

COM 337-004 (A) –Photojournalism – Spring 2025

Tu / Th 10:00-11:20 – FMH 409

COM 336 – Photojournalism (*Prerequisites: ENGL 102 and one History and Humanities GER 200 level course with a grade of C or higher*): Through hands-on photography and writing supervised by the instructor, students develop competencies in discovering and creating interdisciplinary stories using a variety of photographic techniques and writing methods. Special focus on creating photographic narratives, supported by prose. This course satisfies the three credit 300 GER in History and Humanities.

Dr. Carol Siri Johnson

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Office –316 Cullimore

Hours: by email appointment

COM 337 (A) Photojournalism Syllabus

—there is **no** textbook and **no** final in this class—

Course Goals:

In this course you will learn to:

- ◆ Practice photographic design
- ◆ Learn to view images analytically
- ◆ Identify and develop a personal style
- ◆ Use your photos to tell a story
- ◆ Use effective captioning techniques
- ◆ Combine visuals and narrative in informative essays

Assignments & Grading:

- ◆ **Attendance is required and is graded:** 0-1 absences = 20 (highest score); 2 absences = 18; 3 absences = 16; 4 absences = 14; 5 absences = 12; 6 absences = 10; 7 absences = 8; 8 or more = 0. If you are absent due to illness or other problems, email me *before* class.
- ◆ All grading will be done numerically (if an assignment is worth 10%, it will receive a grade from 1 to 10) which will be added at the end of the semester. Grades are not fully recorded in Canvas. Small assignments receive full credit after completion.

Shared Google Drive Folders

Inside the main folder for this class, “1 Photojournalism A,” there are folders for each assignment. Upload your work here.

Naming Conventions

Name your photos and files so they are easy to find. The best convention is lastname.firstname. If you are submitting multiple images that will be sequentially viewed, try: jones.joe 1, jones.joe 2, jones.joe 3.

Final Grades:

A = 91 – 100 B+ = 86 – 90 B = 80 – 85 C+ = 75 – 79 C = 70 – 74 D = 65 – 69 F = 0 – 64

Academic Integrity is the cornerstone of higher education and is central to the ideals of this course and the university. Cheating is strictly prohibited. As a member of the NJIT community, it is your responsibility to follow the [academic code of integrity policy](#). Any student in violation of the code by cheating, plagiarizing, or using any online software inappropriately will result in disciplinary action. This may include a failing grade, suspension, or dismissal. **In this class, use your own writing only.**

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Assignment and Grade List

Assignment Name and Description	%
Class Participation – 0-1 absences = 20 (highest score); 2 absences = 18; 3 absences = 16; 4 absences = 14; 5 absences = 12; 6 absences = 10; 7 absences = 8; 8 or more = 0. If you must be absent, email me <i>before</i> class.	20
Purpose: collaborative practice and analysis of photography takes place during class, so it is necessary to be there.	
Ongoing Photo Review (OPR) – we will be looking at new photos all semester, rotating through the class list. Every time we look at one of yours, upload a new one, using a naming convention such as: last.first.#. 6 or 7 photos will be viewed.	5
Purpose: Practicing photographic design, analyzing image components, identifying and developing a personal style.	
Where am I? – take three pictures of a place with no explicitly identifiable features. Using details from the photos, the class will guess where you are.	2
Purpose: Learning to view images analytically, focusing on details in photos.	
What is It? – take three close-up pictures of three objects with no explicitly identifiable features. Using details from the photos, we will guess what each is.	3
Purpose: Learning to view images analytically, practicing macro photography; focusing on details in photos.	
Five Best Photos – Choose five photos you have taken in the past and prepare a presentation in which you explain where, how and why you took them.	5
Purpose: Starting to identify and develop your personal style, practicing presentation skills.	
A Day in the Life – Start by listing the basic actions you take every day. Take photos to illustrate some of those tasks. Create a slide show, 10-15 images, with a caption describing each. Upload to the class folder and to Canvas for grading. This will be presented in class (3-5 minutes), rotating through the alphabetical list by last name.	5*
Purpose: Practicing photographic design, photographing ordinary objects, using effective captioning.	
Portrait of a Student (first draft) – You will be randomly assigned someone to work with. Create a photo essay about their life and activities at NJIT, including work and hobbies. Begin by interviewing them and writing down their answers. Collaborate with your partner to get or take photos. The first draft should be a Word document with a unique title, text describing the student, at least 5 photos, and a minimum of 400 words. Upload to Canvas for comments and grading.	10*
Purpose: Interviewing, collaboration (to take or get photos) and writing.	

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Assignment Name and Description	%
Group Photo Stories – with your group, plan a story you can tell with twenty to thirty photos and no words. Collaborate to take the photos and combine them into a slide show. This assignment will be presented in class. Purpose: Planning, using photos to tell a story, group work.	5
Portrait of a Student (final draft) – Revise your essay to make changes suggested by my comments. Make sure the layout and spelling are ready to be viewed by others. Upload (in Word or PDF) to Canvas. Purpose: writing revision, layout, proofreading.	5*
Tips and Tricks – Identify and experiment with one photographic technique from online resources. Create a slide show to teach the new technique to the class and display your own experiments (4-7 min.). Purpose: Using online resources to learn photographic techniques; practicing presentation skills.	5
Self Portraits – Take three photos of yourself. One should be designed for LinkedIn, one for social media, and one should be your “real” self. Photos will be presented in class. Purpose: Creating effective self-portraits, practicing photographic design, audience analysis.	5
Photo Essay – Choose a topic that interests you that you can photograph (art, architecture, a place, local sports, vintage clothing, etc.). Take photos of the topic and write about it. Combine the words and images into an article (~400 words). 7 photos are required and 5 must be your own. Submit the first draft (10 points) and the revised draft (5 points) in Canvas. Purpose: Photography, writing, layout.	10* / 5*
Favorite Photographer – Create a ten to twenty slide presentation on your favorite photographer. Be prepared to talk about their work history, sources of inspiration, style, and whether they make any money from their work. This will be shown in class (5-8 min.). Purpose: Researching professional photographers, viewing images analytically, career analysis, practicing presentation skills.	5
Commercial Advertisements – Create an advertisement for a product using your photo as the background image. Combine with text. Purpose: Designing advertisements using professional photos and text.	5
Best (new) Photos Presentation – Create slide presentation with the five best photos you took during this semester. Be prepared to talk about how your personal style has developed (3-5 min.). Purpose: Identifying and developing a personal style, semester review.	5

Note: much of the work in this class is short assignments worth five points. Generally, you receive full credit upon completion but won't see the grade. Assignments with an asterisk (*) will receive detailed grades and comments from me in Canvas.

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Course Schedule (subject to minor changes)

Tuesdays		Thursdays	
Date	Class Activity	Date	Class Activity
1/21	Go over syllabus; assign <i>Five Best Photos</i> presentation; demonstrate and assign <i>Where am I?</i> ; show recent photo	1/23	Demonstrate and assign <i>What is It?</i> ; <i>Where am I?</i> ;
1/28	<i>What is it?</i> ; in-class exercise (LTB)	1/30	Demonstrate and assign <i>A Day in the Life</i> ; start <i>Five Best Photos</i>
2/4	Finish <i>Five Best Photos</i> ; start <i>A Day in the Life</i> presentations (~13 per class)	2/6	<i>A Day in the Life</i> presentations
2/11	OPR (Ongoing Photo Review); finish <i>A Day in the Life</i> presentations (if necessary);	2/13	OPR; make teams for <i>Portrait of a Student</i> ; start interviews
2/18	OPR; (brief) work in teams on <i>Portrait of a Student</i> ; make groups for <i>Group Photo Stories</i> ; start group work	2/20	OPR; first draft <i>Portrait of a Student</i> due ; work in groups on <i>Group Photo Stories</i>
2/25	OPR; present <i>Group Photo Stories</i> ; teamwork for <i>Portrait of a Student</i> (to get additional material if necessary)	2/27	OPR; demonstrate and assign <i>Tips and Tricks</i> presentation
3/4	OPR; final draft <i>Portrait of a Student</i> due ; in-class photo exercise	3/6	OPR; <i>Tips and Tricks</i> presentations (~13 per class)
3/11	OPR; <i>Tips and Tricks</i> presentations	3/13	OPR; in-class photo exercise
3/18	Spring	3/20	Break
3/25	Assign <i>Photo Essay</i> ; look at articles from last semester; individual brainstorming	3/27	OPR; assign <i>Self Portraits</i> , demonstrate <i>Favorite Photographer</i> presentation
4/1	OPR; review <i>Photo Essay</i> assignment; view <i>Self Portraits</i> in class	4/3	First draft <i>Photo Essay</i> due ; Wellness Day, no class
4/8	OPR; <i>Favorite Photographer</i> presentations (9 per class)	4/10	OPR; <i>Favorite Photographer</i> presentations
4/15	OPR; <i>Favorite Photographer</i> presentations	4/17	OPR; in-class photo exercise
4/22	Final draft <i>Photo Essay</i> due ; OPR; in-class exercise	4/24	OPR; in-class exercise
4/29	OPR; show <i>Commercial Advertisements</i>	5/1	OPR; in-class exercise
5/6	<i>Best (New) Photos</i> presentations		