

PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM, BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS (B.F.A) WITH A CONCENTRATION IN FILMMAKING

The Department of Photography and Film offers a variety of basic, intermediate and advanced photography and filmmaking classes leading to a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography and Film.

The program provides students with the ability to intelligently express, investigate or document using photography and/or film and to interpret meaning in still and moving images. Emphasis is placed on photography and film as contemporary fine arts. The department promotes a fundamental and effective philosophy that students maintain creative freedom, have access to resources and are enrolled in courses in which they can refine their voices and skills through traditional and contemporary media, tools and professional working methods.

Learning outcomes

Upon completing this program, students will know and know how to do the following:

- **Historical perspectives**
Students will clearly recall a functional knowledge of photographic and independent film history and theory, define the relationship of photography/film to the visual disciplines and relate the medium's influence on culture. Students will incorporate a broad perception of cultural diversity including age, race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, etc., communicating insight and ownership of a personal meaning of diversity.
- **Applied criticism and theory**
Students can analyze, assess and debate contemporary sociopolitical issues and theoretical discourses within the context of contemporary photography and film as well as related media practice and research. Topics to be examined can include but are not limited to multiculturalism, environmentalism, queer theory, feminist and gender studies, postmodernism, modernism, psychoanalytical, Marxism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism and post-digital. Students will incorporate a broad perception of cultural diversity including age, race, gender, ethnicity, nationality, etc., communicating insight and ownership of a personal meaning of diversity within applied criticism and theory.
- **Effective visual communication**
Students can effectively author and present visual illustrations, representations, descriptions, explanations and/or contextualizations of their artistic, research-based and career-oriented photography/film pursuits, ideas and emotions for a broad range of purposes and audiences.
- **Effective oral communication**
Students can effectively deliver oral descriptions, explanations and/or contextualizations of their artistic, research-based and career-oriented photography/film pursuits, ideas and emotions for a broad range of purposes and audiences.
- **Effective written communication**

Students can effectively author written descriptions, explanations and/or contextualizations of their artistic, research-based and career-oriented photography/film pursuits, ideas and emotions for a broad range of purposes and audiences.

- **Studio technique**
Students definitively recognize, explain, employ, appraise and compute the use of basic to advanced photographic and film tools, techniques, technologies and processes sufficient to advance their work from concept to finished product. Students will display evidence of professional proficiency regarding the methods and modes of production presented in required courses covering technical mastery of antique, analog and digital photography/filmmaking processes and techniques.
- **Professional practice skills**
Students demonstrate and apply broad knowledge of current business practices and resources of professional artists and independent commercial photographers and filmmakers. Students are capable of estimating costs, administering their legal rights as authors of visual art, establishing a professional network, generating and distributing marketing materials, establishing a reliable mode of art production, acquiring additional training, and devising business plans. Students can recognize ethical issues when presented within the context of professional practice.

Special requirements

While in the program, students must earn a minimum grade of C in each departmental course. Students who fail to meet this requirement may be asked to change their major.

Degree requirements for Photography and Film, Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A) with a concentration in filmmaking

General Education requirements

Course	Title	Hours
University Core Education Curriculum		
UNIV 111 Play course video for Focused Inquiry I	Focused Inquiry I	3
UNIV 112 Play course video for Focused Inquiry II	Focused Inquiry II	3
UNIV 200	Inquiry and the Craft of Argument	3
Approved humanities/fine arts		3
Approved natural/physical sciences		3-4
Approved quantitative literacy		3-4
Approved social/behavioral sciences		3-4
Total Hours		21-24

Course	Title	Hours
Additional School of the Arts requirements		
ENGL 215	Reading Literature	3

General education electives (Choose from AFAM, AMST, ANTH, ARBC, ARTE, ARTH, BIOL, CHEM, CHIN, CMSC, CRJS, ECON, ENGL, ENVS, FREN, FRSC, GLED, GRMN, GSWS, HIST, INNO, INTL, ITAL, LGCC, LATN, LING, MASC, MATH, MILS, MHIS, PHIL, PHYS, POLI, PSYC, RELS, RUSS, SOCY, SPAN, UNIV, URSP, BRND, VNTR, or WRLD)	6
Total Hours	9

Collateral requirements

Course	Title	Hours
Art Foundation Program		
ARTF 131	Drawing Studio	3
ARTF 132	Surface Research	3
ARTF 133	Space Research	3
ARTF 134	Time Studio	3
ARTF 139	Project	2
Art history		
ARTH 103 & ARTH 104	Survey of Art I and Survey of Art II	6
ARTH 270 & ARTH 271	History of the Motion Picture I and History of the Motion Picture II	6
ARTH 374 or ARTH 370	Studies in Film History of Animated Film	3
Studio art electives		
Total Hours		36

Major requirements

Course	Title	Hours
PHTO 275	Film as Material	3
PHTO 280	Moving Pixels	3
PHTO 281	Digital Imaging I	3
PHTO 295	Revolutionary Cinema	3
PHTO 350	Concepts I	3
PHTO 361	Sound and Color	3
PHTO 362	Lighting and Cinematography	3
PHTO 377	The Film Image	3
PHTO 390	Writing and Directing for the Screen	3
PHTO 394	Documentary I	3
PHTO 436	Senior Suitcase	3
PHTO 475	Advanced Production Workshop	3
PHTO 484 & PHTO 485	Thesis Film I and Thesis Film II	6
PHTO 494	Documentary II	3
Total Hours		45

Open electives

Course	Title	Hours
Select nine open elective credits		9

The minimum total of credit hours required for this degree is 120.

What follows is a sample plan that meets the prescribed requirements within a four-year course of study at VCU. Please contact your adviser before beginning course work toward a degree.

Freshman year		Hours
Fall semester		
ARTF 131	Drawing Studio	3
ARTF 133	Space Research	3
ARTF 139	Project	1
ARTH 103	Survey of Art I	3
UNIV 111	Focused Inquiry I	3
Play course video for Focused Inquiry I		
Quantitative literacy course (University Core)		3
Term Hours:		16
Spring semester		
ARTF 132	Surface Research	3
ARTF 134	Time Studio	3
ARTF 139	Project	1
ARTH 104	Survey of Art II	3
UNIV 112	Focused Inquiry II	3
Play course video for Focused Inquiry II		
Social/behavioral sciences course (University Core)		3
Term Hours:		16
Sophomore year		
Fall semester		
ARTH 270	History of the Motion Picture I	3
PHTO 275	Film as Material	3
PHTO 280	Moving Pixels	3
PHTO 281	Digital Imaging I	3
UNIV 200	Inquiry and the Craft of Argument	3
Term Hours:		15
Spring semester		
ARTH 271	History of the Motion Picture II	3
PHTO 362	Lighting and Cinematography	3
PHTO 377	The Film Image	3
PHTO 394	Documentary I	3
Natural/physical sciences course (University Core)		3
Term Hours:		15
Junior year		
Fall semester		
PHTO 350	Concepts I	3
PHTO 390	Writing and Directing for the Screen	3
PHTO 494	Documentary II	3
Humanities/fine arts course (University Core)		3
Open elective		3
Studio arts elective		4
Term Hours:		19
Spring semester		
PHTO 295	Revolutionary Cinema	3
PHTO 361	Sound and Color	3
PHTO 475	Advanced Production Workshop	3

General education elective	3
Open elective	3
Term Hours:	15
Senior year	
Fall semester	
ARTH 374 Studies in Film	3
ENGL 215 Reading Literature	3
PHTO 436 Senior Suitcase	3
PHTO 484 Thesis Film I	3
Term Hours:	12
Spring semester	
PHTO 485 Thesis Film II	3
General education elective	3
Open elective	3
Studio art elective	3
Term Hours:	12
Total Hours:	120

The minimum total of credit hours required for this degree is 120.

PHTO 201. Sophomore Photography Seminar. 1 Hour.
Semester course; 1 lecture hour. 1 credit. Prerequisite: sophomore standing in Department of Photography and Film. Introduces various methods and means of exhibition.

PHTO 202. Sophomore Film Seminar. 1 Hour.
Semester course; 1 lecture hour. 1 credit. Prerequisite: sophomore standing in the Department of Photography and Film. Students will learn all aspects of organizing a film festival that will be held at the end of the spring semester.

PHTO 233. Elements of the Moving Image. 4 Hours.
Semester course; 4 lecture hours. 4 credits. A survey of new media and their origins. An exploration of this visual phenomena and its relationship to modern society.

PHTO 243. Darkroom. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: sophomore standing in the department. Manual 35mm film camera is required. Study of fundamental camera techniques and photographic processes including darkroom printing. Emphasizes professional standards, technical proficiency and individual artistic expression.

PHTO 245. Design Photography I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. For communication art and design majors only or permission of instructor. A comprehensive beginning class covering an introduction to the camera, the process of exposure, developing, and black-and-white printmaking.

PHTO 260. Experiments in Sequencing. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHTO 243 or PHTO 281. Explores the history, contexts and applications of sequencing as a unifying artistic practice. Emphasis is placed on sequencing as it relates to visual communication and contemporary multimedia.

PHTO 275. Film as Material. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. Prerequisite: sophomore standing in the department. Study of the fundamental techniques and processes of 16mm film production, including cameras, lighting and composition. Emphasizes technical proficiency and individual artistic expression.

PHTO 280. Moving Pixels. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: sophomore standing in the department. Introduction to digital video, computer imaging and interactive multimedia as tools of artistic expression and social inquiry.

PHTO 281. Digital Imaging I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. Prerequisite: sophomore standing in the department. Digital still image camera is required. Study of fundamental techniques and processes of digital image-making, including image capture, manipulation and digital printing. Emphasizes professional standards, technical proficiency and individual artistic expression.

PHTO 289. Filmmaking for Non-majors. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; variable hours. 1-3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits. Digital motion picture camera is required. Study of fundamental techniques and processes of digital filmmaking, including image and audio recording, editing and exporting digital media. Emphasizes media as a tool of artistic expression and social inquiry.

PHTO 290. Photography for Non-majors. 1-3 Hours.
Semester course; variable hours. 1-3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 credits. Digital still image camera is required. Study of fundamental techniques and processes of digital image-making, including image capture, manipulation and digital printing. Emphasizes professional standards, technical proficiency and individual artistic expression.

PHTO 295. Revolutionary Cinema. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHTO 280. Investigates a range of experimental/underground/alternative moving image art forms and styles and covers key historical moments in the avant-garde. Emphasizes attentive viewing and critical analysis of works that challenge dominant media conventions.

PHTO 301. Junior Seminar. 1 Hour.
Semester course; 1 studio hour. 1 credit. Prerequisite: junior standing in the Department of Photography and Film. Instruction in how to make an artist website using current technology and 2-D design principles.

PHTO 307. Processes and Techniques. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHTO 243. Explores alternative photographic techniques with an emphasis on handmade printing. Places various photographic practices and aesthetics in a historical context. Students develop personal awareness of their creative process in the pursuit of a conceptually coherent body of work.

PHTO 340. Lighting I: Studio. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHTO 243 and PHTO 281. Introduces controlled lighting for still photography in the studio. Students use continuous light sources and professional grade strobe equipment to explore tabletop and portraiture photography through lectures and studio assignments. Emphasizes professional standards, technical proficiency and individual artistic expression.

PHTO 350. Concepts I. 3 Hours.
Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: UNIV 200 or HONR 200 and PHTO 281. Students utilize the aesthetic and technical skills mastered in previous courses to explore photography as a conceptual tool. Emphasizes both historic and contemporary contextualizations of the medium and fosters development of a long-term, personal artistic project.

PHTO 351. Portrait Photography. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHTO 345 Design Photography or PHTO 350 Intermediate Photography. Students explore the various visual possibilities of the use of portrait photography.

PHTO 352. Concepts II: Junior Project. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. Prerequisite: PHTO 350. Students complete a conceptually coherent body of work that engages with photography as an artistic medium. Course emphasizes advanced understanding of historical perspectives and critical theory as they relate to the development of a personal project.

PHTO 361. Sound and Color. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHTO 280 and PHTO 281. Explores advanced concepts and techniques in sound design, editing, color grading and postproduction workflow for film, video and multimedia.

PHTO 362. Lighting and Cinematography. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHTO 280. Explores theory and formal aspects of lighting, framing, composition, and camera function and movement for moving-image media in a range of genres. Students develop strategies for visual storytelling through hands-on workshops and exercises.

PHTO 377. The Film Image. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum of 9 credits. An examination of production techniques and problems encountered by the filmmaker in creating the motion picture image. A selected number of narrative, documentary, experimental and animated films are viewed as source material and dealt with from a production point of view. The films chosen for discussion vary from semester to semester.

PHTO 381. Digital Imaging II. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHTO 281. Digital still image camera is required. Study of advanced techniques and processes of digital image-making, including advanced manipulation and color control and advanced digital printing. Emphasizes professional standards, technical proficiency and individual artistic expression.

PHTO 382. Advanced Digital Printing. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisites: PHTO 380 and 381. How to manage a digital color workflow in order to produce desired colors and tonal values in the final output – the print. Instruction in controlling image management, color calibration and printing through lectures, demonstration and hands-on experience. Discussion of student work in regular critiques.

PHTO 390. Writing and Directing for the Screen. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: UNIV 200 or HONR 200. Enrollment is restricted to majors in the School of the Arts. Explores basic theory and formal aspects of story, structure, performance and character through readings, workshops and writing exercises. Students develop skills specific to writing, preproducing, staging and directing a short fiction film.

PHTO 391. Topics in Photography and Film. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; variable hours. 1-3 credits. May be repeated with different topics for a maximum of 6 credits. A lecture and/or studio course offered on a variety of photography or film issues. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics covered each semester.

PHTO 392. Animation. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Explores various materials and processes, analog and digital, involved in creating animated moving image works. Emphasizes studio technique and artistic exploration.

PHTO 394. Documentary I. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHTO 280. Introduces strategies for developing, shooting and editing various types of documentary and nonfiction media including, but not limited to, the electronic essay, biography/portraiture, ethnographic film and new genres. Covers key historical moments and ethical issues related to the representation of the real world.

PHTO 420. Senior Thesis I. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: senior standing in the department. Critical analysis and development of a yearlong creative thesis project with emphasis on the completion of a conceptually coherent body of work. Course emphasizes professional standards, technical proficiency and individual artistic expression informed by historical perspectives and critical theory.

PHTO 421. Senior Thesis II. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHTO 420. Critical analysis and development of a yearlong creative thesis project with emphasis on the completion of a conceptually coherent body of work. Course emphasizes professional standards, technical mastery and individual artistic expression informed by historical perspectives and theory. This course is a capstone experience integrating effective oral, written and visual communication, critical thinking and advanced studio techniques.

PHTO 435. Professional Practice. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Examines a range of business models, practices and tools applicable to building a career in photography and related artistic, commercial and media fields. Emphasizes practical skills, marketing, legal and ethical issues.

PHTO 436. Senior Suitcase. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Examines a range of professional practices and tools applicable to building a career in the media arts. Students develop ancillary materials related to their overall student film portfolio. Emphasizes practical skills, marketing and audience-engagement issues.

PHTO 442. Lighting II: Location. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHTO 340. Explores photography using lighting design on location. Students concentrate on balancing and matching available lighting with electronic flash and continuous lighting tools. Emphasis is on the technical, professional and logistical skills required of a photographer working on location assignments and on using creative approaches to lighting and image design.

PHTO 474. Contemporary Critical Perspectives. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 3 lecture hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHTO 352. Explores and interrogates multiple theories of representation and the aesthetic, ideological, ethical and cultural issues raised by contemporary photography and related media. Students will view work, read contemporary criticism, engage in discussion and produce original, critical writing.

PHTO 475. Advanced Production Workshop. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHTO 390. A practical, intensive workshop in which students work collaboratively in standard industry crew positions to complete a single project. Students explore craft, aesthetics, storytelling and production issues at an advanced level.

PHTO 484. Thesis Film I. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHTO 475. Students complete writing, previsualization, preproduction and initial production on their thesis films. Students engage in workshops, screenings and critiques in order to further develop their professional identities and to advance their understanding of the methods and tools deployed by independent film and media artists.

PHTO 485. Thesis Film II. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHTO 484. Students complete all production, editing, sound design and outreach materials for their thesis films. Students engage in workshops, screenings and critiques in order to further develop their professional identities and to advance their understanding of the methods and tools deployed by independent film and media artists. This course is a capstone experience integrating effective oral, written and visual communication, critical thinking and advanced studio techniques.

PHTO 491. Topics in Photography and Film. 1-4 Hours.

Semester course; variable hours. 1-4 credits. May be repeated with different topics for a maximum of 12 credits. A seminar or workshop that intensively engages photography, film and related-media subjects, including, but not limited to, a range of historical and contemporary photographic/cinematic practices, trends, theories and concerns within a wider artistic and art historical context. See the Schedule of Classes for specific topics covered each semester.

PHTO 492. Independent Study in Photography and Film. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; variable hours. 1-3 credits. May be repeated for a maximum total of 6 credits. Prerequisites: junior or senior standing as a major in photography and film, and approval of department chair and instructor. Individual instruction and supervision of a special project. Learning experiences should be designed with the supervising faculty member in the form of a contract between student and instructor. This course is limited to those students who have demonstrated an exceptional level of ability and intense commitment to their discipline.

PHTO 493. Teaching Practicum in Photography and Film. 1-3 Hours.

Semester course; variable hours. 1-3 credits. Repeatable for a maximum of 6 credits. Prerequisites: senior standing in the department and a minimum GPA of 3.0. Advanced students in photography and film are mentored in the classroom while serving as teaching apprentices. Specific duties are negotiated between the student and the mentor and approved by the department chair. Duties will typically include regular classroom attendance, peer tutoring and assistance in technical demonstrations of equipment and/or software.

PHTO 494. Documentary II. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 2 lecture and 3 studio hours. 3 credits. Prerequisite: PHTO 394. Students will explore advanced concepts and techniques in documentary and nonfiction media creation through in-class exercises, screenings, independent productions and group critiques.

PHTO 495. Photography and Film Internship. 3 Hours.

Semester course; 10 hours per week for a total of 150 hours of professional work experience. 3 credits. May be repeated. Prerequisite: consent of internship supervisor and academic adviser. Practical work experiences are coordinated with professionals in the field of photography, film and related media.