

# DEPARTMENT OF PHOTOGRAPHY AND FILM

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[arts.vcu.edu/photofilm](http://arts.vcu.edu/photofilm) (<http://arts.vcu.edu/photofilm>)

The Department of Photography and Film aims to facilitate a comprehensive artistic, technical and intellectual understanding and use of the mediums of photography and film; to provide a rigorous education in the arts, specifically in photographic and moving image media, and a broad education in other academic subjects; to foster a climate that inspires creativity, intellectual curiosity, freedom of expression and critical-thinking. The department fosters a pluralistic approach that allows both faculty and students to expand the traditional boundaries of the respective media and engage in multidisciplinary practice.

The department offers undergraduate concentrations in photography and filmmaking resulting in a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography and Film, as well as a graduate program that leads to a Master of Fine Arts in Fine Arts with a concentration in photography and film.

To promote student development and research of contemporary art practice and theory, the Department of Photography and Film presents a diverse and active visiting artist program. Through lectures, critiques and research courses, students are exposed to the valuable insights of respected international artists, scholars and critics. In addition, the visiting artists teach topics courses exploring the current artistic and conceptual foundations found in their own work. Graduate students are encouraged to establish an individual critical dialogue with the visiting artists and faculty and attain a strong critical and historical basis for their work.

The facilities include several critique and screening rooms; a large black-and-white darkroom; a large state-of-the-art digital photography and film editing lab; a shooting studio; a student checkout center with a wide range of still photography and film cameras, professional lights and sound recording equipment; a professionally staffed graphics lab located in the same building that provides student with digital services on several high-tech imaging devices; and individual graduate M.F.A. studios.

- Photography and Film, Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) with a concentration in filmmaking (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/arts/photography-film/photography-film-bfa-concentration-filmmaking>)
- Photography and Film, Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.) with a concentration in photography (<http://bulletin.vcu.edu/undergraduate/arts/photography-film/photography-film-bfa-concentration-photography>)

## **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 390. 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.