

Journalism Department -- University of Southern California

Tuesday Thursday 9am -10:50pm ASC G38

Mission and outcome.

Advanced Photojournalism is a rigorous program of practical exercises and academic study.

Weekly workshops will give students an advanced and comprehensive understanding of photojournalism. Personal photo essays, picture stories, and personal documentary projects will be self-assigned with deadlines. We will also investigate other photojournalist's work that led to social or political change.

During the semester, students will develop a strong sense of style, content, and design.

Presentations, discussions, and exercises will also cover ethics, truth, and honesty in photo reporting.

At the end of the semester, students will be able research issues and subjects, overcome technical problems, and bring their own personal vision to photo stories and essays. Students will be able to tell stories with their cameras with an enhanced understanding of camera functions, basic digital media, presentation methods and ethical concerns.

Photo assignments will be given, with deadlines. Three picture packages/photo essays of publication quality images will be produced during the term.

Instructor: Rick Meyer, Photojournalist

Prerequisites

330 Photojournalism or must be a grad student.

Recommended Reading

Photojournalism: The Professionals' Approach. Kenneth Kobre, Boston Press, 3rd Ed.

Various handouts provided throughout the semester. You will be required to report on an approved photojournalist of your choice.

You should be aware of local and national news, and read a newspaper of record every day, such as the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, or the Orange County Register. National Public Radio and various news websites provide important news as well.

Additional Reading

News Photographer magazine, the Los Angeles Times, Orange County Register, and New York Times are all available daily in the Annenberg Resource Center (ARC).

Newsmagazines, photo websites, photography books and catalogs, Biographies of photographers and photojournalists. Associated Press Stylebook.

Topics

The goal of the class is to provide you with an advanced understanding of photojournalism. We will explore complex composition, content and form with an emphasis on shooting storytelling photos.

You will learn how to research issues and subjects and overcome technical problems while bring your own personal vision to the assignment.

We will explore the basic question of what you are interested in, what you have access to and how to tell the story with your camera.

Emphasis will be placed on improving your technical expertise in basic digital media, existing light photography, and developing your shooting style.

Each student will be assigned a professional photojournalism mentor who will assist you with story ideas, technical help, and logistics.

Attendance

Good attendance is mandatory if you expect to pass the class. Tests and assignments cannot be made up except in the most serious medical situations.

You may not make up quizzes and all assignments must be turned in on time. If there are religious holidays you observe or unusual situations that require you to miss class, please let me know about them as far in advance as possible, preferably at the beginning of the semester.

Current Events

Please read local newspapers and newsmagazines. Almost every week there will be some type of exercise or quiz about current events.

Field Trips

If the class is interested, we can meet during non-class time for photo field trips. We might go shooting on a Saturday morning.

Portfolio

At the end of the semester, I will review your portfolio. This could be your class work or your real working portfolio.

Grading

I look at several factors when grading. I estimate your experience and then measure your improvement. Not all grading can be from tests. As photographers, I look for your technical ability, your ability to "see" photographs, the creative insights you have for photography. The amount of effort you expend on your class work will have a direct positive relationship to your grade.

65% Weekly assignments and portfolio/essay project

25% Quizzes and final exam

10% Class Participation

A = Excellent. Professional quality work. Flawless technique. Relevant and insightful photos.

B = Good. Competent simple images that are storytelling. Good technique.

C = Acceptable. Average composition, technique and message.

D = Poor. Unsatisfactory and flaw-filled. This work is not publishable.

F = Unacceptable. Thoroughly unprofessional. A total failure to execute the assignment.

All pictures will be critiqued in class.

Please note that successful photojournalism is not about perfection, it is about problem solving, being proactive, and investing your time wisely. Your out-of-class time usually includes 8 hours of homework and assignments per week. I will hold you to professional standards because I know you are capable of them.

Minimum equipment and supplies.

35mm film camera or digital camera (3 megapixel or bigger) with manually adjustable shutter speeds and apertures. Digital cameras are available for checkout.

You will be required to have your film processed for your assignments.

USB thumb drive or blank CD-ROMS for turning in assignments and storing photos.

Courtesy

Please keep cell phones and pagers set to "vibrate" or "off" during class. Please leave the classroom to handle emergency business without disturbing others.

Make sure the computer lab and classroom are clean before you leave. Respect your colleagues and friends by keeping your community workspace neat. Sorry, but no food or drinks are allowed in the computer lab/classroom.

Deadlines

Deadlines are not a goal: A late assignment WILL affect your final grade.

Even if you can't come, someone else can deliver your assignment by deadline.

PLAN AHEAD. If you are shooting at the last minute and something goes wrong, you won't have time to solve the problem. Shoot and process your assignments early in the week so you can reshoot if your story falls through, access isn't what you expected, subjects aren't cooperating, or you are having technical problems.

If your camera equipment is not working, make arrangements to use other gear or get it fixed. In the same way that your essay for your English class is still due on time even if your home computer is on the fritz, your photography assignments are due at the deadline (some camera service resources will be provided).

If you observe a religious holiday when class meets or if you become ill on the day of class, make arrangements to turn your materials in on time. See "Grading" above.

IMPORTANT STATEMENTS USC SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The following is the School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity as published in the University Catalog.

Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will immediately receive a failing grade in the course and will be dismissed as a major from the School of Journalism. There are no exceptions to the school's policy.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one's own; in journalism, this includes appropriating the reporting of another without clear attribution. The following is the Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity as published in the University catalog: "Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course and will be dismissed as a major from the School of Journalism. There are no exceptions to this policy."

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776.

INTERSHIPS

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course who undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to one percent of the total available semester points for this course.

Week 1, January 9

Orientation, Student & Instructor Expectations.

The Schedule.

Student Profiles.

Characteristics of Photojournalism (review).

Covering the News with a Camera (review).

Careers in Photojournalism

A sense of curiosity, artistic aptitude, computer aptitude, high ethical standards, quick thinking and adaptable.

January 11

How photographs are used in today's media.

Photos that express an emotion, idea or concept. Editing Exercise.

The camera connects us to our subject/world. The camera sometimes captures images that speak, compel, and cause anger.

Good photo books.

Video: Dying to tell the story. The story of Don Eldon. Part 1

NEXT WEEK BRING YOUR CAMERAS AND GEAR TO CLASS

Week 2, January 16

Camera/equipment clinic.

Rules of the game.

Professional camera tricks.

What makes a photo story? Photo story exercise.

Story topic proposals picture story #1.

Questions Without Answers

My Ghost
The Architect's Brother
Without Sanctuary
Other Pictures

January 18

Five Topic Method

10 photo ideas for a total of 50 items.

Pre-thinking ideas. Lens and physical angels.

Video: Dying to tell the story. The story of Don Eldon. Part 2.

Week 3, January 23

Photo Mechanic

Digital darkroom.

Prepress.

Proofing and output.

January 25

Care and feeding of digital cameras.

Story proposals picture story #1.

Assign: Report on modern masters of documentary photography.

Video clips, still images, use your imagination. Please use the web as your **only** research method. Be ready to make a 3-5 minute presentation to the class on meeting #4. Videotape, PowerPoint or QuickTime are all acceptable. Due in 2 weeks.

Week 4, January 30

Social or political change: Photos can make a difference.

Using the internet to research issues and subjects.

The Lens.

Correct lens selection can isolate your subject, distort reality and perspective.

Ethics, truth, and honesty in photo reporting.

Why people lie. Publications that cheat. Copyright.

Internships.

February 1

Functioning like a reporter.

Accuracy, accuracy, accuracy.

Are you the “camera guy” or a photojournalist?

Picture story #1 first edit.

Video: Photojournalists, The Nikon School.

The Environmental Portrait. Photographing people and the space around them.

Week 5, February 6

Professional bag of tricks.

Deadlines and time management for photojournalists.

Dealing with your client and keeping them happy.

Critique the professionals. Bring in the good and bad.

Photo editing methods.

February 8

Report: Modern masters of documentary photography.

Video: Sebastiao Salgado.

Picture story #1 second edit.

Advanced scanning, PhotoShop, and printing. (lab)

Week 6, February 13

If a picture is worth a thousand words, what volumes could you write?

Picture story #1 final edit.

What are photos that present a viewpoint?

Story topic proposals picture story #2.

Dark Horses
Compound Fracture
Certain People
Lost Hollywood
Hollywood Holidays

February 15

Gallery, exhibitions and networking.

The 16 image portfolio.

Portfolio images to avoid.

Images of historic value, archiving and indexing. Video: Alfred Stieglitz.

Week 7 February 20

Newspapers, magazines and the internet. Survey of picture use.

Getting the most out of a portrait/personality assignment.

The quality of light. Develop an understanding and appreciation for the qualities of light.

The portrait. Explore ways to photograph people, friends and strangers.

Ways to add energy to your work.

February 22

Midterm exam.

Language difficulties and ways around them.

Automatic vs. manual exposure. Are you smarter than your camera?

Picture story #2 first edit.

Week 8, February 27

Guest Speaker

Intuitive elements of a photo.

Intellectual elements of a photo.

Visual elements of a photo.

March 1

Computer hardware survey and buying guide. Mac vs. PC. What the pros use.

Shooting in the courtroom.

Internships and apprenticeships.

Picture story #2 second edit. Advanced scanning, PhotoShop, and printing.

Week 9, March 6

Breaking news and dealing with the police.

How to stay out of jail.

Local resources: Where you can find help.

Who is your competition and how can you beat them.

Equipping yourself on a budget.

Salaries reflect supply.

March 8

Picture story #2 final edit.

Advanced scanning, PhotoShop, and printing.

Story proposals picture story #3.

 Night Gang

 A Time Not Here

 A Morning's Work

 Harms Way

 The Last City

Video. Henri Cartier-Bresson

Spring break week, March 13, 15

Week 10, March 20

Video vs. still. Can they exist together?

Art directors, editors, page designers and other people that can change your world.

The personality of a photojournalist.

You can shoot, but can you sell?

So what is a photo editor?

Improving your technical control.

March 22

Digital camera comparison and shopping guide.

Video. Annie Leibovitz

Picture story #3 first edit.

Week 11, March 27

Guest Speaker

Formula shooting. Life Magazine: If it was a success, why did it fail?

Handling the difficult subject matter.

March 29

Shooting for the publication and developing different shooting styles.

The complete caption.

Picture story #3 second edit.

Advanced scanning, PhotoShop, and printing.

My mistakes. What can go wrong, will go wrong.

Week 12, April 3

Death, destruction and dealing with unpleasant situations.

Traumatic Stress Syndrome.

Domestic and international corpses: What can be published?

Photographing victims and family members.

Privacy and Los Angeles neighborhoods.

Can you get too close to your subjects?

April 5

Picture story #3 Final edit.

Story proposals. Telling the story with one photo.

Portfolio project lab.

Video: Photography made difficult, W. Eugene Smith.

Week 13, April 10

Guest Speaker

The local and regional job market.

April 12

Business management for freelance photojournalists.

Diversity in the work place and making it work for you.

Occupational Stats.

Getting started with your career. Portfolio project lab.

Week 14, April 17

When disaster strikes and how to profit from it.

Taking your act on the road. Foreign locations, local customs.

The “road kit” for photojournalists.

April 19

Future of Photojournalism.

Portfolio project lab.

Final Portfolio/Photo Essay Critique.

Meeting 15, April 24

Final Portfolio/Photo Essay Critique.

April 26

Final Exam.

Syllabus is subject to change.

