

Syllabus Copied and Pasted from Sakai Site, please excuse formatting inconsistencies

MEJO 180: Foundations in Photojournalism

Fall 2020 Instructor: Peter Hoffman

Office: Zoom Room # <https://unc.zoom.us/j/97856865991>

Email: Ptrgbrl@live.unc.edu

5:00-6:45 PM / Asynchronous optional

**I check email at least once daily Mon-Fri, usually in the afternoon/evening.

Zoom Office Hours: **W 3:00 - 4:30 - by appointment. Other times may be available depending on request.**

Required Texts and Equipment:

Book: Kenneth Kobre - Photojournalism: The Professional's Approach (6th edition is fine)

Hardware and Software:

- Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) or MILC (Mirrorless interchangeable lens) digital camera that allows you to manually set the f/stops and shutter speeds
- A lens (a 50 mm is a good and relatively cheap general lens, but others are possible) •
- Camera Flash Card, at least 16 GB (these are not available from Checkout)
- A subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud, activated and ready to go with Lightroom Classic CC and Photoshop downloaded. This is provided by the university.

Start here and put in a student order: <https://software.sites.unc.edu/adobe/>

- A digital subscription to AT LEAST the New York Times - other newspapers are encouraged. The New York Times Subscription is provided by the university.

Start here: <https://guides.lib.unc.edu/nyt-academic-pass>

Recommended!

Portable Harddrive to archive your photography - 250 gig is a good place to start. Best practices recommend all raw digital photos are stored on at least 2 hard drives at all time (your computer's hard drive, your external hard drive), and that portfolio worthy work is also stored on the cloud.

[Access the Wall Street Journal](#) (no pictures unfortunately)

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Class Format:

This class will be online only and will combine mostly synchronous meetings with the option to access them outside of assigned class hours. All scheduled Zoom meetings will be indicated on the course calendar. These meetings are subject to change. If we do not have a synchronous meeting on a particular day I will update the calendar to reflect that.

We will meet synchronously during assigned class times often, but not always - depending on the lessons and current assignment load of the course.

Most class meetings will be used for lectures, discussions, critiques and student presentations. Lectures, discussions and critiques will be recorded and will be uploaded for later viewing through Warpwire (see toolbar). *You may not download or share course materials outside of this online course.

Course materials can be accessed using the Lessons, Resources and Course Reserves tabs.

Attendance Policy:

Simply put - attendance is important for your learning - additionally it is crucial for feeling connected to the online course and to your peers in the course. You will get out of it what you put into it.

This being said, I understand many of you are taking this course under circumstances that may not always allow for synchronous attendance. Because of this, I am not demanding attendance but rather will further emphasize how present you are in the class under the participation grade. Your presence in the course could come in the form of more active forum participation, if for example, you struggle to attend our synchronous meetings.

Most important are critiques (see for more info in the critiques section) where you will show your work. Please do everything you can to attend critique days as they are crucial for not just your own development, but the development of your peers.

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Primary Course Objectives

- To help you learn how to effectively use your ILC (SLR/MILC) Digital cameras.
- To help you understand what makes a good photojournalistic image in terms of (1) content; (2) composition/aesthetics; (3) technical quality.
- To help you acquire and develop the intellectual, technical and analytical skills of visual journalism communication.
- 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.
- To engage in thoughtful discussions about the ethics of photojournalism, including, but not limited to the act of mindfully recognizing and considering one's own position and subjectivity in the construction of the documentary image, and to acknowledge and address issues of within representation in the journalism industry.

Major topics we will cover include:

- Camera mechanics
- Equivalent Exposure
- Idea generation
- Caption Writing

- Depth of field
- Light
- Composition/Design
- Portraiture
- Picture Stories
- Story research and proposal
- Action/Motion
- Ethics, Laws
- Building a beginning portfolio
- Photojournalism and Documentary Photography History

In addition to these subjects, we may have guest speakers 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.

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.

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Exercises and Assignments / Grade Breakdown:

You will complete:

Four introductory lessons (one of which involves making photographs) (various points assigned)

Five dedicated photography assignments. (60 points each)

Two Photographer Presentations (50 points each)

Final Project (Proposal, Check-In and final Picture Story)

Reading Responses throughout the semester

Participation (in class, in small groups and in discussion forums)

Extra Credit

Total

If you need clarification about specific grade points assigned please see the course gradebook for more details.

The grading scale for this course is as follows:

Grade scale:

- A = 93-100% / A- = 90-92.999%
- B+ = 87-89.999% / B = 83-86.999%
- B- = 80-82.999% / C+ = 77-79.999%
- C = 73-76.999% / C- = 70-72.999%
- D+ = 67-69.999% / D = 60-66.999%
- F = less than 60%

Please note that each grade's minimum is the full, round number listed and grades are not rounded up. For example, a 79.876 is a C+. In extenuating circumstances or in circumstances where a student has demonstrated exceptional growth or effort, the instructor may decide to round up, but grade complaints about borderline marks will not be entertained.

Introductory Assignments: (150 total points)

The initial assignments and lessons are intended to familiarize you with the concept of photojournalism, the technical aspects of this course, the technical aspects of the camera, and to encourage your own curiosity about the medium and to provide opportunities for you to embark on some initial research.

This is also the time to work out any technical issues you may have before the more demanding photographic assignments come due.

The first few weeks and assignments are weighted as a slightly lower portion of your grade. They include short presentations and posts on Sakai.

Photography Assignments (300 Total Points)

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on their due date. We will go over the details of submitting the work, but for each assignment your "select" image(s) will be posted in the forums, and your full take of images will be submitted to me via the dropbox tool.

As a matter of course late photography assignments are not accepted! You will get a 0. I repeat, late assignments will receive a "0" grade. If you have extenuating circumstances, you must email me prior to the deadline.

Weekly photography assignments, combined with your final compromise more than half of your final grade. Take them seriously. One zero on these assignments can noticeably affect your grade.

Each photo assignment will comprise of two or more class sessions. To introduce the assignment your instructor will show and discuss relevant example works. Once the assignment has been completed, we will critique the work. Critiques in this class may take various forms - they may be instructor led discussions, they may consist of small groups working together, and they will usually consist of both synchronous class time and written feedback provided to classmates on the discussion forums.

Each assignment will be posted with information outlining the requirements for the assignment. 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 photography class. That means - except for images where the construction of a scene is expected by viewers and part of the point - still life and portrait images - you may not set up or stage pictures. No posing or coaching subjects. No manipulating the scenes, no retouching. Please see the NPPA Code of Ethics for more <https://nppa.org/code-ethics>

Photographer Presentations: 100 Total Points

During the semester, each student will complete 2 research presentations on an historically relevant photojournalist or documentary photographer of their choice.

Presentations will generally occur during class and will be 5-8 minutes long and will require an unstyled list of sources on the final slide (a list of links is fine).

More details will be provided when the presentations are assigned.

Final Project - The Picture Story (250 Total Points)

Your final project will consist of an idea generation/pitch phase, a check-in phase during the course of the work being completed, and the delivery of the final product. It will be a picture story consisting of multiple photographs that work together to tell a story. Editing

Class Presence (200 Total Points).

- Your class participation grade will be out of 100 points. Participation comes in the form of attendance and speaking during Zoom discussions and critiques, as well as contributions to the forums where student work is posted. Demonstrating consistent engagement with the materials and with your classmates is critical! As an instructor I cannot always chase you down if I don't hear from you for a period of time, however if you do not attend our course and do not post on the forum your grade will likely suffer for that time period. If you are having difficulties or have encountered extenuating circumstances that prevent you from fully engaging please email me and I will work to accommodate you as best I can.
- Your reading, film and speaker responses will make up the remaining 100 points. Each time a reading, film, or guest speaker is assigned you will respond with a 2 paragraph reflection submitted before the assigned deadline via the Assignments tab. Most of the readings will come from the textbook, however some may come from outside sources. I will always provide the extra readings or films.

About Critiques

What is a critique?

For our purposes, it is a critical discussion of the images that you and your classmates make. Our goal is to discover what makes a good picture, to uncover the highs and lows, the good and bad, to prepare you to go out and make images that communicate better the next time. Critiques are essential to growth. I want involvement from everyone and the critiques need to be constructive. Remember, you are not your work. You are a full, holistic being, and the work you create is only one facet of who you are, so by separating your self worth from your work can lead to productive feedback sessions. There is 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. Will the feedback you get always be useful? No. Will you sometimes strongly disagree with others about what makes a good picture? Yes. Does a critique provide a concrete way to make better work every single time? No - but as a collection of feedback sessions over time they will help you immensely!

A critique is best thought of as an opportunity to see how others react to your work. The response of the audience will tell you how your work is being received. It is up to you to decide if your work is being received as intended. Critiques help you work towards a clearer form of communication.

I will take more of a lead on critiques at the beginning of the semester, but I expect to see more participation towards the end of the semester. I may change the method of critiques from time to time, depending on how class goes. This includes the length of time spent on them and the requirements regarding participation.

Grading Philosophy

The grading will be rigorous, but I will do my best to match my grading to your learning. When it comes to the photographic assignments, 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. The best way to get a good grade in this class is to invest considerable time and effort on each assignment. A sure way to get a low grade is to wait to the last minute and not give the assignment - not to mention the people you are photographing - the attention deserved. If you come into this class already knowing some basics about photography, resist the temptation to

“phone it in” - I can tell, and will grade accordingly. *Effort* is the most important factor in assessing an assignment.

Although this is a subjective world (how do you define quality?), there still must be a final say, and that is where we come in. Your work will be evaluated on image quality, technical skills, content, ethics and aesthetics. Remember this is a journalism course, and the key is communication and connection. We will define all of this during class.

Grades can get in the way of deep learning, and true learning requires an environment in which one can experiment and make mistakes (If you’re going to fail, fail creatively!) Recognizing this, you will have the opportunity to reshoot two of your assignments. These will be due in the last few weeks of class.

Social Media

As instructor, I do not follow any students or respond to communication through any SM platforms. Please keep all course related communication to the Sakai platform or through e-mailing me.

Inclusive and Accepting Space

First of all, everyone is welcome here. Bigotry and sexism are not welcome here. We may have difficult discussions in this class, and as that happens I want everyone to be mindful of the power of words and how they can impact others. Simply, be thoughtful of others and be aware that your own experiences that inform your words may be very different from others. As students, your job is to think critically about the discussion and if you have strong feelings about it, to use well reasoned arguments to communicate this. If a particular discussion makes you uncomfortable you are free to leave the classroom, provided you communicate about this with the instructor later.

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. If you can, change the handle of your Zoom screen to reflect your preferred name. Either way, please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records. My preferred pronouns are he/him/his.

As instructor, I do my best to exclude personal politics from the class, just as I do when I am working as a journalist. My job is to teach you how to make pictures, and to foster relevant, healthy and valuable discussion along the way. In addition, I want you to see how strong, interrogative journalism plays a role in letting the public make up their own mind about the issues of the day. That said, I am still a person with a subjective position like anyone else, so my point of view will necessarily be reflected in my teaching to some extent.

Seeking Help

If you need individual assistance, it’s your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness. While there is a designated time for Zoom office hours I will do my best to accommodate you if you cannot meet during the assigned times.

Diversity

The University’s policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin <http://www.unc.edu/ugradbulletin/>. 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 on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Special Accommodations

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Department of Disability Services website at <http://disabilityservices.unc.edu/>

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. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean C. A. Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

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.

SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to change and adjustment throughout the semester. Please refer to lessons and the assignments tab for more specifics. This is provided as a rough outline with regards to how we will proceed throughout the semester.

Class	Topics
01 Aug 10 M	Review syllabus, intros and purchase books
02 Aug 12 W	We will review procuring Adobe CC, NYT, Camera, Flash Card and make the first practice Fo before the next course. Visions will also be assigned.
03 Aug 17 M	DUE: Visions and discussion
04 Aug 19 W	The Camera/Exposure, Digital workflow, Assign: F22
05 Aug 24 M	More discussion of digital workflow - exposure/lenses and Depth of Field
06 Aug 26 W	DUE: f22/Critique
07 Aug 31 M	Introduce Composition
08 Sept 2 W	Camera, Exposure, Depth of Field - DUE: In Class Forum Posting Exercise.
09 Sept 7 M NO CLASS	
10 Sept 9 W	DUE: Composition/Critique / Discuss Light & Portrait
11 Sept 14 M	Intro to the Picture Story - Final Project
12 Sept 16 W	DUE: Light and Portrait/Critique
13 Sept 21 M	The Moment
14 Sept 23 W	The Feature Picture
15 Sept 28 M	DUE: The Moment: Critique
16 Sept 30 W	DUE: Picture Story Ideas
17 Oct 5 M	Photographer Presentations
18 Oct 7 W	Photographer Presentations
19 Oct 12 M	DUE: The Feature Picture/Critique
20 Oct 14 W	Motion, Blur, Panning, Sports Package
21 Oct 19 M	DUE: Picture Story Proposal
22 Oct 21 W	The Picture Story continued / Guest Speaker?
23 Oct 26 M	DUE: Sports/Action Critique
24 Oct 28 W	Overflow critique/etc day.
25 Nov 2 M	Photographer Presentations
26 Nov 4 W	Photographer Presentations
27 Nov 9 M	Open - Flash/Shelby Lee Adams Film/Etc?
28 Nov 11 W	DUE: Check in 1 for Final Project (10 images)
29 Nov 16 M	Continued Discussion of Final Projects

Tues Nov 24, 4 PM Final Projects Due, Class Debrief