

## **PHOTOGRAPHY: FIGURE GROUND, SPRING 2021**

Course Number: PGY2442C

Meeting Times: T, R 2 – 4 (8:30 – 11:30 AM)

Instructor: Vahid Valikhani

Email: [v.valikhani@ufl.edu](mailto:v.valikhani@ufl.edu)

Location: Online, [Zoom Link](#)

Office Hours: T, R 11:30 – 12 PM [Zoom Link](#)

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### **OBJECTIVE**

This course provides a critical understanding of the formal and conceptual aspects of the photographic image. Utilizing traditional, nontraditional, and experimental photographic processes, this course will provide students with an introductory understanding of contemporary art and serves to stimulate critical thinking when engaging with image making. Students are expected to engage in a wide range of themes relevant to the current social, political and art historical moment, and students will also look at various artists, curators, and critics.

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### **METHODS**

The goal of this course is for students to think critically about artistic production and to develop skills to speak about their own work and the work of other practicing artists. Students will have readings and group discussions on the reading material. Students will also be expected to do independent research on artists and have presentations in the class. Students will also be assigned three core projects over the course of the semester, when they are expected to explore and discover new ways of working that is critically informed from research/readings. The three projects will be assessed in group critiques where students are expected to exhibit their work professionally. Individual meetings will be conducted throughout the semester, where students will propose ideas and show in progress work.

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### **REQUIRED READINGS AND COURSE CONTENT**

All required readings will be made available through Canvas and will be posted at least 1 week in advance of the date on which they will be covered. Class resources, announcements, updates, and assignments will also be made available through Canvas, so please check this site frequently: <http://lss.at.ufl.edu/>

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## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THIS COURSE

- Be on time
- Read the articles, take notes
- Talk actively in the class
- Look at as many photo projects as you can and Introduce them to the class if you want
- Go to as many [exhibitions](#) as you can
- Follow the instructions on each project and assignment
- Go out to take photos; the more, the better
- Edit your photos
- Look at them
- Think about them
- Empty the card
- Go out again to take more photos
- Work more
- And do not underestimate the power of communication!

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## WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE (TENTATIVE)

Week 1	Tuesday, 1/12/21	Getting to Know Each Other, Course Introduction, Canvas and Syllabus Review
	Thursday, 1/14/21	Presentation Reviews
Week 2	Tuesday, 1/19/21	Photo Tour with Jillian, Introducing Project One; <b>Reconstruction</b> + Reading Discussion I
	Thursday, 1/21/21	Artist Presentation + Part I
Week 3	Tuesday, 1/26/21	Reading Discussion II
	Thursday, 1/28/21	Artist Presentation + <i>Part II</i>
Week 4	Tuesday, 2/2/21	Watching Movie: <i>Blow Up</i>
	Thursday, 2/4/21	Artist Presentation + Part III
Week 5	Tuesday, 2/9/21	Open Lab Day
	Thursday, 2/11/21	Critique I
Week 6	Tuesday, 2/16/21	Introducing Project Two; <b>Photographic Image Power</b> + Reading Discussion III

	Thursday, 2/18/21	2 Artist Presentations + Part I
Week 7	Tuesday, 2/23/21	Reading Discussion VI
	Thursday, 2/25/21	Artist Presentation + Part II
Week 8	Tuesday, 3/2/21	Watching Nan Goldin documentary
	Thursday, 3/5/21	2 Artist Presentations + Part III
Week 9	Tuesday, 3/9/21	Open Lab Day
	Thursday, 3/11/21	Critique II
Week 10	Tuesday, 3/16/21	Reading Discussion V + Introducing Final Project; <i>Story Telling with Photographs</i>
	Thursday, 3/18/21	2 Artist Presentations + In Progress Work Presentation I
Week 11	Tuesday, 3/23/21	Watching Documentary, TBD
	Thursday, 3/25/21	2 Artist Presentations + In Progress Work Presentation II
Week 12	Tuesday, 3/30/21	Open Lab Day
	Thursday, 4/1/21	Artist Presentation + In Progress Work Presentation III
Week 13	Tuesday, 4/6/21	Artist Statement Workshop
	Thursday, 4/8/21	Artist Statement Review
Week 14	Tuesday, 4/13/21	Open Lab Day
	Thursday, 4/15/21	Critique III
Week 15	Tuesday, 4/20/21	Portfolios' Due, Course Evaluations
	Thursday, 4/23/21	Reading Days

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**LIST OF PROJECT AND ASSIGNMENTS**
**Project One: Due February, 11<sup>th</sup> (15% of final grade)**

<b>Reconstruction,</b> Throughout the series of assignments and readings students are supposed to reread and reconsider their understanding of photographic images. During this time, students have the chance to look back over what they have unconsciously and culturally accepted in terms of photographic images.	
Part I	<b>Why Photography?</b> Rediscover why you love to make photographs. Review your earliest work and ask yourself: What do you see in it? Can you find a theme that connects to your work today? What do you like and dislike about your early work? What about the photographs that made you want to be a photographer/artist? Take 10 photographs and compare them with your old photographs to get the full credits for this assignment.
Part II	<b>Photography Walk</b> Go out for a walk without your camera. Go back and make some photos of something you noticed along the way. Walk an area you would normally drive past. Bring your camera and make photos of what you might normally overlook. Select 10 photos and bring them to the class.
Part III	<b>What to Photograph?</b> Think of an object, place, or scenario to be photographed, write it down and pass it to your peers. Make 10 photos of the given list and bring them to the class.

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**Project Two: Due March 11<sup>th</sup> (15% of final grade)**

<b>Photographic image Power</b> Since its invention, photography has been a powerful apparatus for different practices. Nowadays, we might underestimate the potentiality of the photographic image and take it for granted. In most of the cases, one might tend to look at the photographs objectively and do not recognize the agency of the person behind it. In this project students will have series of assignment to understand the sense and power of the subjectivity in photography.	
Part I	<b>What Does the Camera Do?</b> Make 5 portraits of something you love, then make 5 portraits of something you hate. Put them randomly in a PowerPoint presentation without any captions.

Part II	<p><b>Cameras Do not Take Pictures</b></p> <p>The camera is blind, and it does not understand the mood. Make 10 images with your camera of different moods and bring them to the class.</p>
Part III	<p><b>Life and Photography</b></p> <p>Photograph yourself throughout a week, it is an interesting exercise that anyone can do is to take one photograph per day for a week. The idea is to focus enough to only photograph what is necessary. What are the seven pictures that not only define the week, but yourself? This exercise can be an important analysis of the self in relation to life and photography.</p>

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### Project Three: Due April 15<sup>th</sup> (15% of final grade)

#### Story Telling with Photographs

Telling a story with pictures is just like writing with words. Something is seen, or thought of, or imagined. I would like you to tell a story with images that you make and put together, one after another, to recount something— be it abstract, conceptual, documentary, or journalistic. Inside or outside. It can be vast or very small. It can be realistic or abstract. It can be something real, an idea, a fantasy, an emotion. You should use no more than 15 photos, no fewer than 10. Each image must add something that has not yet been seen in the images precede it. The selection should be coherent.

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### Artist presentation (10% of final grade)

In the beginning of the semester students will sign up for the artist presentations. They can either pick up one artist to do the research or ask the instructor to introduce them one.

- Students will have 10 - 15 minutes to give their presentation which should include:
  - \*Artists' creative vision
  - \*Artists' creative Processes
  - \*Reflections + Q&A

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### Artist Statement (10% of final grade)

Students are supposed to be present at the workshop on Tuesday, April 6<sup>th</sup> and post their artist statements by Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> to the Canvas.

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**LIST OF READINGS (TENTATIVE)**

- Photography Reader, Liz Wells
  - What Is A Photograph, Graham Clarke
  - The Photographer's Eye, John Szarkowski
  - The Nature of Photographs, Stephen Shore
  - Ways of Seeing, John Berger
  - Looking at Photographs, Victor Burgin
  - The Invention of Photographic Meaning, Allan Sekula
  - Camera Lucida, Roland Barthes
  - Criticizing Photographs, Terry Barrett (optional)
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**Check Out Guideline**

Students in this class can check out photography equipment from FAD. Email Jillian at [jbrowning@arts.ufl.edu](mailto:jbrowning@arts.ufl.edu) for more information.

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**FIGURE/GROUND STUDIO EVALUATION AND GRADING:****-25 % Attendance and Participation in Reading Discussions**

- Students are expected to attend all classes. An 'A' grade is awarded to students who among producing excellent work, has attended all classes, and has participated enthusiastically in class. Participation includes having completed work during all scheduled classes and active participation through shared ideas and commentary. Excellent attendance and punctuality are expected for this class and will impact your grade. Roll will be taken at every class and students will be considered late if they arrive after roll has been taken. Three tardiness will equal one unexcused absence. Three unexcused absences are accepted, however four unexcused absences or more will result in 10 points off the participation grade for each subsequent absence. Excused absences require appropriate documentation, and it is expected that the student communicate with the instructor if they are going to be absent.
- On seminar days, students are expected to come to class prepared, having read the assigned material. They are also required to have three questions or observations from

the reading typed and turned in at the beginning of the class with their name on it. Failure to bring in written work on the day it is assigned will result in a lower assignment grade.

#### **-45% Critiques/projects**

- There will be three projects for this course, each resulting with a critique where students are expected to exhibit their work professionally and purposefully. Students are also expected to provide constructive and critical feedback to their peers. PowerPoint presentations should be ready by class time on Critiques Days and there will be penalties for work that is not ready.

#### **-10% Weekly Assignments**

#### **-10% Artist Presentations**

#### **-10% Artist Statement**

### **GRADING SCALE**

<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>D-</b>	<b>E</b>
<b>100-95</b>	<b>94-90</b>	<b>89-87</b>	<b>86-84</b>	<b>83-80</b>	<b>79-77</b>	<b>76-74</b>	<b>73-70</b>	<b>69-67</b>	<b>66-64</b>	<b>63-60</b>	<b>59-0</b>

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### **LATE WORK**

All projects, reading responses etc. must be completed on time for full credit. Specific due dates are stated on each project sheet and are announced in class. Critiques may be rescheduled for a drop in letter grade for the project.

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### **CLASS COMMUNICATIONS**

Students must check their school email accounts and Canvas shell regularly. Students are responsible for any information, deadlines, and updates that are emailed to the webmail or sent through the Canvas.

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### **COURSE EVALUATIONS**

We will complete our course evaluation on the last day of class – Tuesday, April 23rd. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals.

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**STATEMENT OF DIVERSITY**

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that I can make arrangements for you.

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**COVID INFO + RESOURCES****Weekly Screening**

To better monitor the spread of COVID-19 within our community, we ask all students and employees to complete a brief weekly symptom screening questionnaire as part of the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect initiative. Screening is a quick and easy way to link the UF community to resources available to combat COVID-19 spread.

Complete your screening today by following these steps:

Log in to [ONE.UF \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Locate the "UF Health COVID-19 Screening" card

Click on the screening questionnaire link

Complete the questionnaire and if appropriate schedule a test

Students and employees are asked to complete a UF Health Screen, Test & Protect COVID-19 Weekly Screening Questionnaire every week. Remember, if you are sick, stay home, self-quarantine, and visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps and to schedule your test in the first available time slot. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect <https://coronavirus.ufhealth.org/screen-test-protect-2/>

**FACEMASK POLICY**

Our face-covering policy has been revised: Effective immediately, face coverings are now required outdoors on UF and UF Health property unless a physical distance of 6 feet or more is maintained at all times. The full policy is available below. Please also see [coronavirus.ufl.edu](https://coronavirus.ufl.edu) for more information.



**UF Masking and Physical Distancing Policy**

All visitors, faculty, staff, students, patients, volunteers and vendors are required to wear a mask or cloth face covering when in UF and UF Health facilities, with an exception for children less than 2 years old. If two or more people are within 6 feet of each other outdoors they must wear a mask or cloth face covering. Masks with exhalation valves or vents allow air to be expelled and are prohibited because they do not provide protection to others. In addition, neck gaiters and bandanas should not be worn unless no other face covering is available.

Face coverings are to be worn in all classrooms, in patient care areas and when in public/common areas, including lobbies, conference rooms, elevators, stairwells, bathrooms and lounges. Face coverings are also required on employee and visitor shuttles, and on RTS buses.

Exceptions include when in private offices, private workspaces with adequate physical barriers, and well-ventilated outdoor spaces where appropriate physical distancing of 6 feet or more can be maintained. All visitors, faculty, staff, students, patients, volunteers and vendors are required to wear a face covering when outside on all UF and UF Health property unless a distance of 6 feet or more is maintained at all times.

**UNIVERSITY AND SA+AH RESOURCES AND POLICIES: SA+AH HEALTH & SAFETY**

<https://arts.ufl.edu/academics/art-and-art-history/health-safety> UF Grades

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

**DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOR**

Be advised that you can and will be dismissed from class if you engage in disruptive behavior. Students who intentionally act to impair, interfere with, or obstruct the mission, purposes, order, operations, processes, and functions of the University shall be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. The Dean of Students Office: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/>

**ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

## CAMPUS RESOURCES

### Health and Wellness

\* **U Matter, We Care:** If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

\* **Counseling and Wellness Center:** <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

\* **Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)** Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

\* **University Police Department**, 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

<http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

### Academic Resources:

\* **E-learning technical support**, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learningsupport@ufl.edu](mailto:Learningsupport@ufl.edu). <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

\* **Career Connections Center**, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <https://career.ufl.edu/> Rev (Thursday, August 27, 2020)

\* **Library Support**, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.