Advanced Photography

University of Texas at El Paso
Spring 2020
COMM 4350
Instructor: Dino Chiecchi, eechiecchi@utep.edu
Class meets: Friday 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. Cotton Memorial 104

‘There are always two people in every picture: the photographer and the viewer.’ - Ansel Adams

‘I fight to take a good photograph every single time.’ - Annie Liebowitz

‘We can never be objective, for all that we have been, and all that we are, is with us every moment of our lives, shaping all of our attitudes and our vision. What we can be however, what we must be, is fair. And that idea of fairness boils down to one word—honesty, the one thing that we owe our subjects.’ - B.C. Cohen

Class overview

Advanced Photography is a skills-based immersion class where we will go beyond what you learned in Digital Photography, putting to use all the skills learned there, but augmenting that skill set with new techniques, new assignments and a more challenging and rigorous class.

Advanced Photography, which focuses more on the day-to-day workings of a photojournalist, is like lightning. Lightning is bright and fast and shocking, it can startle and kill you. But it’s also fleeting. It’s like the daily news coverage – it wakes you up, makes you pay attention. It’s the spark that starts the conversation but doesn’t end it. It’s the flash that brings awareness to a subject. But it can also disappear quickly. In the sea of images that flood us daily, how do we make images that persist? That are burned into the mind’s retina? Images that bring
both information and understanding?

That’s our challenge.

This class will accelerate throughout the semester. The pace will be frenetic, the workload high and the stress nearly unbearable. It will be like working in a newsroom, in other words. You are here because I believe you are ready for this. It is entirely possible that at some point this term you will question both your sanity and mine. I’m okay with that – questioning is journalistically healthy.

Be skeptical of everything, including your own abilities.

There are several basic tenets we will follow in this class. They are simple:

* Try
* Fail
* Accept
* Question
* Work

We also will discuss the history of photography in journalism and fine art. During the course of the semester, we will look at the camera and lens, specific traditional techniques, the digital image and the print. As in Digital Photography, we will use Adobe Lightroom to process your photos.

In general, we will work with your photography in every class.

Photojournalism is about storytelling and communicating with pictures - the task of using a camera to convey ideas, thoughts and art. We will work on assignments that will emulate what it is like to be a daily news photographer.

You will have one project to do this semester due at the end of the semester. Additionally, you will shoot environmental portraits, features, sports and other assignments.

The purpose of this class is to prepare you for a multimedia journalism environment in the marketplace through a series of assignments that are similar to those you’ll have to do in a newsroom.

We also will have a number of field trips. If weather cooperates, we will go to Ski Apache in Ruidoso and photograph skiers making their way on the slopes. We also will go outside El Paso into the hinterlands to photograph migrating birds. We’ll go to a sporting event and photograph baseball or a high school sport in season.

We will use ambient light in most assignments and learn how to use off-camera flash. Very simply, we will be making photos and not taking snapshots.
We’ll discuss in class the field trips and the guest speakers, who will visit us and via Skype. Be prepared. This class will be rigorous. We’ll also discuss how you’ll submit your photos and quizzes.

Each student should always have a camera with them when they come to class and at all times. Points will be deducted from a subsequent quiz if you do not bring your camera to class.

### Required Textbooks

- *The Documentary Impulse*, Stuart Franklin, 978-0714870670
- *It’s What I Do – A Photographer’s Life of Love and War*, Lynsey Addario, 978-0143128410
- *Photography as Activism*, Michelle Bogre, 978-0240812755
- *Instant: The Story of Polaroid*, Christopher Bonanos, 978-1616890858
- *Associated Press Stylebook 2019*, 978-1541699892

### Optional Textbooks


### Required equipment

- A digital camera that produces a 10-mega pixel file or larger, and can shoot video
- An SD card reader
- A tripod
- An intervelometer
- A neutral density filter
- A flash, also called a speedlight, and an off-camera cord jack. The recorder must also be capable of uploading files to a computer via USB
- An external hard drive, no slower than 7200 RPM, with a minimum capacity of 1 terabyte is required. It is your responsibility to backup and maintain a copy of your assignments
Camera – Do not buy a camera without checking with me first. I recommend the Nikon D3500, which is a solid entry-level camera and shoots 1080p video. It can be bought in a kit with an 18-55mm lens and/or a 70-300 lens.

If you prefer Canon cameras, the Canon EOS Rebel T5i Digital SLR Camera is another solid camera. It also can be bought with a kit lens, an 18-55mm and/or a 55-250mm lens. Both are excellent choices.

We have Nikon cameras for 24-hour check-out in the department. You also can check out a Nikon 70-300 lens on a Friday, for example, and return it Monday. Otherwise, the check-out period is 24 hours.

If you find a Nikon or Canon camera that has been discontinued at a heavy discount, let’s chat about it. There are deals to be had on recently discontinued models and lenses. The latest models cost more and don’t offer any substantial improvements.

Also the newer “mirrorless” cameras such as the Panasonic Lumix GX series and the Olympus OMD series are good choices. However, they cost more. If you plan to work in media someday, choose the Nikon or Canon camera since most newsrooms use these cameras.

If you already own a digital camera, bring it to class so we can determine if it can be used in this course. You can use a digital camera for the course as long as it has manual adjustments. Since digital cameras have different controls, you are responsible for reading the user manual and learning how to set your own camera. The camera should have manual controls so you can choose F-stops, shutter speeds and ISO. Look for the “manual” command, which we will use most of the time.

All automatic point-and-shoot digital cameras, or smart phone cameras, are useless for this course.

If you have a bit of extra cash lying around, buy a 50mm 1.8 lens. It’s an under-rated, inexpensive lens that you’ll find to be amazingly versatile.

You will need a sturdy tripod for a couple of assignments.

You can buy your equipment where you’d like, and I’m not affiliated with B&H or Best Buy, but their prices are reasonable and shipping is fast and often free.

The Macs in the multimedia lab in Cotton Memorial 104 have Adobe Lightroom installed and it will be our primary tool in this course. If you are serious about photography, you may want to rent or buy Lightroom. Adobe Lightroom, which is available for Windows and Macs, is a good tool for archiving your photos and for basic adjustments. Also, there is a nearly infinite supply of free instructional material on line that you can find as you learn what to look for in class.

Be aware this syllabus is subject to change.

Course Goals:
The goal of the course is to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the importance of photojournalism and visual journalism as a communication tool in society. Students will have an opportunity to refine their photojournalism techniques through assignments and by learning key concepts and methods of digital workflow used to produce publishable images.

Students will have an opportunity to create a portfolio of their work from the semester assignments that will include a multimedia picture story incorporating stills, audio and video. Students will gain an in-depth understanding of ethical and copyright issues surrounding photojournalism.

Photojournalism and visual journalism is concerned with people and their stories, whether told in one or multiple images. Students will be required to turn in images of people only. This course will refine student’s ability to produce storytelling images in both single and multiple image formats and to produce an in-depth picture story of a single subject who is of journalistic interest to the community.

Students will gain an understanding of multimedia techniques and trends used to enhance single and multi picture packages, by incorporating multimedia techniques into their assignments and picture story project.

**Academic Integrity**

All academic work must meet the standards contained in UTEP’s Academic Integrity policy. Each student is responsible for informing themselves about these standards before performing any academic work.

The only reason readers continue to support news organizations is because they believe they are credible. All
work done for this course must be your own and done this semester. If you are assisted during a shoot, it is advisable to notify the instructor prior to submission.

The ethics of the visual journalist are extremely important and we will use the National Press Photographers Association’s Code of Ethics as a guide. Learn it, live by it. You will be asked to sign it.

It is very easy, and very tempting, to digitally enhance or retouch your images. If it is suspected that you have retouched an image to alter its meaning or content in any way you will be asked to provide all of the original files from the shoot. If it is found that you have manipulated the image – either digitally or through subject direction – a report will be filed with the Communication Department chairwoman. Failure to provide requested, supporting information or files will result in a grade of zero.

Assignments:

* Photo essays
* Environmental portrait
* Sports event (from action to emotion)
* News event (coverage of local news)
* Written essay (a short paper on the most important photo ever made)
* Entertainer - (feature on a local entertainer including portrait and performance

AP Photo/Jack Dempsey
Class and Assignment Schedule: No credit is given for missed deadlines and only still images in .jpg digital format will be accepted. For multimedia assignments, a .mov QuickTime file is required.

Week 1 – Jan. 21
Introduction Course and Syllabus Review
Lecture: Lightroom review, IPTC and Caption writing review, white balance, focus points
Assignment No. 1: Shake the cobwebs off – pictorial of Bronco Swap Meet, 8408 Alameda or the Downtown Art and Farmer’s Market, 117 Anthony.

Reading assignment:
On Being a Photographer - handout

Week 2 – Jan. 27
Lecture: Photographing children
Assignment No. 2: Photographing children

Reading assignment:
Street Photography - Daniel Hoffmann
The Documentary Impulse

Week 3 – Feb. 3
Lecture: Photographing sports - from action to emotion
Assignment No. 3: Shoot a sporting event. We’ll discuss.

Reading assignment:

Week 4 – Feb. 10
Lecture: Photographing sports - from action to emotion
Assignment No. 4: Sports
Reading assignment:
Response to The Documentary Impulse due Feb. 14

Week 5 – Feb. 17
Lecture: Photographing sports - from action to emotion
Assignment No. 5: Shoot another sport
Reading assignment:
It’s What I Do

Week 6 – Feb. 24
Lecture: Off-camera flash
Assignment No. 6: Executive portrait
Reading assignment:

Week 7 – March 2
Lecture: Bracketing
Assignment No. 7: Bracketing assignment
Reading assignment:
Response to It’s What I Do due March 6

Week 8 – March 9
Lecture: Photographing sports - from action to emotion
Assignment No. 8: Shoot a football game -Friday night lights or a Saturday morning game
Reading assignment:
Photography as Activism

Week 9 – March 16
Lecture: Feature on local entertainer, including portrait and action
Assignment No. 9: Photograph a local entertainer
Reading assignment:

Week 10 – March 23
Lecture: Street photography
Assignment No. 10:  
Reading assignment:  
Response to Photography as Activism due March 27

Week 11 – March 30  
Lecture: Managing your focus points, photographing birds  
Assignment No. 11: El Bosque del Apache field trip  
Reading assignment:  
The Story of Polaroid

Week 12 – April 6  
Lecture: Neutral Density filters, Mission Trail  
Assignment No. 12: Photographing migrating birds  
Reading assignment:  

Week 13 – April 13  
Lecture: Time lapse photography  
Assignment No. 13: Shoot a time lapse video, three-minute video  
Reading assignment:  
Response to The Story of Polaroid due April 17

Week 14 – April 20
Assignment Guidelines, Deadlines and Grading:

There are no expectations to the following policies.

1. Only photographs taken by you will be accepted for all photography and multimedia assignments. For multimedia assignments only images, audio and text photographed, recorded or written by you will be accepted. Plagiarism includes using someone else’s images, audio recordings, text and graphics. By placing your copyright and name in image IPTC fields and as a credit to multimedia productions you are confirming that the content is yours and yours alone. Using someone else’s creative content is an academic integrity violation and will result in an F for the course.

2. Turning in work for or by another student is an academic integrity violation and will result in the violating student (s) either being dropped from the class or given an F for the course, which of these two actions is subject to the instructor’s determination.

3. Only images taken during this semester will be accepted. Photographs taken and turned in for another class assignment require permission from both instructors. Make sure that your camera’s date and time stamp are set with the current date and time. Images turned in displaying the wrong date will not be accepted for credit.

4. Camera Settings: Correct date and time, no time stamp appearing on images, color setting set to RGB not sRGB.

5. Make sure that your camera’s date and time are set correctly. Images turned in displaying the wrong date will not be accepted for credit. The date and time stamp must not appear on your actual images.

6. There will be no cropping of images until your instructor says so. Further explanation and ethical considerations will be provided during class lectures.
7. The use of your camera’s flash and the ability to change your ISO settings beyond ISO 400 will not be permitted until you’re given permission to change the ISO. Further explanations will be provided during class lectures.

8. Friends, roommates, classmates, relatives and other people you know personally may not be used as subjects for class assignments. All identifiable subjects in your photographs must be identified in the caption. Always try to get contact information of subjects, e-mail, phone etc. and provide this information in the caption information in Lightroom.

9. Inform all subjects that you are journalism students and that pictures and multimedia projects done of them may appear in print or online publications.

10. It is your responsibility to keep copies of your work. Work left on the journalism lab computers is deleted. Any work left on a journalism lab computer is done at your own risk. Work lost or deleted from the journalism lab computers does not constitute an excuse for missing the assignment. It is required that you purchase an external hard drive for backing up your work in this class. Hard drives will be required from the first week of class.

11. Students using Communication Department computers must not save their work on school lab computers.
12. An external hard drive with a capacity of 1 TB or greater is required to work with Adobe Lightroom software. All multimedia and audio assignments are completed using this software.

13. Assignment Deadlines: Photojournalism and Journalism are deadline-oriented professions. Missing deadlines in the real world, means having a direct negative affect on an entire chain of people in a news organization, which ultimately results in lost respect, lost revenues and loss of your job. In this class, as in the professional world, there are no excuses for missing deadlines.

14. The instructor must be notified in advance of an excused absence as defined under the Attendance Policy section of this syllabus and be provided with the required written documentation at the beginning of the first class lecture (not lab) following the excused absence date.

If the assignment deadline has passed and the instructor has not accepted or received the required written documentation during the first class lecture following the excused absence then an F will be given for that assignment.

15. Turning assignments into the wrong assignment folder will result in a ONE full letter grade reduction for that assignment. PLEASE DOUBLE CHECK THAT YOU HAVE TURNED YOUR WORK INTO THE CORRECT FOLDER. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY. The reduction will result after the assignment is graded. For example: Should you place the assignment in the wrong folder and after grading the assignment you receive a B for the work on that assignment, then the final grade will be marked down one full letter grade to a C, as a result of placing the assignment in the wrong folder.
16. Never email assignment work to the instructor. No assignments will ever be accepted via email.

17. It is your responsibility to review your graded critique in Blackboard. Any problems associated with critique grades must be brought to the professor’s attention during the week the grade was issued only. No changes will be made after the week assignment grades are logged.

**Grading:**

Judging, critiquing and grading multimedia either professionally or for class is a subjective process. The following is a general guide to how grades for multimedia assignments will be determined.

Critiques: Constructive evaluation of the quality of your photography, writing, and editing are part of my job. Becoming a good photographer or multimedia producer is a process. Becoming confident and competent in these skills, overcoming weaknesses and learning from mistakes takes time. The criteria by which I critique and grade your assignments are listed in detail below.

There will also be from time to time in-class critiques and peer-critiques of your work. This is an important part of the journalistic process. ALL your professional journalism work will be constantly subjected to the assessment of your peers, your editors and your audience, so it is important to develop a “thick skin” early on and learn not take criticism personally. Rather, keep an open mind, listen carefully and consider the criticism an opportunity to learn and improve your professional skills. That said, if you have problems with in-class or peer-critiques, please talk to me.
A Excellent in all areas: Is publishable, meets deadlines, adheres to assigned content, adheres to assigned criteria as stated on the assignment sheet, achieves correct exposure, color balance, composition, and is in focus. Contains no caption or IPTC data errors.

B Good, overall work that is publishable, on deadline, in focus and adheres to assigned content, but may have minor problems associated with one of the following; exposure, color balance or composition. Contains no caption or IPTC data errors. Adheres to assigned criteria as stated on the assignment sheet.

C Average work turned in on time and contains the assigned content, but is not publishable because of problems with focus, exposure, color balance or composition. Contains caption and or IPTC data errors.

D Below average work that is turned in on deadline but is not publishable. The work shows some effort, but fails to meet technical, compositional or content standards as noted above. Contains caption and or IPTC data errors.

F Fails to meet minimum expectations in most or all areas noted above and/or missed the deadline. Contains caption and or IPTC data errors.

Important Note Concerning Captions & IPTC Data Fields Associated With All Shooting Assignment Grades:

Mistakes in captions or IPTC data including, spelling, grammar, AP style errors and missing information, will result in at least one full letter grade reduction for all shooting assignments. In addition, completely missing
captions and IPTC data will result in at least a two full letter grade reduction. Proof your captions and IPTC data before turning in your shooting assignments!

Final Grade is based on the following percentages:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bronco</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>15 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Off-camera flash</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bracketing</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Architecture</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local entertainer</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Street Photography</td>
<td>2.5 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>El Bosque</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>ND filters</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time lapse</td>
<td>5 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>History essay</td>
<td>2.5 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photo essay</td>
<td>20 percent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book responses</td>
<td>10 percent</td>
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Assignment Point Grade Scale:

A 90-100
B 80-89
C 70-79
D 60-69
F 0-59
Final Grade Scale: There is no increasing of grades if you receive an 89 it is a B etc.

A 90-100
B 80-89
C 70-79
D 60-69
E 59 and below

Makeup work and extra credit policy
Assignments, projects, exams or quizzes can be made up only if a student has a valid written excuse for missing them. See attendance policy below for a definition of a “valid written excuse.” You must contact Professor Chiecchi prior to or immediately following your Excused Absence to arrange for a deadline change, failing to contact me will result in an F for the missed assignment. You will receive the grade you earn on the assigned work. No extra credit opportunities are available. Exams or quizzes may not be retaken in an effort to improve your grade.

Incompletes and Withdrawals:

Attendance Policy:
Attendance in journalism classes is mandatory. Students who don’t attend class miss lectures, class discussions and assignments. Unexcused absences will have a major impact on your grade because you will not be permitted to make up missed assignments.

Three unexcused absences will result in your being dropped from the class, or failing the class if the third ab-
sence falls after the university’s online drop deadline.

Excused absences are granted only for valid, documented reasons and only if the reason makes your presence at the scheduled time impossible. University policy limits acceptable excuses to five: serious illness (with documentation), jury duty, religious observance, a dean’s excuse and military reserve obligation. If you have a reason for missing class that you think is legitimate, it is your responsibility to contact me ahead of time. Contacting Professor Chiecchi after the absence will result in an unexcused absence. Absence excuses are subject to verification. Presenting a false excuse will be considered cheating, a violation of the academic integrity rules, resulting in an F for the course.

Attendance will be taken using a class roster sheet. Signing the class roster for another student or providing picture ID for another student is an academic integrity violation and will result in both violating students being dropped from the class. If the official drop deadline has passed, an F will be given for the course.

Emailing the instructor to say that you are going to miss class does not constitute a valid excuse. You must provide written documentation for the valid excuses discussed above. The excused absence documentation must be provided to the instructor at the beginning of class on the first scheduled lecture following the excused absence date.
If you need to leave class early you must notify the instructor before the beginning of class. Failure to do this will result in an unexcused absence for that class.

Tardy: For every two times late, one unexcused absence will be assigned. The class begins at 9 a.m. you will be counted tardy at 9:01 a.m.

Religious observances
All holidays or special events observed by organized religions will be honored for those students who show affiliation with that particular religion.

**Student Code of Academic Integrity**

Academic Integrity. Prohibited conduct covers all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, fabrication and facilitating academic dishonesty by others. The university’s Code of Conduct prohibits such behavior as threatening fellow students or faculty, false identification or documents, false alarms, forgery or misuse of documents or records, stalking or discrimination against individuals or groups.

Though the department’s classes often involve students working on team projects and peer reviewing, most assignments require individual attention and effort to be of any benefit. Unless otherwise stated by the instructor, all work is expected to be that of each student alone, without consultation with others. Prohibited activities
include asking other students for access to their work, asking other students for help during lectures or labs, or sharing information during a quiz or exam.

Possible offensive content
Journalism is a vital part of the democratic process. We deal every day with what happens in the world, both good and bad. That means you may hear discussions about news coverage that could be offensive to you, such as ugly crimes, political controversies or conflicting religious beliefs. If you have particular concerns about a subject, you are welcome to discuss them with me.

Accessibility and Accommodations
It is the university’s goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss options.

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact: The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass. CASS staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

Classroom Behavior
Computer security rules
It is very important that students know and observe the following rules that help protect the security of the journalism server:
1. Use only your university e-mail account to correspond with journalism faculty and staff.
2. Do not check your personal e-mail accounts from department computers.
3. You may not connect your laptops to our networks or computers under any circumstances. E-mail material to your UTEP e-mail account or transfer it to a CD, DVD, portable hard drive or USB flash drive.
4. You can connect a laptop to the video inputs (only) on the projection monitors if you are making a class presentation.
5. Students are allowed in the lab outside of class hours.

There will be no makeup quizzes for unexcused absences.

ABOUT YOUR PROFESSOR
Dino Chiecchi is an associate professor of practice. He previously was the consumer experience director for the El Paso Times. Immediately prior to that assignment, Chiecchi was the managing editor for presentation and web for the El Paso Times. He has worked in various capacities at the San Antonio Express-News, Associated Press, Tucson Citizen, Hong Kong’s South China Morning Post, Austin American-Statesman and El Paso Herald-Post.

He is the immediate past-president of the Texas Associated Press Managing Editors and has been on that board for 13 years. He is a past-president of the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and was inducted to NAHJ’s Hall of Fame in September 2017, is a founding member of the San Antonio Association of Hispanic Journalists and has served in leadership capacities in other organizations. He began his experience as a leader with journalism organizations while a student at the University of Texas at El Paso.
when he led the student chapter to a nominee for Top National Chapter.

Acknowledgments:
We wish to thank Professor Kim Newton, of the University of Arizona, and Professor Mark E. Johnson, University of Georgia’s Henry W. Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication, for sharing their valuable insights and syllabuses for us to review and select some of the portions that suit our students best. We also thank the Associated Press for their photographs. We couldn’t be more grateful.
COMM 4350  
Spring 2020 Class contract  
Student Name:  
Student ID #:  

I have read this syllabus and fully understand all the policies, procedures and requirements as detailed here.  

Student Signature: