



Art 246 Photography & Culture
Fort Hays State University
College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
Art and Design
Curt Steckel

1. COURSE INFORMATION

1.1. Credit Hours	3
1.2. Semester and Year	Fall 2026
1.3. Course Prerequisites	none
1.4. Location of Class	Art and Design Building, Room 210 & Room 221
1.5. Class Time	Monday, Wednesday, & Friday 1:30 – 3:20

2. INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

2.1 Instructor Contact Information

- Name: Curt Steckel
- Title: Assistant Professor
- Office Location: Art and Design Building, Room 222
- Office Hours: Mon/Wed, 12:30 – 1:30, Tues/Thurs 10 – 12pm
- Email Address: casteckel@fhsu.edu
- Phone Number: 785.628.4216

2.2 Contact Procedure and Policy:

The best way to contact me is by email. It is best practice to list the course title, number, and I usually respond within 24 hours during the week. I also have an office phone if you call during my office hours, however, I typically am meeting with students during that time too. I use Calendly to schedule office hours, which I have linked below and within blackboard, as well as a QR code outside my office door for easy access.

<https://calendly.com/casteckel/office-hours>

2.3 About the Instructor:

- Education and Teaching Background: Master of Fine Arts degree received from the University of South Florida. I have been teaching for over ten years with experience in both high school and at the college level
- Research Areas of Interests: My research includes both photography and performance art, ranging in a lot subjects. Recent bodies of work are examining levels of perception, time, and long-standing research into ideas of failure.

3. TEXTBOOK AND COURSE MATERIALS



3.1. Required Textbook(s): no required textbook

This course requires you to have regular access to a digital camera. Acceptable cameras are DSLR (Digital Single Lens Reflex), mirrorless, or a high-quality point and shoot camera. This is an introductory course into digital photography, which means a fully manual camera is not required, but could be useful with certain later projects. **A cellphone is not acceptable for this class.** In addition to the camera, you will need a memory card (8GB minimum would be best), and a flash drive or external hard drive for storing your files.

Sketchbook or notebook for taking notes and developing ideas for projects.

3.2. Supplementary Book(s) and Article(s): Article links are available on Blackboard.

3.3. Computer Requirements: Please refer to the [TigerTech webpage](#) to check the requirements. If you have any technical issues, contact FHSU TigerTech 785-628-3478, notify to the instructor.

4. COURSE DESCRIPTION

4.1. Course Description: This is an introductory course into photography and its cultural impact. We will be learning how to capture various photographs using dedicated cameras, while discussing the societal shift as the technology has evolved alongside humanity. There was once a time when people would consider themselves lucky if they had a singular portrait of themselves to send to a loved one. Today, billions of photographs are taken and shared every day. We will study a small section of the different types of photography to be able to recreate them in our own style.

4.2. Regular and Substantive Interaction:

You will need your camera for almost every class period (it will be rare for you to NOT need your camera on the ready). Average class periods will be around discussions and demonstrations at the beginning of the class, which will roll into hands on work for the second half of class and following class periods as needed. Most Friday's will also be dedicated to work days meaning access to the lab for completing projects, discussions about progress on assignments, and access to lighting equipment.

4.3. Recommendations for Success:

Success in class will be reflected in the commitment you put into the work and clarity of your ideas. It is about controlled skills in using the materials to get the desired results. Art is about the process of discovery and how you guide yourself



through it. Experimentation is paramount to meaningful work, researching ideas and materials open new pathways, and often, the more work you make, the more you will uncover.

You will fail. How you react during and after the failure is what determines if you are an artist or not. Mistakes happen, and you must budget your time to still accomplish what you set out to do. Last minute actions and procrastination often lead to mistakes that can cost you, or others, time, and materials. Class time includes participation in critiques and discussions and working on projects in class. Expect to work outside of class times as well to “go above and beyond” for high achieving grades.

4.4. Course Expectation

- Students to Instructor Expectation
 - Holding class at the designated times
 - Notifying students via email/announcement if there are changes to the class (recommendation is to check those before heading to class in case we need to reschedule)
 - Staying organized while being succinct with the course materials
 - Adjusting class materials or lecture times to match the pacing of the class
- Instructor to Students' Expectations
 - Attending class
 - Not being on your phone or otherwise distracted during demonstrations
 - Working on assignments; with effort
 - Asking questions as they arise

5. COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

5.1. Course Learning Outcomes/Objectives:

- Demonstrate knowledge of a digital camera's main operations and functions.
- Learn and apply photography techniques to capture commercial projects such as product photography and proper lighting in an image
- Participate in group critiques to analyze and improve personal and peer projects
- Be able to discuss ethical considerations in photography, regarding representation, manipulation, and impact an image can have on an audience

5.2. Prerequisites: none



6. TEACHING, LEARNING METHODS, & COURSE STRUCTURE

6.1. Delivery Method:

Content will be primarily delivered through lectures, or demonstrations. Additional materials to supplement notes taken during lecture will be provided on handouts or in the course shell.

6.2. Instructional Approach:

There will be a combination of direct lecture or demonstrations, often followed by collaborative learning with hands on work and guided learning on the techniques for everyone. A lot of the materials covered require an experimental mindset to fully explore the capabilities of the media.

6.3. Course Structure:

Each week will cover a new project or concept within photography that will become the framework for the next lesson. Due to the nature of the art medium and due to limitations with the facilities, there might be concurrent projects that will give you the choice on what you will be working on. There will be a project due each week that will be discussed as a class, analyzed, and used to improve personal and group techniques.

7. COURSE SCHEDULE

This schedule is tentative and might change during the semester depending on how the course evolves. The content is subject to change depending on students' interest and progress. Students will be notified of the changes through announcements either in the class or at the Blackboard course site. If time is mentioned in the course, it refers to the Central Time Zone.

There is a separate handout for the schedule.

8. ASSESSMENT METHODS AND GRADING SCALE

There are 150 points for this course. The grade you earn for this course depends on the total number of points you earn throughout the semester. The assessment methods and grading scale are as follows:



Assessment Methods	How Many	Total Unit Points	Percentage
Projects	12	120	80%
Discussions & Participation	Varies	30	20%
Total Points		150	100%

135 - 150 = A (90.00% and above)

120 - 134 = B (80.00%–89.99%)

105 - 119 = C (70.00%–79.99%)

90 - 104 = D (60.00%–69.99%)

< 89 = U (below 60.00%)

9. STUDENT HELP RESOURCES

9.1 [FHSU Blackboard Student Tutorials](#)

9.2 [Student Accessibility Services](#)

9.3 [Health and Wellness Services](#)

9.4 [Career Services](#)

9.5 [Technology Services](#)

9.6 [Forsyth Library Research Help and Tutorials](#)

9.7 [Academic Tutoring](#)

9.8 [Writing Center](#)

Special Learning Conditions/Accommodations:

Fort Hays State University, in accordance with The Americans With Disabilities Act, provides assistance and resources for students with disabilities. The Student Accessibility Services office is located within Health and Wellness Services in the Fischli-Wills Center for Student Success, Room 301, 785-628-4401. This is the appropriate office for students, faculty or staff to contact to verify and notify the University of a student's documented disability. After verification of a documented disability, the Student Accessibility Services office will initiate a request for services. Students should contact the instructor within the first two weeks of class if they require special accommodations for test taking, carrying out assignments, or any other need for assistance.

For more information, you can contact TigerTech at 785-628-3478 or [FHSU TigerTech](#)

10. COURSE POLICIES



- 10.1 Class Attendance: Class attendance is required. If a student must be absent, it is their responsibility to inform the instructor and if excused make an appointment during office hours to make up for the time and activity missed. Missing critique is lost time that cannot be accommodated for, which means a project grade will be a zero if absent during critique days. School-related absences should be discussed in advance. Appointments should not be made during class-time. Illness should be documented with Student Affairs or a doctor's note.

Three absences may result in one grade lowered. More than three absences will reduce the grade further, and the student's name will be reported to Student Affairs, pending further action. FHSU policy states the professor is advised to inform the college Dean of excessive absences and to initiate an official withdrawal from the course.

Attendance will be taken in the first 5 minutes of class. Three tardies may be counted as one absence. If counted absent at the beginning of class, it is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of their attendance at the end of the class.

- 10.2 Class Participation:
Do your work to the best of your ability. Failures will happen, and that is ok. You get out of your education what you invest in it. No amount of talent can replace hard work. It takes time to make art. Researching materials and ideas will lead you to making more meaningful and powerful art.

Critiques are a vital part of class and cannot be skipped or missed. Artwork is evaluated and discussed as a whole group. Your grade will be comprised of discussions, critiques, worktime, and handling of materials in class. Most work will be turned in on Blackboard or via a hard drive to the instructor. We will discuss the best practices for our class as we begin the semester.

- 10.3 Procedures for Assignment Submission:
Projects will be turned in through Blackboard. Exporting and formatting images will be covered during class instruction.

- 10.4 Bonus Points or Extra Credit:
Extra credit opportunities can be documentation of any art gallery visits, or art shows, that are attended during the semester. Instructions are listed in Blackboard

- 10.5 Other Course Policies: ChatGPT and all other A.I.



Students can use AI-generated texts (images) on assignments in this course if instructor permission is obtained in advance and content generated is properly cited. Unless given permission to use AI tools, each student is expected to complete each assignment without substantive assistance from others, including AI. Unauthorized or suspected use of AI will be subject to the FHSU Academic Honesty Policy and may result in a 0 for the assignment, failure of the course, and, if warranted, expulsion from FHSU.

Instructor's Art Academic Honesty Policy. // In an art class, academic honesty means your art should not be copied from another artist. If you have subject matter interests, then research and develop those interests, they will lead to unique solutions and content. If you continue to develop a large set of skills, try to find your special way of combining those skills into something new.

11. UNIVERSITY POLICIES

11.1. [Academic Honesty](#)

11.2. [Attendance](#)

11.3. [Withdrawal](#)

11.4. [Title IX Policy](#) : 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 or (785) 628-4175. The Compliance Officer can help connect you to campus and outside resources, discuss all your reporting options, and assist with any concerns you may have.

12. ADDITIONAL ITEMS REQUIRED BY DEPARTMENT/COLLEGE