

— Course Guide / Syllabus —

Photo 155: Photography I (Online, 8-Week) • Spring 2023

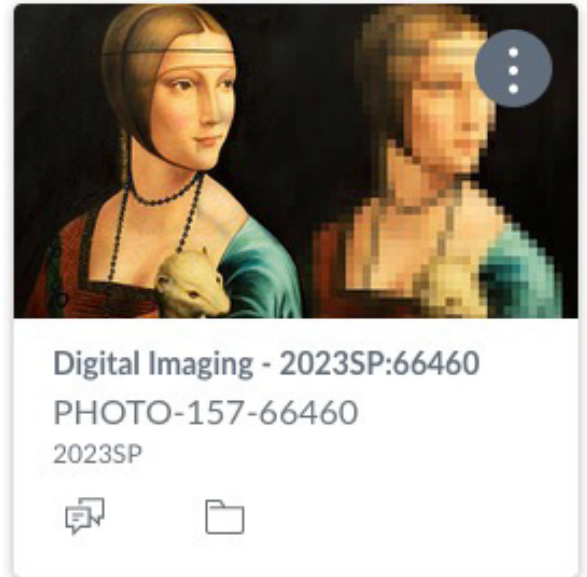
College of the Canyons

Welcome to Photo 157: Digital Imaging

This introductory course in digital imaging is a gateway course for Photo majors. It is an elective course for the Photography AA degree and a required course for the Certificate of Achievement in Commercial Photography.

This course will teach you fundamental concepts, terminology, techniques, and applications of digital imaging using Adobe Photoshop. You will explore both the technical aspects of image manipulation and the artistic aspects of creating images digitally. This is not a course that teaches camera skills.

This 8-week course compresses an entire semester into half the time. To be successful, plan on investing 12–20 hours weekly in your work (online activities + creating / presenting your digital images).



Meet Your Instructor: Syl Arena



Syl rhymes with “Bill.” It’s short for “Sylvester,” which was my dad’s dad’s name. Feel free to call me “Syl.” My wife and I first met when we were young children (she literally was the girl across the street). In late April, Amy and I will celebrate our 32nd wedding anniversary. We have three sons and have lived on the Central Coast for 25 years.

I hold both an MFA in Visual Art (Lesley University, Cambridge, Massachusetts) and a BFA in Studio Art (University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona).

My passion for photography started 50-ish years ago. My eclectic work ranges from environmental portraits and commercial projects to non-representational art and video. You can visit my portfolio archive Projects.SylArena.info, my artist site SylArena.com, and [my Instagram](#).

I have taught photography for many years around the US and in Brazil, Canada, Cuba, and Dubai. I am the author of two popular books on photographic lighting: [Lighting for Digital Photography](#) and [Speedlitter’s Handbook](#). NOTE: We will not be using either of these books in this course. I mention them only as background.

I am an experienced online instructor. I originated the online photography courses for West Valley College (Silicon Valley) and Cuesta College (San Luis Obispo). I earned both of the certificates offered by the [Online Education Initiative](#): the *Certificate in Online Teaching & Design* and the *Advanced Certificate in Online Teaching Principles* and participated in the pilot of the *Peer Online Course Review* program at West Valley.

Contact Options / Response Time

- **Email**—Syl.Arena@canyons.edu Email is the best way to reach me.
- **Canvas Conversations (Inbox)**—After the course starts, you may contact me using the Inbox within Canvas. Based on my Notification settings, I receive all Canvas messages via email; so you do not need to contact me via both methods.
- **Response Time**—Expect to get a response within one school day. Do not wait until the last minute! For messages sent prior to 8:00pm Monday–Thursday, I will do my best to reply the same day, but may not be able to until the following day. Messages sent on Friday and over the weekend will be responded to on the next school day.

Student Success Meetings (Office Hours) Via Zoom

Student meetings are private and confidential. If you have questions about your camera, Lightroom, or any aspect of the course, schedule a meeting by sending [me a message](#). Please share several days and times that work for you. I will reply with a confirmation of our meeting time.

To join a pre-scheduled meeting, click the link you receive in the confirmation email. You will first land in the waiting room. Be patient. I may be helping another student. I will admit you as soon as possible.

Class Specifications

- **Section #** 66460
- **Dates:** Monday, April 10, 2023 to Saturday, June 1, 2023
- **Duration:** 8 weeks. You will complete a full semester's work in half the time. This requires twice the work each week, when compared to a 16-week course. Plan on 12–20 hours each week.
- **No mandatory class meetings.** You must submit assignments by weekly due dates.
- **Prerequisite:** None.

Important Dates

- TBA—Last day to drop (no “W” on transcript)
- TBA—Last day to withdraw (“W” on transcript)
- [COC Student Calendar Spring 2023](#)

Course Overview

Consider Your Goals: Paths To Study Photography At COC

Goal: Transfer to 4-year college—Consider COC's [Associate of Art degree in Photography](#). The AA degree requires that you complete general education requirements and a core group of photography courses in preparation for transfer to a bachelor's degree program elsewhere. [Example: [CalARTs transfer agreement with COC](#).]

Goal: Work in professional photography—Consider COC's [Certificate of Achievement in Commercial Photography](#). The certificate requires that you complete a wide range of photography courses that prepare you to seek employment opportunities.

Goal: Learn / expand basic camera skills—If you are a recreational learner and prefer not to engage in the rigor of typical college-level activities, consider COC's [non-credit courses in photography](#).

More details on COC's offerings—See the [COC Photo Department website](#).

Academic Counseling—COC offers great support when deciding which courses best fit your needs. Check out the resources or schedule an appointment at the [Academic Counseling Office](#).

Deciding If Photo 157 Is Right For You

AA Photography—This course satisfies an elective. See: [Photography AA Program Mapper](#).

Commercial Photography Certificate—This is a required course. See: [Certificate Program Mapper](#).

Community Learner—This is an intense, college-level experience. If you just want to learn how to use your camera, consider COC's [non-credit courses in photography](#).

Typical Activities for This Course

- **Readings and Videos**—Each week you will have new information to study that is presented as online readings or videos.
- **Class Discussions**—Most weeks you will have a required online discussion in which you will share your insights and thoughts with your classmates.
- **Adobe Photoshop**—You will learn to use Adobe Photoshop as the means to create, manage, and present your digital images.
- **Technical Exercises**—You will demonstrate your understanding of the weekly course materials by completing technical exercises each week. These exercises will require you to follow a specific set of steps to achieve an expected result.
- **Creative Projects**—You will complete several creative projects this semester. They will explore a wide range of approaches to digital imagemaking. As the semester moves on, you will have increasing latitude in the creation of your projects.
- **Presentation of Your Digital Images**—We will use the discussion forum in Canvas as a means of presenting and sharing insights about your creative projects.
- **Written Analysis of Digital Trends and Works**—Throughout the course, you will learn about the lives of digital imagemakers across a wide range of genres. For several of these artists, you will have an opportunity to write an analysis and/or reflection on selected works.
- **Other Activities**—The above represent the main activities that will be assigned over the course of the semester. Other activities will be assigned on an intermittent or one-time basis..

Accelerated Schedule / Plan On 12 to 20 Hours Each Week

This course runs on an accelerated 8-week schedule. The normal semester runs 16 weeks. So, you will earn the full 3 units of credit in half the time.

The pace of this course is intense...twice as intense as the full-semester version.

To achieve the expectations of the [Course Outline of Record](#), commit to investing 12–20 hours each week. This includes time for online study, reading the required textbook, working through exercises, completing projects, and posting your work online. Your time requirement will vary based upon your own level of experience with digital imaging and computers.

If you are not prepared to work 12–20 hours each week on this course, please consider whether now is the right time to enroll in Photo 157.

If you are a dual-enrolled high school student with a full load of classes, consider taking another course. The majority of high school students with full loads struggle in this course. It is not an easy path to completing your fine art requirement.

Course Outline of Record

You may view the Course Outline of Record on [eLumen](#). Select “Photography” in the departments column to start. Then select “PHOTO157” under courses. Finally, click “Course Outline Report.”

COC Catalog Description

“Introduces the fundamental concepts, terminology, techniques and applications of digital imaging using industry standard software such as Adobe Photoshop. Through application of theory, students will explore both the technical aspects of image manipulation, as well as the artistic aspects of creating images.”

Course Objectives

Lecture

1. Compare and contrast the key artists from the history of digital imaging.
2. Compare and contrast artistic values of commercial and fine art.
3. Define general copyright/appropriate use guidelines.
4. Evaluate specific digital imaging projects applying critical, technical, and aesthetic standards.

Lab

1. Distinguish and employ industry standard imaging software, hardware, materials and processes.
2. Design and develop digital imaging projects applying appropriate software tools and techniques.
3. Analyze and assess appropriate acquisition and output methods.

Student Learning Outcomes

- **Lecture:** Develop basic knowledge, theory, concepts, & appreciation of photographic compositing.
- **Lab:** Apply and demonstrate basic compositing using appropriate hardware and software.

Required Software: Adobe Photoshop (Needed in Week 1)

This course will teach you to use [Adobe Photoshop \(Ps\)](#), the leading app for processing digital images.

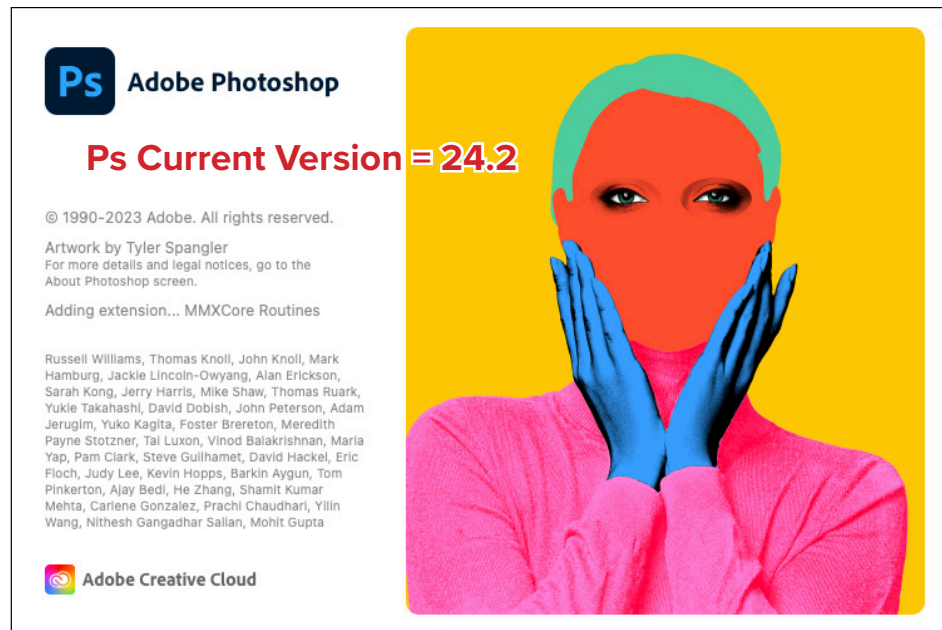
We will start using Photoshop in Week 1. Please have it installed as soon as possible.

For the best subscription price on Photoshop, check [CollegeBuys.org](#) for a special offer of **\$39.99 for a 6-month subscription to the Adobe Creative Cloud All Apps plan (normally \$60/month!)**. Once you install the Creative Cloud app and connect it to your Adobe subscription, use it to download and install Photoshop to your computer. Ps is also available for subscription as part of [Adobe's Creative Cloud Photography \(20gb\) Plan](#) for \$9.99/mo. If you can afford it, the CollegeBuys offer is much better.

Plan ahead. This process can take up to 4 days. For help, see the [CollegeBuys support page](#).

Important: We use the Ps version that runs on desktop and laptop computers. Please do not use web-based, tablet, Chromebook, or mobile versions. Check out the [computer guidelines](#) for running Ps.

Please be sure that you update to the most recent version of Ps. Does your splash screen look like the one above? Is your Ps version at least 24.2? If not, please update your app.



On-Campus Computers With Photoshop

If you're on-campus and want to use a COC computer to work on your Photoshop assignments, you can head to the ASG Computer Lab in the Student Center ([ASG lab location & hours](#)) or The Learning Center ([TLC lab location & hours](#)). Let them know you need a computer with "Adobe Creative Cloud."

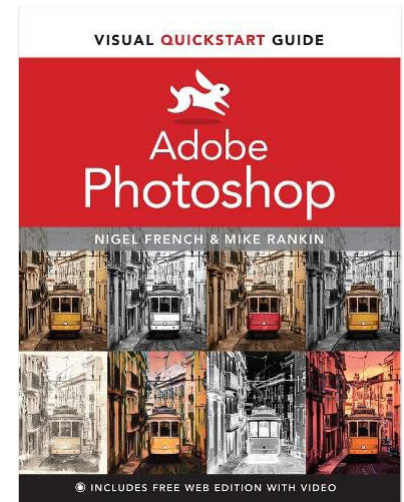
To use a COC computer, you will need to have your work on a [USB 3 flash drive](#). Do not use a USB 2 flash drive because the speed is 10x slower. Repeat: do not use a USB 2 drive.

Required Web Edition of Textbook (Needed in Week 1)

We will start using our textbook during Week 1.

Adobe Photoshop Visual Quickstart Guide, 1st edition. Nigel French & Mike Rankin, Peachpit Press, 2023. ISBN 978-0-13-764083-6. About \$40/new. About \$30/rental. You can [read more details and look inside on Amazon](#). The book is also available in the COC bookstore.

Strive to have this book in hand before the course starts. It provides essential details about how to use Photoshop. Weekly materials in Canvas will refer directly to workflows and checklists provided in the textbook.



You DO NOT Need A Digital Camera For This Course

This is not a course that teaches camera skills. If you want to learn to create digital photographs, consider enrolling in *Photo 155: Photography I*.

Many students in Photo 157 want to use digital photos that they have created in their composited (assembled) images. This is perfectly fine.

Typical Course Sequence

Weekly Modules Publish on Saturdays

- Apr 8*—Orientation and Week 1: Getting Started With Photoshop
- Apr 15—Week 2: Cropping, Making Selections, Using Layers
- Apr 22—Week 3: Layer Masks & More Selection Techniques
- Apr 29—Week 4: Layered Project
- May 6—Week 5: Adjustment Layers & Image Adjustment
- May 13—Week 6: Blending Modes, Color, & Type
- May 20—Week 7: Showcase Project
- May 27—Week 8: Wrapping Up Photo 157!
- June 1—Final Project Due

* April 8 is early bird start for course (provides a bit more time). Official start is April 10.

You will have one week to complete most exercises. To provide a bit of extra time, the weekly modules publish on Saturday, which gives you eight days to the Sunday due dates that follow.

Note: Projects and modules may change during the term.

Success With Online Education

Internet Access = Getting To Class

This course is conducted entirely online. So, having reliable access to the Internet is essential. You will watch many online videos for this course. If you can watch YouTube without growing impatient with your connection speed, then your Internet access is fast enough.

Canvas Student Mobile App—Use Large Screens When You Can

You will be more successful if you routinely engage with this class via a laptop or desktop computer. Frankly, the larger your screen, the happier you will be while working on your digital imaging. As you have likely experienced already, viewing a photo on a small screen is not the same experience as viewing it on a large screen.

If you must engage with Canvas via a mobile phone or tablet, I strongly encourage you to use the Canvas Student mobile app. It's available for [Apple iOS](#) and [Android](#) devices.

Getting Started With Canvas LMS

COC uses Canvas as its learning management system (LMS). If you have not worked with Canvas before, explore these resources:

[Canvas Student Guide: Getting Started](#)

[Canvas Browser & Computer Specifications](#)

[Setting Notifications In Canvas](#)

[COC Canvas Student Orientation Videos](#)

Weekly Modules—New Every Saturday

Each week's content will be organized in a module. A new module will be published each Saturday. Most of the assignments for that module will be due on Sunday of the following week—meaning that you will have 8 days to complete each module. Some assignments have mid-week due dates. So you should check out each new module as early as you can.

To use Modules as a table of contents for the course. 1. Click on “Modules” in the course navigation menu. 2. Expand a specific module by clicking on the triangle at the left on the header bar. To stay focused, you are encouraged to keep the other modules closed (also by clicking on the triangle.)

Regular Effective Contact

Regular and Effective Instructor Contact will be met through weekly instructor-initiated threaded discussion forums; weekly announcements to students; timely and effective feedback on student assignments; email, phone or messaging to individuals; and virtual office hours.

Your Well-Being

Academic Counseling Services

COC's Counseling Services provides a wide range of services for students, including academic and career counseling. For more information, see the [Counseling Office site](#).

The Learning Center—Tutoring

The Learning Center (TLC) provides tutoring assistance to current COC students seeking to supplement classroom instruction to reach their educational goals. TLC provides Online LIVE! Tutoring via Zoom, Tutoring by Appointment, and On-Campus Face to Face! Tutoring. [TLC site](#).

Learning Differences and Accommodations

COC is here to support you, and we want to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. This course uses Canvas as an accessible Learning Management System, and course materials have been created with ADA compliance in mind.

If you think you may run into academic barriers because of a learning difference (including permanent disabilities or chronic or temporary medical conditions), please contact the COC Academic Accommodation Center.

- [Academic Accommodation Center](#)
- Email: AAC@canyons.edu
- Phone: (661) 362-3341, TTY: (661) 362-3726
- Valencia Campus Location: Seco Hall 103 (SCOH-103) [Valencia campus map](#)

Management of Stress & Mental Health

In our current moment, the pressure on students is significant. You likely are juggling academic goals, family obligations, stressed relationships, and employer expectations. The faculty and staff of College of the Canyons are here to help you succeed. We care about your emotional and physical health.

A broad range of confidential student services, including counseling and mental health services [are available on campus](#). You may get more information by walking into the Student Health Center in the Student Services Building (across from the bookstore on the Valencia campus, [Valencia campus map](#)). At the Canyon Country Campus, the Health Center is in 1B adjacent to Administration, Admissions and Records. [Canyon Country campus map](#).

You may contact Student Health via phone 661-362-3259 or email studenthealthcenter@canyons.edu.

New: 988 National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, dial 988.

You are encouraged to enter the new 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline into your phone. Use it when you, or someone you know, is having thoughts of suicide or is in severe mental distress. This [new, nationwide service](#) replaces the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline number (1-800-273-8255).

You can also use the Crisis Text Line: Just text "Courage" to 741741. Someone will get back to you immediately. Its free, 24/7, and confidential.

Finally, check out [Be The Difference SCV](#) for mental health resources in the Santa Clarita Valley Area.

Course Policies

Mandatory Participation—Week 1

Plan on accessing our course in Canvas no later than Monday, April 10, 2023 via [COC.instructure.com](https://coc.instructure.com). You will be required to complete the assignments in the Orientation and Week 1 modules in order to maintain your seat in the class. If you do not complete the required activities, you will be dropped.
Note: early-bird access to the Orientation module will open on Saturday, April 8.

This Course Welcomes All People As They Are

Our classrooms, studios, and labs are safe spaces for all voices and bodies. Diversity is a strength in the classroom, particularly in relationship to Art. Because Art is a language, our goals should be to communicate openly and honestly, and it is imperative that all participants feel comfortable to express our ideas freely. A commitment to diversity is an active experience and we are committed to fostering an inclusive space where students feel comfortable to respectfully engage with each other, support each other, and grow intellectually.

This Course Welcomes All Viewpoints

As you pursue your higher education it should be noted that an academic environment is based on free and open inquiry and is essential to the well-being of a student's education as an adult learner. Similar to many college level courses, we may examine potentially controversial subjects.

It is expected that you may view artwork that will include frank consideration of what might be categorized as mature: provocative, emotional, controversial, violent, or sexual in nature. These are subject matters that artists have dealt with for millennia. Themes such as these are also found in the academic areas of human sexuality, religion, and politics.

If you are a student who, for whatever reasons, may have strong personal reservations about participating in the free and open inquiry into such academic areas of discourse, I am happy to have a private conversation to help you decide whether or not you will continue with the class. Otherwise, please be prepared to listen openly and contribute to class discussions respectfully.

COC Academic Freedom Policies

For COC's full statement on Academic Freedom, see [COC 2022-2023 Catalog, pg. 344](#)

Academic Freedom and the Faculty

"Academic freedom in the course of instruction means that faculty members teaching in the District have the prerogative to present and explore all issues relevant to their disciplines which contribute to the education of students regarding the substance of each course's content and the student learning outcomes."

Academic Freedom and Students

"By accepting an academic course of study within the College system, students accept the principle that they will study in an environment that is designed to present the fullest range of academic insight in the subjects they are enrolled in, including contemporary and historical perspectives, and open, thoughtful examination of differing points of view in pursuit of knowledge within general and specific fields of study.

"Academic freedom allows students to take reasoned exception to the concepts and conclusions presented in any course of study. Students are, however, responsible for learning the content of any course in which they are enrolled, and can expect to be tested on their knowledge of such information."

My Equitable Grading Philosophy

You and I share the responsibility for your success in this course. Beyond designing the course as a series of guided experiences that prepare you to achieve the objectives and outcomes described above, I am committed to providing individualized support that facilitates learning in the manner(s) most relevant to you. Your responsibilities include making a consistent and sincere effort to be successful in this course and to communicate with me when you face challenges that impact your success.

Grades are a necessary part of this course. They serve to help you understand how your skills are developing and how much of the information you understand. Grading will not be a mystery and should not be a source of stress. If you get stressed by grades, get in touch. Let's talk about it.

My criteria for grading will be presented in a rubric for every assignment. Use these rubrics as a step-by-step checklist for what you are to do. I encourage you to review them before starting your work and again before submitting your work.

I accept that not every student defines academic success as earning an A. For some, earning a C is the threshold of success. Know that I will remain non-judgmental and support your efforts to achieve academic success as you define it.

Scoring of Assignments / Feedback

I strive to score assignments within one week following submittal. If assignments are not scored in the stated time frame, an announcement will be sent out to all students.

For assignments submitted online, you will find that I provide written or video comments on your assignments. Please take the time to review these comments. They are intended to help you grow as a student. Also, you may reply to my comments. Resource: [Canvas Student Guide—How Do I View Assignment Feedback From My Instructor](#).

Project Reworks / Resubmission

If I feel that you are capable of delivering a higher quality of work for a project, I will ask you to consider reworking an assignment and resubmitting. Whether you do, is your choice. Likewise, if you feel that the score you earned does not represent your ability, get in touch to talk about a rework. I am willing to reward continued growth and development over the semester.

Calculation of Semester Grade

Letter grades for the semester will be based on the following percentages of total points earned.

| Grade | Percentage |
|-------|-----------------|
| A | 100% to 90% |
| B | 89.99% to 80% |
| C | 79.99% to 70% |
| D | 69.99% to 60% |
| F | 59.99% or below |

Late Work Policy

You will always earn points for submitting work—even if the work is significantly late.

The last day to submit late work is the day before the final project is due. (Yes, at the end of the term!)

You do not need permission to submit late assignments. Submit them as soon as you can. If more than a week late, please send me a message advising that you have done so.

Late work may be assessed a penalty based on a percentage of total points possible for the assignment. The percentage is based on when you submit your assignment:

- 1–7 days late = no deduction
- 8–14 days late = 10% deduction
- 15 or more days late = 15% deduction

In terms of learning, instructor feedback is more informative than a grade. Late work will receive reduced or no instructor feedback.

No Extra Credit

I do not provide extra credit opportunities to make up for poorly done or missing assignments. You have the opportunity to rework projects and submit late work, as described above.

No Weighting of Scores

I do not weight different types of assignments. Your course grade will be calculated as a straight percentage of total points earned across all assignments divided by total points possible.

Points will always be stated in the assignment materials. You will find that small routine tasks, such as a weekly check-in, have less points available than major project activities.

Also, do not stress if you get off to a rough start in the course. The points for assignments increase as the semester moves along. The orientation activities are worth significantly less than your final project.

Checking / Estimating Your Grade In Canvas

You may check the status of your grades at any time in Canvas. After logging in to our course, click “Grades” in the course navigation.

To see how various scores affect your overall grade, you may enter scores on the Grades page. These, of course, are temporary and will not be counted towards the calculation of your actual grade.

Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

All students attending Santa Clarita Community College District at any district site (including online access) and when representing COC in any off-campus activity, assume an obligation to conduct themselves in an acceptable manner compatible with the [Student Conduct Code](#). Further, the *College of the Canyons Statement on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism* describes the standards for and enforcement of academic integrity. See [COC 2022-23 Catalog pg. 354](#).

You May Be Dropped For Non-Participation

If you do not log in and actively participate during the first week of class, you will be dropped from the course without notice.

At any point during the term, if you have not submitted 60% of the assignments, you may be dropped from the course without notice.

You Must Do Your Own Work / No Prior Work / No Duplicate Submittals

Unless specifically stated in the assignment specifications, you may not submit work created prior to the date an assignment was published, work created for another course, work created previously for this course, or work created by another person.

Should you submit work that does not meet my expectations for authenticity (such as work created by another person or work done prior to assignment publication), you will be referred to COC administration for disciplinary action—which may result in dismissal from this class.

Attributions Must Be Provided For Downloaded Open-Source Assets

Photo 157 focuses on the creation of composited (assembled) digital images. This course is unique in that you will use assets you download from open-source communities on the web, such as [Unsplash](#) and [Pexels](#). For each exercise and project, you will submit a folder that contains the assets for your work and a folder that contains your Photoshop files. This enables me to see the original (unedited) assets and your Photoshop work in its native state. For these exercises and projects, you will also submit a list of attributions and hyperlinks to the assets you used in your work. Submissions that lack full attributions will not be scored.

Academic Authenticity in the Age of ChatGPT

There are many opportunities for me to become acquainted with your communication style: class discussion posts, emails, weekly check-ins, etc. When the style of a writing, such as your artist statement about an image you created for a project, differs significantly from the style used in your other submissions, I will assume that it is not authentic.

Also, I always require specific references in your writing: to elements in your photographs, to the speaker in a video, to statements made in an article, etc. If your writing does not include these specific references, I will assume that it is not authentic.

Above all, I ask you to consider why you enrolled in Photo 157 and to think about how a writing bot dilutes your learning experiences as my student.

I asked ChatGPT about this. It replied

“Using ChatGPT or any AI language model as a substitute for personal interaction with teachers and peers can reduce opportunities for critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication skills, which are essential for academic success and future career prospects. Additionally, relying solely on AI-generated answers may prevent students from developing their own understanding and knowledge of a subject, potentially leading to a lack of retention and a decreased ability to apply what they have learned in real-world situations.”

If you enrolled in this course to learn, then trust me to guide you through the learning process with respect and dedication. Do not be afraid of not being perfect in all you do. You will soon learn through my weekly intro videos that I frequently make mistakes. The fact is that we usually learn more from our mistakes than from getting a task right the first time.

If you enrolled because you thought you could skate through with ChatGPT at your side, I encourage to find another academic path before the drop period ends.

Plagiarism—Using Words Written By Others

- I expect you to use your own voice and be authentic in your writing for this course.
- There are no circumstances in this course when it is appropriate to copy words written by another and paste them into your writings as if they were your own. The number of words does not matter. Even two or three copied words constitutes plagiarism.
- If you follow the standards for proper citation, you may include small portions of writings by others in your writing. Acceptable standards include MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.
- You may not copy the words of another and then change select words to make it appear as an original writing. Every word you submit must be unique to you. They must be an authentic expression of who you are, as you are. You must think the words and then write the words without using the work of another person.
- Violations will be referred to Cuesta administration for disciplinary action—which may result in dismissal from this class.

Changes to The *Course Guide*

The *Course Guide* will be changed if the need arises during the term. All changes will be announced prior to their implementation and posted on Canvas. The version of the *Course Guide* linked on the course home page will be the official version at all times.

Questions? Concerns?

If you have questions or concerns, send me a message. The contact details are on page 1.