

## Course Syllabus

### **FORS 402/802** **Principles of Forensic Photography** 1 credit hour

#### **Course Description**

This course examines the theory and techniques of forensic photography. Students will be introduced to basic photographic terminology, concepts, and techniques, and introduced to the use of photo editing software for analysis and interpretation of photographic evidence. A bridge or SLR digital camera is required for the course. The course dates are August 24, 2009 until September 25, 2009. The final test and final assignment are due by midnight (2400 Hours), August 27, 2009.

#### **Measurable Behavioral Objectives**

Following the completion of this course, participants will be able to:

- Write an acceptable protocol for a forensic scene photography event.
- Answer why photography is important to forensic issues.
- Discuss the principles of light as light applies to forensic photography.
- Recount the basic considerations of forensic photography composition.
- Describe the basic concepts of perspective, depth of field, field of view, shutter speed, aperture setting, and ISO speed.
- List and demonstrate the techniques for documentation of a forensic scene.
- Perform the physical techniques for operation of a digital camera.
- Identify the various applications of crime scene photography that relate to
  - close-up photography
  - painting with light
  - fluorescent photography
  - time exposure photography
  - cold weather photography
  - fill flash
  - side lighting
  - use of filters, and
  - surveillance photography.
- Explain the legal implications of digital images as probative evidence.

#### **Required Text and Equipment**

1. All students must be able to use the University of Nebraska Blackboard System.
2. Bob McMicken, Practical Police Photography (The text can be purchased online at <http://www.forensic-photography.com/>).
3. Digital Camera with manual setting capabilities.
4. Six inch scale with metric gradations.

#### *Blackboard*

Please check Blackboard on a regular basis. Check announcements, assignments, discussion, course materials and course documents.

## Course Topics

1. Introduction to Photography
2. Concepts of Light
3. Getting to Know Your Camera
  - a. Owners Manual
  - b. Dials for settings.
  - c. Recording Medium
  - d. Settings
4. Shutter Speed, Aperture, ISO setting, and Flash.
5. Crime Scene Photography Protocol
6. Crime Scene Photography Composition
7. Special Crime Scene Photography Techniques
  - a. close-up (macro) photography
  - b. flash photography
  - c. lighting techniques
  - d. filters
8. Basic computer enhancement of crime scene images.
9. Legal considerations pertaining to crime scene photography.

### *Assignments*

Quizzes: There are four quizzes. Quizzes must be taken online. Questions are taken from the assigned readings, Power Point presentations, and practical application knowledge. Grades are in compliance with the University of Nebraska grading system. One hour is allowed for taking a quiz.

Blackboard Discussions: There are five discussion questions. You are required to post to each question a personal response, and post to at least two classmates posts. This amounts to 3 posts per question.

Assignments: Five photographic assignments are required for completion of the course. These are specific photographs that you take and submit. Photos are to be submitted via the internet. Image files should not be larger than 3 megabytes. Submit all images as an attachment in a PowerPoint file.

Final Test: The final test is a comprehensive test. Two hours are allowed for the final test.

Computer Enhancement: The computer enhancement assignment requires you to use basic photo editing software. Adobe Photoshop CS 4 is available in the UNL computer lab. You do not need this level of software. You can use any basic software that will allow you to lighten, darken, adjust contrast, and invert images. If you do not have software to do this, please let me know about this.

Incompletes: A request for an incomplete grade must be received in writing and approved by the instructor and program director. This approval must be made at least one class period prior to the last class.

Late Assignments: One percent will be deducted for each day late of an assignment.

- **Please go to Blackboard “Assignments” for each week’s assignment. This will include the practical assignments, readings, and PowerPoint lectures for each week.**
- Power Point Presentations: Several Power Point Presentations will be posted in Blackboard. These are part of the course material.
- Readings: These will include assignments from your text and other sources. I will either provide you a link or a file copy for any readings outside your text. See Blackboard “Course Information:\” for any additional reading assignments.

### *Blackboard Discussions*

- Blackboard Discussions are an important part of the online learning experience. They are also a part of the course requirements.
- There will a “General Subjects” mode that you can use to post any thread you wish.
- **There are five additional modes. You must respond to each mode with an original post, and respond to at least two classmates post. For each discussion you should have 3 posts.**

### *Point Distribution*

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| Quizzes (4) 30 points each                | 120        |
| Blackboard Discussion Board Participation | 50         |
| Photo Assignments (5) 15 points each      | 75         |
| Computer Enhancement Exercise (10)        | 10         |
| Final Test                                | 100        |
| <b>Total</b>                              | <b>355</b> |
| Extra Credit                              | TBA        |

Grading System: All work and final grades will be denoted according to the following scheme.

|    |        |    |       |    |       |    |       |   |      |
|----|--------|----|-------|----|-------|----|-------|---|------|
|    | %      |    | %     |    | %     |    | %     |   | %    |
| A+ | 97-100 | B+ | 87-89 | C+ | 77-79 | D+ | 67-69 | F | ≤ 59 |
| A  | 93-96  | B  | 83-86 | C  | 73-76 | D  | 63-66 |   |      |
| A- | 90-92  | B- | 80-82 | C- | 70-72 | D- | 60-62 |   |      |

### *Expectations for graduate students*

Graduate students are held to a higher standard of quality, completeness, and analysis. The quality of photographic projects and discussion board postings are held at a higher level for graduate students. Discussion Board postings are also held to a higher level of quality such as clarity of writing, literature review and depth of writing, logical reasoning, and spelling and grammar. However, lab assignments and quizzes will be graded with the same expectations, regardless of graduate or undergraduate standing.

### *Schedule of Events*

The schedule will run during the first five weeks of the semester. The schedule of assignments and reading will be posted and will follow the sequence of Course Topics above.

### *Academic and Personal Requirements:*

Important Web sites: <http://forensic.unl.edu>.  
[www.unl.edu/libr/dept/subjname.html](http://www.unl.edu/libr/dept/subjname.html).  
<http://iris.unl.edu>

Report and Exam Policy: Make up exams are available to students who experience crises during the semester. Contact me if this becomes the case.

Statement on Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is one of the basic principles of a university community. The University of Nebraska encourages and expects the highest standards of academic honesty from all students.

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln has a policy about academic dishonesty, as indicated in the Student Code of Conduct (see Undergraduate Bulletin). You enjoy rights and protections under the code. You are obligated to conduct yourself in compliance with the code.

One area where students occasionally have some confusion regards plagiarism. The key concept is misrepresenting the work of another as one's own work. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please read <http://www.unl.edu/UFP/acadinte.htm>. Pay particular attention to the section that provides students with information about citing sources. We want your work, not the work of others. Summarize, synthesize and completely rewrite the material for your work.

The Student Code of Conduct presents information on academic sanctions for misconduct subject to appeal, and that sanctions are at the discretion of the instructor. Sanctions may include a failing grade for the course. Cheating and other forms of misconduct are fundamentally opposed to the aim of forensic science.

University Policies: University of Nebraska-Lincoln policies can be accessed through the UNL Office of Registration and Records. See <http://www.unl.edu/regrec/rrhome.htm> for policies.

Discrimination of any form, as described by The University of Nebraska, will subject any person in violation to disciplinary action.

Professional Accountability: Course materials include graphic photographs and descriptions. These materials are to be treated as privileged information. The photographs are of persons who have died or who have been seriously injured as a result of violence. Respect for the victims of violent crime and their families are expected of all participants. The photographs and descriptions are for educational and research purposes. They shall not be made available for public consumption or entertainment purposes.

Course Etiquette: You are to be courteous to others when submitting assignments and participating in discussions on Blackboard. Offensive materials will be removed from the course web site. Students will be contacted if material is deemed inappropriate by any instructors.

Library Services: UNL students have access to a tremendous library resource. There is a tab at the top of the Blackboard home page that directs you to the library resources. This web site can be accessed directly at <http://iris.eunledu>. Information about other library services can be gotten through <http://www.unl.edu/libr/dept/subjname/html>.

## **The University of Nebraska's Commitment to Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the instructor for a confidential discussion of their individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

### ***References:***

Adobe Systems Incorporated. Adobe.Photoshop.com User Guide. San Jose, CA: Adobe Systems Incorporated, 2003.

Ang, Tom. Digital Photography: An Introduction. New York: DK Publishing, Inc., 2003.

Bargh, Peter. Photoshop CS The Essential Visual Reference Guide. London, UK: Elsevier Press, 2004.

Crime and Clues. [www.crimeandclues.com](http://www.crimeandclues.com). "Crime Scene Photography."  
<http://www.rcmp-learning.org/docs/ecdd1004.htm>.

Crime Scene Investigation. [www.crime-scene-investigaotr.net](http://www.crime-scene-investigaotr.net) . "Crime Scene and Evidence Photography." <http://www.crime-scene-investigator.net/>.

Evidence Photographers International Council, Inc. Standards For Evidence Photography Criminal & Civil. Honesdale, PA: Evidence Photographers International Council, 2002.

Friar, John. "Basic Reference Exposure." Basic Photography. 26 January 2005  
< <http://www.libarts.ucok.edu/journalism/Basicphoto.html>.>

Friar, John. "Light." Basic Photography. 26 January 2005  
< <http://www.libarts.ucok.edu/journalism/Basicphoto.html>.>

Hughes, Jerry. How To Take Great Photographs With Any Camera. Dallas, TX: Phillips Lane Publishing, 2002.

Hughes, Jerry. Digital Photography Made Fun & Easy. Dallas, TX: Phillips Lane Publishing, 2002.

Kodak. Pocket Guide to 35mm Photography. Rochester, NY: Silver Pixel Press, 1996.

Kodak. Pocket Guide to Digital Photography. Rochester, NY: Silver Pixel Press, 2000.

Langford, Michael. 35mm Handbook. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002.

Miller, Larry L. Sanone's Police Photography. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing Co., 1993.

Nikon. Guide To Digital Photography. Nelville, NY: Nikon, Inc.

Russ, John C. Forensic Uses of Digital Imaging. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press LLC, 2001.

Tutorials. <http://www.cambridgeincolour.com/techniques.htm>.

Staggs, Steven. Crime Scene and Evidence Photographer's Guide. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Wildomar, CA: Staggs Publishing, 2004.

Weiss, Sanford L. Forensic Photography: The Importance of Accuracy. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2009.