

Three Rivers Community College  
Digital Photography  
GRA\* K131 - T01  
CRN [10614](#)  
Friday 8:00 – 10:45 a.m.  
Ben Lifson (email [benlifson@yahoo.com](mailto:benlifson@yahoo.com))

Syllabus Spring Semester, 2010

Textbook: *A Short Course in Digital Photography*, Barbara London & Jim Stone  
(*Hereafter: TB*)

**Please turn in the weekly assignments either a) on a CD (with your last name on it) or b) as a Zip file attached to an email or sent by a file-transfer program. A good one, which is also free, is You Send It, at [www.yousendit.com](http://www.yousendit.com)**

**If you elect b), please put your last name in the Zip file title.**

**Also, please label each assignment's individual pictures according to the assignment itself. As for the technical exercise pictures, please label the pictures according to the technique involved.**

**For example, for the Figure Group assignment, please label as follows: "Figure Group 1, Figure Group 2..." etc. For the Focal Length assignment, "Focal Length Wide Angle", "Focal Length Telephoto).**

**For Photoshop assignments in which you make adjustments, i.e. have a "Before" and "After" picture, please include "Before " and "After in the picture titles, e.g. "Curves Before" "Curves After"**

**I will have to return improperly labeled assignments and ask you to re-label and re-submit them.**

**I regret to say that I can't accept assignments on flash (or thumb) drives.**

## **THE FINAL PROJECT**

**On July 7, the last class, you will submit, on CD, or by Internet, a portfolio of 12 (minimum) to 20 (maximum) photographs on a subject you have identified for yourself via your prior exploration of subject matter.**

**The photographs should be finished as far as you can take them using the Photoshop techniques and adjustments we will study in class..**

**Part of your grade will depend on your having made adjustments to the best of your ability.**

**The point is to have the idea of the good picture and to work toward it. It's the effort that will affect your grade more than will the result. (Mastery of a craft is a life-long undertaking.)**

**So you will also submit a "Before" portfolio of the same 12-20 pictures as they were before you made any adjustments: i.e., exactly as they came out of the camera.**

**Due on June 21, by CD or Internet, some of the raw material for this portfolio, including, 1) certainly, the pictures beginning with the first "New Subject Matter" assignment that have given you the idea for this project, and, 2) if possible, a few pictures you already think will make the final cut.**

**Each week, submit via CD the project in progress. I will respond by email over the weekend with advice and suggestions for final pictures.**

## **SYLLABUS WITH ASSIGNMENTS**

May 27 Introduction to the Course. Basic Camera Facts: Shutter Speed, Aperture, Focal Length, Depth of Field  
Introduction to Figure Groups.

May 31 MEMORIAL DAY: NO CLASS

### **Interruption for Surgery**

June 9 In Class:

Technical Component: Review of Camera Controls: Textbook pp. 14-16; 18-25; 29-37; 40-45

Photography Component: Review of Figure Group

Assignments, Due June 14

Technical Component: Repeat of Camera Exercises 1: Due June 14

Using the controls for Shutter Speed and Aperture, choose a number of subjects.

Photograph subject 1 twice in order to create a) deep and b) shallow depth of field.

With Subject 2 – which should be a subject in motion – photograph it twice, first to create a) a picture in which everything in it is still, and second, b) a picture in which part or all of the subject is blurred (has what is technically called “motion blur”).

Photograph Subject 3 twice, to create a) a still picture and b) a picture which is blurred not because the subject moved but because the camera shook or moved during the exposure.

Camera Exercises 2:

Choose another subject and photograph it twice, a) with your zoom lens set at its longest focal length (most telephoto) and b) at its shortest focal length (most wide angle)

The above exercises should take only a few minutes, total.

Photography Assignment: Figure Groups, Assignment 2: 50 pictures showing figure groups created by yourself as a consequence of your vantage point(s) on the subject..

June 14

In Class:

Technical Component: Introduction to Photoshop TB pp 88-93; 100-101: Levels and Curves

Photography Component: Introduction to the Bottom Edge

Assignment Due June 16:

Technical Component: Photoshop Exercises: Choose 2 photographs from the earlier Figure Group Assignment. Adjust Picture 1 using Levels. Adjust Picture 2 using Curves. For each adjustment, submit a “before” and “after” picture.

Photography Assignment (50 pictures): Continue with Figure Groups, in light of class review and my comments on your first two sets, adding now further control over them by use of the placement of the bottom edge of the frame. But don't make all 50 pictures those of figure groups. Add to this subject the subjects of landscapes, architecture, interiors, still-lives (objects of everyday life), streets, roads, automobiles, rivers, etc. *For all of these, make deliberate variations in the use of the bottom edge. An ideal approach to this assignment is to photograph each figure group, landscape, building, toy, etc. several times, with the bottom edge in a different place each time.*

June 16

In Class:

Technical Component: Introduction to More Photoshop Adjustments: pp. 94-97, 100-101 Plus **Contrast, Saturation and Selective Color.**

Photography Component: New Subject Matter and All Four Edges

Assignments Due June 21:

Technical Component: Choose 4 photographs from earlier photography assignments. Using Photoshop, Adjust the whole of Photograph 1 (global adjustment) using the Contrast control Adjust Photograph 2 Using the Saturation control Adjust Photograph 3 using the Selective Color control. Adjust Photograph 4 using

Sharpening Techniques (p. 100) In each case submit a “before” and “after” photograph.

Photography Component: 50 Pictures exploring New Subject Matter and the use of the picture’s 4 edges. As you go from one new subject to another, use the vertical edges to create fragments of people and things at the sides of the picture. Use the top edge to create the shape of the sky or of a ceiling and to create the height of things like trees, poles, etc. in the picture (using the top edge, a very tall tree in nature can become a very short tree in a picture).. Experiment with tilting the horizon and with putting the horizon at different heights within the picture.

**The exploration of subject matter can also lead to your choice of subject for your final portfolio, due the last day of class.**

However, you don’t have to choose the portfolio’s subject from these 50 pictures. If you already have a subject in mind, or a range of subjects, this is perfectly acceptable. But vigorous engagement with this assignment can lead you to discoveries of what you’re really noticing in life, discoveries of things that are truly your subject matter, things that will make your portfolio personal to yourself and in certain ways original work.

June 21

In Class

Technical Component: Adjusting Part of an Image, TB pp. 94-95 and **The Edit/Fill Process as explained and demonstrated in class.**

Photography Component: Composition: Explanation and Demonstration

Assignments, Due June 23

Technical Component: Adjusting Part of an Image

Choose 1 picture from current and past assignments. Following the textbook’s techniques and explanation and the **Edit/Fill Process**, make an four adjustments, each one of a different one part of the image. Make the adjustments via a) levels, b) contrast, c) saturation and d) selective color.. For each adjustment, submit a “before” and “after” version. Then combine these four adjustments into the same picture – i.e. a single picture with all four parts adjusted. Again, submit a “before” and “after” picture.

Photography Component: 50 Pictures. Continue the exploration of subject matter, controlled by the use of all four edges and, when possible, informed by the use of figure groups. Add to these concerns an emphasis on composition.

If you have already chosen the subject for your portfolio, this assignment should be the first sustained work on it. If you haven't, please use the assignment as a means of helping you choose your final portfolio subject matter.

June 23

In Class

Technical Component: Layers and Layer Masks p 96

Photography Component: The Final Portfolio, via critiques of student work in progress

Assignments Due June 28

Technical Component: Choosing a picture from your Subject Matter and/or Portfolio work, and following the book's explanation, experiment with making adjustments layer by layer. Make a duplicate image and perform the same adjustment on each. At the end, *flatten one of the pictures* – “Layers” menu at top, “Flatten Image” at bottom of drop down menu. Compare the difference between the two with respect to removing changes.

Photography Component: Final Portfolio Work in Progress 50 new pictures to add to those from which you will choose the final portfolio.

June 28

In Class:

Technical Component: Exposure, TB pp. 68-73 Concepts and techniques of exposure with emphasis on Dynamic Range.

Photography Component: Critique of portfolio work-in-progress with guidelines to be taken – as student work indicates – from important examples of 19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>-century photography.

Assignments, Due June 30

Technical component: Choose lighting situations similar to those outlined in the Textbook, pp. 68-73. Photograph under low light,

and in extremely bright situations, applying techniques as outlined in pp. 68-73.

Photography Component: Continued work on portfolio (50 new pictures)

June 30

In Class:

Technical Component: Sharpening TB pp. 100-101

Photography Component: How to Select the Final Portfolio. Using student work-in-progress, a discussion of various ways to narrow down the many pictures already taken into a coherent, unified portfolio of 12 – 20 pictures.

In addition, continued on-going critique of final portfolio work, with new aspects of the visual construction of pictures added as student work begins to involve them

Assignments, Due July 5

Technical Component: Sharpening. From previous assignments and/or portfolio work, find pictures which could be improved by their being sharper. These can include pictures taken at wide apertures, which have out-of-focus passages; or even pictures that are over-all slightly out of focus; or even pictures with some blur. Use these to explore the sharpening techniques as outlined and explained on p. 100.

Photography: The first (provisional) selection of the portfolio. A folder of 12-20 pictures, together with a single folder now, containing all the rejects.

July 5

In Class

Technical Component: Review of technical matters, camera and/or Photoshop, according to student questions.

Photography Component: Continued work on how to select final project, and on this day's new 50 pictures for the final project.

Assignments, Due 7 July

Final Project Due by CD or Internet. 12-20 pictures unified by theme or technique or both or indeed some other principle.