want you to succeed • As you might observe from the above syllabus, this class requires much work. But that's okay! If you apply yourself, you will experience visible growth in your storytelling abilities, and that can be so rewarding. I look forward to working with you this semester!

HONOR CODE

Students will operate within the requirements of the honor code. All work must be your own, must be done specifically for this class, and should be done with the high level of honesty and integrity that this University demands.

ACEJMC

The School of Media and Journalism's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program.

Learn more here:

<http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps>

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on:

- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

INCLUSIVE AND ACCEPTING SPACE

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

The University's Statement

UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities based on age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

The School of Media and Journalism Diversity and Inclusion

Mission and Vision Statements with accompanying goals can be found at this site:

<http://www.mj.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion>.