

BCB Spring Semester 2021

FA106 Beginners Black and White Photography

Seminar Leader: April Gertler

Course Time: Fridays: 2 - 5.15pm

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Office Hours: by appointment - Fridays: 1 - 2pm

Course Description

Using the backdrop of Berlin, this class will explore the history of photography by Berlin based photographers while learning how to use a manual camera and also finding one's way around an analogue darkroom through acquiring the techniques of printing black and white photographs.

This class is designed for beginning photography students interested in learning to effectively use photography as a means for self-expression or cultural comment. Course structure is based on the assumption that students are coming into the class with little to no experience. Mastery of basic skills and conceptual principles is key to the student's success. This class aims to provide students with a rigorous training in the mechanics of the 35mm camera, darkroom technique (photographic printing), basic composition and photographic history. We will also explore critical issues surrounding photography as artistic medium, and cultural product through selected readings, presentations made by students and class discussions. Though technical skills are stressed in this course, image content is equally important.

Requirements

Students are expected to:

- Turn off phones during class unless otherwise asked to.
- Use the designated printing times given to each student at the beginning of the semester. If the time is not used, please contact the Professor.
- Be prepared to present artworks / assignments / presentations without reminder.
- Engage in critiques and discussions.
- Initiate appointments with the Professor or arts staff outside of class time when assistance is necessary.
- Always allocate extra time for work preparation and clean-up for independent production.
- Respond to emails and/or text messages from the Professor in a timely manner.
- Inform Professor at beginning of semester if photos of student, artwork, works in progress are NOT to be taken and / or used for Bard College Berlin.
- Remove all artworks, art materials, and any personal belongings before the final inspection of the arts spaces during completion week. Failure to remove works and / or clean spaces used will result in final grade penalization. Donating artworks or art

materials (unrequested) at anytime is not permitted and will still be considered student's property that will be expected to be uninstalled and removed.

- Students are expected to purchase 36 exposure Black and White film and photographic paper as needed for class assignments.

Attendance and Special considerations for Spring 2021:

Some students might need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic. In addition, all students and instructors must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill. Instructors should make efforts to offer alternatives to in-person attendance where needed, including remote participation or asynchronous options.

- Attendance of ALL classes is expected.
- More than one absence (that is, absence from one three-hour session per week) in a semester will affect the participation grade for the course.
- Students are expected to attend all off-campus classes punctually, from start to finish. If there is a scheduling/travel conflict, the Professor must be informed in advance.
- Tardiness after five minutes will be considered an absence unless the Professor is contacted at least 1/2 an hour before class.

Policy on Late Submission of Artworks / Presentations

Assignments (artworks, essays, oral presentations) that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (Example: B+ becomes C+). Professor is not obliged to accept assignments that are more than 24 hours late. Where the Professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it must be submitted within two weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C.

Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Grade Breakdown

This class is based on the simple principle of doing the best you can in class.

That means; handing your work in on time, coming to class on time, participating in class and cleaning / maintaining the darkroom and finally, being prepared and ready when in class.

John Cage, the artist, wrote a very apt list titled:

10 RULES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS.

I follow this list quite closely.

Rule Number 7 says; The only rule is work. If you work it will lead to something. It is the people who do all the work all the time who eventually catch to things.

You can fool the fans — but not the players.

Keep this in mind during this class.

Here is a breakdown of percentages for each component listed

50% work on time

40% cleaning / maintaining darkroom

30% coming to class on time

30% participating in class

... that's 150%.

In fact, that's what I want you to give to this class.

Assessment

Students are also assessed on their ability to work independently and responsibly. They will be graded on their ability to communicate with the Professor as well as amongst themselves. This also includes their ambition to create artworks as well as their willingness to budget their time for all requirements connected to this class. This assessment also includes preparation, production, and cleaning up of spaces used at P98 at Bard College Berlin.

Anticipated Costs for this Class

Each student will be expected to purchase their own film and paper for this class. We suggest buying materials with other students - it's cheaper!

Materials list

400 ASA film (or you can also try a 125 ASA film speed as well) : €4 - €7 per roll

- buying film in bulk (blocks of 10 rolls) can be cheaper

Binder or folder to keep your negatives organized and clean!

Film suggestions (all prices based on Fotolmpex prices)

FOTOIMPEX* CHM 400 "Kleinbildfilm" 135/36 = €4.15 (*only at Fotolmpex)

ILFORD Delta 400ASA 135/36 = €5.95

KODAK TRI-X 400ASA 135/36 = €6.09

ROLLEI RPX 400 135-36 = €5.25

Paper suggestions:

Most important: MULTIGRADE/Variable paper! RC (resin coated!)

Paper surfaces: Hochglänzend (high gloss), Seidenmatt (silky matt), Pearl (pearl), Matt (matt)

Paper brands: 1st 2 are cheaper: FOMA Fomaspeed, ADOX Easy Print RC 311, Ilford

Paper size: 18 x 24cm (a little bit smaller) or 24 x 30cm (a little bit bigger)

If you don't want to process your film yourself, here is a list of labs:

(All of these labs also sell black and white film)

Viertel vor 8 (<https://vv8.de>), Pappelallee 7/8, 10437 Berlin (nr. M1 / U2 Eberswalderstr.)

Opening times: Mon - Fri: 10 - 7pm

Jetfoto, Dircksenstraße 89, 10178 Berlin (nr. Alexanderplatz)

Opening times: Mon - Fri: 9 - 8pm, Sat 11 - 8pm

Pixel Grain, Rosenstraße 17, 10178 Berlin (nr. Alexanderplatz)

Opening times: Mon - Fri: 10 - 7pm, Sunday 2 - 7pm

Das Foto, Dietzgenstraße 39, 13156 Berlin (10 min walk from P98)

Opening times: Mon - Fri: 9.30 - 6.30pm, Sat: 9.30 - 12.30pm

Safelight Berlin, Tegeler Str. 34, 13353 Berlin (nr. U9 Amrumer Straße & (U6) Leopold Platz)

Opening times: Tue - Sat: 10 - 4pm

Photo stores:

FOTOIMPEX, www.fotoimpex.de

Alte Schönhauser Str. 32b, 10119 Berlin-Mitte (U2 Weinmeister Str. - south exit)

Opening times: Mon - Sat: 12.00 – 20.00h

Safelight Berlin, www.safelightberlin.com

Tegeler Str. 34, 13353 Berlin (U9 Amrumer Straße & (U6) Leopold Platz, Bus 221)

Opening times: Tues- Sat: 10 - 4pm

Fotopioniere, www.fotopioniere.com (they give a 5% student discount with your student ID)

Karl-Marx-Allee 87, 10243 Berlin-Friedrichshain, (U5 Strausberger Platz or Weberwiese)

Opening times: Mon - Fri: 11.00 - 20.00h, Sat. 11.00 - 18.00h

Calumet Photographic Berlin, www.calumetphoto.de

Bertha-Benz-Straße 5, 10557 Berlin (nr. Hauptbahnhof)

Opening times: Mon: 9 - 7pm, Tues - Fri: 10 - 7pm, Sat: 10 - 6pm

Online:

FOTOIMPEX, www.fotoimpex.de

CALUMET, <https://www.calumetphoto.de/category/schwarz-weiss-filme>

Recipes for Developing Film:

FilmDev.: <https://filmdev.org>

SPRING 2021 WEEKLY SCHEDULE*

*There may be adjustments to the timing of assignments as course progresses. All students will be informed of any new expectations and/or deadlines. It is the sole responsible of each student to be in charge of getting their own film developed at the lab close to campus:

Please plan accordingly: this class requires a minimum of 6 - 10 hours for weekly print assignments.

February 5: Week 1

Introductions, expectations, and rules. Assignment of printing times in the darkroom.

Introduction to the darkroom.

February 12: Week 2 - In class shooting assignment and film processing demo

Cameras and Starter Kit handed out

Tutorial on how to use an analogue camera and film processing demo.

Assignment #1 due FEBRUARY 18 - Negatives:

Work in pairs — Shoot one roll of film during class!

Fill in documentation form for each shot taken, starting with frame number 36/37 which must be included when you submit your assignment.

Assignment #1 should include :

- A. Processed negatives
- B. Filled in log sheet of each frame.

February 19: Week 3

Assignment #1 due!

Tutorial on how to use an enlarger.

Demo: Make a contact sheet and if we have time, make a print

Assignment #2 due 26 February:

Three (3!) prints are due! The prints should include the following: a bracketed image, one should be a panning shot, one should shallow depth of field and one should include everything in focus) from the film you have shot so far (2 rolls)

1. Copies of all of your test stripes for each image you have printed
2. Your name and all relevant information about printing (exposure time, F-stop of your lens at enlarger station) **MUST BE WRITTEN** on the back of your print with PENCIL

February 20 - Saturday Class - 6 hour processing and printing workshop

Meeting at BCB from 10 - 5pm in 2 groups: 10 - 1pm and 2 - 5pm

We will be doing in-depth printing and processing film, a morning shooting assignment and afternoon processing

Demo: Make a contact sheet and a print

February 26: Week 4

TWO TESTS in class on camera functionality and the darkroom!

Bring 3 prints to class and your processed roll of film to discuss printing issues

How to critique a print.

Assignments #2 is due in class.

Critique day - How to critique a photograph? What to look for? How can composition be analyzed? How do we analyze the technical elements of a print?

Introduction of Section 1: Portraiture.

SECTION 1: PORTRAITURE

Portraiture Assignment is due 12 March:

Assignment #3: Shoot 3 rolls of film of 6 different people and one of those people has to be YOU!

Focus on portraying each person the best way you can. Print 1 print from each sitting.

Six (6) prints will be due on in class. This is the breakdown:

One (1) print will be recreating an image you receive from a classmate.

One (1) print has to be a self-portrait.

One (1) print has to be of a person you don't know - please get as close as possible.

Two (2) prints have to be of two different people (head to waist).

One (1) prints have ben of two different people (full body).

In class portraiture discussion and presentations.

Assignment of photographic artist to each student for slide show presentations : March 12.

Each student will do a **presentation** of a photographer who has been assigned to them.

Bring to class 2 portraits for your final assignment; discussion on printing and processing

March 5: Week 5

IN SEARCH OF THE MIRACULOUS: A PHOTOGRAPHY WALK (Meeting point TBD)

MEETING OFF CAMPUS FOR A WALK THROUGH THE CITY.

The walk will look at some of the rich photographic history of Berlin.

Assignment #2 due March 12; Bring 6 digital prints of casual portraits you have made with your phone. Print them at DM or Rossmann near you and make sure the images have been **converted to black and white!**

March 12: Week 6

Due today: 6 digital prints and presentation

What is a portrait? How can lights be used? Does the whole body need to be shown for a portrait to be successful? How can you convey someone's personality through a portrait?

Each student **presents a photographer** who specializes in Portraiture to the class - the photographer will be assigned to each student.

March 13: Saturday Class! - 6 hour processing and printing workshop

Meeting at BCB from 10 - 5pm in 2 groups: 10 - 1pm and 2 - 5pm

We will be doing in-depth printing today!

March 19: Week 7 - PORTRAITURE

Assignments #3 is due in class.

Critique day - How to critique a photograph? What to look for? How can composition be analyzed? How do we analyze the technical elements of a print?

Assignment of photographers for presentations by each student for April 9.

NO CLASS DUE TO SPRING BREAK: 29 March - 2 April

Assignment #4 - Spring break off-campus assignment - due April 9

Please visit a photography exhibition in Berlin or somewhere else on your travels if you leave Berlin for Spring Break. Write a one to two page review/critique of the show.

This is a two part assignment; paper and presentation on the show you saw.

Things to include in your paper:

- + Entrance ticket or pamphlet proving that you saw the exhibition in person
- + Brief Biographical history of the photographer
- + Explanation of the work that was being exhibited
- + Description of the place where the work was exhibited?

(Was the space a project space, gallery, museum, Kunsthalle, etc)

- + Was the work for sale? How much was it? Was the work part of an edition?
How big was the edition?
- + Did you like the work? Did it remind you of other works you have seen? Explain.

Please be prepared to present your paper to the class with 10 images of the exhibition and support images by the artist on April 9.

March 26: Week 7 - Sets, Stories and Situations

In class discussion of SETS, STORIES AND SITUATIONS.

In class printing.

SECTION 2: SETS, STORIES AND SITUATIONS

Spring Break Assignment #4 is due today

Assignment #5 is due

Assignment #5: Shoot 4 rolls of film at a minimum of **6 different locations**.

Focus on portraying various types of street scenes.

Four (4) of the prints you submit must include people.

A total of 8 prints are due.

April 9: Week 8 - Sets, Stories and Situations

Bring to class 2 portraits for your final assignment; discussion on printing and processing

April 16: Week 9 - Sets, Stories and Situations

Assignment #5 due at the beginning of class.

Bring the eight (8) prints to class: prints should be spotted, dodged/burned and printed with perfect borders

Assignment of photographers for presentations by each student for April 30.

April 23: Saturday afternoon/early evening

Meet up to do a night photography workshop together.

4.30 - 7pm - Meet at P98

Be prepared to walk a lot! Bring your camera and 2 rolls of film.

SECTION 3: STREET PHOTOGRAPHY

April 30: Week 10 — Street photography

Assignment #6 due on

Assignment must include:

Eight (8) images of street photography.

Four (4) have to be with people.

Two (2) images without people.

Two (2) images from the night shoot we did together.

A total of eight (8) images are due.

Each student will do a **presentation** of a photographer that is assigned to them.
Discussion on composition in street photography.
Slide show of photographers from Europe and Berlin who work with Street Photography.

May 7: Week 11

Continuation of discussion on street photography.
Bring four (4) of the eight (8) street images to class for discussion.
Talk about and choose images for 2D departmental Zine to come out for Open Studios.

May 14: Week 12 : Open Studio Exhibition Week

Assignment #6 due today.

May 21: Completion Week - final meet up to clean darkroom thoroughly

Should only take an hour or less!

[Although] you are needed to be there [in class] to get grades or pass the course — [more importantly] you are needed to help make the class. So the structure is there for you and you also are the structure; your particular gifts help shape it [the class].

— Amended statement from Corita Kent

Photo Darkroom Facilities

Platanenstrasse 98

** Guidelines given during orientation

Facility Policies: The Factory – Eichenstrasse 43

- 1) The BCB "Factory" (main arts building) has space and facilities available to BCB students with an academic purpose for using the building. Any space in the building, private or shared, cannot be used unless permission has been granted. Any questions relating to this must be addressed to the Director of Studios Arts.
- 2) Chip access to the building will only be granted to those students currently registered for classes using the factory (after add-drop), and that have been offered orientation.
- 3) No smoking is allowed anywhere inside the building. There are to be no projects using open flames (such as candles, torches, lanterns, fireworks, etc.) inside any part of the building.
- 4) Fire exits and lanes (black-taped areas) must be kept clear of any obstructions.
- 5) No spray-painting inside of the building. This also includes any strong, odorous materials (with or without spray). All production involving odorous material is to be done outside the building.
- 6) All work surfaces (table and floor) must always be protected with thick plastic or cardboard. If production is to happen outside, ground / concrete is also to be protected.
- 7) Food must be always cleaned up and removed immediately. Any food used for an art project requiring refrigeration must be labeled with one's name, and disposed of after presentation. All food must be disposed of in lidded trash cans.
- 8) All students are to always be respectful of other student artworks and personal property.
- 9) No art projects may function as weapons, or potentially cause bodily harm.
- 10) No sandals, flip-flops, or bare feet will be allowed inside or around the workshop areas, which includes walking through the workshop. This includes dance and theater students as well.
- 11) Students should always wear adequate protection (goggles, gloves, dust masks, etc.) when needed. BCB will always try to provide these items.
- 12) If you are uncertain how to use a tool or piece of equipment or require assistance, please ask for assistance (by appointment, if necessary).
- 13) Students must be aware of who else is working in the building after dark. Any curfews established by Bard College Berlin must be respected. Finishing production and cleaning up must happen before the curfew time.
- 14) Students must make sure all lights are turned off and doors are closed when leaving the building. No windows or doors are to be left opened or cracked. All electrical items must be unplugged when not in use.
- 15) Any unidentified property left in any common space is subject to either be taken or thrown out, without restitution. All private property **MUST** be labeled and stored in

its proper location.

- 16) All workshop items must be returned to the workshop when not in use.
- 17) Any items leaving the building without permission will be considered stolen, and access to the factory may be suspended for the rest of the semester. If an item must be borrowed for a purpose outside of the building, contact the arts staff, and be prepared to leave your Student ID as a deposit. Fines may be charged for late return.
- 18) All students must respect signage posted in the factory that may involve rules that are not mentioned in this document. This includes signage indicating reserved spaces where communal use is restricted.
- 19) There are to be no architectural changes to studios or any areas inside or outside of the building without first speaking with your Professor, Studio Arts Manager, or Director of Studio Arts. When repainting any walls that need restoration, please consult with arts staff beforehand.
- 20) During completion week, any space used by a student must be returned empty with clean walls and floors. All garbage must be bagged (or boxed) and properly disposed of. All students must accept the penalty of grades being affected and / or fines imposed if items are left (or renovations unfinished) by the inspection deadline.

1. Contact AV Manager: Janina Schabig with questions: j.schabig@berlin.bard.edu