



Photography for Social Media

COURSE DETAILS

Course Designator and Number: FLOR 3016

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: Alessandra Capodacqua

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the principles of photography for social media and how essential it is to learn about storytelling. Students will also learn about the power of imagery and its wider impact in the digital world. While an increasing amount of people carry around a phone every day, how many really know the potential of these powerful cameras, and how to use them to create and share images that make an impact with social media audiences? The course will appeal to students majoring in communication, marketing, design, journalism, and sociology and to all students interested in learning practical skills in photography, including compositional and technical information about apps, smartphone settings, and gear. There will also be time dedicated to analyzing social media impact on data, privacy, image protection, and intellectual property. This is not a social media marketing course but is designed as a creative exploration that will help students develop their eye for exciting imagery and improve their shooting skills.

Course Objectives

- Improve technical skills in mobile photography.
- Develop an image aesthetic through lighting, focus, and composition: from food, to product, to lifestyle images.
- Familiarize with mobile digital editing and creative post-production of images.
- Explore available options for improving how photographs appear.
- Understand the contemporary approaches and trends in social media photography.

- Master visual storytelling and develop a personal point of view and language through mobile photography.
- Think critically and express creativity and thoughts through work.
- Develop a deeper understanding of composition, visual perception, characteristics, possibilities, and limitations of mobile photography as a language and its quality as a medium of personal expression.

Methodology

This course has been designed to take full advantage of the study abroad experience. A strong emphasis is placed on class discussions and active participation. The course will deepen the understanding of technical issues related to mobile photography as well as of visual experimentation.

The course is organized around a number of components that introduce specific topics and applied practice and also determine class location, shootings, or field trips.

- Lectures and presentations: classroom presentations of theoretical subjects.
- Demonstrations: classroom demonstrations of the technical aspects of mobile photography.
- Lab: creative work during class time or on location.
- Group and peer review: feedback on projects through individual and class discussion.
- Texts and readings: technique, theory, and context.
- Assignments: introduce strategies for translating and interpreting themes and genres.
- Exhibitions, lectures: opportunities to see work in an exhibition context and meet up with photographers to discuss their work and ideas.

Course Prerequisites

Each student is recommended to have a mobile device (smartphone or tablet). A personal computer with an image-related editing program is welcome, but not essential.

Required Readings/Materials

This is a fast-evolving field of study and we will try to access the most up-to-date materials available semester by semester. The following reading list is thus subject to change.

- Elisa Serafinelli, *Digital Life on Instagram: New Social Communication of Photography*, Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018.
- Eric Kim Photography Blog.
- The New York Times Opinion - The Privacy Project.
- Tutorials on *LinkedIn Learning* (formerly *Lynda.com*) and other online resources.
- A course packet of required reading material and a list of videos will be made available during the course through the ACCENT Portal, online sources, and handouts. Details to be given during class.

Further Requirements

An Adobe ID (free of charge). The Adobe ID set up will be completed during class time.
An estimated US\$ 30–40 expenditure to buy paid apps.

IMPORTANT: photographs and papers must be uploaded to the Google Drive BEFORE 8 a.m. of the date indicated on the syllabus. Submissions received after 8 a.m. are treated as late. Handwritten papers are not accepted.

Starting from Unit 4, the review of work done will be conducted in two separate sessions—Tuesdays and Wednesdays—so that there is enough time to discuss and receive feedback on the photographs. Students will be divided into two flexible groups. When Group 1 is reviewing the work with the instructor, Group 2 will assist the instructor by giving feedback to their peers.

Students are responsible for weekly readings, videos, tutorials, and resource material indicated in the bibliography for each class. Throughout the semester there will be a set time for discussion on readings and videos with presentations conducted by a group of students. The group must prepare a presentation on readings and videos to give to the class and moderate the discussion. Fellow students will ask questions and animate the dialogue.

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter grade	Score or percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of grade
Participation in class	15%
In-class reviews	10%
Assignments and papers	50%
Final presentation of portfolio	25%

COURSE CONTENT

Unit 1

Introduction

- Course requirements and course objectives, text, materials, grade codes. Students present their previous work on social media.
- The basics of photography (ISO, speed and aperture controls, light and exposure).
- How to use your mobile device.
- How to write a great bio for social media and how to create effective hashtags.
- **Assignments:**
 - 8 photographs that tell a visual story of your first days in Florence, including photographs of your new neighborhood. Tag your photographs with #UMFlorence2020 and hashtags of your choice. Post your photographs on Instagram and upload them as separate files to the dedicated folder in Google Drive in Unit 2—Tuesday before 8 a.m.
- **Reading:**
 - Eric Kim, 10 Lessons Seneca Has Taught Me, erickimphotography.com/blog/seneca

Unit 2

How to see and how to photograph

- Analysis of photographs from Week 1, adjusting technical and compositional problems. Q&A.
- Basics of photographic language; How this language can proficiently interact with social media.
- Apps for post-processing—part 1.
- **Assignments:**
 - *Keep it secret!* Tell a story without revealing your theme(s) and/or topic(s). Be inspired by stories on Instagram or EyeEm or a book you're reading, a TV series you're watching, etc. 8 photographs and a 300-word reflection paper on the assignment. Post your photographs on Instagram and upload them as separate files to the dedicated folder in Google Drive in Unit 3—Tuesday before 8 a.m.
- **Reading:**
 - Eric Kim, 10 Lessons Marcus Aurelius Can Teach You, erickimphotography.com/blog/marcus-aurelius

Unit 3

Review and work evaluation of Assignment #1

- Lecture on photographers who have developed interesting works on social media.
- Apps for post-processing—part 2.
- **Assignments:**
 - *Tell a story About Florence. A Personal Outlook.* Pick a personal perspective or angle to describe your view of the city and what has interested you the most during the first weeks. 8 sequenced photographs and a 450-word reflection paper. Due Unit 4—Tuesday before 8 a.m. Review and work evaluation for Assignment #2 will be conducted in split groups, in Unit 4—Tuesday and Wednesday.
- **Reading:**
 - Eric Kim, 20 Photography and Life Lessons From Publilius Syrus, erickimphotography.com/blog/publilius-syrus

Unit 4

Review and work evaluation for Assignment #2

- Day 1:
 - Group 1—review and work evaluation for Assignment #2. Group 2 assists the instructor by giving feedback to their peers.

- Day 2:
 - Group 2—review and work evaluation for Assignment #2. Group 1 assists the instructor by giving feedback to their peers.
- **Readings:**
 - Group A: Elisa Serafinelli, *Digital Life on Instagram: New Social Communication of Photography*, Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018 – Chapter 2: *The Practice of Online Photosharing*, Subsection 2.1: *The Evolution of Photosharing*, 7 pages.

Unit 5

Group A presentation on reading.

- Group A presentation on reading. Q&A.
- Apps for post-processing—part 3. The workflow. Editing the images. How to use Adobe Spark for presentations.
- **Assignments:**
 - A personal project based on your experience of studying abroad. It is a visual journal to be presented with Adobe Spark; choose between Page and Video. Create a story—including portraits with and without people, and self-portraits—that develops your idea of what studying abroad means and of the differences or similarities with your study experience back home. The Assignment #3 is composed of at least 10 photographs and a 450-word reflection paper to be included in Adobe Spark. Due Unit 6—Tuesday before 8 a.m. Review and work evaluation for Assignment #3 will be conducted in split groups, on Tuesday and Wednesday.
- **Reading:**
 - Eric Kim, *The Social Media Blackbook for Photographers*, PDF, 28 pages.

Unit 6

- Day 1:
 - Group 2—review and work evaluation for Assignment #3. Group 1 assists the instructor by giving feedback to their peers.
- Day 2:
 - Group 1—Review and work evaluation for Assignment #3. Group 2 assists the instructor by giving feedback to their peers.
- **Readings:**
 - Group B: Elisa Serafinelli, *Digital Life on Instagram: New Social Communication of Photography*, Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018 – Chapter 2: *The Practice of Online Photosharing*, Subsection 2.2: *Photosharing on Instagram: Motivations, Organization and New Practices*, 18 pages.

Unit 7

Group B presentation on reading

- Group B presentation on reading. Q&A.
- Apps for post-processing—part 4.
- **Assignments:**
 - A photo essay about your field trip to Sicily. Your goal is to create a visual journal—composed of minimum 15 photographs and a 450-word reflection paper—that narrates your experience in Sicily. Include photographs of people, places, details, such as food, traditions, tourism, etc. Your reflection paper should be inserted directly in your Adobe Spark presentation, page, or video. Due Unit 8—Tuesday before 8 a.m. Review and work evaluation for Assignment #4 will be conducted in split groups, on Tuesday and Wednesday.
- **Readings:**
 - Eric Kim, A.B.C. (Always Be Creating) erickimphotography.com/blog/2016/11/15/a-b-c-always-be-creating
 - Eric Kim, Create Your Own Visual Diary erickimphotography.com/blog/2016/04/27/create-your-own-visual-diary

Sicily Study Tour (Group 1) & Spring Break (Group 2)
Sicily Study Tour (Group 2) & Spring Break (Group 1)

Unit 8

Review and work evaluation for Assignment #4

- Day 1:
 - Group 1—review and work evaluation for Assignment #4. Group 2 assists the instructor by giving feedback to their peers.
- Day 2:
 - Group 2—review and work evaluation for Assignment #4. Group 1 assists the instructor by giving feedback to their peers.
- **Readings:**
 - Group C: Elisa Serafinelli, *Digital Life on Instagram: New Social Communication of Photography*, Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018 – Chapter 3: *Visual Social Relationships*, Subsection 3.1: *Social Relationships Online*, Subsection 3.2: *The Mediation of Photosharing in Social Relationships*, 11 pages.

Unit 9

Group C presentation on reading

- Group C presentation on reading. Q&A.
- Problem-solving discussion and Q&A about technical issues—composition, exposure, post-production, etc.
- **Assignments:**
 - A personal project on a topic you feel interested and/or somehow concerned about—social, political, cultural, environmental-oriented. Due Unit 10—Tuesday before 8 a.m. Review and work evaluation for Assignment #5 will be conducted in split groups, on Tuesday and Wednesday.
- **Reading:**
 - Eric Kim, *How to Overcome Photographer's Block*, PDF, 34 pages.

Unit 10

Review and work evaluation for Assignment #5

- Day 1:
 - Group 2—review and work evaluation for Assignment #5. Group 1 assists the instructor by giving feedback to their peers.
- Day 2:
 - Group 1—review and work evaluation for Assignment #5. Group 2 assists the instructor by giving feedback to their peers.
- **Readings:**
 - Group D: Elisa Serafinelli, *Digital Life on Instagram: New Social Communication of Photography*, Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018 – Chapter 3: *Visual Social Relationships*, Subsection 3.3: *Instagram Communities Online and Offline*, 14 pages.

Unit 11

Final presentation of portfolio

- Group D presentation on reading. Q&A.
- Final presentation of portfolio: discussion and selection of works to include.
- **Readings:**
 - Group E: Elisa Serafinelli, *Digital Life on Instagram: New Social Communication of Photography*, Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018 – Chapter 5: *Privacy and Surveillance*, Subsection 5.1: *The Paradox of Privacy on Social Media Platforms*, Subsection 5.3: *The Pleasure of Watching and Being Watched Within Everyday Life*, Subsection 5.4: *Sharing and Protecting Visual Content on Instagram*, 23 pages.

Unit 12

Final presentation of portfolio

- Group E presentation on reading. Q&A.
- Review of the work to be included in the final presentation of portfolio.

Unit 13

Final presentation of portfolio

- Day 1:
 - Group 1: Final presentation of portfolio: each student presents three of her/his best project and describes accomplishments achieved during the course. A 600-word reflection paper is required.
- Day 2:
 - Group 2: Final presentation of portfolio: each student presents three of her/his best project and describes accomplishments achieved during the course. A 600-word reflection paper is required.

POLICIES

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing

a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.