**Curriculum**

**Photography I**

**Course Overview**

Photography 1 is a half-credit course meeting twice each week for the entire academic year. The aim of the course is to introduce students to the technical and conceptual aspects of black and white photography. The functions of the 35mm camera, processing negatives and development of enlargements are covered initially. Students then begin the study of pictorial composition, masterworks of photographic history, and finally important issues in photo-journalism and fine art photography.

**Department Standards**

Students will be encouraged to develop an involvement in and appreciation of the Visual Arts.

Students will utilize and explore a variety of media and techniques.

Students will develop interpretive skills through exposure to and active investigation of social, historical and philosophical contexts.

Students will develop an understanding of Visual Arts from a local, national and international perspective.

**Benchmarks**:

Students should:

Learn to operate a 35mm camera, read a light meter, and use camera controls creatively.

Master all aspects of basic darkroom technique.

Develop a working vocabulary relevant to technique and pictorial composition.

Become familiar with master photographers and important developments in the history of photography.

Develop a critical awareness of major issues in the field of photography.

**Performance Indicators**

Students should understand basic camera functions and use camera controls effectively to produce images which demonstrate both practical and creative use of shutter and aperture combinations. With regard to particular shooting assignments, students should demonstrate by documentation in their photo research notebooks that they have dealt effectively with the instructions given by displaying contact sheets which clearly show that they have utilized prescribed and/or recommended approaches and camera settings.

In the darkroom, Students should demonstrate a mastery of the use of enlargers and exposure timers to produce quality contact sheets, test strips, and finished 5 X 7 and 8 X 10 inch enlargements. They should also be able to competently process both film and paper through development, fixing, and drying procedures.

In classroom discussion, group and individual critiques, and written analyses in their photo research notebooks, students should demonstrate a basic understanding of technical and compositional concepts and effectively employ vocabulary appropriate to the particular critical task they are undertaking.

Through research in the photolab and Upper School libraries, the internet, and through class discussion, and by watching powerpoint and video presentations, students should begin to become familiar with the works of master photographers who have helped shape the history of photography. Written and pictorial documentation of research should be made visible in photo research notebooks. Students will begin to demonstrate understanding of the role of photography in socio-historical contexts by comparing and contrasting the intentions and products of photographers working in different periods and places and in a diversity of societies.

Through an examination of "the photograph as document" and more specifically as a tool for producing "social inventories" at certain historical moments, students will become aware of the complex of ideas surrounding the practice of recording the lives and/or activities of national or local populations in what may or may not be an objective manner.

After being exposed to the survey of the work of five master photographers operating in three different countries and two different centuries, and after studying their varying approaches to the documentary tradition, students should begin to understand and appreciate the value of comparing and contrasting the techniques, intentions, and general attitudes of photographers who have attempted to "record" what they see in the world around them.

With regard to using light creatively, students should demonstrate, through the production of images shot under a variety of lighting situations, that they are capable of using the camera's controls to exploit or accentuate existing and/or manufactured light effects.

In the darkroom, students should demonstrate a full understanding of the use of the complete range of available multigrade contrast filters to attain various levels of light contrast within a given photographic image.

In the darkroom, students should demonstrate a functional understanding of techniques such as sabbatier and negative sandwiching in order to creatively manipulate any given photographic image.

After having been shown a variety examples of proper photographic image presentation, and after a series of "hands-on"workshops, students should be capable of carefully preparing images, measuring, cropping, cutting matts and window mounts, and finally mounting photographs into aluminium frames with glass.

After having been exposed to "The Photographer's Eye: Five Essential Issues in Pictorial Composition", students should be in possession of a more sophisticated framework for understanding what photography is good at doing. The concepts of The Thing Itself, The Detail, Time, The Frame, and Vantage Point should enable students to begin to analyse photographs with more acuity and to discover new levels of significance in the photographic image.

By examining The developing relationship between photographic practice in the 19th century and the fine art painting tradition, students will begin to see and understand the formal and conceptual relationships between a new art form and an age-old pictorial tradition.

Through the process of studying examples of photo essays by master photographers and then by attempting to construct their own based upon an original theme, students should gain and then demonstrate an understanding of the mindset required to visualize, shoot, develop, print, organize, and edit a series of images which deliver a conceptual message larger than the sum of its parts.

As they set out to solve the compositional problems posed in the first major shooting assignment, students should become a great deal more creative in their placement of the subject, use of shallow/deep space, and the pre-visualization of a scene.

As they set out to solve the compositional problems posed in the second major shooting assignment, students should become much more aware of the myriad ways of influencing the framing of any given subject and the effects these decisions can have on the overall visual message of any given photograph.

As they set out to solve the compositional problems posed in the third major shooting assignment, students should begin to think more instinctively about creating dynamic figure/ground relationships and about utilizing vertical, horizontal, and diagonal lines to create moods charged with psychological power in their compositions.

By the end of the Third Quarter, students should be operating their cameras confidently and creatively solving pictorial and conceptual problems in both the field and in the photo lab.

Through their continuing studies of the history of photography, students will enlarge their knowledge of photography as an important exploratory tool, used by artists, photojournalists, and scientists to record new visions of place, the vagaries of war, and the movement of objects in space.

In working independently on a themed project, students should begin to take artistic responsibility for their work.

Students should demonstrate through documented experimentation and research, that they have taken their independent work seriously and have pushed themselves beyond their own initial expectations.

By designing the final presentation of their projects and by mounting, framing, and installing the work themselves, students will show that they understand the importance of every step of the artistic process, from the inception of a visual idea to final display.

By researching the work of a master photographer, and by making a formal presentation about the trajectory of that photographer's career, students will become "experts" on a body of significant information and will be able to speak articulately about artistic intentions, formal qualities of photographic work, and the social and historical contexts surrounding the photographer's efforts and activities.

By studying these particular themes from the history of photography during the Fourth Quarter, students will have encountered a host of ideas which have influenced the course of photographic discourse throughout the 20th century and into the 21st. They should begin to see how the "democratisation of photographic practice" changed conventional notions of photography's role in the evolution of modern Western Society.

**Assessments**

Creating a photograph without the camera and using multiple images.

Exploring the relationship between the viewfinder and composition. Understanding camera mechanics.

Employing camera angles that view a subject from an unusual point of view, i.e. above, below, low to ground.

Photographing with texture as the subject. Using close-up and wide-angle views to crate images. Exploration of composition.

Learning to analyze and assess images on a contact sheet.

Using the shutter speed as a creative tool for image making. Frozen and blurred movement, and how the angle and direction of movement affects shutter speed choice.

Using the aperture as a creative tool for image making. Subject matter, composition and effects of shutter speed in relation to depth of field. Using shallow and extended depth of field. A series of three 10 point quizzes also covers this material.

Written Review of a photographic Exhibition.

Photo Research Notebook Short Essay: Comparing and contrasting the documentary approaches of Diane Arbus and Richard Avedon.

Light as a subject and the significance of light quality to the image. Natural light and man-made light sources, shadows and light contrasts.

Achieving proper contrast: use of contrast filters in the darkroom. Photo Research Notebook documentation of each filter grade as it affects a sample image.

Collecting exercise utilizing Sarkowski's The Photographer's Eye and the Five essential issues in pictorial composition. Search photo history for the best illustrations of the five concepts, mount these into the Photo Research Notebook with accompanying written reflections.

19th century innovations in imaging: shooting assignment based on pictorial discoveries made by photographers and painters as they examined how photographs changed notions of visual meaning.

Constructing a photo essay based upon a theme: Create a dynamic sequence of at least five photographs which relate closely to one another, based on a theme chosen by the student.

Individual and group critiques dealing with each of the above assignments and also on work submitted for the End of First Semester Photo Exhibition.

Written analyses and reflection in the Photo Research Notebook.

Written Self-assessment at the Semester's end based on the TASIS England Photography 1 & 11 grading criteria.

Shooting Assignment: "Filling your Image with Content", a series of exercises aimed at discovering approaches to endowing a photographic image with Gravitas.

Shooting & Post-Shooting Assignment: "Framing the Subject", a series of exercises carried out in the field and in the lab, aimed at achieving innovative framing of the subject.

Shooting Assignment: "Backgrounds and Designing Mood with Line", a series of exercises in experimenting with figure/ground relationships and exploring the psychological overtones of horizontal, vertical, and diagonal lines in photographic composition.

Individual and group critiques dealing with each of the above assignments and also on work submitted for the End of Third Quarter Photo Exhibition.

Written analyses and reflection in the Photo Research Notebook.

Written Self-assessment at the end of the Third Quarter, based on the TASIS England Photography 1 & 11 grading criteria.

Independent exploratory shooting and printing projects arrived at through putting forward proposals and setting up regular conferences with the instructor to discuss process and progress. These projects require a written set of goals and ongoing documentation and reflection in the photo research notebook.

On Photography: Each student gives a 15 minute Oral presentation on the work of a master photographer, utilizing a PowerPoint program supported by an informative illustrated hand-out sheet.

Individual and group critiques dealing with each of the above assignments and also on work submitted for the End of Second Semester Photo Exhibition.

Written analyses and reflection in the Photo Research Notebook.

Written Self-assessment at the Semester's end based on the TASIS England Photography 1 & 11 grading criteria.

**Core Topics**

The Origins of Photography: the Camera Obscura and early developments in optics.

The Photogram and Double Exposure, Unusual Angles, creating Texture.

The anatomy of the 35mm SLR camera.

Basic Camera Functions: Shutter, aperture, use of light meter.

How silver-based film and paper work.

Basic Photo Lab procedures: Enlarger operations, basic use of chemistry,

developing film, safety precautions.

Basic photographic composition.

A Survey of master photographers of the documentary tradition.

Light: Quality of light, strategies for exploiting light

Achieving proper contrast in the field and in the darkroom.

Sabbatier technique.

Negative sandwiching and advanced dodging and burning techniques.

Basic presentation and display techniques.

The Photographer's Eye: Five essential issues in pictorial composition.

19th century innovations in camera technology and

imaging.

Constructing a photo essay based upon a theme.

Seeing Photographs: an In-Depth Exploration

Basic Choices:

Content

Framing the Subject

Backgrounds

Basic Design:

Spot/Line

Shape/pattern

Emphasis/Balance

Themes in the History of Photography:

Early Travel Photography

Early Images of War

Time and Motion in Early Photography

Independent Exploration:

Creating unified bodies of work based upon original themes.

On Photography: oral presentations on master photographers

Themes in the History of Photography:

Photography and Social Change

Photojournalism

Pictorial Photography and the Photo-Secession

**Specific Content**

The Origins of photography: The evolution of the Camera Obscura as a drawing aid, the pinhole camera, the camera lucida. Daguerre and Fox Talbot: their discoveries and inventions. Early uses of photography.

The Photogram: origins and basic techniques, the making of double exposures, using unusual angles effectively, creating textures with different materials.

The Anatomy of the 35mm SLR camera: viewing systems and their evolution, mirror and penta-prism, focusing, the camera's light meter.

Basic Camera Functions: Shutter calibrations, time, and movement. Aperture calibrations, understanding depth of field. Combining Shutter and aperture creatively, making equivalent exposures which produce different optical effects.

How silver-based film and paper work: the anatomy of film and papers, how light affects silver bromide. Resin coated paper types.

Basic photolab procedures: the anatomy and functions of the enlarger and exposure timer. Making a contact sheet, making a test strip. Using developer, stop bath and hypo fix. Steps in processing film. How to use equipment and chemistry safely.

Basic photographic composition: Introduction to the Elements & Principles of Design. Looking at masterworks as examples. Description and Analysis of composition.

A Survey of the work of five master photographers of the documentary tradition: Felix Nadar, August Sander, Robert Frank, Diane Arbus, and Richard Avedon.

Light as a subject and the significance of light quality to the image. Natural light and man-made light sources, shadows and light contrasts.

Achieving proper contrast: use of contrast filters in the darkroom and techniques for exploiting lighting conditions while shooting images.

Sabbatier technique:Origins of the technique. Man Ray's use of it in creating Surrealist images. Experimentation with methods for achieving visually compelling effects through the controlled use of the technique.

Negative sandwiching: creating montaged, overlapped, multi-layered images through the use of several negatives placed in the enlarger.

Basic presentation and display techniques: cropping, trimming, mounting, and framing of photographs for exhibition.

The Photographer's Eye: Five essential issues in pictorial composition as conceptualized and illustrated by John Sarkowski of The Museum of Modern Art, New York: The Thing Itself, The Detail,Time, The Frame, Vantage Point.

Themes in the History of Photography:

19th century innovations in camera technology and

imaging, improvements in shutter speeds, camera portability, the glass plate negative, albumen emulsion.

The developing relationship between photographic practice and the fine art painting tradition.

Constructing a photo essay based upon a theme: examining contemporary and traditional master photographers' themed photo essays. Creating a photo essay through selection of a subject/theme.

Seeing Photographs: an In-Depth Exploration

Content: How much of a scene to show.

Getting close to the subject.

How to focus the viewer's attention.

Deciding exactly what your photograph is about. Visualizing what you want the

image to look like.

Framing the Subject: Isolating part of a larger scene.

How to crop an image judiciously.

Horizontality or Verticality. Which works better?

Backgrounds: Bland? Distracting?

Blurring a busy background.

Providing scale to a subject.

Basic Design: A single element of design rarely occurs in isolation.

Psychological overtones of compositional lines.

Themes in the History of Photography:

Early Travel Photography: European photographers and The Near East, Photographers explore the American West.

Early Images of War: Photographing the Crimean War, Photography and the American Civil War.

Time and Motion in Early Photography: Long exposure times, Stereographic photographs and action, Edweard Muybridge's motion studies.

Independent Exploration:

Creating unified bodies of work based upon original themes: Independent exploratory shooting and printing projects arrived at through putting forward proposals and setting up regular conferences with the instructor to discuss process and progress. These projects require a written set of goals and ongoing documentation and reflection in the photo research notebook.

On Photography: Each student gives a 15 minute Oral presentation on the work of a master photographer, utilizing a PowerPoint program supported by an informative illustrated hand-out sheet.

Themes in the History of Photography:

Photography and Social Change: The pioneering social documentary work of Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine in the early 20th century. The work of the Farm Security Administration Photographers in the 1930s: Dorothea Lange, Walker Evans, Russell Lee, and others.

Photojournalism: The introduction of half-tone printing and the work of Eric Salomon. The rise of the photo essay in magazines and newspapers. The work of W. Eugene Smith and others for "Life Magazine".

Pictorial Photography and the Photo-Secession: Henry Peach Robinson, Peter Henry Emerson, Alfred Stieglitz, and the Pictorialists.

**Resources**

Photography is a "materials-intensive" course in which studies use large quantities of film, paper, chemicals, etc., and each student will pay a 65.00 lab fee for enrollment in the course. Students must provide their own 35mm cameras, preferably single-lens reflex with manual controls. Materials provided are listed below:

1.Ilford HP5 Black and white 35mm film (bulk loaded)

2. Ilford Multigrade paper

3. All development chemicals and toners

4. Plastic wax negative files

5. Enlargers, exposure timers and all other lab equipment.

Museum and gallery visits.

Reproductions of artworks.

Lectures and visual presentations.

Visiting artists and school art gallery program.

"Photography" by Barbara London and John Upton

"The Genius of Photography: How Photography has changed Our Lives",BBC2 Documentary Series DVD Parts 1 and 2.

"On Photography" by Susan Sontag

"Face of Our Time" by August Sander

"Diane Arbus" by Diane Arbus

"The Americans" by Robert Frank

"In the American West" by Richard Avedon

Art studio and Upper School Library.

Internet and CD-Rom art collections.

"The Photographer's Eye" by John Sarkowski

"Photography: A Concise History" by Ian Jeffrey

"Photography: Essays & Images" by Beaumont Newhall

"The Waking Dream: Photography's First Century", The Gilman Paper Company Collection

"Aperture" A Quarterly Journal of Photography, Aperture Foundation Publications.

Phaidon "5 X 5" monographs on Master Photographers

"Photography Speaks: Interviews with Master Photographers", Aperture Foundation Publications.