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# Digital Photography Fundamentals for Better Pictures

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## OSHER 575-002

**Dates:** Tuesdays, 4/07/15 - 5/12/15

**Times:** 5:15 PM - 6:45 PM

**Location:** Commander's House, Fort Douglas

**Instructor:** Thomas J. Sevcik

### Course Overview

**Course prerequisites.** Ownership of any point-and-shoot or DSLR camera. Knowledge of some of the basic camera functions helpful. Some knowledge of printing from a computer or use of PictBridge is helpful, but not necessary.

Welcome to, "Digital Photography Fundamentals for Better Pictures." I'm your instructor, Tom Sevcik, and we'll be together on Tuesdays for the next six weeks. In this course, we'll come together to help you learn to expand your capability of determining when to use your camera on "auto," or "manual." Also, we'll explore the principles of color, composition, exposure and what equipment to take on a trip to the ocean or mountains. By expanding your knowledge and awareness of the principles of the photographic processes, you'll look at your subjects from different points of view before pressing that shutter button.

**Course theme:** One of my favorite piece of advice for aspiring photographers is;

**Persist... Adapt... Improve... Then rise and repeat**

*...David Strick*

### Course Objectives/Learning Objectives

Through this course, students will learn to advance their digital photographic skills through class lectures, demonstrations, hands-on training, and a field trip followed by a group critique.

Students will learn the following:

- Understanding light and color and how color harmonies play a role in photography
- Factors to think about when composing photos and the "rule of thirds"
- Using a color card, light meter or ExpoDisc for color balance
- The role of megapixels in print quality
- Using automatic exposure bracketing
- Using the back-button focusing technique
- Shooting snowy day portraits or landscapes
- Setting aperture or shutter priority and exposure compensation
- Photographing bugs and insects

- Star and satellite photography
- Reading the histogram
- Use of extension tubes or close-up lenses
- Use of framing materials in mounting photographs for display

**Course supplies:**

- A digital point-and-shoot or Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) or mirrorless DSLR.
- One SD or CF memory card with at least 8 GB of storage.  
*(Note; instructor will supply card reader for the purpose of displaying any student photos)*
- One open-back wood frame, mat material *(or a pre-cut mat)*, glass to fit frame and wire-hanging hardware.  
*(Note; students will not be required to mount a picture in the last session, but at least observe)*

**Schedule:**

<u>Session</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Coursework</u>
Session 1	Course overview	Instructor +student introductions. Understanding light and color. Applying composition.
Session 2	Reviewing camera basics <i>(students bring cameras to class)</i>	Study of student’s cameras and instruction on the use of various functions. Use of color card and light meters. Reading the histogram. Using the priority modes.
Session 3	Reviewing camera basics <i>(students bring cameras to class)</i>	Photographing bugs, insects, etc with extension tubes or close-up lenses (classroom hands-on). Shooting stars and satellites at night. Megapixels and photo quality. Tripods and field essentials.

Session 4	Field trip	<u>To Be Announced</u> Students will need to bring their camera. Tripod, filters, extra lenses is up to the individual.
Session 5	Critique and Editing	Students bring SD or CF cards or a photo from the field trip for critique session. Editing. How to resize, crop, add filters, simple b & w conversions, adding sharpness.
Session 6	Mounting Photos	Students will learn how to cut mats, use a point driver and seal photos for protection from the elements that could shorten the life of a photo. They will also apply the wire-hanging method for fail-safe wall hanging.

***Suggested readings:***

- How Digital Photography Works**, by Ron White, 2006, QUE press, ISBN 0-7897-3309-9  
**Plateau Light**, by David Muench, 2011, Graphic Arts BOOKS, ISBN-13 978-1-55868-855-1  
**Mat, Mount and Frame It Yourself**, by M. David Logan, 2002, Watson-Guptill Publishing, ISBN 0-8230-3038-5  
**Advanced Digital Black & White Photography**, by John Beardsworth, 2007, Lark Books, ISBN 13 978-1-60059-210-2  
**PC Photo Digital SLR Handbook**, by Rob Sheppard, 2005, Lark Books, ISBN 13 978-1-57990-602-3  
**Mastering Photographic Composition, Creativity, and Personal Style**, Alain Briot, 2009, Rocky Nook Inc., ISBN 978-1-933952-22-2

In the context of this course there will be an emphasis on shooting. Students are encouraged to bring their memory cards and/or print to any class for critique. Consequently, do not use web downloads, “clip art” or “clip photography.” Work created with such images will not be accepted for evaluation. While no specific photographic topic will be assigned, students are encouraged to shoot their favorite subjects with the following in mind.

## Evaluation 'Criteria' for “Creative Work:”

**1– the relationship between content and form:** Is the image a work of art?

How does the idea that serves as the point of origin for the image influence the selection of materials and processes for execution? How does the meaning of the work and its construction interrelate?

**2-experimentation:** Have we seen this before?

What risks, in terms of challenges to convention or experimentation with materials, were taken to arrive at the final form of the work? Does the work surprise the viewer in terms of correspondences between content and form? Are there new combinations of familiar methods, materials, and visual approaches to design?

**3-presentation:** Are we convinced?

Considering the limitations of the classes, what kind of care and attention was devoted to the creation of the photographs/images? If the project was less ambitious in terms of scale and execution, perhaps a series of images will best demonstrate the overall intention of the artist in terms of concept.

**4-concept:** What's the idea?

The concept in forming the creation of the final project may be complex and multi-faceted. Photographic work may be more conceptual and less dependent upon traditional aesthetic criteria for evaluation.