

Course Syllabus for Commercial Photography

Revised: January 2026

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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Course Description: This class introduces photography, including but not limited to: using camera equipment, techniques to capture photos, composition of photos, how to edit photos, and how to use and manipulate off-camera lighting.

Prerequisite: None

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- SLR-style camera with changeable lenses
- SD Card
- Studio strobes or speedlights
- Radio trigger for flashes
- Basic modifiers for off-camera lighting

OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Know and understand the advanced functions of an SLR camera as demonstrated by the use of manual mode to create photographic compositions using advanced rules of composition and exposure
- Demonstrate complex lighting values associated with back light, front light, side light, shading, and highlights of basic lighting patterns
- Demonstrate use of ISO, shutter speed, and aperture settings of the exposure triangle as demonstrated by composition and appeal of images

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment:

- Create a portfolio of diverse subject matter using advanced principles of photography

Course Evaluation:

- Grading is based on evaluation critiques and rubrics of photographs captured for lessons, research papers, projects, prepared portfolios, and tests on digital photography concepts and technical terms
- The class is rigorous. You must complete the lessons and show evidence of your learning. Do not expect to just take some pictures and pass.

- I embrace your mistakes and expect them. Learning is messy and it takes time and practice. Jump into the process and be willing to redo your work. The focus of assessments is on students showing evidence of their learning.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Grade Distribution:

Photo Projects & Activities: 80 Percent

Assessments & Summative Assignments: 20 Percent

Grading Scale:

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

F = 69 or lower

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Topic	Assignment
1	Manual Settings Review	Manual Settings Scavenger Hunt
2	Off-Camera Lighting Introduction	How Flash Works Notes
3	Constant Lights	Placing Lighting/Light Patterns Practice
4	Product Photography	Product Photography Practice
5	On-Camera Flash Techniques	Intro to Flash Practice
6	Single Light Off-Camera Practice	Product Photography Practice: Part II
7	Portrait Lighting Introduction	Portrait Lighting Notes
8	Adding a Second & Third Light	Portrait Lighting Practice
9	Balancing Ambient & Flash Lighting Intro	Using Flash “outside” Practice

POLICIES

Attendance Policy:

Students are expected to attend all classes in order to be successful in a course. The student may be administratively withdrawn from the course when absences become excessive as defined in the course syllabus.

When an unavoidable reason for class absence arises, such as illness, an official trip authorized by the college or an official activity, the instructor may permit the student to make up work missed. It is the student’s responsibility to complete work missed within a reasonable period of time as determined by the instructor. 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. A student who does not meet the attendance requirements of a class as stated in the course syllabus and does not officially withdraw from that course by the official census date of the semester, may be administratively withdrawn from that course and receive a grade of “X”. Instructors are responsible for clearly stating their administrative drop policy in the course syllabus, and it is the student’s responsibility to be aware of that policy.

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.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Students are expected to do their own work on all projects, quizzes, assignments, examinations, and papers. Failure to comply with this policy will result in an F for the assignment and can result in an F for the course if circumstances warrant.

Plagiarism violations include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Turning in a paper that has been purchased, borrowed, or downloaded from another student, an online term paper site, or a mail order term paper mill;
2. Cutting and pasting together information from books, articles, other papers, or online sites without providing proper documentation;
3. Using direct quotations (three or more words) from a source without showing them to be direct quotations and citing them; or
4. Missing in-text citations.

Cheating violations include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Obtaining an examination by stealing or collusion;
2. Discovering the content of an examination before it is given;
3. Using an unauthorized source of information (notes, textbook, text messaging, internet, apps) during an examination, quiz, or homework assignment;
4. Entering an office or building to obtain unfair advantage;
5. Taking an examination for another;
6. Altering grade records;
7. Copying another’s work during an examination or on a homework assignment;
8. Rewriting another student’s work in Peer Editing so that the writing is no longer the original student’s;
9. Taking pictures of a test, test answers, or someone else’s paper.

Student Code of Conduct Policy: 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.

Institutional Policies

Updated policies concerning the following can be found here
<https://www.southplainscollege.edu/syllabusstatements>

- Diversity Statement
- Disability Statement
- Nondiscrimination Policy
- Title IX Pregnancy Accommodations Statement

Campus Concealed Carry: Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in South Plains College buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and South Plains College policy, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations and Frequently Asked Questions, please refer to the Campus Carry page at: <http://www.southplainscollege.edu/campuscarry.php>
Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all South Plains College campuses. Report violations to the College Police Department at 806-716-2396 or 9-1-1.

SPC Bookstore Price Match Guarantee Policy:

If you find a lower price on a textbook, the South Plains College bookstore will match that price. The difference will be given to the student on a bookstore gift certificate! The gift certificate can be spent on anything in the store.

If students have already purchased textbooks and then find a better price later, the South Plains College bookstore will price match through the first week of the semester. The student must have a copy of the receipt and the book has to be in stock at the competition at the time of the price match.

The South Plains College bookstore will happily price match BN.com & books on Amazon noted as ships from and sold by Amazon.com. Online marketplaces such as Other Sellers on Amazon, Amazon's Warehouse Deals, fulfilled by Amazon, BN.com

Marketplace, and peer-to-peer pricing are not eligible. They will price match the exact textbook, in the same edition and format, including all accompanying materials, like workbooks and CDs.

A textbook is only eligible for price match if it is in stock on a competitor's website at time of the price match request. Additional membership discounts and offers cannot be applied to the student's refund.

Price matching is only available on in-store purchases. Digital books, access codes sold via publisher sites, rentals and special orders are not eligible. Only one price match per title per customer is allowed.

Note: The instructor reserves the right to modify the course syllabus and policies, as well as notify students of any changes, at any point during the semester.