



News Photography

COMM 1316 –Fall 2026 T/TH 900 – 1045 a.m. Room CM 156

Instructor: Margaret S. Kirby Office: Communications Building, CM154
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Office Hours: Face to face hours are held in my Levelland office, CM 154.
Virtual meetings can be scheduled on Collaborate by appointment.
Tuesdays 830 - 9 a.m.; 11-12 p.m.; 3 – 4 p.m.
Thursdays 830 – 9 am; 11-12 p.m.; 3-4 p.m.
Fridays 9 am – 12 pm

Course Description: This course introduces the basics of digital photography, and includes instruction in camera operation, techniques and presentation skills.

Required Materials:
Smartphone with camera
Storage device for photos (USB Flash Drive)

Photography Assignments: Learning to take photographs is an important part of this course. You will have multiple photography assignments during the semester, each focusing on developing your skills and creativity. Most of the assignments will be submitted into Blackboard. You will begin creating a digital portfolio early in the semester. You will also learn to print photos from Photoshop, and you will print what you consider to be your “best” photos of the semester.

Exams: You will have one midterm exam that covers the material presented in lectures and possibly additional quizzes.

Total points available for the semester = **1000**

The grading scale is:

900 -1000 = A

800 - 899 = B

700 - 799 = C

600 - 699 = D

599 and below = F

Participation: In addition to a midterm exam, classwork assignments, and long range assignments, you will receive a participation grade that is worth 100 points to your final grade. The grade is earned using the chart below.

Participation		
Missed (Classes for semester)	Class Contributions	Grade Range
0-2	Frequent contributions; well considered comments	90-100
0-2	Infrequent contributions or ill-considered comments	80-90
0-2	Rare or no comments	70-80
2-3	Frequent contributions; well considered comments	70-80
2-3	Infrequent contributions or ill-considered comments	60-70
2-3	Rare or no comments	50-60
3-4	Frequent contributions; well considered comments	50-60
3-4	Infrequent contributions or ill-considered comments	40-50
3-4	Rare or no comments	30-40
More than 4		30

There are no “weighted” points in this class. All points are equal. The total of them results in your grade at the end of the semester. It’s quite possible that the number of available points this semester will not reach the 1000- point level, or it might exceed it. Either way, Blackboard will keep track of your points earned and calculate your grade out of how many points were available at the end of the semester.

The Blackboard gradebook will display a current “running grade” so you know where you stand throughout the semester. It will display in percentages not points. Here are the basic percentage/grade calculations.

90 – 100% = A

80 – 89% = B

70 – 79% = C

60 – 69% = D

Below 60% = F

Tutoring Info

SPC Tutors:

Tutoring is FREE for all currently enrolled students. Make an appointment or drop-in for help at any SPC location or online! Visit the link below to learn more about how to book an appointment, view the tutoring schedule, and view tutoring locations. <http://www.southplainscollege.edu/exploreprograms/artsandsciences/taughtutoring.php>

Tutor.com

You also have 180 FREE minutes of tutoring with Tutor.com each week, and your hours reset every Monday morning. Log into Blackboard, click on the tools option from the left- hand menu bar. Click on the Tutor.com link and you will automatically be logged in for free tutoring. You may access tutor.computers during the following times:

Monday – Thursday: 8pm-8am

6pm Friday – 8am Monday morning

For questions regarding tutoring, please email tutoring@southplainscollege.edu or call 806- 716-2538.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Distinguish the parts and functions of a digital camera.
- Apply knowledge of camera operations to compose and capture digital photographs.
- Apply knowledge of digital imaging and image manipulation utilizing

Photoshop software.

- Identify flaws and make improvements to photographs produced.
- Differentiate between aperture and shutter speed and recognize how they work together to produce appealing images.

Absence Policy: Students are expected to attend all classes in order to be successful in this course.

Instructor's Expectations of the Student

- You are expected to log into the Blackboard course and check your SPC email **daily** to be aware of possible announcements/reminders and to pace your progress in the course. Grades will be submitted into the My Grades area.
- Higher institutions recommend that students plan to spend 2 hours of outside study for every 1 hour of in class time. For a 3 credit-hour, face-to-face course that means a total time investment of 6 hours per week. Expectations for time investment are no less rigorous for online courses at SPC.

Lost/Corrupt/Disappeared Files

You must keep/save a copy of every project/assignment on an external disk or personal computer. In the event of any kind of failure (e.g., Blackboard server crash or virus infection, student's own computer crashes, loss of files in cyberspace, etc.) or any contradictions/problems, I will request that you resubmit the files. In other words, if you submit a document to me, and I do not receive it or am unable to open it in the submitted format, you will need to resend it to me, corrected, with little or no "downtime" in regard to the timeline for submission.

Deadlines: The assignments in this class will be deadline driven. You must keep track of deadlines and submit work when it is due.

ALL deadlines are absolute. You need to get used to deadlines that exist in the off-campus world. All assignments will be due at the beginning of each class unless told otherwise. Late assignments may be penalized harshly if they are accepted at all.

Absence Policy: Students are expected to attend all classes and labs in order to be successful in this course.

I'm sure there will be multiple reasons why you might be absent this semester, such as illness or an official trip or activity authorized by the college.

Missed Work

Please do NOT assume that I will contact you to tell you about missed work. You can expect new class materials each week. You must contact me to find out what you missed.

Keep track of deadlines and submit work when it is due.

Do NOT assume that I will move deadlines for you unless you contact me and offer very good and documented reasons why you cannot meet deadlines that are already in place.

In the event that you miss the midterm exam, you must notify me within 48 hours about why. You may or may not be able to “make up” the missed exam. If you miss an exam due to COVID-19, you will take the exam the day you return.

Excuses: Don't bother to try lame ones. I've heard most of them and have used some of them myself. Only deaths of immediate family members (parents, grandparents, siblings – ONLY), or your own, may be considered for an excused absence in that category. Of course, you will need to provide proof (such as the obituary notice). If you are ill, please offer a medical note as documentation in order to possibly complete “makeup” work. Students who are enrolled in at least 6 hours of classes may visit the Health & Wellness Center for medical care free of charge. Student athletes or those participating in other college-sponsored activities that require an absence, will be excused, with prior notice to me and appropriate documentation.

You may or may not be allowed to do “makeup” work depending on the length of your absence, the reason for your absence, whether you have supporting documentation to prove why you missed class, and what assignment it was that you missed. Some group assignments cannot be made up.

Students are officially enrolled in all courses for which they pay tuition and fees at the time of registration. Should a student, for any reason, delay in reporting to a class after official enrollment, absences will be attributed to the student from the first class meeting.

Students who enroll in a course but have “Never Attended” by the official census date, as reported by the faculty member, will be administratively dropped by the

Office of Admissions and Records.

It is the student's responsibility to verify administrative drops for excessive absences through MySPC using his or her student online account. If it is determined that a student is awarded financial aid for a class or classes in which the student never attended or participated, the financial aid award will be adjusted in accordance with the classes in which the student did attend/participate and the student will owe any balance resulting from the adjustment.

Tardiness Policy: I enforce a 5-minute tardiness rule in my face-to-face. I use the clock in the classroom or on my computer. You may come to class **up to** 5 minutes late. That's the cutoff. If you arrive **after** that 5-minute window, you'll be given one warning. Any time after that, you'll be asked to leave. It will be an unexcused absence. I may or may not have taken attendance already if you arrive 5 minutes late. It's up to you to make sure you are marked present.

Withdrawal Policy: The last day to withdraw/drop with a grade of "W" is December 3. It is the student's responsibility to withdraw from this course. Otherwise, students will be assigned their earned letter grade at the end of the course. Course averages will be updated frequently, and guidance will be provided throughout the term to help students decide whether they need to drop the class or not. For more information regarding drops/withdrawals, please visit <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/admission-aid/apply/schedulechanges.php>.

Intellectual exchange, disabilities, non-discrimination, Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations, CARE Team, and Campus Concealed Carry, COVID 19, AI statements, and a new Digital ID/photo requirement!!!!

Please visit: <https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements/>.

Academic Integrity

It is the aim of the faculty of South Plains College to foster a spirit of complete honesty and a high standard of integrity. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own any work which he or she has not honestly performed is regarded by the faculty and administration as a most serious offense and renders the offender liable to serious consequences, possibly suspension.

Each student is expected to abide by absolute honesty. Infractions will result in penalties subject to an assignment of a grade of "F" for the course or expulsion

from the college. Students should also regard civility online as a requirement to remain on the roll in class.

As future professionals, you are to communicate with each other in a professional and civil manner. Any successful learning experience requires mutual respect on the part of the student and the instructor. Neither instructor nor student should be subject to others' behavior that is rude, disruptive, intimidating, aggressive, or demeaning. Student conduct that disrupts the learning process or is deemed disrespectful or threatening shall not be tolerated and may lead to disciplinary action and/or removal from class.

Cheating: Dishonesty of any kind on examinations or on written assignments, illegal possession of examinations, the use of unauthorized notes during an examination, obtaining information during an examination from the textbook or from the examination paper of another student, assisting others to cheat, alteration of grade records, illegal entry or unauthorized presence in an office are examples of cheating. Complete honesty is required of the student in the presentation of any and all phases of course work. This applies to quizzes of whatever length, as well as to final examinations, to daily reports and to term papers.

Plagiarism: Offering the work of another as one's own, without proper acknowledgment, is plagiarism; therefore, any student who fails to give credit for quotations or essentially identical expression of material taken from books, encyclopedias, magazines and other reference works, or from the themes, reports or other writings of fellow student, is guilty of plagiarism.

In this class, submitting an AI generated photograph as an assignment will be considered plagiarism.

Fall 2026 Comm 1316 News Photography T/Th 9 – 1045 a.m. Tentative Schedule

Week 1 Aug. 25 Tue Intro course/syllabus/expectations/questions
TexanMosaic/Individual photo galleries
Jobs for photographers
Old camera show and tell

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YaFUftqcos&t=62s>

Homework for Thursday: Take TWO photos using your Smart Phone that illustrate a "Back to School" story; gather basic caption info; bring both with you to class Thursday

Aug. 27 Thu IT in class to help log into Photoshop

.jpg vs. .heic/change file names in downloads
Cropping/Tilting/Auto brighten in Photoshop

What's a "good" photo?/ Class work (10 points)
Phone Cameras and iphonography tips

Homework for start of class Tuesday: Bring your "best" "back to school" shots with you to class.

Week 2 Sept. 1 Tue IT in class again to finish Photoshop help.
Upload your 2 "best" back to school shots- cropped, tilted,
brightened - into Blackboard. Class work. (20 points)
Covering the news- TIPCUP/accuracy

Assign: Farm & Ranch project; due Friday 9/18

Homework: Using your SPC email account, answer the question I sent you via your SPC email account. (10 points)

What is a pixel? What is resolution? Why does it matter?
CU/MS/WS

Class shoot: Fall Harvest– due Friday, 9/4

Sept. 3 Thu Digital editing and Photojournalism ethics
Short history of photography + make pinhole cameras (10 points)

Sept. 4 Friday Fall Harvest photos due BB (60 points)

Week 3 Sept. 8 Tue Mirrorless camera distribution; parts of a camera and major buttons;
playback; clear card. **Bring camera to every class from now on.**
Class shoot: Victory Bell/Dome - submit into BB before the
end of class (10 points)

Sept. 10 Thu View Fall Harvest gallery in class
Mirrorless cams vs. DSLR; Tripods
Basics of light and outdoor/reflectors

Week 4 Sept. 15 Tue Portfolios intro and part 1
Class shoot – 3D art projects?

Assign: Same place different light. Due Tuesday, Sept. 29 by the start of class.

Sept. 17 Thu Capturing motion; Shutter Priority Mode.
Class shoot - Indoor cycling class. Submit into BB before the end of

class. (30 points)

Sept. 18 Friday Farm & Ranch photos due (90 points)

Week 5 Sept. 22 Tue Introduce light painting. Practice (10 points)

Sept. 24 Thu Light painting project in studio (10 points)

Week 6 Sept 29 Tue Submit Same Place Different Light photos into BB at beginning of class (40 points)
Submit light painting project into BB at beginning of class (60 points)
Depth of field; aperture priority mode; Bokeh practice using 50 mm lens outdoors. (10 points)

Oct 1 Thu Bokeh in studio project

Assign Finding Fall: Shoot 3 photos- 1 CU, 1 MS, 1 WS of "Finding Fall". Photos should be of three different locations or involve three different subjects. We should know instantly what is a CU, MS, and WS without reading the label. If you include a person with their face in a shot, you MUST get caption info...that is name (s), where they are, what they are doing....
Due into BB by Tues. October 20 at the start of class

Week 7 Oct. 6 Tue Submit Bokeh photos into BB (60 points)
Composition: dog's eye view. Submit into BB Thur 10/15

Oct. 8 Thu Review for midterm exam

Week 8 Oct. 13 Tue Midterm exam in class (100 points)

Oct. 15 Thu Dog's eye view due **at start of class** (30 points)
Class shoot- submit 2 patterns/lines into BB by the end of class. (20 points)

Week 9 Oct. 20 Tue Submit Finding Fall shots (90 points)
Women's BB practice this week or next week. Illustrate news stories?

Oct. 22 Thu Learning to print!; Assign Fur-tography due 11/10 at the start of class

Week 10 Oct. 27 Tue Illustrate news stories? Environmental Portraits
Assign Environmental Portrait for use in portfolio- due 11/ 24

Oct. 29 Thur Shooting video discussion; assign “How to” assignment as homework

Week 11 Nov. 3 Tue Work on projects

Nov. 5 Thur Load “How to” clips onto hard drive (20 points)

Week 12 Nov. 10 Tue Fur-tography shot due **at the start of class** (60 points)

Assign and work on pop art portrait of Fur-tography in class
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZkeDwo-g8yM&t=8s>

Nov. 12 Thur Work on projects

Week 13 Nov. 17 Tue Work on projects

Nov. 19 Thur Work on projects

Week 14 Nov. 24 Tue Environmental Portrait due (20 points); and pop art assignments are due in BB (50 points)
Work on portfolios

Nov. 27 Thur Happy Thanksgiving!!

Week 15 Dec. 1 Tue Work on Portfolio.

Dec. 3 Thur Turn in cameras! And place your “best of the semester photos” into marked envelope along with caption info; work on Portfolios.

Week 16 Dec. 7 – 10 Final Exams Week

Portfolio is due Tuesday, 12/8