

VM366-1: Digital Photography (4 cr.)

Emerson College — Fall 2026 Syllabus (last revised on 09/08/2026)

Class sessions: In-person on **Fridays**, 10 a.m. — 1:45 p.m.

Locations: 180 Tremont Street, Ansin Bldg. #206 (Classroom), #703 (Photo Electronic Lab)

Professor: Camilo Ramirez
Camilo_Ramirez@emerson.edu
www.camramirez.com/teaching.html (Syllabus, project worksheets, some readings, public resources)
[Shared Google Drive Repository](#) (Delivering your work, additional resources, project evals & grades)

Office & Hrs: 180 Tremont St. (Ansin Building) #911. Mailbox is also on the 9th floor of the Ansin bldg.
In-person on Mon & Wed: 12:45pm–1:45pm and Fri: 8:50am–9:50am, or by appointment.

Course Description:

A hands-on production class created especially for the photography student who is interested in the digital darkroom. It is designed to give students a basic introduction to the elements of digital capture, manipulation, and output. The course addresses the digital tools within the context of the aesthetics of photography. Photoshop is used as another photographic tool.

Prerequisite: VM265: Introduction to Photography

Student Learning Outcomes - Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the history, theory, and practice of media arts (digital photography).
- Demonstrate basic skills in media arts production (digital photography).
- Demonstrate a critical understanding of photographic projects and images through group critiques.
- Learn professional standards and techniques for shooting still images with medium-format cameras.
- Learn professional standards and techniques for shooting still images with Digital SLR or Med Format cameras.
- Demonstrate knowledge of converting color analog film and printed photographs into digital.
- Establish an effective color-managed workflow for digital photography with industry standard software.
- Learn various output workflows for print and online use.

Course Requirements:

The content of this course requires in-person, physical presence by students. Attending in person assignments, technical demos, in-class lab time, group critiques of photo projects is essential for learning and safety. Using equipment that is specific to our digital and darkroom photo labs is required, and thus there will be no remote attendance for individual students. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to follow up in order to mitigate your absences & any missed work. Whenever possible, inform me in advance if you will be missing class. See the course Attendance Policy below for details, since poor attendance can negatively affect your course grade.

Students are required to complete all assignments on time. This means regularly shooting & printing new pictures and attending each critique. Scheduled lab-work time means coming prepared with new pictures to edit or print. Students are required to spend time outside of class for shooting, editing and printing new photographs, finishing class readings and completing short writing assignments on occasion. Active participation during critiques is required. Each student is responsible for having and bringing all supplies required of this course to each class. Students must also follow all lab rules. Project Description Sheets will detail project requirements and items to be graded during the progression of each project.

Using an [Emerson Drive Log-In](#) & [Emerson Email Address](#), and checking them frequently, is a requirement for this course. You will use the Emerson Drive Log-In to access some course materials, and to view evaluations/grades and for each project. We will use Emerson Email for course communications, and I will notify you of any schedule changes, updates, and announcements for this course via email.

Mobile Device Policy:

- The use of mobile devices in class is strictly prohibited unless otherwise instructed.
- Under no circumstances should you ever make or answer phone calls during class.
- Text messaging, web browsing, even checking the screen on your device is prohibited during class.
- Your phone should be turned off and put away when you enter the classroom.

Class Recording Policy:

No one may record any part of this class unless the faculty member has given them express permission to do so. Students who require that a class be recorded due to a disability should work with Student Accessibility Service (SAS) to receive an accommodation for that recording. This class is considered a private environment and it is a setting in which copyrighted materials, creative works and educational records may be displayed. Audio or video recording, photographing, transmitting, or publishing the images of those materials or educational records without expressed consent is strictly prohibited. Any student who records a class without the faculty's permission **without a registered accommodation** will be referred to the Office of Community Standards. Accommodations for recording a class will be honored by your instructor.

Textbooks (Recommended):

Digital Photography A Basic Manual, by Henry Hornstein, ISBN: 978-0316020749 (Recommended)
The Photograph as Contemporary Art (4th Ed.), by Charlotte Cotton, ISBN: 978-0500204481 (Recommended)
Research in Photography, (2nd Ed.), by Ana Fox & Natasha Caruana, ISBN: 978-1350010499 (Recommended)
A World History of Photography by Naomi Rosenblum, ISBN: 978-0789209375 (Recommended)

Supplies and Materials:

Required Supplies and Materials:

- An Emerson email address that you regularly check
- A Digital-SLR or Digital Medium Format camera with manual aperture and shutter speed controls (both available for checkout at the EDC)
- A still film camera: medium format up to 4"x5" ([available at the EDC](#))
- Inkjet Paper: Final Digital Prints - Minimum 50 of sheets of 8.5"x11" Epson Ultra Premium Luster Photo Paper
- Inkjet Paper: Digital Contact Sheets - Minimum 50 of sheets of 8.5"x11", Any inexpensive INKJET PHOTO paper
- Medium Format Color Negative Film: Preferably Kodak Portra 400NC, 120 size (minimum 14 rolls)
- Color Film Processing Service: each roll of color film must be developed externally (C-41 Processing)
- Negative Sleeves - PrintFile brand 120-3HB, 25pack
- 3-ring Negative Box
- Anti-Static Orange cloth for negatives
- Any form of physical portable digital media that you can use to easily store, backup, and retrieve your work
- Paper Journal/Notebook for use as a darkroom Exposure/Printing Log, class notes, jotting ideas and thoughts

Recommended Supplies and Materials:

- Inkjet Paper: Large Format Inkjet Paper in sheets 13"x19" up to 17"x22". Or a 24"x100' roll of a specialty paper.
- 8x10" Negative Sleeves for contact sheets - PrintFile brand, Model: 810-1HB, 25pack
- Tripod & mechanical cable release for 35 mm cameras (or remote release for your D-SLR) ([available at the EDC](#))
- Display Calibrator, such as an X-rite Photo Display Pro ([available at the EDC](#))
- Adobe Suite ([Provided by Emerson to Full-time students](#))

Getting your Supplies and Color Film Processing:

Equipment & 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 Hunt's (www.huntsphotoandvideo.com) in Cambridge, Kenmore Square and various locations around Boston. For analog cameras I recommend Joe & Karen's Cameras (617- 770-3446) in Quincy. Emerson provides students with the Adobe Suite and student pricing on computers, for more info visit (support.emerson.edu). Always ask for a student discount when buying any equipment and supplies.

Digital Camera Review Sites: These sites are a good start if shopping for digital equipment, especially cameras.
<http://www.dpreview.com/> & <https://www.imaging-resource.com/> & <https://www.cameralabs.com/>

Film Processing: Local labs [Panopticon Imaging](#), [CatLABS](#), [Hunt's](#), and [Colortek](#), do (C-41) color film processing. No matter which service you use, be sure to plan ahead and give yourself enough time to shoot, develop, and receive your film in time for class deadlines, ***since ultimately you are responsible for developing your film on time.***

Access to Emerson Photo Facilities & Equipment:

As part of your First Project you'll need to complete the following **three items for credit (1 point each)**:

1. Learn about photo facilities, see open lab hours, sign the Post Production contract, and take the hazmat quiz:

[Hours of Operation & Facilities Contacts](#)

[How to Make a Post-Production Reservation via the Patron Portal](#)

[Sign the Post Production Lab Contract and take the Hazmat Quiz](#)

2. Learn about equipment access at the EDC, terms of usage, safety, and sign the usage contract:

[Review the EDC Terms of Use & sign the Usage Contract](#)

3. The School of Film, Television and Media Arts' safety form is required as part of all equipment reservations:

[Review the SoF procedures for using the use of Safety Forms & the Production Portal](#)

[Enroll in the Production Safety and Resource Center Course, and review the course info](#)

[Review & Sign the Production Safety Guidelines & Agreement](#)

Grading and Standards:

Grades will be earned in points throughout the semester by completing assignments, critiques, and deliverables. The total points possible and all grading criteria are specified in each Project Description Sheet. The three Project Critiques are weighed with the highest values. Your total points earned throughout the term are factored against total possible points into a percentage which determines the Final Course Grade according to this scale:

COURSE GRADE SCALE

A	93% - 100%	C+	77% - 79%
A-	90% - 92%	C	73% - 76%
B+	87% - 89% *	C-	70% - 72%
B	83% - 86%	D	60% - 69%
B-	80% - 82%	F	59% and under *

Because we work with physical materials and sensitive equipment/facilities, in a collaborative group environment, poor attendance can also negatively override your Course Grade as stated below in the Attendance Policy.*

Course Attendance Policy:

Missing three or more of our 4-hour class sessions means that you will have not had sufficient exposure to the course material and will result in failing the course. Apart from assignment grading: absences, tardies, leaving class early, and being unprepared can also negatively affect and override your Course Grade as follows:*

- In person attendance is absolutely critical to this course. There will be no remote attendance.
- Late work is even when due to absences, is unacceptable and may only be accepted/graded at my discretion.
- If absent, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to deliver your work on or before the due date.
- If absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you've missed and make arrangements to turn in pending work.
- If absent, it is your responsibility to find out if the Course Calendar/Schedule has been updated.
- Poor attendance can negatively affect and override your Course Grade as described in the tables below.*
- You can read more at length about [Emerson's Academic Policies](#) & [Emerson's Attendance Policy](#).

TARDIES, etc.	COUNT AS:
1 Tardy	½ of an Absence
1 Early Class Departure	½ of an Absence
Coming to Class Unprepared	½ of an Absence

ABSENCES	COUNT AS:
1 Absence	Course Grade not affected
2 Absences *	Course Grade is no greater than B+
3 Absences *	Automatic F (Course Failure)

Religious Accommodations:

Students who may have a conflict with a course requirement due to a sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance, should work with the instructor as soon as possible to identify an accommodation that satisfies the specific need of the student while maintaining the necessary academic requirements. The student will then work with their instructor to find a mutually acceptable way to make up any missed coursework and/or assignments. Any student absence for a religious observance will count toward the total number of absences permitted in the course under the instructor's written attendance policy. For more information see the [Student Religious Accommodation Policy](#).

Support for Students with Disabilities:

Emerson is committed to providing equal access and support to students with disabilities, through the provision of reasonable accommodations, to allow them to fully participate in Emerson programs and activities. If you have a disability that may require accommodations, please contact [Student Accessibility Services \(SAS@emerson.edu; 617-824- 8592\)](#) to make an appointment with an SAS staff member.

Students are encouraged to contact SAS early in the semester. Please be aware that accommodations are not applied retroactively.

Support for Individuals Impacted by Discrimination, Harassment, or Sexual Violence:

If you have been impacted by discrimination, harassment, or sexual violence, the [Office of Equal Opportunity \(oeo@emerson.edu; 617-824-8999\)](#) is available to meet with you and discuss options to address concerns and to provide you with support resources. **Your instructor is another resource, but please note that as an Emerson employee, they must share information related to discrimination, harassment, or sexual violence with the Office of Equal Opportunity.** If you would like to connect with a confidential resource, please contact the [Healing & Advocacy Collective \(advocate@emerson.edu, 617-824-8857\)](#), the [Emerson Wellness Center \(emersonwellnesscenter@emerson.edu, 617-824-8666\)](#), the [Center for Spiritual Life \(spiritual_life@emerson.edu, 617-824-8036\)](#).

General Support for Students:

Students may face a variety of challenges during the semester that can impact their well-being and academic performance. These may include but are not limited to: general wellbeing concerns, significant medical or mental health issues, academic pressure or burnout, or major family responsibilities such as caregiving or loss. If you are experiencing difficulties, please know that support is available.

You are encouraged to explore Emerson's ConcernCenter (emerson.concerncenter.com) an interactive tool that connects you with campus resources based on your specific concerns. You may also reach out to the Office of Student Care and Support at care@emerson.edu to help you navigate your situation and resources, or talk with me if you need help identifying next steps.

Community, Culture, and Belonging:

Among the College's Strategic Plan goals is to "Support a vibrant community culture and experience that fosters creativity, curiosity, belonging, accessibility, and well-being." Diversity of identity, heritage, thought, lived experience, languages, and perspective is valued in our community, and we are committed to cultivating productive learning environments that respect and celebrate our differences. The instructor will make every effort to ensure that an inclusive environment exists for all students.

If you have concerns or general comments about what Emerson can do to increase innovation, curiosity, creativity, or create more inclusive classroom environments, you may share your suggestions with Dr. Tuesda Evans in the Iwasaki Library. Her email is tuesda.evans@emerson.edu.

If you have any concerns or suggestions for improving how Emerson approaches its culture or community-building efforts as an institution, please do not hesitate to contact the [Community, Culture, and Belonging Division](#). Their email is ccb@emerson.edu.

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct:

It is the responsibility of all Emerson students to know and adhere to the College's policy on plagiarism, which can be found at emerson.edu/policies/plagiarism. If you have any questions concerning the Emerson plagiarism policy or about documentation of sources in work you produce in this course, speak to your instructor. Additionally, the Working with Research and Avoiding Plagiarism (WRAP) Quiz is available to all students through the Writing and Academic Resource Center's [self-enrollment Canvas course](#). One-on-one consultations are available (emerson.mywconline.com).

Students should also familiarize themselves with the college's [Academic Misconduct Policy](#).

Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) Policy:

This course is oriented around you learning to make decisions at every step of the creative process, from technical choices to conceptual development, and through the critical analysis of photographic work & related writing. In order to develop your own voice, work ethic, and skills, the use of A.I. technology for generating any image based work and for reading/writing assignments is prohibited in this course.

When learning digital photo workflows we will use the Adobe suite, and recent versions of Photoshop, Lightroom, etc. integrate AI tools automatically, and I will introduce some of these tools so that you are aware of their existence and learn how they work and introduce some nuanced distinctions. So there may be some specific permitted uses, but only when instructed to do so by me, during our class.

Regardless of the software, there is a difference between delivering AI work as your own (prohibited use), and using AI tools during demos and for in-class exercises (permitted use). Likewise using digital tools for image generation (i.e.- generating image content in-whole or in-part) is prohibited, but using AI for workflow automation (i.e.- making selections, or image library management) is permitted. To be clear...

Prohibited Uses:

- Do not submit AI-generated images or use generative tools for any photo works in progress, or for final works.
- Do not submit AI-generated writing for response papers, project proposals, or any graded writing work.
- Do not use AI to brainstorm, outline, or explore research directions.
- Do not use AI to summarize or synthesize responses to class readings or assignment prompts.
- Do not use AI to fabricate sources, citations, or quotations in your writing or creative work.
- Do not use AI to generate the substantive [analysis / argument / creative work] you submit in this course.

Permitted Uses:

- If AI tools are built into Adobe suite and do not generate image content in-whole, or in-part.
- If AI tools are built into Adobe suite and assist with workflow automation (selections, image library sorting, etc).
- When instructed for in-class demos/exercises by me, but this use never extends to any of your delivered work.
- For advanced work in upper level photo courses, as specified in a Project Description Sheet for an assignment.

Disclosure:

If you have a doubt about an AI tool or a prohibited use listed above, then you should disclose how you used it by answering these questions and [e-mailing me with your answers](#) **before** the due date of the assignment:

1. **Which tool did you use?**
2. **What did you use it for?**
3. **At what stage of your work?**
4. **How did you evaluate or modify what it produced?**

Disclosure for any potential prohibited use of AI is part of every assignment. Submitting an assignment where you used AI without the instructor's knowledge, and/or having a missing or false disclosure may be treated as a violation of academic integrity and is considered [Academic Misconduct](#), and will be addressed under [Emerson's Academic Misconduct Procedures](#).

SoF Photography Capstone and Photo Minors:

For students looking to concentrate in photography, this course is part of track of photography courses that are required to as you make your way to eventually take the **VM492 Photo Practicum** course. For students who are interested in intermediate and advanced photo courses, it is highly recommended that you meet with your academic advisor as early as possible to map out your trajectory over several semesters.

Course Calendar:

- The following schedule is subject to change at my discretion.
- Late work is unacceptable and may only be accepted/graded at my discretion.
- If absent, it is your responsibility to make arrangements to deliver your work on the due date.
- If absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you've missed and turn in any pending work.
- If absent, it is your responsibility to find out if the Course Calendar/Schedule has been updated.

Class	Date	Lesson Topics this week	Due this class	Due next class
#1	9/4	• Introduction to the course • Review syllabus • EDC, Facilities, & Safety Contracts • Email Communication Test • Backups, Setting up a hard-drive & folder nesting • Exposure Triangle & Bracket Review • Medium-Format film camera demo • Introduction to Project #1	—	• Email test due by Sunday • Complete Hazmat Quiz, EDC Contract, Safety Production Guidelines Agreement • Week 1 Reading, and Discussion • Read Proj #1 Assignment Sheet • Upload 1pg Proj 1 proposal (PDF) • Shoot and develop 2 rolls of 120 film • Completed Bracket Worksheet • Bring your hard-drive next class • Bring some old color or b/w negatives
#2	9/11	• Reading Discussion • Film Scanning Basics - Flatbeds • Hard Drive Setup for Photo Libraries • Lightroom Setup • Individual meetings / Print (LAB) Scan Contact Sheets	• Email test due by Sunday • Complete Hazmat Quiz, EDC Contract, Safety Production Guidelines Agreement • Week 1 Reading, and Discussion • Read Proj #1 Assignment Sheet • Upload 1pg Proj 1 proposal (PDF) • Shoot and develop 2 rolls of 120 film • Completed Bracket Worksheet • Bring your hard-drive next class • Bring some old color or b/w negatives	• Setup your Hard drive for use with Lightroom • Shoot, process, sleeve & print contact sheets: min. 2 rolls of 120 film • Print all contact sheets so far • 1 high-res medium format film scan on a Flatbed scanner
#3	9/18	• Project Proposal Presentations with Contact Sheets • Individual Frame Scans: Flatbed vs Flextight Scanners • Lightroom Setup & Basic Navigation • Individual meetings / Scan (LAB)	• Setup your Hard drive for use with Lightroom • Shoot, process, sleeve & print contact sheets: min. 2 rolls of 120 film • Print all contact sheets so far • 1 high-res medium format film scan on a Flatbed scanner	• Shoot, process, sleeve & print contact sheets: min. 2 rolls of 120 film • Print all contact sheets so far • High Res Flextight Scan of at least one image from your rolls, color corrected & printed
#4	9/25	• Digital Image Anatomy & Basic Color Theory & Manual Global Color Corrections • Digital Printing workflow for color • Q&A review for critique next week • Individual meetings / Project Check-in, Scan & Print (LAB)	• Shoot, process, sleeve & print contact sheets: min. 2 rolls of 120 film • Print all contact sheets so far • High Res Flextight Scan of at least one image from your rolls, color corrected & printed	• 6 Good Color Prints from High-Res Medium format Film Scans • Contact Sheets for total 6 Rolls of 120 Film. • Printed Project Proposal
#5	10/2	• Critique for Project #1 • Introduction to Project #2	• 6 Good Color Prints from High-Res Medium format Film Scans • Contact Sheets for total 6 Rolls of 120 Film. • Printed Project Proposal	• Week 5 Reading and Discussion • Read Project #2 Worksheet • Submit your choice of Photographer • Research your chosen photographer • Shoot, process, sleeve & print contact sheets: min. 2 rolls of 120 film • 1 color print from a new film scan

Class	Date	Lesson Topics this week	Due this class	Due next class
➤	10/9	No class - Fall Break	• See Below	• See Above
#6	10/16	- Reading Discussion and/or 4x5 Demo Local Adjustments & Photoshop Editing via Lightroom - Color Management & ICC Profiles - Individual meetings / Print at least 1 photo in class / Project Check-in, (LAB)	- Week 5 Reading and Discussion - Read Project #2 Worksheet - Submit your choice of Photographer - Research your chosen photographer - Shoot, process, sleeve & print contact sheets: min. 2 rolls of 120 film 1 color print from a new film scan	- Shoot, process, sleeve & print contact sheets: min. 2 rolls of 120 film - Contact Sheets for all photos shot 1 color print from a new film scan
#7	10/23	Visiting Artist Presentation 4-up color print tests - Advanced use of Printers & Ink types, Soft Proofing, Paper Media Options - Individual meetings / Print at least 1 photo in class / Project Check-in, (LAB)	- Shoot, process, sleeve & print contact sheets: min. 2 rolls of 120 film - Contact Sheets for all photos shot 1 color print from a new film scan	- Shoot, process, sleeve & print contact sheets: min. 2 rolls of 120 film - Contact Sheets for all photos shot 1 color print from a new film scan - Bring your D-SLR or Mirrorless camera
#8	10/30	- Shooting with your DSLR & Medium Format Digital Cameras in RAW - Individual meetings / Print at least 1 photo in class / Project Check-in, (LAB)	- Shoot, process, sleeve & print contact sheets: min. 2 rolls of 120 film - Contact Sheets for all photos shot 1 color print from a new film scan - Bring your D-SLR or Mirrorless camera	- Shoot, process, sleeve & print contact sheets: min. 2 rolls of 120 film - Contact Sheets for total 8 Rolls of 120 Film. 8 Great Color Prints from High-Res Medium format Film Scans Upload PDF of Research Paper to shared google drive - Present Printed Research Paper + research materials
#9	11/6	Critique for Project #2 - Introduction to Project #3	- Shoot, process, sleeve & print contact sheets: min. 2 rolls of 120 film - Contact Sheets for total 8 Rolls of 120 Film. 8 Great Color Prints from High-Res Medium format Film Scans Upload PDF of Research Paper to shared google drive - Present Printed Research Paper + research materials	- Week 9 Reading and Discussion - Read Project #3 Worksheet Upload 1pg Proj 3 proposal (PDF) - Printed version of your proposal - Shoot a minimum of 100 new RAW images (or film equivalent) Digital Contact Sheets for all photos shot
#10	11/13	- Field Trip – TBA - Reading Discussion - Questions in Art Criticism Worksheet - Individual meetings	- Week 9 Reading and Discussion - Read Project #3 Worksheet Upload 1pg Proj 3 proposal (PDF) - Printed version of your proposal - Shoot a minimum of 100 new RAW images (or film equivalent) Digital Contact Sheets for all photos shot	1 pg Art Criticism Response Paper stapled to Art Criticism Worksheet Uploaded Critical Response Paper - Shoot a minimum of 100 new RAW images (or film equivalent) Digital Contact Sheets for all photos shot 1 color print from a new photo
#11	11/20	- Basic RAW workflow for color - Digital Contact Sheets in LR - Individual meetings / Print at least 1 photo in class / Project Check-in, (LAB)	1 pg Art Criticism Response Paper stapled to Art Criticism Worksheet Uploaded Critical Response Paper - Shoot a minimum of 100 new RAW images (or film equivalent) Digital Contact Sheets for all photos shot 1 color print from a new photo	- Shoot a minimum of 100 new RAW images (or film equivalent) - Contact sheets for all photos shot 1 color print from a new photo

Class	Date	Lesson Topics this week	Due this class	Due next class
➤	11/27	No class - Thanksgiving Break	• <i>See Below</i>	• <i>See Above</i>
#12	12/4	• Understanding Image Resolution & Image Sharpening • Large format Printers & Handling Big Prints • Individual meetings / Print at least 1 photo in class / Project Check-in, (LAB)	• Shoot a minimum of 100 new RAW images (or film equivalent) • Contact sheets for all photos shot • 1 color print from a new photo	• <i>Shoot a minimum of 200 new RAW images (or film equivalent)</i> • <i>Contact sheets for all photos shot</i> • <i>1 color print from a new photo</i>
#13	12/11	• Output workflows for print, press, and Saving for Web • Online Publishing Platforms, Venues & Dissemination of your work • Final Project Q&A Session • Individual meetings / Print at least 1 photo in class / Project Check-in, (LAB)	• Shoot a minimum of 200 new RAW images (or film equivalent) • Contact sheets for all photos shot • 1 color print from a new photo	• <i>10 Perfect Color Prints</i> • <i>Contact Sheets for total 500 RAW Files or 10 Rolls of 120 Film.</i> • <i>Printed Project Proposal</i>
#14	THU 12/17	• <u>Critique for Project #3</u>	• 10 Perfect Color Prints • Contact Sheets for total 500 RAW Files or 10 Rolls of 120 Film. • Printed Project Proposal	—