



Carrie Mae Weems, *Untitled (Woman Standing)*, 1990

## **Creative Photography I ART 244 A**

Monday and Wednesday  
9:30 AM – 12:20 PM  
Center for Art & Design, Room 221  
Fort Hays State University  
Spring 2022

### **Instructor:**

Nick Simko

Assistant Professor, Photography  
Room 222

### **Office Hours:**

Monday and Wednesday, 2:30 – 4:30  
Tuesday and Thursday, 8:00 – 9:00

appointments by request

[ncsimko@fhsu.edu](mailto:ncsimko@fhsu.edu)

### **Course Description**

This course is an intensive exploration of the medium of darkroom photography. Students will be introduced to the fundamental techniques of darkroom photography, including analog camera functions, developing black and white film, and silver gelatin printing. This is an analog course and only includes limited digital instruction.

We will consider the rich history of analog photography as well as contemporary artists that use the darkroom in their practice. The course features a series of thematic projects that will require students to use their new technical knowledge to create a visually coherent group of silver gelatin prints. Students are expected to participate in every class session, and to devote a considerable amount of time outside of class to make their strongest possible photographic work.

Class time will be a combination of technical demonstrations, darkroom printing time, in-class discussions, and slide presentations, as well as occasional field trips. Critiques are an integral part of this course, where each student will share their work and ideas with each other in a thought-provoking and constructive environment. This class is time-intensive, and will require each student's consistent engagement and self-directed problem solving.

### **Course Goals**

- Gain fluency with 35mm analog cameras, film processing, and darkroom printing
- Cultivate an awareness of historic and contemporary issues in fine art photographic practice
- Develop the ability to critically analyze and discuss photographic images
- Cultivate the skills necessary to fully realize photographic projects from initial idea to finished print

## Projects

Students will turn in 5 projects over the course of the semester. Each project is designed to help students gain familiarity with the overall practice of photography both as a technical medium and as a conceptual way of creating art. These projects make up the majority of each student's grade.

Each project will conclude with an in-class critique. Part of learning to make good photographic images requires an understanding of the diverse ways in which people see images and the underlying histories that viewers bring to looking at works of art. This process can only be carried out through discussion. Attendance and participation in critiques is required, no exceptions. Failure to attend critique results in a zero for that project. In addition, projects lose one letter grade for each day they are late.

## Project Schedule

Unit	Dates	Projects	Themes	Skills
1	Jan. 18–31	<b>Landscape (Digital)</b> Crit Date: Jan. 31	Environment, space, place	Exposure principles, shutter speed, aperture/depth of field, reciprocity, composition
2	Feb. 2–21	<b>Landscape (Analog)</b> Crit Date: Feb. 21	Environment, space, place	Camera basics, film loading and processing, enlarger basics, darkroom printing, image framing
3	Feb. 23 – Mar. 28	<b>Haunted</b> Crit Date: Mar. 28	Traces, echoes, atmospheres	Split filtering, long exposures, scanning prints and negatives
4	Mar. 30 – Apr. 18	<b>Experimental</b> Crit Date: Apr. 18	Notions of place, space, and time	Contact printing/photograms, cyanotype
5	Apr. 20 – May 4	<b>Final</b> Crit Date: May 4	Self-directed	Synthesis of skills for self-directed final project

There will be a number of assignments designed to help students with the thematic projects. The majority of assignments are to be completed in-class. Exercises, on the other hand, are intended to enhance each student's grasp of the technical aspects of photography. The completion and submission of both assignments and exercises is required.

### Evaluation

All thematic projects are graded on evidence of skill development in the areas listed below. Students can expect full points according to the following criteria:

<b>Conceptual</b>	Outstanding commitment to developing ideas, original and creative problem solving, clear visual demonstration of ideas expressed from abstract vision to photographic image
<b>Formal</b>	Excellent execution overall, exposure management perfected, carefully formulated compositions
<b>Print Quality</b>	Images are properly printed from negatives with rich range of tonal values, with no dust or other kinds of imperfections, display is considerate and meaningful in critique setting
<b>Participation</b>	Student has thoughtful, constructive feedback to offer to classmates in critique, submits work in progress in a timely fashion and actively engages in one-on-one meetings with instructor

Work that possesses several of the above qualities, but not all of them, will not receive full points. Above all, student success in this course will be determined by each student's willingness to explore the many facets of photographic image-making (and what it means to them personally) paired with satisfactory progress towards basic literacy when using the camera and darkroom. In other words, students will be evaluated on their personal commitment to making photographs that are exciting and meaningful while also understanding how the camera, film processing, and darkroom printing function symbiotically.

### Grading

- A** outstanding commitment to developing ideas, original and creative problem-solving, clear evidence of risk-taking, excellent technical execution overall
- B** work that possesses several of the above qualities, but not all of them
- C** assignment completed according to expectations, doing what is asked, minimal risk-taking, technique not entirely refined
- D** less-than-satisfactory completion of expectations, minimal results, late, or incomplete
- F** failure to complete work according to minimum expectations

### Late Work

This is a college-level course and all work should be completed and turned in on time. For every day that a project is late, students will lose a full letter grade for that project. Projects will not be accepted after three days of being late. When a project is submitted after the deadline, the student must also make the instructor aware that it has been submitted to Google Drive via e-mail in order for it to be graded.

If a student misses a critique, that student will receive a zero for that project.

## Grade Breakdown

Assessment areas	Possible points
Unit 1 Project – Landscape (Digital)	12
Unit 2 Project – Landscape (Analog)	12
Unit 3 Project – Haunted	12
Unit 4 Project – Experimental	12
Unit 5 Project – Final	16
<b>Projects Total</b>	<b>64 / 100 points</b>
Exposure Basics Quiz & Composition Assignment (2 pts. ea.)	4
Contact Sheet & Test Strips Assignment (2 pts. ea.)	4
Split Filtering Assignment	4
Photograms Assignment	4
Reading Responses (2 total, 2 pts. ea.) & Artist Research (2 total, 2 pts. ea.)	8
<b>Assignments Total</b>	<b>24 / 100 points</b>
Participation - Attendance	4
Participation - Engagement	4
Participation - Respect	4
<b>Participation Total</b>	<b>12 / 100 points</b>
<b>Points Total</b>	<b>100 / 100 points</b>

## Required Costs and Materials

- Camera: A 35mm (millimeter) camera with lens

Students that have enrolled in this course often borrow a camera from a relative. If you do borrow a camera, please check to make sure the camera is in working condition ahead of the class to save time. You should also have a standard lens that has a range of at least 18-55mm. Please do not use a fixed, telephoto, or macro lens. Please e-mail me if you have questions or concerns about this.

Students can also purchase a used or new 35mm camera online, however please pay close attention that you are NOT purchasing a digital camera that resembles a “vintage” camera, a point-and-shoot camera, an instant camera (Polaroid, Instax, etc.), or an analog camera that is “body only” (this means that it doesn’t include a lens.)

- Film: 5 Rolls Kodak TX 400-36 35mm Tri-X Pan Black and White Film

This is just to start. Depending upon how much you shoot, you might need more. Please note that we will NOT be shooting color film in this class.

IMPORTANT: Do not delay in purchasing your camera and film as we will load your cameras within the first two weeks of class. Again, if you would like guidance, please e-mail me with links to cameras you are considering. I will get back to you as soon as I can, usually within 24-48 hours.

- Darkroom Paper: Ilford MGIV Multigrade IV RC Pearl 8x10 in 50 sheet pack.

PLEASE DO NOT OPEN THE BOX OF PHOTO PAPER BEFORE CLASS! It will be ruined if exposed to light. Please note that it is possible that, depending upon how many sheets you go through, that you might have to invest in more paper beyond the 50-sheet box. Often, students will invest in a second box of paper with another student towards the end of semester to save money.

- Binder with plastic 35mm negative sleeves (for storage)
- Scissors (for cutting film)
- Storage box/binder for silver gelatin prints
- Work apron to protect clothes

Your course fee covers the cost of darkroom chemistry for the semester.

### A note on Chemistry

Please note that this course is not only a studio art course, but also one that requires students to be vigilant about how they handle the materials that they will use in order to make their art. While the chemicals are relatively safe as long as they are properly handled, they are still hazardous to one's health and potentially toxic if not used correctly. That said, *students are required to practice the utmost attention and care during their time in the darkroom, for their safety and the safety of others*. Students must make sure to avoid all contact / prolonged exposure to all of the darkroom chemicals, and that frequent hand washing be made into a darkroom printing habit. Students should avoid touching their face and eyes in the darkroom, and also make sure that they rinse their hands thoroughly with soap and water for 30 seconds after being in the darkroom. Darkroom procedures will be covered in more detail during class.

### Notes on Required Materials

Think of the requirements in this course by means of analogy: *Your camera, film, negatives, and paper are your textbooks, critiques are exams, prints are essays*.

- In the same way that you wouldn't attend a lecture or discussion without the text, it is essential that you have your camera, film, and paper with you **FOR EVERY CLASS SESSION** in order to engage in in-class assignments and exercises.
- Critiques are like exams in the same way you would not miss an exam in a lecture class: critiques are impossible to make up. It is also disrespectful and detrimental to your experience and that of your classmates when you miss a critique. If you miss a critique, you will receive a zero on that project.
- Prints are like essays in that, if we discuss issues with the quality of your prints, the way you printed them (be it printing errors, etc.), or the negative itself, it is expected that you will adjust any problems **before** the critique in the same way you would fix grammatical errors or citations for a written essay before submitting it.

### Course Content and Communications

Course content will be posted on Blackboard. The primary method of communication for this class is via Blackboard Announcement, which is sent through FHSU e-mail. It is essential that students check their FHSU e-mail on a daily basis to receive important information about assignments, scheduling, and all other updates about the class. Failure to do so will adversely affect student performance in this class and ultimately student grades.

### Expectations and Academic Dishonesty

The work presented in class MUST be made by the student from initial idea to final finished product. Any work made by anyone other than the student will NOT be accepted; nor will work that was made prior to this class; nor will work that is/was made for another class. If students have questions about academic honesty in relation to this course, please ask the instructor. Turning in someone else's work will result in an automatic failure of the course (a letter grade of "F" with academic dishonesty). Creative Photography, like all studio and academic classes, demands a commitment of time in order to perform successfully. Students are encouraged to read FHSU's Academic Honesty Policy, which is found in the University Catalog and online at:

[https://www.fhsu.edu/academic/provost/handbook/ch\\_2\\_academic\\_honesty/](https://www.fhsu.edu/academic/provost/handbook/ch_2_academic_honesty/)

### Attendance

*Attendance is absolutely mandatory on all days and for the entire duration of class time.*

A student's grade will be adversely affected by absences, lateness, or premature exit from class. More than three (3) absences will result in the lowering of a grade by a full letter grade. Being late to class or leaving early three (3) times is equal to one (1) absence. Students should not let attendance ruin their grade. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they have obtained all of the material they missed for any absence. If a student is aware that they will be absent ahead of time, they must notify the professor in writing (i.e. via e-mail) as soon as possible. All work, including in-class assignments, must be done in advance in order to get full points.

### Participation Rubric

(12 points total, cumulative throughout the semester and different from the participation grade in critique)

	No points 0 points	Half points 2 points	Full points 4 points
<b>Attendance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student does not attend class</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student is sometimes absent without explanation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student is present for practically every class</li> </ul>
<b>Participates in group conversations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student does not participate in group conversations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student sometimes participates in group conversations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student actively participates in group conversations</li> </ul>
<b>Respects and makes space for the opinions of others</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student does not respect nor make space for the opinion of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student sometimes respects and makes space for the opinion of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student respects and makes space for the opinion of others</li> </ul>

**Excused Absences**

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD A STUDENT COME TO CLASS IF THEY HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 or any other serious illness. If a student is not feeling well, they are strongly encouraged to seek medical attention in a timely manner. In the event that a student has serious illness such as CoVid-19, they should contact the Office of Student Affairs in order to take next steps while also informing the instructor. Above all, students should NEVER come to class if they are feeling ill or have been directly exposed to someone with CoVid-19.

**CoVid-19 Safety Precautions**

Students are required to wear face coverings in this class for the entire duration of class time until further notice.

While the University is not mandating face coverings in general at this time, the University does recommend and support the wearing of face coverings in alignment with current public health guidance. Additionally, the University's policy on face coverings does allow for some local-decision making by instructors and event organizers. Students in this course are required to wear face coverings while in the classroom. This rule is subject to change, at the discretion of the instructor or as otherwise announced by the University.

While instructors and event organizers will attempt to resolve matters at the local level first, violations of this policy will be handled through the Student Code of Conduct process. Individuals may utilize the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Concern Reporting form](#) for this purpose.

**Cell Phones and Technology**

As a matter of courtesy, please turn off cell all phones and other devices prior to the beginning of class. If students are using their phones for any reason (which includes text messaging or using TikTok, Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, etc.) I will issue one (1) warning after which time I will count every instance of use as a late to class / early departure. That being said, three (3) instances of in-class engagement with non-related devices or applications (or any combination of the two) will result in one (1) absence.

**Food and Drink**

No food is allowed in the darkroom at any time, for any reason. If students need to drink water, they should leave water bottles outside of the darkroom and make sure that they are clearly labeled.

**Breaks and Rest**

It is important for students to rest. If students do not take the time to rest, they cannot fully engage with the course material in a meaningful way. That said, all students should have designated times during the day to take a break. They should also have a routine of regular sleeping hours, as well as restricting the use of portable electronics such as cellphones and laptops for several hours before bedtime. For more resources on how to cultivate a better work-life balance as a student, please contact Health & Wellness Services at FHSU, 785-628-4401.

**ADA**

FHSU is committed to full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These and other federal, state and local laws prohibit discrimination against qualified persons with disabilities. Under the ADA, "disability" means a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity of an individual; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment. A substantial impairment is one that significantly limits or restricts a major life activity such as hearing, seeing, speaking, breathing, performing manual tasks, walking, or

caring for oneself. For information pertaining to services, activities, and facilities that are accessible to persons with disabilities, contact the Human Resource Office, Sheridan Hall Room 110, 600 Park Street, Hays, KS 67601, (785) 628-4462.

Students can also visit the following page for more information:

<https://fhsu.edu/president/Compliance-Office/Americans-with-Disabilities-Act/index.html>

### **Harassment**

It is expected that all students enrolled in this course will abide by the terms and conditions of student conduct and academic honesty as cited in the FHSU campus-wide policy. FHSU is committed to creating and maintaining a community in which students, faculty, administrative, and academic staff can learn and work together in an atmosphere that enhances productivity and draws on the diversity of its members; an atmosphere free from all forms of disrespectful conduct, harassment, exploitation or intimidation, including sexual. No form of harassment will be tolerated in this class.

### **Title IX**

FHSU is committed to fostering a safe and productive learning environment. Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex, gender, and gender identity are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. This includes all types of gender and relationship violence, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, domestic and dating violence, and stalking. If you wish to report an incident or have questions about school policies and procedures regarding Title IX issues, please contact Amy Schaffer, University Compliance Officer and the FHSU Title IX Coordinator, at [alschaffer@fhsu.edu](mailto:alschaffer@fhsu.edu) or 785-628-4175. The Compliance Officer can help connect you to campus and outside resources, discuss all of student reporting options, and assist with any concerns you may have.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.fhsu.edu/judicial/gender-based-violence-misconduct-policy/>

FHSU community members can also speak *confidentially* with a Fort Hays State University professional who works in a healthcare or counseling role:

- Health & Wellness Services (formerly Student Health Center), 785-628-4293
- Options Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, 785-625-4202

### **Student Support Services:**

- Tiger Tech  
<http://www.fhsu.edu/tigertech/>
- Forsyth Library  
<http://www.fhsu.edu/library>
- Writing Center  
<https://www.fhsu.edu/WritingCenter/>

**Creative Photography I – Schedule\***  
**Spring 2022**  
**\*Subject to change**

<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Week 1</b>	Monday	1/17	No Class – MLK Jr. Day
		Wednesday	1/19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Day of Class</li> <li>• Syllabus</li> <li>• Icebreaker</li> <li>• Tour</li> <li>• Landscape Project (Digital) introduced</li> </ul>
	<b>Week 2</b>	Monday	1/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking About Photographs Presentation</li> <li>• Composition Presentation</li> <li>• Landscape Presentation</li> <li>• 1.1 Composition Assignment introduced</li> </ul>
		Wednesday	1/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Composition Assignment</li> <li>• Camera and Exposure Basics Presentation</li> <li>• Loading film</li> <li>• On-Campus Field Trip</li> </ul>
	<b>Week 3</b>	Monday	1/31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to Critique Presentation</li> <li>• 1.2 Landscape Project (Digital) Critique</li> </ul>
<b>Unit 2</b>		Wednesday	2/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Darkroom Basics &amp; Safety</li> <li>• Darkroom Clean-up</li> <li>• Loading and Processing Film Demo</li> <li>• (IMPORTANT: Students must come to class in OSHA approved footwear from this day forward, with the exception of lecture and critique days)</li> </ul>
	<b>Week 4</b>	Monday	2/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Film Processing Film for 2.0 Landscape (Analog) Project</li> <li>• (IMPORTANT: Students must have at least one roll to develop by this session)</li> </ul>
		Wednesday	2/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enlarger Basics</li> <li>• Printing Basics</li> <li>• Contact Sheets</li> <li>• Test Strips</li> <li>• (IMPORTANT: Students will need paper by this session)</li> </ul>
	<b>Week 5</b>	Monday	2/14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab Day</li> <li>• 2.1 Darkroom Fundamentals Quiz</li> </ul>
		Wednesday	2/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab Day</li> </ul>
	<b>Week 6</b>	Monday	2/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2.2 Landscape (Analog) Critique</li> </ul>

<b>Unit 3</b>		Wednesday	2/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student should respond in writing to 3 of the study questions from the Haunted Presentation (3.1)</li> <li>• Review Haunted Presentation</li> <li>• Discuss 3.2 Haunted Ideas</li> </ul>
	<b>Week 7</b>	Monday	2/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3.3 Dodging &amp; Burning</li> </ul>
		Wednesday	3/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3.4 Split Filtering</li> </ul>
	<b>Week 8</b>	Monday	3/7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Film Processing for 3.5 Haunted Project</li> <li>• Review 3.3 Dodging &amp; Burning and 3.4 Split Filtering</li> </ul>
		Wednesday	3/9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab Day</li> </ul>
	<b>Week 9</b>	Monday	3/14	No Class – Spring Break
		Wednesday	3/16	No Class – Spring Break
	<b>Week 10</b>	Monday	3/21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab Day</li> <li>• 3.6 Review in-progress prints</li> </ul>
		Wednesday	3/23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab Day</li> </ul>
	<b>Week 11</b>	Monday	3/28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3.7 Project 3: Haunted Critique</li> </ul>
<b>Unit 4</b>		Wednesday	3/30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.1 Artist Presentations</li> <li>• 4.2 Discuss ideas for Experimental Project</li> <li>• 4.3 Scanning and Retouching</li> </ul>
	<b>Week 12</b>	Monday	4/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.4 Photograms in-class assignment</li> </ul>
		Wednesday	4/6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Film Processing for 4.5 Experimental Project</li> <li>• Lab Day</li> <li>• Discuss ideas for Final Project</li> </ul>
	<b>Week 13</b>	Monday	4/11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab Day for 4.5 Experimental Project</li> </ul>
		Wednesday	4/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab Day for Experimental Project</li> </ul>
	<b>Week 14</b>	Monday	4/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.5 Experimental Project Critique</li> </ul>
<b>Unit 5</b>		Wednesday	4/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Portfolio Review</li> </ul>
	<b>Week 15</b>	Monday	4/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Film Processing for Final Project</li> </ul>
		Wednesday	4/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab Day for Final Project</li> </ul>
	<b>Week 16</b>	Monday	5/2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lab Day for Final Project</li> </ul>
		Wednesday	5/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.1 Final Project Critique</li> <li>• 5.2 Final Portfolio Due</li> </ul>
	<b>Week 17</b>	Monday	5/9	University Finals – No Class
		Wednesday	5/11	University Finals – No Class