Introduction to DSLR Photography
Job Aid

Image: Dean Lin via Flickr

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Introduction

Many people decide to invest in a DSLR camera because they want to take better quality photos. However, the amount of buttons and settings involved can be overwhelming. Many DSLR users never move out of auto mode.

Introduction to DSLR Photography will teach the basic skills needed to use a DSLR camera. Learners will be introduced to the photo triangle (frame, light, focus) and how camera settings relate to these three points. This will allow users to move from auto mode to manual mode and create quality photos. Exposure, white balance, and focusing techniques will also be presented in order to give the user the ultimate control over the images they produce.

Learning Theory

A pragmatic constructivism approach will be used to encourage students to be active, social, and creative learners. In addition to creating photographs of their own, they will be encouraged to view and discuss other students’ work.

Goals and Objectives

1. Learners will understand the basic principles of DSLR photography
   1.1 Identify characteristics of a DSLR camera
   1.2 Identify components of the photo triangle
   1.3 Analyze photos based on photo triangle principles

2. Learners will compare DSLR equipment and evaluate their current skills
   2.1 Identify essential DLSR equipment
   2.2 Differentiate settings based on camera brand
   2.3 Describe familiar and unfamiliar settings

3. Learners will implement basic principles of DSLR photography
   3.1 Choose appropriate need for Shutter Priority and Aperture Priority
   3.2 Calibrate white balance
   3.3 Articulate the pros and cons of shooting RAW photos
   3.4 Correct color in Adobe Lightroom

4. Learners will create a digital photo story
4.1 Locate a powerful photo story and discuss techniques
4.2 Create a Flickr account
4.3 Tell a story through a series of photos

5. Learners will differentiate between lenses

5.1 Select appropriate lens based on type of photography
5.2 Identify crop factor and focal length of current lens
5.3 Distinguish differences between crop sensor and full frame lenses

6. Learners will synthesize their research on DSLR photography

6.1 Explain key aspects of DSLR photography
6.2 Discuss future photography goals
6.3 Complete course evaluation

Learning Activities

Matching activity on DSLR camera basics. (1.1)
Quiz on characteristics of a DSLR and photo triangle. (1.2, 1.3)
Discussion: Post one of your best photos to the forum, comment on another students’ photo and explain why you like it. How does your reaction relate to the principles of the photo triangle? (1.4)

Watch DSLR Essentials video. (2.1)
Discussion: Post a picture of your camera to the forum and identify differences between my camera and yours. Describe any settings you don’t yet understand. Evaluate your proficiency with your DSLR thus far. What do you want to improve on? (2.2, 2.3)

Submit one photo shot in Shutter Priority and one shot in Aperture Priority. (3.1)
Submit two photos of the same subject, before and after calibrating white balance. (3.2)
Discussion: Discuss the pros and cons of shooting RAW photos. Which do you prefer and why? (3.3)
Process RAW photos in Lightroom, correcting color and lighting, and create a before & after gallery in a Word or PDF document. (3.4)

Locate a powerful photo story and discuss the techniques that made it successful. (4.1)
Discussion: Create a Flickr account and familiarize yourself with the site. Use this platform to create a photo story on the topic of your choice. Share it on the forum and comment on at least two of your classmate’s submissions. (4.2, 4.3)

Watch Lens & Body video. (5.1)
Quiz on lenses and types of photography. (5.1)
Discussion: Do you have a crop sensor or a full frame camera? What is the crop factor and focal length of your current lens? Which type of photography is it best suited for?
What type of camera would be optimal for your particular photography interests? (5.2, 5.3)

Compose a 1500-word essay explaining the key aspects of DSLR photography and mention any concepts you are still having trouble with. (6.1)

Discussion: Post your future goals in photography to the forum, comment on other students’ goals and exchange contact information if desired. (6.2)

Complete the course evaluation. (6.3)

**Environment**

The environment for this course is an online learning management system called Canvas. Students will watch videos, participate in discussion, and submit assignments there.

Each section is linked on the course home page (shown below), and all required assignments are linked within their corresponding lesson.

Course Site URL: https://canvas.instructure.com/courses/919926

The image above shows what the student will see. When you log into the course site, you will notice that there are several more tools on the left sidebar. If a tool is grayed-out, it is only visible to instructors. Making extra tools invisible to students cuts down on clutter and confusion. If you ever want to see what the students are seeing, go to Settings and click Student View in the top right corner.
## Scheduling

This course is designed to be taught during an 8-week summer session with the following schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1</strong></td>
<td>Understand the basic principles of DSLR photography</td>
<td>Discussion: Introductions</td>
<td>June 7, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion: My Best Photo</td>
<td>June 7, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 2</strong></td>
<td>Compare DSLR equipment and evaluate current skills</td>
<td>Discussion: My Equipment</td>
<td>June 14, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Short Paper 1</td>
<td>June 14, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 3</strong></td>
<td>Implement basic principles of DSLR photography</td>
<td>Discussion: RAW Photos</td>
<td>June 21, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Share Your Photos</td>
<td>June 21, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Short Paper 2</td>
<td>June 21, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 4 + Week 5</strong></td>
<td>Create a digital photo story</td>
<td>Discussion: Agropreneurship Photo Story</td>
<td>July 5, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post Your Photo Story</td>
<td>July 5, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Short Paper 3</td>
<td>July 5, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 6</strong></td>
<td>Differentiate between lenses</td>
<td>Discussion: Lens &amp; Crop Factor</td>
<td>July 12, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Short Paper 4</td>
<td>July 12, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Week 7 + Week 8</strong></td>
<td>Synthesize research on DSLR photography</td>
<td>Discussion: Future Goals</td>
<td>July 26, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>July 26, 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessments & Rubrics

Students will be assessed based on understanding of photography principles. You will evaluate photo submissions based on your expertise and give feedback for improvement, but student photography itself will not be graded. Only papers and discussion forums will be graded.

Discussions will be graded based on the rubric (see Appendix A) and quality of discussion. Read through the student rules and guidelines to get an idea of what your expectations should be when grading discussions.

The final paper will be graded based on the rubric (see Appendix B). Students are instructed to keep this in mind while writing their short papers, which will be combined into the final paper. Graded short papers should be returned to the student no more than 5 days after the due date.

Tips & Tricks

1. **This discussion-heavy course requires a lot of attention from you as the instructor.** Make sure you are commenting on one or two student posts each week – they need to know you are watching the discussion boards and are interested in what they have to say. While students enjoy interacting with each other, they appreciate personal stories and experience from the field. As a professional photographer, you have a lot to teach them! Don’t be afraid to open up and share your story, just as you would in a face-to-face class.
2. **Be aware of the General Course Questions forum**, which is pinned to the top of the discussion board. This is where students will post any issues they come across during the course. The great thing about this forum is that it allows students to help each other and cuts down on the amount of emails you receive. Many times, students will answer each other’s questions before you get to them. Just be sure to keep checking back and avoid a question to sit in the forum without being answered.

3. **View student engagement with the Course Analytics tool.** In the gray Course Status box on the right side of your screen, click View Course Analytics to see student activity, recent submission, and overall grades. The color-coded tables provide an at-a-glance overview of how things are going in the course.

4. **Most Importantly: Click through the course site to make sure due dates are updated and hyperlinks are working correctly!** This will help you answer any questions the students may ask about navigating the course site.
Appendix A: Discussion Forum Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent 21-25 points</th>
<th>Good 11-20 points</th>
<th>Bare Minimum 0-10 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posts to the forum:</td>
<td>Posts to the forum:</td>
<td>Posts to the forum:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Make a positive contribution to the body of knowledge and/or add new insights to the discussion by fully addressing the forum prompt.</td>
<td>▪ Attempt to make a positive contribution to the body of knowledge and/or add new insights to the discussion.</td>
<td>▪ Meet the requirements of the discussion question assignment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Include ideas from the assigned readings.</td>
<td>▪ Demonstrate some evidence of having read the assigned material.</td>
<td>▪ Include ideas that have a vague relationship to the assigned readings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Are very respectful and responsive to other discussion members.</td>
<td>▪ Are respectful and responsive to other discussion members.</td>
<td>▪ Are respectful but minimally responsive to other discussion members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Offer a unique perspective than earlier posts to the forum.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion Forum Rules

▪ Be sure you are responding to the specific post within the forum with which you would like your response associated. If you click the Start New Thread button at the top of a forum and then post a message, you create a new cluster of messages, known as a “thread,” within the forum. This is sometimes appropriate and desirable. However, not all messages within a forum should be new threads. To add to an existing thread, click a message and then click Reply and respond to the post.

▪ Respect the views of others even if you disagree. You may express disagreement but do so without any harsh words or potentially inflammatory remarks. It is okay to disagree with a person’s ideas, but it is not okay to attack a person. Try to be descriptive and invoke well-reasoned arguments.

▪ Offensive or abusive language will not be tolerated.

▪ Do not criticize the grammar and spelling of those making responses. In this case, as with gifts, it is most definitely the thought that counts.
Appendix B: Final Paper Rubric

The final paper will be a culmination of the knowledge you acquire throughout the course. You will explain the key aspects of DSLR photography and compile the research from your short papers into a literature review. In conclusion, mention any concepts you are still having trouble with and how the research will affect your continuing photography practice.

<table>
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<th>Good 11-20 points</th>
<th>Bare Minimum 0-10 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Paper:</td>
<td>Research Paper:</td>
<td>Research Paper:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Includes clearly labeled sections for Abstract, Introduction, Conclusion, and Reference List; subheadings are included appropriately</td>
<td>• Includes clearly labeled and organized Abstract, Introduction, Conclusion, and Reference List</td>
<td>• Includes Abstract, Introduction, Conclusion, and Reference List</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reflects a deep understanding of DSLR photography</td>
<td>• Reflects an intermediate understanding of DSLR photography</td>
<td>• Reflects a basic understanding of DSLR photography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is a minimum of 10 pages</td>
<td>• Is a minimum of 8 pages</td>
<td>• Is a minimum of 6 pages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Includes 11-20 relevant sources and references each at least once within the paper</td>
<td>• Includes 6-10 relevant sources and references each at least once within the paper</td>
<td>• Includes 0-5 relevant sources and references each at least once within the paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Content is clear and comprehensive. The writer makes a contribution to the reviewed research.</td>
<td>• Content is clear and comprehensive. The writer makes a contribution to the reviewed research.</td>
<td>• Content is clear and comprehensive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>