

ART 331 JACKSON HOLE PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP

Professor: Michael Sherwin
Email: misherwin@mix.wvu.edu
Phone: 304-293-3839
Cell: 304-680-6142

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

West Virginia University's Jackson Hole Photography Workshop is a 10-day intensive field course that explores the diverse and remote region of northwestern Wyoming. The workshop uses the town of Jackson, Wyoming as its home base. Daily excursions exploring this stunning region are complemented by darkroom and digital work sessions, critiques of work in progress, gallery visits, and evening presentations. The program is limited in size to insure a close working relationship with the faculty and a significant amount of one-on-one attention.

COURSE CONTENT:

The workshop covers a broad range of photographic practices and principles with an emphasis on instruction targeted to the individual level of the student. Primary instruction is done with digital and 35mm film cameras, and color inkjet or black and white darkroom processes. Students will also have the potential to explore work in medium and large format cameras, and mixed media processes. In addition, required readings and discussions on the history, culture and environment of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, will add dimension to the students' exploration of a new geography.

Throughout the ten-day workshop, students will be encouraged to experiment with various forms of image making, developing creative approaches to the medium in order to create unique individual expressions in response to space and place. Subject matter can vary from concepts that pertain to interpretation of the landscape, to intimate nature studies, to social documentary and portraiture. Among the locations visited during the workshop are Grand Teton National Park, Yellowstone National Park, the National Elk Refuge, the historic Mormon Row homestead site, an authentic western rodeo, and a variety of neighboring locations.

Lectures and demonstrations will cover basic camera operations (both digital and film), beginning to advanced Adobe Photoshop techniques, black and white film processing and printing, custom inkjet printing, and more. In addition, there will be several presentations and technical demonstrations by professional artists working in the field and a tour of the galleries in town.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Apply an understanding of the principles of control in photography: camera, composition and control of light.
- Apply an understanding of the technical aspects and use of traditional and/or digital darkroom equipment.
- Design and produce a successful portfolio of select images using traditional and/or digital methods.
- Execute and present work in such a way that yields successful communicative results.

GRADING:

Attendance/Participation	50%	A = 90-100%
Presentation	10%	B = 80-90%
Final Portfolio	40%	C = 70-80%
TOTAL	100%	D = 60-70%

EVALUATION:

- A = exceptional work in which the student shows that he or she has firmly grasped and achieved objectives and expectations of the course (excellent)
- B = very good work and considerable grasp of the essentials of the course (above average)
- C = good work and a useable grasp of the essentials of the course (average, acceptable)
- D = definite, but not necessarily coherent, knowledge of the course (below average)
- F = student has not achieved even a minimum grasp of the essentials of the course or failure to withdraw officially from the course (failure on multiple levels)

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:

Attendance and participation is the most important aspect of this course. Attendance is mandatory and essential for learning and understanding the techniques introduced throughout the ten-day workshop. Attendance and participation includes: photo shoots, lab sessions, reading discussions, evening artist lectures, and a group gallery tour.

There will be many photo shoots scheduled throughout the ten-day workshop. You are required to participate in these photo shoots. ***If you miss two photo shoots your grade in the class will be automatically deducted one letter. Three or more unexcused absences will result in automatic failure.***

There will also be several lab sessions at various times throughout the ten-day workshop. You are required to show up to every lab session. ***If you fail to participate in a lab session your grade in the class will be automatically deducted one letter.*** Simply showing up to lab sessions with nothing to work on is equivalent to marking you absent. The lab sessions are absolutely critical to the success of your work. You will be evaluated on your commitment to your work and overall improvement throughout the ten-day workshop.

There will be several evening artist presentations and a tour of the photo galleries in town. You are required to attend all of these events. ***If you fail to attend an artist presentation, or the gallery tour, your grade in the class will be automatically deducted one letter.***

Finally, it is important to note that our time in the field is equivalent to time spent in the classroom. ***Cell phone use is not permitted in the field.*** Engaged participation in all course outings is expected and will be noted. **Excessive distractions and otherwise apathetic attitudes will be detrimental to your final grade.**

READING & DISCUSSIONS:

The Jackson Hole Photography Workshop reader is the only required text for the course. The Reader is organized into sections, including: Introduction, History, Culture and Environment. We will have planned discussions based on the required readings during our stay in Jackson. Please see the schedule for further details. It is your responsibility to be prepared for these discussions and to provide your own constructive, thoughtful input to the conversation.

PRESENTATION:

On the final day of the workshop, students will present on the work they have created over the course of the ten days. The final images will be projected in digital format. Students should be prepared to discuss their techniques and choices along with the content of the images. ***If you fail to participate in this presentation it will result in automatic failure.***

FINAL PORTFOLIO:

For your final portfolio you will submit up to 20 of your best images from the workshop on a CD or jumpdrive. If your shooting film, you will need to scan the film or prints and include them on the CD. All the images need to be flattened jpegs saved at the highest quality setting. You may want to think of it in terms of a completed body of work, which communicates an idea or concept, rather than a technical exercise. Your work will be critiqued and assessed according to its creative value as well as technical strength. In other words, aesthetic concerns, content, and individual creativity in photography will be as important as your knowledge of its mechanics.

SAFETY:

Due to the nature of this course, there is some assumed risk involved. The town of Jackson, Wyoming is situated at over 6,500 ft. elevation. Most of our excursions will be at an even higher elevation, reaching 11,000 ft. at the highest. You may experience some symptoms of altitude sickness, including: fatigue, dizziness, dehydration, upset stomach, and a bloody nose. Please be sure to drink plenty of water and

slow down if you begin feeling any of these symptoms. There will also be opportunities for hiking in the area depending on your interest. The area surrounding Jackson is an extreme vertical environment and it's up to you to gauge your conditioning level.

The photo lab is a chemical lab. As such, safe handling of the chemistry is required at all times. No part of your body should ever come in contact with the chemicals. You should use tongs or gloves (preferably nitrile) at all times. The Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are available on request.

FINAL NOTES:

The area surrounding Jackson, Wyoming is a truly special and magical kind of place. It is the largest, most intact, pristine wilderness area in the lower 48 states. It is very important that you respect every detail of the spaces and places we will be exploring. Lower your voice, open your eyes and ears, mind your manners, tread lightly and leave no trace!

SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENTS:

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to foster a nurturing learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin.

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course please make arrangements to meet with me concerning your needs by the end of the first week of classes and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700).

The schedule and procedures in this course are subject to change in the event of circumstances beyond the instructor's control.