

## **BCB FALL SEMESTER 2021**

### **FA106 Beginners Black and White Photography : The Slow Photo**

Seminar Leader: April Gertler

Course Time: Fridays: 9 - 12.15pm

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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.
- Use the designated and assigned printing times given to each student at the beginning of the semester.
- 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 penalisation. 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 throughout the semester

### **Attendance and Special considerations for Spring 2022:**

***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 via text or email.

### **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 and Sister Corita Kent, both artists, 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.

Although you are needed to be in class to get grades or pass the course — much more importantly you are needed to help make the class. The structure is there for you and you also are the structure; your contributions help shape the class.

Here is a breakdown of percentages for each component listed

50% handing work in 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)

> Surface choice is really up to you, although I would suggest starting with glossy

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 and better for contact sheets)

**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)**

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

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

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

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](http://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](http://www.safelightberlin.com)

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

Opening times: Tues- Sat: 10 - 4pm

Calumet Photographic Berlin, [www.calumetphoto.de](http://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](http://www.fotoimpex.de)

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

**Recipes for Developing Film:**

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

**SPRING 2022 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 4: Week 1

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

Introduction to the darkroom.

February 11: 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 18 Feb):**

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 18: 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 3 March):**

**Shoot 2 rolls of film.**

Three (3!) prints, plus contact sheets for each roll of film, are due on 3 March! 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 (3 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 19: Week 3 - **Saturday Class!** - Processing and printing workshop

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

February 25: 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 and 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!**

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**

**Assignment #3 Due March 25**

**Shoot 3 rolls of film of 7 different people and one of those people has to be YOU!**

Focus on portraying each person the best way you can.

**Seven (7) prints will be due on March 25 in class.**

This is the breakdown of prints:

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 as close up to someone as you can get.

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

One (1) print has to be of a person with their full body.

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

In class portraiture discussion and presentations. All portraits have to be of individual people, no couples.

**Presentation information:**

Assignment of photographic artist to each student for slide show presentations : March 10.

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

Presentation must include; short bio of the photographer, 10 slides of the photographer's work, your favourite image of theirs (if you have one) if you don't like their work, your least favourite image of their's - explain why during your presentation

March 4: Week 5

**Bring 2 Portrait prints to class for work in progress review for Assignment #3.**

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

March 11: Week 6

**Bring 2 Portrait prints to class for work in progress review for Assignment #3.**

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

March 18: Week 7

**Bring 3 Portrait prints to class for work in progress review for Assignment #3.**

March 25: Week 8

**Assignment #3\_Due Today**

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?

**PRESENTATION OF SECTION 2: SETS, STORIES AND SITUATIONS**

**Assignment #4 Due: April 28**

**Shoot 2 rolls of film at a minimum of:**

**6 different locations focusing on 2 or 3 situations or staged events that you create.**

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

**A total of eight (8) prints are due.**

Focus on portraying various types of street scenes or scenes (based on a story or situation that you set up) - this assignment is about staged photography.

From the MOMA website about this topic:

*Building and reflecting upon the legacy of early staged photography, many contemporary artists make their own elaborately structured photographs—with a twist. Their images are carefully constructed and meticulously photographed, but in ways that consciously reveal their artifice. By showing the ease with which images may be set-up or manipulated, these artists challenge the commonly held perception of photography as an objective medium.*

Some photographers to consider:

Laurie Simmons, Pierre et Gilles, Duane Michaels, Jon Henry, Robert Capa, Nikki S. Lee, Thomas Demand, Carrie Mae Weems and so many others

April 1: Week 9 - Sets, Stories and Situations

**Bring 3 prints to class for work in progress review for Assignment #4**

Each student **presents a photographer** who uses in Sets, Stories and Situations, to class today

April 8: Week 10 - Sets, Stories and Situations

**Bring 4 prints to class for work in progress review for Assignment #4**

Each student **presents a photographer** who uses in Sets, Stories and Situations, to class today

**SPRING BREAK: 11 April - 17 April**

**Spring Break Assignment #5: The Photo Sleuth**

**Due April 22!**

April 22: Week 11 - Sets, Stories and Situations

**Assignments #4 & #5: Due today!**

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

April 29: Week 12 - Collage in Book Form

**Assignment #6: May 13**

**6-8 Prints are due for this assignment!**

In-class book making and collaging workshop.

Bring to class all of your test strips, any old magazines or books you might have found on the street, and anything else, scraps of pieces of paper in different colors, product newsletters/magazines from REWE, or flyers that you might have found.

If you have pencils in a variety of colors or water colors, bring them to class! If you have ribbons or threads or small objects - bring them to class!

**PRESENTATION OF SECTION 3: Collage in Book Form**

A small collaged book will be made in class and we will go from there!

Details about this assignment are to come!

May 6: Week 13

**Bring 3 prints to class for work in progress review for Assignment #6!**

**Please bring your collaged book that you made on April 29 to class as well!**

**Your page for the ARTZINE is DUE TODAY via email.**

**That should include:**

**A4 format - portrait**

**Include an image or a collection of images**

**Your name and the image titles on the page you submit**

**The page should be scanned at 300dpi if possible, and saved and sent to me as a JPG:**

**a.gertler@berlin.bard.edu**

May 13: Week 14

**Assignment #6 Due Today!**

Final critique

May 14 + 15: Week 14 : YOUR EXHIBITION at WIRWIR Projektraum Berlin

We will discuss!

May 20: Week 15 : Completion Week

Final meet-up to clean darkroom thoroughly and do a print exchange!

Should only take an hour or less!



IMMACULATE HEART COLLEGE ART DEPARTMENT RULES

- Rule 1 FIND A PLACE YOU TRUST AND THEN TRY TRUSTING IT FOR A WHILE.
- Rule 2 GENERAL DUTIES OF A STUDENT:  
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR TEACHER.  
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS.
- Rule 3 GENERAL DUTIES OF A TEACHER:  
PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR STUDENTS.
- Rule 4 CONSIDER EVERYTHING AN EXPERIMENT.
- Rule 5 BE SELF DISCIPLINED. THIS MEANS FINDING SOMEONE WISE OR SMART AND CHOOSING TO FOLLOW THEM.  
TO BE DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A GOOD WAY.  
TO BE SELF DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A BETTER WAY.
- Rule 6 NOTHING IS A MISTAKE. THERE'S NO WIN AND NO FAIL. THERE'S ONLY MAKE.
- Rule 7 The only rule is work.  
IF YOU WORK IT WILL LEAD TO SOMETHING.  
IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO DO ALL OF THE WORK ALL THE TIME WHO EVENTUALLY CATCH ON TO THINGS.
- Rule 8 DON'T TRY TO CREATE AND ANALYSE AT THE SAME TIME. THEY'RE DIFFERENT PROCESSES.
- Rule 9 BE HAPPY WHENEVER YOU CAN MANAGE IT. ENJOY YOURSELF. IT'S LIGHTER THAN YOU THINK.
- Rule 10 "WE'RE BREAKING ALL OF THE RULES. EVEN OUR OWN RULES. AND HOW DO WE DO THAT? BY LEAVING PLENTY OF ROOM FOR X QUANTITIES." JOHN CAGE

HELPFUL HINTS: ALWAYS BE AROUND. COME OR GO TO EVERYTHING. ALWAYS GO TO CLASSES. READ ANYTHING YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON. LOOK AT MOVIES CAREFULLY, OFTEN. SAVE EVERYTHING-IT MIGHT COME IN HANDY LATER.  
THERE SHOULD BE NEW RULES NEXT WEEK.

## **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](mailto:j.schabig@berlin.bard.edu)**