

ASTU 3502.501 Darkroom Photography | Spring 2026

Instructor: Lauren E. Allen

ART 358, Tuesday - Thursday 2:00 pm - 4:50 pm

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Office hours: By appointment.

Catalog Description

Advanced course with instruction in film-based photography, exposure, and darkroom printing. Through assignments, lectures, demonstrations and critiques students gain competency in analog photography, archival darkroom printing and film-based photography in relationship to contemporary art and photographic practices.

Prerequisite(s): ASTU 2501, ASTU 2502 and selection through the entry review (any concentration)

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 critiques, technical assignments as well as written and oral projects.

Communication

Please use **email** to communicate with me – Lauren.Allen@unt.edu. I make an effort to answer, or acknowledge, all my emails within 24hrs during the work week - I ask that you do the same. I will use CANVAS announcements to make notifications to the class.

Content / competencies:

1. Black and white film processing
2. Pinhole or Photograms
3. 35 View camera
4. Darkroom printing
5. Print finishing - spotting and matting
6. Introduce film scanning - Flatbed
7. Reading/ Theory.
8. Writing - project statements
9. Scanning / Camera scanning
10. Digital negatives to silver prints

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.

- Assignments 40%
- 4 critiques 60%

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 will be accepted except for reading discussions and critiques.

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) in order to be 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 to be arrival 5 minutes after the beginning of class.
- Assignments that are turned in late will receive one letter grade lower per day for each day they are late.
- 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.

Required Equipment and Supplies

This page covers the equipment and materials you will be required to buy or access to successfully complete this course. While we work to provide you with access to equipment through check out, Studio Art courses can be expensive. Please review this information thoroughly at the beginning of the course and plan accordingly. Not purchasing or having access to required equipment and materials will negatively affect your ability to complete this course and your grade. **It is likely that this course will cost \$200 - \$250 or more.**

- **35mm film camera** - If you don't own your own, there are approximately 10 cameras available in the Photo Lab that you can check out for three days at a time. If you have your own, bring it during the first week of class so we can make sure it's in good working order. If you are interested in purchasing one, I'm happy to give you recommendations on the first day of class.
- 100 sheets of **8 x 10-inch RC Paper darkroom paper**. Choose from any of the following surfaces: Ilford MULTIGRADE RC Deluxe Paper, Satin Ilford MULTIGRADE RC Deluxe Paper, Pearl Ilford MULTIGRADE RC Deluxe Paper, Glossy. I recommend buying 100 sheets.
- **3-Ring binder or Clamshell Portfolio** - Used to store negatives
- Negative sleeves
- **Black and white 35mm film** - Purchase at least 6 rolls to start with - I recommend starting with Ilford HP5 Plus Black and White. You need to shoot a minimum of 9 roles for this class. It is possible that you will need to buy more.
- Portfolio or archival box to store dry prints
- Hard drive and access to a computer with Photoshop.

Suggested Equipment and Supplies

- Apron or smock
- Anti-static cloth
- Dust off or canned air

Calendar

Week 1

(01/13) Day A: Syllabus Introduction, dark room tour

(01/15) Day B: What is B&W photography, Elements & Principles of Design lecture, Composition & Light. Aperture Article introduction. Scavenger hunt (cell-phone)

Week 2

(01/20) Day A: Group discussion - Aperture Article, Lecture on Lensless Photography, Photogram Assignment introduction, photogram demo

Next Class: Bring objects & paper

(01/22) Day B: Photogram lab time

Week 3:

(01/27) Day A: Photogram lab

(01/29) Day B: Photogram Critique. Introduce Project 2

Week 4:

(02/03) Day A: Need camera today. Lecture: Camera handling / Aperture / Shutter speed / ISO / Exposure check / Equivalent Exposure. Film loading. Shoot 1 roll of film

(02/05) Day B: Must have one roll of film completed before class. Demo develop film

Week 5:

(02/10) Day A: Contact sheet demo, Making a print

(02/12) Day B: Lab time

Week 6:

(02/17) Day A: Lab Time - Dodge & Burn

(02/19) Day B: Lab time

Week 7:

(02/24) Day A: Critique 2

(02/26) Day B: Critique 2 & Project 3 introduction

Week 8:

(03/03) Day A: Reading discussion: Barthe's Photographic Message

(03/05) Day B: Bad Print - Battle Royale

Spring Break

Week 9:

(03/17) Day A: Film Scanning

(03/19) Day B: : Independent Studio

Week 10:

(03/24) Day A: lab day - Negative Stacking

(03/26) Day B: lab day

Week 11:

(03/31) Day A: Introduce photographer presentations, 3 critique

(04/02) Day B: 3 critique, & 4 introduction & writing a proposal

Week 12:

(04/07) Day A: Willis library (order mat board)

Order mat board, 1 on 1 checkins

(04/09) Day B: Work time

Week 13:

(04/14) Day A: Photographer presentations

(04/16) Day B: Mat board Demo & Work Time

Week 14:

(04/21) Day A: Work Time

(04/23) Day B: Work Time & Dark Room Cleanup

Week 15:

(04/28) Day A: Final Critique

(04/30) Day B: Final Critique

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 4500 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 & Safety Area Specific Information: [Photography](#)

1. Hazards of Materials

There are many hazards associated with photographic materials. An effort to minimize the hazards associated with photographic chemicals begins with the understanding and following of darkroom rules and procedures, and with familiarity with the Material Safety Data Sheets and proper handling and disposal of these chemicals.

Stop Baths: The acetic acid commonly found in stop baths can cause dermatitis and skin ulceration and can severely irritate the respiratory system. Contamination of the stop bath by developer components can increase inhalation hazards.

Fixers: Fixer contains sodium thiosulfate, sodium sulfite and sodium bisulfite. It may also contain potassium aluminum sulfate as a hardener and boric acid as a buffer. Fixer solutions slowly release sulfur dioxide gas as they age. However, when these solutions are contaminated with acid from the stop bath, the gas sulfur dioxide is released at a more rapid rate.

Hardener: in most darkrooms, hardeners are added to fixer for use in film processing. Although we do not use hardeners at this time you should be familiar with the hazards. They often contain formaldehyde, which is poisonous, very irritating to the eyes, throat, and breathing passages, and can cause dermatitis.

Fixer Removers: also known as Hypo Clear or Perma Wash. Many hypo eliminators are skin and respiratory irritants. Some are corrosive to skin, eyes, nose and throat.

Toners: toner usually involves the replacement of silver with another metal such as gold, selenium, uranium, lead, cobalt, platinum or iron. These highly soluble toxic compounds are more dangerous since they can be readily absorbed in the body and immediately affect internal organs. We do not use toners of any kind.

This is not an exhaustive list of all the types of chemistry that is used in darkroom work, nor does it cover all of the risks. Please familiarize yourself with the chemistry you will be using by reading all instructions associated with their use, and their corresponding MSDS sheets.

2. Best Practices

The darkroom is a shared workspace filled with expensive, sensitive equipment and corrosive chemicals. How you conduct yourself directly effects both you and your fellow students. It is very important to take care of equipment, and safely handle chemicals for both your safety and the safety of others. This is a lab and cleanliness is important for safety. This includes keeping darkroom equipment and finishing areas separate from chemicals hence designated dry and wet areas. Different chemicals have different ways they are handled and disposed of, and these are clearly outlined on signs in each area.

The following points are a guide to basic darkroom safety and etiquette. To use these facilities, you must adhere to these safety guidelines and always leave the darkrooms clean and orderly.

- Know the locations of all exits, emergency eye and body wash stations, fire extinguishers, MSDS sheets, emergency spill kits and the H&S safety station. A first aid kit is available in the H&S station.
- Never place trays or chemistry on enlarger stations or on dry areas. Dry areas include enlarger stations, drying racks, cutting areas, finishing areas, light tables, and worktables.

- Never place darkroom equipment, paper, negatives, or personal belongings on wet areas. Wet areas include the stainless sinks in the darkroom, the counter and sinks in the film processing/print washing room, and anywhere chemistry is used. It is important that you do not place any wet materials in the dry area.
- Do not leave your equipment or university equipment unattended.
- Wear nitrile gloves, chemical aprons, and safety goggles when using hazardous materials. Nitrile gloves are recommended for film processing and printing.
- Tong use is mandatory for printing. Be sure that you are using the properly labeled tongs for each tray and rinse if you contaminate them.
- Avoid splashing or spilling chemicals. Immediately wipe up any spills, splashes or dribbles. Chemicals dry into a powder and become airborne, contaminating all areas of the darkroom and may get on your clothes, shoes (in which case you will carry the chemicals home) or in your lungs.
- Always use a plastic tray to transport wet prints, and avoid dripping chemicals on the floors, if your print has not been washed for 30 minutes, then it is contaminated with chemicals. Wet floors mean you may get chemicals on the soles of your shoes and transport chemicals to your home.
- If a splash occurs and affects you bodily, flush affected areas (15-20 minutes for eyes) immediately with water using the eyewash station.
- The following may not be poured down the drain: fixer, potassium bichromate. Both have specific waste collection containers and policies.
- Rinse all lab ware and trays before and after use with hot water. Return items to their proper place, and invert to dry.
- Keep the darkroom uncluttered and free of chairs, backpacks and stools to avoid tripping hazards in the dark.

3. Links for Safety

MSDS sheets can be found here. <https://untphotolab.wordpress.com/msds/>

4. Area Health & Safety Rules

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.