

ASTU 2501 Photography I | Fall 2026

Instructor: Jacob Erwin

ART 358, Tuesday and Thursday, 2:20pm – 5:10pm

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Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:20pm – 2:20pm or by appointment.

Catalog Description

Beginning course providing a combination of lecture and studio with an introduction to photographic materials, techniques and digital cameras.

Course Structure

This is a studio class. You will be expected to plan ahead and work during class time. Generally, class time will be split evenly between lectures and studio time. There will be four critiques, and technical assignments/quizzes.

Textbook and Readings

Charlotte Cotton, [Photograph as Contemporary Art](#)

Objectives

- Students will learn basic project development in the context of contemporary photography.
- Students will gain knowledge of contemporary photography and discipline vocabulary used to analyze artworks.
- Students learn to analyze and critique artworks using knowledge of contemporary photography and discipline vocabulary.
- Students learn to describe the subject and form of their photographs using knowledge of contemporary photography and discipline vocabulary.
- Students will learn DSLR camera functions.
- Students will be introduced to equivalent exposure.
- Students will learn file management and tonal/ color correction in Adobe Lightroom.
- Students will learn basic inkjet printing (tonal and color correction for prints).
- Students learn basic studio lighting using LED lighting
- Students gain competencies using a Tripod.

Grading and Course Requirements

Students will participate in critiques, complete technical assignments, and participate in group discussions. Students are expected to complete all the assigned course work to successfully complete this course.

- Technical assignments / quizzes 20%
- 4 critiques/ projects 80%

Grading scale:

- A = Excellent (100-90%)
- B = Above Average (89-80%)
- C = Average (79-70%) [passing but not qualifying students for Photography II]
- D = Inferior (69-60%) [passing but not necessarily satisfying degree requirements]
- F = Failure (59% or below)

Late Work / Make-Up Policy

Late work may be subject to a penalty of 10% deducted from the assignment's value per class day the work is late, unless the student provides proof of an acceptable mitigating circumstance: serious illness, death of a family member, or other circumstance if approved by the instructor.

Attendance Policy

- Regular and punctual attendance is mandatory.
- Three unexcused absences will be tolerated.
- More than three absences will require a note from a doctor or a note from the art office excusing the absence for a reason covered under UNT policy 06.039 (Student Attendance and Authorized Absences).
- Attendance and Authorized Absences are counted as excused.
- More than three absences will lower your final grade by one letter grade per additional absence.
- Most lectures, demonstrations, and assignments will occur at the beginning of class periods and will not be repeated for those who come in late. If you are late to class, you will need to notify me at the end of the class period to replace an absence with a tardy.
- Three tardies will constitute an absence. A tardy is considered arrival 5 minutes after class begins.
- Assignments turned in late will receive one letter grade lower per day for each late day.
- Examinations, quizzes, and in-class assignments missed may only be made up with an official doctor's excuse or note from the art office excusing the absence for a reason covered under UNT policy 06.039 (Student Attendance and Authorized Absences).
- Critiques missed may not be made up and grades will reflect the student's failure to participate in the critique discussions.

Calendar

Week 1

Tue, Aug 18 Welcome!
Introduce: Class expectations and equipment/ supplies
Introduce: Everyday Project - Shoot everyday from here until the end of class.
Introduce: Blog Project - Create a Blog

For Next Class: Bring a camera to the next class (DSLR or Mirrorless preferred. Cell phones okay.)

Thu, Aug 20 **Demo:** Exposure / Camera.
Lecture: Framing and composition.

Due Aug 23rd: **Tech Assignment:** Framing and composition scavenger hunt (in class).

For Next week: Bring camera and hard drive to class next week (DSLR or Mirrorless required from this point forward for everything but the everyday project)

Week 2

Tue, Aug 25 **Demo:** More Exposure / Camera.

Thu, Aug 27 **Demo:** Formatting your Hard drive (Laptop Cart)
Demo: Setting up and importing images into your Lightroom Classic Catalog (LRC),
Check in: Everyday Project.

Due Aug 30th: **Tech Assignment:** Focus & Depth of Field

Week 3

Tue, Sep 1 **Introduce:** Inspiration Project - from Deadpan, Intimate Life and Once Upon a Time
Reading discussion: Chapters 1-2 from The Photograph as Contemporary Art
Demo: Making color and tonal correction in LRC (Laptop Cart)

Thu, Sep 3 **Demo:** Making color and tonal correction in LRC (Laptop Cart)
Check in: Inspiration Project research

Due Sep 6th: **Tech Assignment:** Motion & Shutter Speed
Tech Assignment: File Management with LRC

For Next week: Bring your camera, hard drive and laptop to class.
Read and summarize Chapters 3-4 from The Photograph as Contemporary Art

Week 4

Tue, Sep 8 **In class:** Field trip to the library print study collection. Meet in classroom, then walk to Library.
Check in: Inspiration Project

Thu, Sep 10 **Demo:** Long Exposure and tripods
Reading discussion: Chapters 3-4 from The Photograph as Contemporary Art

Quiz: Camera and Exposure

Due this week: **Tech Assignment:** Describing a Photograph
Tech Assignment: Long Exposure

Next week: Bring your hard drive, paper, and laptop to class.

Week 5

Tue, Sep 15 **Demo:** Printing from LRC
In class: Printing from LRC

Thu, Sep 17 **In class:** Printing from LRC

Due this week: **Tech Assignment:** Printing From LRC

Week 6

Tue, Sep 22 **Critique One:** Inspiration Project.

Thu, Sep 24 **Critique One:** Inspiration Project.

Next week: Bring your camera to class.
Read and summarize Chapters 5-6 from The Photograph as Contemporary Art

Week 7

Tue, Sep 29 **Reading discussion:** Chapters 5-6 from The Photograph as Contemporary Art
Lecture: Finding and developing ideas. Rigor and ambition. Reading and Listening
Introduce: Color Project
Demo: Lighting Studio and LED lights (If time)

Thu, Oct 1 More Lighting Studio

Due this week: **Tech Assignment:** Lighting Studio

Week 8

Tue, Oct 6 **Check in:** Color Project
Check in: Blog Project
Tech review
Reading discussion: Chapters 7-9 from The Photograph as Contemporary Art

Thu, Oct 8 **Demo:** Making a Contact Sheet
Check-in: Everyday Project
Quiz: Printing and LRC
In class assignment - Metadata

Week 9

Tue, Oct 13 **In class:** Printing from LRC

Thu, Oct 15 **In class:** Printing from LRC

Week 10

Tue, Oct 20 **Critique Two:** Color Project

Thu, Oct 22 **Critique Two:** Color Project

Week 11

Tue, Oct 27 **Introduce:** Open Project

Demo: Using Lightroom with Photoshop: File management with Lightroom
and Photoshop (Laptop Cart)

Thu, Oct 29 **Demo:** Basic Image Editing in Photoshop I

Check in: Everyday Project

Week 12

Tue, Nov 3 Photo Project Space Exhibition

Check in: Open Project

Thu, Nov 5 **Introduce:** Sequencing and Zine building

Check in: Blog Project

Week 13

Tue, Nov 10 **In class:** Printing from LRC

Thu, Nov 12 **In class:** Printing from LRC

Week 14

Tue, Nov 17 **Critique Three:** Open Project

Thu, Nov 19 **Critique Three:** Open Project

Check in: Blog Project

Thanksgiving Break (no classes)

Week 15

Tue, Dec 1 **Critique Four:** Everyday Project – Making and viewing zines

Thu, Dec 3 **Critique Four:** Everyday Project – Making and viewing zines

Due: Blog Project

Week 16 Finals week

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

All work used for this class must be made by the student, during the semester they are registered in the class. Work made for other classes, even in the same semester cannot be used for this class.

AI and Academic Integrity

Unless otherwise stated, the use of Generative AI (GenAI) tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Stable Diffusion, etc.) is permitted in this course if it is properly acknowledged. Acknowledgement should take the form of a short statement explaining how AI was used.

Unacknowledged use of AI, or using AI in ways not permitted for a specific assignment, will be treated as academic dishonesty under the UNT Academic Integrity Policy. If you are unsure whether AI use is appropriate, you are expected to ask before submitting your work.

Examples of how to acknowledge the use of AI:

- **Brainstorming ideas:**
"I used generative AI to generate possible themes for my project proposal. I selected and rewrote the final version myself."
- **Writing assistance (phrasing/clarity):**
"I used generative AI to suggest alternative wording for two paragraphs in my statement."
- **Image or media generation:**
"The background texture in this artwork was created using generative AI and then modified in Photoshop."
- **Editing/proofreading:**
"I used generative AI to check grammar and sentence flow in my final draft."

Equipment and Supplies

Camera requirement

You will need access to a DSLR or Mirrorless camera with full manual control of exposure and focus. There is a wide range of cameras that will meet these requirements, running from introductory level cameras to expensive professional cameras.

- If you plan on buying a camera for this class, it is recommended that you email your instructor the name, model and a link to where you plan on purchasing the camera before you make your purchase. This will help avoid buying a camera that does not meet the requirements.
- If you already own a camera, it will likely work for this course. Email your instructor the brand and model to verify.
- If you do not own a camera and want to check a camera out to use for assignments rather than buying one, please see: <https://itservices.cvad.unt.edu/equipment>. DSLR cameras and tripods can be reserved from "CVAD Student Computer Lab". It is best to reserve a camera from "CVAD Student Computer Lab", not "CVAD Photography". The computer lab has 60+ of the DSLR

cameras used for this class. The Photography check out only has a few. Note: before you can check out a camera, you need to complete the Equipment Checkout TOA Form here: <https://myunt.sharepoint.com/sites/CVADITServices/SitePages/Electronic-Forms-All>.

Miscellaneous Required Camera Equipment

In addition to a camera, you will need a charger, battery, and memory card. You will also want a carrying case or camera bag. If you are checking out a UNT camera, it will come with all of these accessories, although you may want to consider buying your own memory cards.

I recommend buying a few smaller memory cards rather than one very large memory card. This strategy can be more cost-effective, and you do not have all of your images on the same card, so if you lose one, you do not lose everything.

For example, two of these SD cards would work well for this class (verify they fit your camera, they will work for most cameras, including the checkout cameras): [Link to B&H Photo Memory Cards](#). [Links to an external site.](#)

Hard Drive requirement

You will need a portable external hard drive for this class. It must be mac compatible and a minimum of 1tb (it is fine to format the drive to work on both a Mac and PC. You can use a PC for all of the course work done outside of the printing lab if you want). It should be powered by the USB cable, not an AC power cord.

If you already own a hard drive:

Does it already work on a Mac? Great, it will work for this class! You do not have to buy a new hard drive.

- Does it work on a Windows computer? You may need to reformat it. It is very important that you do this carefully, and back up any information on your hard drive first to avoid losing your files. The ExFAT file system will work on both Mac and PC computers.
- If you are not sure if your hard drive works on a pc or mac, it is fine to wait to ask for help when we meet during the first week.

If you need to buy a hard drive, here are some things to consider:

- Buy a known brand and read the reviews.
- Often, it is not much more expensive to get a significantly larger hard drive.
- Once you buy your hard drive, make sure it is formatted to work on a mac before you start to use it (you can set it up to work on both a Mac and PC by formatting it using ExFAT):

Computer access requirements

You need regular access to a computer with good access to the internet and Adobe Lightroom Classic installed. You will need to have a SD card reader on your computer or use an external card reader. You can use computers in the CVAD computer lab or your laptop. If you plan to use your laptop you need to make sure it is compatible with the latest version of Adobe Lightroom Classic.

Software requirements

Adobe Lightroom Classic will be the software we use for this class. If you are using a computer on campus in the CVAD computer lab, you will not need to buy this software. If you are planning on using your laptop for this course, you will need to buy a student license - this might be a good idea and will give you access to a large range of Adobe software. You are able to get Adobe Software as a discounted price at a UNT student. Here is information on how to purchase at the discounted price:

- Adobe Creative Cloud is available to students to purchase at a heavily discounted price. The price of a student subscription through our program is \$50 (+\$5.55 processing fee). The subscriptions will be valid for the full 2021-2022 Academic Year, through August 31st. On or before August 1st, they will have the option to renew their subscription for the same price for the 2022-2023 Academic year. Further details and the option to purchase a subscription are available here: <http://www.unt.edu/adobe>. This offer is only available to students.
- A subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud allows for on and off-campus use of all of the applications: on UNT or personally-owned laptops, as well as on the remote lab computers.
- If a student is currently paying for a subscription through Adobe (\$239-\$359 per year) but would like to take advantage of the lower cost of a subscription through this program: they are eligible to cancel an existing subscription without an early termination fee or further obligation once they have purchased a subscription through our program. They must contact Adobe Customer Care within fourteen days of purchasing this subscription to inform Adobe of their wish to opt-out of an existing subscription in order to have the early termination fees waived. Adobe will not provide a refund, however – only the months left on the current subscription will be canceled. We are not able to process the opt-outs on their behalf. The subscription they would be opting out of is an agreement between the student and Adobe. The subscription through our program would be a new subscription, not an extension of the current subscription.
- Adobe Customer Care can be reached by phone at 1-800-833-6687, you may also visit their support website and talk to someone via chat.
- Please contact us at untadobe@unt.edu if you have any further questions.
- Note: Lightroom and Lightroom Classic are not the same software. When you buy a student license you get access to both programs, we will use Lightroom Classic.

Other Material Requirements

Inkjet paper - you will need at least 50 sheets of 11 x 14 or 8.5x11 inch RedRiver UltraPro Satin 4.0 or Epson Luster. If you want larger prints you can buy upto 17 x 22 for this class.

Inkjet Print Storage - you will need an 8.5 x 11 print storage box or portfolio.

Class Participation Expectations

I expect you to attend every class. You are responsible for completing all of the required assignments. I expect all students to participate in class discussions, contributing ideas and perspectives on topics or art. All your work should incorporate aspects or issues addressed in class in relation to your personal or professional interests.

You are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. In order to assure that everyone has an opportunity to gain from time spent in class, unless otherwise approved by the instructor, you are prohibited from using cellular phones, checking your email or surfing the internet, updating your social networking sites, eating or drinking in class, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers or magazines, sleeping or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in, minimally, a request to leave class, which will be counted as an unexcused absence.

Students cannot use work which has been made for another course in this class. Breaking this rule will result in a failing grade for that project.

Course Content Statement

Content in the arts can sometimes include works, situations, actions, and language that can be personally challenging or offensive to some students on the grounds, for example, of sexual explicitness, violence, or blasphemy. As the College of Visual Arts and Design is devoted to the principle of freedom of expression, artistic and otherwise, and it is not the college's practice to censor these works or ideas on any of these grounds. Students who might feel unduly distressed or made uncomfortable by such expressions should withdraw at the start of the term and seek another course.

ADA Accommodation Statement

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Course Safety Procedures

Students enrolled in ASTU 2501 are required to use proper safety procedures and guidelines as outlined in UNT Policy 06.038 Safety in Instructional Activities. While working in laboratory sessions, students are expected and required to identify and use proper safety guidelines in all activities requiring lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that the UNT is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities.

All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider obtaining Student Health Insurance. Brochures for student insurance are available in the UNT Student Health and Wellness Center. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medical attention at the Student Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If students have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, they should be sure that the plan covers treatment at this

facility. If students choose not to go to the UNT Student Health and Wellness Center, they may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. Students are responsible for expenses incurred there.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Blackboard online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct.

Access to Information – Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail: eagleconnect.unt.edu/

Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the

survey, they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website at www.spot.unt.edu or email spot@unt.edu.

Survivor Advocacy

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

HEALTH & SAFETY PROGRAM

Students are required to follow the Department of Studio Art Health and Safety guidelines and are required to complete training for each studio course. The goal of the Studio Art Health and Safety Program is to protect the health and welfare of all faculty, staff, and students and to cooperate with the University of North Texas' Office of Risk Management. Please visit the website for details and the departmental handbook: <https://art.unt.edu/healthandsafety>.

Health and Safety

Health & Safety Area Specific Information: Photography I

All users of the studio classrooms are expected to follow studio area rules at all times. If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

- Follow all CVAD Health and Safety handbook guidelines (the handbook should be reviewed by your instructor and can be found here: <https://art.unt.edu/healthandsafety>)
- Follow the CVAD Waste Management Chart in the classroom and other health & safety guidelines posted
- In case of emergency, call campus police at (940)565-3000 or call 911
- File an incident report (forms may be found in the CVAD H&S handbook and in the main office) within 48 hours of the event)
- Do not prop classroom doors. Doors are to remain closed to ensure the building HVAC and ventilation work properly
- No food or drink in the studio
- There is absolutely no food or drink allowed in the darkroom at any time.

- Your class and experience level determine the level of your darkroom privileges and access to certain equipment and processes.
- Be mindful and respectful of all darkroom rules and procedures, designated wet and dry areas, and use properly labeled equipment appropriately.
- If you cross contaminate chemistry or an area, please inform an instructor, lab tech or student worker immediately.
- If you do not know how to use a piece of equipment or are unsure of proper procedures please ask someone.
- Do not use force on any piece of equipment.
- Clean up after yourself- wipe down surfaces.
- Do not block doorways or block access to lights.
- Do not remove furniture from rooms or borrow furniture from rooms without permission.
- If something breaks, please tell the lab worker or a Faculty member immediately.
- You must leave enough time at the end of open lab or class time to properly wash your prints, clean up, and return equipment.
- Do not create “daisy chains” with multiple electric cords.
- No hazardous materials down sinks.
- Store all flammables in the flammable cabinet. Keep flammable cabinet closed at all times.
- First aid kits are found in each studio. Notify your instructor or technician if supplies are low.
- Report any safety issues IMMEDIATELY to your instructor.
- All courses must engage in an end of the semester clean up.

Lighting Studio

The lighting studio is a shared space with its own set of rules. It is most important that you respect the time you have signed up for, especially during the busy hours. It is also important to keep the area clean and orderly. If you take an item from the closet, you want to make sure you return it to the same place. You also want to create a space for yourself to work in that is not cluttered with cords.

- If anything breaks for any reason, please let the lab worker on duty know immediately.
- While the studio is a space that can be used by many people, there are some pieces of lighting equipment reserved for students who are enrolled/have completed the Advanced Lighting Techniques. It is always better to ask if you are not sure if you can use a piece of equipment or not.
- All lighting that needs to be plugged in must be plugged into one of the power strips in the studio. Never plug anything but a power strip into the wall.

- When using the C-Stands it is important to understand how heavy the equipment is and you want to make sure you are using the sandbags to weight the stand down.
- Make sure you are keeping the cords clear.
- Never mix water and electricity. If you are photographing a liquid, make sure you are careful to keep it away from the equipment.
- *When you are changing the light modifiers, be careful of the flash tubes.
- Do not put heavy objects on the cyclorama.
- Do not use the scissor lift.
- Make sure the studio is as clean as it was when you found it.