

TAMALPAIS UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
Larkspur, California

Course of Study

PHOTOGRAPHY 1

1-Semester Course
Fine Arts Department
Grades 9-12

Course Description:

This hands-on, project-based class is intended for the newcomer to the art and craft of photography. Students learn basic camera use and print production using both digital and film cameras. Students learn to clarify the subject matter, light, and composition in their work and create a portfolio of images. A basic history of photography is taught through presentations, films, and activities.

Learning Outcomes: The student will:

Technical <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learn basic camera operation• Learn film development & darkroom printmaking• Learn basic digital editing & print production• Learn & practice proper photographic craftsmanship	Visual <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a portfolio of personally-generated images• Clarify the subject matter in their work• Clarify and explore the use of light in their work• Create visually balanced and unified compositions in their work
Critical & Historical <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critically analyze their work and the work of others• Learn a basic history of photography	21st Century Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use <i>critical thinking</i> and <i>problem-solving</i> to select, edit, and produce photographic imagery• Learn to <i>communicate</i> in a visual language• Practice <i>creativity</i> in the production of original work• Practice <i>risk-taking</i> in the exploration of a new medium.

Course Materials: The district supplies all darkroom and digital materials required to complete the course. The student should supply their own camera. Cameras are available for check out to any student in need.

Prerequisites: Completion of Art Explorations

Completion Credit: This course satisfies 5 units of the district's 10 unit fine arts graduation requirement. This course is accepted as the UC "F" requirement for admission purposes.

Appendices

Course Overview

Unit 1: Pinhole Photography

In this introductory unit, students create pinhole cameras and use them to make darkroom photographs. Students practice physical craftsmanship in the construction of their camera and learn the basic principles of the negative/positive photographic process. Additionally, they learn to create prints using the darkroom and photographic chemistry.

Unit 2: Exploring Subject Matter

In this unit, students learn to make photographs with clear subject matter. In photography terms this is called creating a “center of interest.” Students learn to choose subjects with high personal and visual interest that will anchor the meaning of their photographs. They additionally learn to edit out any elements that distract from this simple communication. Students learn to use their digital camera in this unit including: focusing, ISO-setting, light-metering modes, color-balance, shutter speed and aperture setting, etc.

Unit 3: Exploring Light

In this unit, students learn to make photographs with clarified light. Students learn to choose the essential direction to point their camera in relation to the image light-source to clearly show their subject. Students explore how light affects the emotional and intellectual quality of their images. They also learn to see shadow and apply it meaningfully in their pictures. Students continue to practice the clarification of subject matter in this unit.

Unit 4: Exploring Composition

In this unit, students learn to make photographs with balanced and unified compositions. They explore concepts including: abstraction, symmetry and asymmetry, off-center of interest, leading lines, etc. Students learn to use the rectangle of the picture border. They continue to apply clarified subject matter and light in this unit.

Unit 5: Final Portfolio

In this summary unit, students create a portfolio of personally chosen images based on the theme of their choice. The student demonstrates their ability to take pictures with clear subjects, clarified light, and unified and proper compositions. Additionally, the student learns to make these images in a series based on a unified visual theme.

Ongoing Unit: The History of Photography

Throughout the course, students see presentations regarding the history of photography. They complete follow-along worksheets while participating in a lecture/discussion of the content. The sequence covers the entire history of the medium. Students are quizzed on their acquired knowledge.

Sample Units:

Photography 1 – Exploring Subject Matter

In this unit you will explore making photographs with clear subject matter. In photography this is called the “center of interest.” By composing your image around obvious subjects of high interest you will make better photographs. Your assignment is to explore your house, neighborhood, and the people in your world creating photographs with clear subjects.

What is due: A minimum of 4 finished 3.5 x 5” prints - 1 from each category below - with your best image enlarged for final presentation. Photograph the following:

At Home:

Find objects of high visual interest and place them next to the sunniest window in your house. Use a table if necessary. Compose your photograph around each object. This is called making a “still life.”

Outside your home:

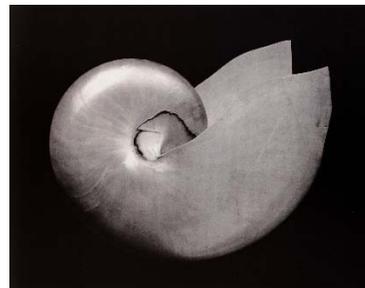
Go on a personal scavenger hunt and find subjects of interest. Compose images that feature these subjects. Fill the frame if necessary. Consider looking below or above to isolate the subject.

In your neighborhood:

Expand your hunt to include your neighborhood. Search for the most interesting subjects you can find: pets, cars, trees, found junk, use your eyes and EXPLORE and always follow your joy. FIND.

Portraits:

For the last shots on your roll take pictures of your friends and family. Each photo should be composed around them and they should fill the frame! Do not make snapshots with a figure centered carelessly.



Photography 1 – Exploring Light

In this unit, you will expand your exploration of strong subject matter to include light. Light creates and defines what we see; every picture that you make utilizes it. Your task is to create photographs composed around strong, obvious subjects that reveal themselves in careful, intentional, and beautiful light. By exploring the world and the people around you with light and subject as your guide you will make better photographs.

What is due: A minimum of **4** finished 3.5 x 5" prints - 1 from each category below - with your best image enlarged for final presentation.

Portraits indoors– Window Light:

Ask your model to pose next to an open window. The light from the outside should reveal them. Be careful NOT to photograph into the window light. This creates a silhouette of your subject. Compose your picture around the clearest view of your model and the light on their face. Fill the frame.

Portraits outdoors– Even Light:

Photograph a willing model in any outdoor setting that adds interest to the portrait. Make the background matter. The place you choose should have *EVEN*, clear light. Avoid hard-shadowing sunlight. Consider working in open shade (a shadowed area lit from overhead sky – NOT under a tree canopy).

In your neighborhood – Patterns:

Go on a photographic scavenger hunt and find subjects that reveal themselves in beautiful light. You should look for **both** even, clear light and wonderful patterns of sun and shadow. Follow your eyes.

Around town – Reflections:

Expand your hunt looking for light by taking pictures of reflections. Search windows, water, mirrors, metal and more for your subjects.



Photography 1 - Exploring Composition

In this unit you will expand your exploration of subject matter and light to include composition. How you arrange the lines, shapes, and patterns of light and dark in your image creates the composition. This active - often intuitive – designing process is necessary to communicate clearly. Your task is to frame well-lit, well-chosen subjects into balanced, simplified, and unified compositions. “Composition is the strongest way of seeing.” -Edward Weston

What is due: A minimum of **4** images - 1 from each category below:

Abstraction:

Look for a well-lit subject with a repeating pattern of shapes, lines, and/or textures and fill the frame creating a purely abstract composition. Try to emphasize the pattern *without* losing what creates it. The subject matter should still be clear.

Perspective:

Create compositions with a worm’s eye view of the world. You must find compelling subject matter looking up. Next create compositions with a bird’s eye view of the world. Find a high place to look down from and frame your subject beautifully.

Balance:

Go on a photographic scavenger hunt and find 3 perfectly-lit subjects that are exactly symmetrical (left/right similar). Now find 3 evenly-lit subjects that are *asymmetrically* balanced. Carefully compose your image so that the visual weights of the shapes are evenly balanced.

Emphasis:

Compose six pictures that have a clear center of interest *not* located in the center of the photograph. Fill the space around your primary subject with patterns, lines, and shapes. Trust your intuition.



Assessment Criteria:

The following proficiency scales are used by the student and the teacher to assess the quality of the work created by the student.

<p>Craftsmanship</p>	<p>4</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p>	<p>My images are very clean and clear. My images have the best possible contrast and brightness. The images are properly dodged, burned, and spotted. This is obviously well-crafted work which displays attention and care. There are no chemical stains. This work can be shown publically.</p> <p>My images are clean and well-made. The image contrast and brightness are mostly perfect. There is good dodging and burning present. This is strong work which needs 1 or 2 adjustments to become perfect.</p> <p>The images are somewhat clean and clear. There is some dodging and burning which may not be well-done. The brightness and contrast of the work may not be finished or proper. There are spots and blemishes on my work. The images do not look finished.</p> <p>My images are poorly crafted. There is a clear need for brightness and contrast correction. There are areas in need of dodging and burning. There are many spots and blemishes. There is an obvious lack of care and attention to craft in my work.</p>
<p>Subject Clarity</p>	<p>4</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p>	<p>The subjects of my images are inspired. The subjects hold obvious interest for a wide range of viewers. The work transcends the “assignment” and has a keen quality of intelligence and perception. The subject of each photo is absolutely clear. There is no confusion about what my photographs are about. There are no clichés in my work.</p> <p>My subjects are strong and interesting. The subjects of each photo are readily discernible. The content is not cliché or boring. The content is exciting.</p> <p>The content and subjects of my work is somewhat clear. My subjects are common and hold some interest. I do not entirely care about these photographs. The content feels somewhat rushed. The work is lacking clarity; another person might confuse what my picture is about.</p> <p>The subjects of the majority of my photographs are unclear. My work is vague. The content is rushed, uninspired, and dull. I don’t care about this work. The content has very little interest for me and most viewers.</p>
<p>Light Quality</p>	<p>4</p> <p>3</p> <p>2</p> <p>1</p>	<p>My images have even, interesting, clear light. Light is bolstering the subject matter of my work. Light is clarifying my work. The brightness/darkness in my work is balanced and even across the picture plane. The light shown in my work makes the images better than they otherwise would have been.</p> <p>My images have a strong sense of light and shadow. The light, or the patterns of light and shadow, is mostly balanced across the 2-dimensional surface. The light in some of my images could be better. I may have chosen a poor direction to photograph producing an uneven distribution of light in some of my works.</p> <p>My images have not used light very well. I did not consider the direction or even-ness of light when I was shooting and it shows. There are strong areas of just white or black in my work that is out of balance with the rest of the work. The subjects of my work are visible, however, and the light is not totally distracting in the work.</p> <p>I made thoughtless choices regarding light in my work. I did not photograph my subject in clarifying light at all. The light in my work is obscuring what the work is about. My work is hard to see. There are distracting areas of light and shadow out of balance with the subject.</p>

Image Composition	4	My images confidently use the pictorial rectangle to full advantage. My compositions are unified, balanced, and strong. The pictorial space is interesting from corner to corner in my work. There are centers of interest <i>not</i> in the center of my photos. Each image is designed with strong shapes and lines. The composition of my images makes the subjects visually stronger than they otherwise could have been.
	3	My image compositions are strong. There is balance and shapes and lines used to create visual movement and unity within the rectangle of the frame. The pictorial space is well-used. There are some elements in my photographs that are distracting from the subject. I could have improved my images with slight compositional changes.
	2	My images have okay compositions. There are areas in my work that are out of balance. There are distracting elements present. The space is unclear lacks unity. I cut off certain subjects or forgot to think about the corners of the picture frame. I need to re-shoot this work to improve it.
	1	I did not consider composition in the creation of my photos. I do not understand unity and balance and it shows in my work. I just center everything. I did not think about the background or the shapes and lines in my images. There is almost no balance or unity in the work as a result. My images could be a whole lot better compositionally.

Course Authors: Mary Krawczyk, Susanne Maxwell, & Jeffrey Martz, M.F.A.

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