

VM492-0: Photo Practicum - Finding Your Voice (4 cr.)

Emerson College – Syllabus: Fall 2011 (revised 9/6/11)

Class sessions: Wednesdays 10am – 1:45pm

Rooms: T206 (classroom) / W418 (digital lab) / T504 (darkroom)

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Office Hours: Room: 180 Tremont (Ansin Bldg.) #919B, Mailbox also on the 9th floor
Wednesdays 1:45pm – 3:45pm, and by appointment

Course Description:

Designed to integrate, enrich, and solidify a student's photographic skills building on past productions. Emphasis is placed on finding your photographic voice and developing a portfolio representative of a personal vision. Explorations of various techniques and styles will be encouraged as one discovers his/her visual identity. Slide presentations and critiques will happen regularly to inspire and assist students in solidifying their personal projects.

One is expected to arrive with darkroom skills in place and well practiced. Therefore this class will not emphasize printing skills, but students are encouraged to utilize a variety of tools, equipment, and techniques to achieve their goals. Exploring a wide range of different photographic formats is encouraged. The class will also include field trips, gallery visits, and visiting artists. Discussion of marketing resources and opportunities beyond Emerson will be presented toward the end of the semester. Presentations will address websites, interactive DVDs, portfolio review opportunities, and building a portfolio for job interviews and graduate programs.

Objectives:

Continuing to discover content that is meaningful is an ongoing process for all artists. Once the craft has been developed, finding your photographic voice becomes the challenge. The goal of this course is to help the student find that voice. What makes us unique are our own stories. It is the place we start from and what is most familiar. It is from this resource that we create; therefore, the first half of the course will focus on searching for content and how that content relates to your life. This will be the core of your project for the semester, and it will be your reference point for those departures from your original intentions. One must define it; name it, and begin to photograph it. A journal will also be required, as a way to document the semester and gather resources relevant to the subject you have chosen. Students are encouraged to bring in examples of work that has influenced them, readings, videos, etc.

Expectations:

Attendance – 3 absences will result in a course grade of F, meaning No Credit.

Excuses for travel, doctor's appointments, and sport events will NOT be excused. Our last day of class is December 14. Please do not book any reservations home before this date.

You will not be excused from class under any circumstances.

Punctuality – 2 tardy's (over 10 minutes) equals an absence, leaving class early equals one tardy.

Accountability – All assignments must be completed and handed in on time. Late assignments will be reduced by 1 letter grade. If you are absent, you should make arrangements to deliver the work before class on the due date. Darkroom time is scheduled nearly every class. This means coming prepared with new negatives to print. If you are not prepared with new negatives to print you will receive an absence for the day! Each student is responsible for having all supplies needed to create their project.

Quality – Students should expect to spend time outside of class for shooting and printing new photographs. Final project must consist of 10-12 finished prints of the highest quality. Students must follow all darkroom rules/ethics.

Grading is based on the following:

The emphasis will be on the work produced and how well the material in class is incorporated into your semester-long project. Students will be penalized for late work. Students will be informed of midterm grade, but because this is a practicum class, students are expected to perform the best quality work. This is NOT NEGOTIABLE. Attendance will be called every class. Work may be retained for exhibition at the end of the semester. I do not give grades for each class. If you are concerned about your progress, feel free to ask. This is a practicum, upper level course and I expect above average work from everyone. Before each critique ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does your work communicate clearly?
2. Have you accomplished your intention?
3. Is your technique the best it can be?
4. Is your presentation craft the best it can be?
5. Is your work consistently presented on time?

Your class grade based on the following criteria:

Evolving your project during the semester:	20%	(Turning work in on time, preparedness, journal)
Presentations & Participation:	20%	(Critiques, reading assignments, discussions)
Final Project:	60%	(Execution, Content, Meaning, Clarity of Ideas)
Attendance & Preparedness:		See Expectations section above

Mobile Devices:

The use of mobile device (such as cell-phones and smart-phones) in class is strictly prohibited. Under no circumstances should you ever make or answer phone calls during class. Text messaging, web browsing, even checking the screen on your mobile device is also prohibited. Your phone should be turned off and put away when you enter the classroom.

Recommended books:

Looking at Photographs by John Szarkowski
The Nature of Photographs: Stephen Shore
Photography Speaks: Brooks Johnson, Aperture Books
The Photograph as Contemporary Art: Charlotte Cotton
Photographer's Market: valuable resource for emerging photographers
On Photography by Susan Sontag
Why People Photograph by Robert Adams

General Photography Resources:

Aperture Magazine, <http://www.aperture.org/>
PDN: Photo District News Magazine: www.pdnonline.com
PDN magazine for students: www.pdnedu.com
Photo Eye, the definitive photography bookstore: <http://www.photoeye.com>
Photographic Resource Center: Emerson College is a member: <http://www.bu.edu/prc/>
Mary Virginia Swanson: <http://mvswanson.com/>
Maine Media Workshops: <http://www.mainemedia.edu/>
Magnum Photos: <http://www.magnumphotos.com>
Santa Fe Center for Photography: <http://www.visitcenter.org/>
American Suburb X: <http://www.americansuburbx.com/>
Flak Photo: <http://www.flakphoto.com/>
Landscape Stories: <http://www.landscapestories.net/>
Fraction Magazine: <http://fractionmagazine.com/>

Portfolio Case & Book Printing Resources:

www.Centuryboxes.com
www.freestylephoto.biz
www.Printfile.com
www.Universityproducts.com
www.Lineco.com
www.Lightimpressionsdirect.com
www.Archivalmethods.com
www.Blurb.com

Getting Photo Supplies:

The cheapest way to buy film and supplies is online through stores such as B&H (www.bhphotovideo.com) and Adorama (www.adorama.com). In town, you can go to Calumet (www.calumetphoto.com) in Cambridge, EP Levines (www.eplevine.com) in Waltham, Hunt's (www.huntsphotoandvideo.com) in Cambridge and on Comm. Ave, or Newtonville Camera (www.nvcamera.com) in Newton. Always remember to ask for a student discount. For equipment you should also try Joe & Karen's Cameras (617- 770-3446), they have excellent prices.

Plagiarism Statement:

It is the responsibility of all Emerson students to know and adhere to the College's policy on plagiarism, which can be found at:

http://www2.emerson.edu/academic_affairs/policies/Plagiarism-Policy.cfm.

If you have any question concerning the Emerson plagiarism policy or about documentation of sources in work you produce in this course, speak to your instructor.

Disability Statement:

Emerson College is committed to providing equal access to its academic programs and social activities for all qualified students with disabilities. While upholding this commitment, we require all Emerson students to meet the high standards of achievement that are essential to the College's programs and services. To advance these dual aims, the College will provide reasonable accommodations to disabled students who request accommodations through the College's Disability Services Office (DSO), if the DSO determines that accommodations are both medically necessary and reasonable. Please note that a requested accommodation will only be approved as 'reasonable' if it does not compromise any essential requirements of a course. Students who wish to request a disability accommodation must submit their request to the DSO, and not to faculty, since only the DSO is authorized to approve or deny any requests for accommodations. College employees and student's family members cannot request accommodations on a student's behalf. Rather, students who wish to request accommodations must themselves contact the DSO since Emerson's philosophy is that its students are independent and self determined and students with disabilities—like non-disabled students—have control over their lives here at Emerson and are ultimately responsible for making their own decisions. Students who know at the start of a semester that they will need accommodations must submit their accommodation requests to the DSO within the first two weeks of the semester. If a student becomes ill or disabled during the course of a semester, or discovers after the start of a semester that he or she needs a disability accommodation, he or she is encouraged to submit his or her request to the DSO as soon as possible since the process of approving accommodations takes time, and approved accommodations will not be granted retroactively. The Associate Director for Disability Services can be reached at: 617-824-8592, dso@emerson.edu, 5th Floor 216 Tremont Street.

Course Schedule:

Please Note: The following schedule is subject to change at my discretion. **If you miss a class, it is your responsibility** to find out from your classmates what, if any, changes to the schedule have been made. Unless you receive an exemption from me, **you will be responsible** upon returning to class for both the current assignment as well as the assignments for the week you missed.

- #1 9/7 Introduction to the course, Review syllabus, EDC Session (1pm),
Review darkroom procedures, Supplies, assign lockers, medium format camera demo
Student and teacher goals and meeting these on time. personal notebooks (journals)
Discuss auto/biography (defining one's identity), see examples. Discuss Project Sheet.
- Assignment: E-mail test, Sign up for a locker.*
Ipg statement about yourself and aspect of yourself addressed in your work
Shoot and make contact sheets starting to explore this idea.
- #2 9/14 Read written statements out loud & show contact sheets.
Be prepared to discuss your idea with the class as well as question your peers about theirs.
Video Presentation. Talk about Blurb, PRC & relevant websites.
- Assignment: Shoot more, develop and print for next week's critique.*
- #3 9/21 **Group Critique Project #1 (8-10 Images)**
- #4 9/28 Show work of contemporary photographers. Second half of class: Lab Time.
- #5 10/5 Lighting demo. Second Half of class: Lab Time.
- #6 10/12 **Group Critique Project #2.** Second half of class: Lab Time.
- #7 10/19 Book Layout Software Demo. Second half of class: Lab Time.
- #8 10/26 Video Screening. talk about convergence. Second half of class: Lab Time.
- #9 11/2 **Group Critique Project #3**
- #10 11/9 Visiting Artist. Presentation of Marketing Resources. Second half of class: Lab Time.
- Assignment: Book layout-send work off to Blurb for proof.*
- #11 11/16 Video Screening. Lab Time.
- 11/23 No Class - Thanksgiving Holiday**
- #12 11/30 Field Trip: T.B.A. Questions in Art Criticism.
- Assignment: Use your in-class completed worksheet to write a Ipg response paper.*
- #13 12/7 One-on-one meetings. Preparation for final presentation.
- #14 12/14 **Group Critique Project #4. Final Exam Period (10:30-12:30pm)**
– The future of photography. Instructor's work.