

Course Title: The Basics of Digital Photography

Course Code: Photo 07

Instructor Name and Bio: Joel Simon

Joel Simon studied with Leo Holub and has worked as an editorial and fine art photographer for four decades. He has lectured on more than 65 trips with Stanford's Travel/Study program. His work has been published in Vanity Fair, Time, GEO, Condé Nast Traveler, STANFORD magazine, and Sunset. His work can be viewed at joelsimonimages.com.

Class Sessions and Recording

Meeting days and times: Thursdays, 7:00-9:00 pm PT

Meeting location: Zoom

The class sessions will be recorded

The class sessions will be recorded but your live attendance is enthusiastically invited. Our course format offers the opportunity for live discussions on topics and techniques and your participation will be both beneficial to all students and appreciated. Also, should you elect to take the course for credit, you will be asked to attend at least three live sessions and participate in at least one homework exercise each week.

Course Features:

- Lecture with some Q&A
- Lecture, discussions, and Q&A
- Lecture, demonstration, practice time for students
- Requires interaction and active participation

- Assignments & Coursework
 - Assignments and course materials posted in Canvas
 - Required discussions in Canvas
 - Instructor will provide some feedback on assignments
 - Students will give voluntary presentations (recorded or live)

Course Summary

This course welcomes all photographers, from the complete novice and beyond, using any camera - yes, any camera! - who wants to take better pictures. It's easy to make photography complex, as five minutes of on-line searching will quickly show. My goal in this

course is to begin by simplifying photography, distilling the fundamental elements of compelling imagery and then inviting you, using these elements, to create your own powerful photographs.

Cameras can literally extend our sense of sight - they can portray motion beyond what our eyes can see. Cameras can also interpret space beyond our normal perceptions. Cameras enable us to “capture” significant moments, ones that celebrate important facets of our lives, and in today’s digital world, images can easily be shared almost as fast as we can press the shutter button. And thanks to social media, our pictures have literally become a “second” language for us all, a new way of communicating in this global, always-connected world.

During our six weeks together, we will explore the power of visual imagery, along with a candid discussion of the technical aspects of how cameras “see and think”. But, again, we will start very simple and build from there: “no photographer left behind” will be our motto!

John and I are confident that we can help you take better pictures. Meanwhile, please let us know if we might answer any questions you might have about our class.

**Please see course page for full description and additional details.*

Grade Options and Requirements

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
 - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
 - Students must attend at least 3 class sessions.

**Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

Textbooks/Required Materials

No required textbooks

First Assignment

Prior to our first class we will send out a simple pre-class survey. Student participation in this survey will be beneficial to all of us.

Tentative Weekly Outline

Week 1: We start with a gentle inquiry: Why take pictures? And continue to ask: What makes a photograph successful? We will then compare our collective goals for the class, looking at the results of our pre-class survey. But let’s state our course criteria once again: all cameras welcome and all skill levels welcome, from total beginner and beyond.

During this first session, we also offer an introduction to camera types, respecting both their similarities and their differences. We plan to conclude the first session with a short discussion of the fundamental and universal aspects of all cameras.

Week 2: Camera basics. We take a look at how cameras, focus, regulate and record light. This leads to a very important conversation about exposure, and how cameras use their three primary functions to control the amount of light that gets recorded in order to make the picture. We will illustrate these basic feature through images showing the impact these setting can have on the pictures that you take, helping guide you as to when to pick your settings, for creative effect, vs. letting the camera do it for you.

Week 3. We continue with the camera basics and then illustrate how those basics can be used deliberately and thoughtfully to create images you consider to be successful. Have you seen how cameras can stop action, or show motion through soft blurring? We will explore creative techniques like these within the context of a single composition, spending time to see how the use of them can give the resulting images a quite different feel. This week we also discuss different types of lenses and compare how, where and when to use them.

Week 4. Composition and Light. These are the primary components of all compelling imagery. This week we take a good look at how we get to decide what to include in the picture or, perhaps more importantly, what not to include! We also begin to better understand how light comes in different qualities and how light itself contributes to the success of an image.

Week 5. Refining your vision. This week we demonstrate some simple post-capture editing techniques and discuss what changes can be made to improve an image, bringing it closer to what it was you wanted to express when you pressed the shutter button. Students will be asked to volunteer any images that they would be willing to use for demonstrating these editing techniques.

Week 6. Sharing and storing images. Especially with so many photos, how can we possibly keep track of them all? We plan to take a brief look at how to organize images, and different ways that images can be stored and shared in today's digital world. In addition, this final session is the ideal time to share some of the things we have all learned as well as ask questions about how we can continue to refine our interest and photographic skills once the class is over.