

The Eye, the Shutter, the Light, the Color: An Introduction to Photography

Photography is a relatively new art, less than 200 years old, but one that changes the way we interpret the world around us and, quite simply, the way we see. This one-semester course will teach such fundamental concepts as frame, focus, and composition, while also exploring the more interpretive side of photography. Students will complete weekly assignments, giving them hands-on experience and a chance to creatively convey their unique vision of the world. Students will also keep a journal where they will collect ideas, magazine clippings, inspiring images, and some personal writing about their experiences. Students are expected to have a working knowledge of and general familiarity with the camera they choose to use for this class. Either a 35-mm camera (point and shoot or SLR) or a digital camera is acceptable.

Outline of the Photography Syllabus:

Lesson 1: Light The Quality of Light The “Magic Hour”	Lesson 9: Patterns and Textures Geometric Repetition
Lesson 2: Composition Ways to Alter Composition Foreground and Background	Lesson 10: Motion
Lesson 3: Frame Framing the Subject The Rule of Thirds	Lesson 11: Documentary Work
Lesson 4: Color The Effects of Weather on Colors Monochromatic	Lesson 12: Mood
Lesson 5: Complimentary Colors The Color Wheel	Lesson 13: Depth of Field
Lesson 6: Black and White	Lesson 14: Focus
Lesson 7: Artificial vs. Natural Light Bouncing Light	Lesson 15: Landscape Panoramic Photographs
Lesson 8: Portraits Candid vs. Formal Portraits Street Photography Tips for Shooting Portraits	Lesson 16: Narrative
	Lesson 17: Specialized Photography Food Photography Commercial Photography Fashion Photography Getting Work Experience
	Lesson 18: Odds and Ends Good Habits

Lesson 3: Frame

Framing the Subject

Frame and composition go hand in hand. The *frame* is what you see through the viewfinder of your camera, and is used for viewing and composing the subject. The frame is the whole area that you see, even the seemingly empty area, called *negative space*.



Negative space and frame. In this image, the subject is framed at the very bottom of the photo, leaving a large area of negative space.

As you frame a photo, you are designing with your eye the arrangement of the subject. Don't get locked into centering the subject and immediately clicking. Often a composition in which the subject is located to the left or right of center is more pleasing. Take your time here. You may need to take a few steps forward or backward to include less or more in the frame. Move the camera around and notice the way different positions of the subject affect the overall image. Notice where in the frame the horizon sits.

Aesthetically, it's more pleasing if the horizon is in the lower or upper third of the photo, rather than right in the middle. Remember that the frame of a photo should be intentional.

If you are using a digital camera and it has a viewfinder, try to use the viewfinder. One thing I've noticed is that when I shoot digitally, I pay much less attention to the frame of the photo, and therefore the overall composition. I end up taking a lot more photos of lesser quality. Always use the viewfinder to frame your shot so you are aware that you are composing an image. In addition, it's better to move your feet to get closer to the subject rather than zooming each time. You will get a clearer photo that includes more detail, and overall better composition.

The Rule of Thirds

The *rule of thirds* is a set of basic guidelines that divides a photo into nine parts using two equally-spaced horizontal lines, and two equally-spaced vertical lines. The rule suggests that a photograph will be more aesthetically pleasing and stronger compositionally if the subject is placed along the lines left or right of center, and if the horizon is placed somewhere close to either horizontal line, neither of which is in the center of the frame.

The rule of thirds. The subject is located right of center, in the center quadrant. The horizon is located



near the lower horizontal line. This gives the photo an aesthetic balance that is more interesting visually than a centered image.

Assignment

Frame.

Frame is a word used to talk about the area you choose to shoot, that which you see through the viewfinder of your camera, comparable to the page of a writer, or the canvas of a painter. It has the capacity to be very expressive, as what you include or don't include in the frame changes the way the viewer will understand the visual information you are providing. **Work with frame** this week. Think about how to frame a subject in several ways to change the way it is interpreted — close up, far back, all the way to the left or right, centered. When you have finished shooting **24 photos**, **write a one-page response** telling me which photos you think were the most successfully framed (these will be the ones that you think are the most pleasing visually). **Post** your photos on [Flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com) and **send me the response paper** via email.