

Syllabus - Introduction to Photography
ARTS 1410 501 SPRING 2026

CRN 80739

University of New Mexico Valencia

M/W 10:30AM - 1:00PM

Classroom VABS 111

Instructor: Anna Rotty

Pronouns: she/her

Email: arotty@unm.edu

Office Hours: Wed 9:30 - 10:30 AM, or by
appointment



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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course introduces the making of photographic images from a broad viewpoint to consider both as an art practice and as a cultural practice. The course covers technical information on camera use and functionality, composition and visual design, digital workflow and editing, professional functions of manipulating and enhancing images, and printing correctly and effectively. The historical and contemporary aspects of photography are also covered.

Through weekly assignments, lectures, demonstrations, and in-class critiques, you will be introduced to a variety of tools for creative exploration and expression in the medium. This is a digital course that does not include darkroom instruction, though we will explore some alternative analog processes. The course culminates in a final project that will require you to use your technical and conceptual knowledge to create a visually coherent group of images. You are expected to participate in every class session, and to devote on average 6 hours/week outside of class time to course work. Class time will be a combination of technical demonstrations, in class exercises and lab time, critiques, discussions of readings and photo history, and slide presentations, with the occasional field trip and visiting artist lecture. This class is time-intensive, and will require your consistent engagement, collaboration, and self-directed problem-solving. Critiques are an integral part of this course, where you will share your work and your ideas with each other in a thought-provoking and constructive environment.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Gain fluency with the camera and other photographic equipment, and software, in order to produce technically successful photographs.
- Have familiarity with current image-editing software to enhance images and develop a digital workflow for managing files.
- Gain an awareness of historical and contemporary issues in fine art photographic practices.
- Develop the ability to critically analyze and discuss photographic images.
- Maintain a safe and respectful environment for each person in the class to creatively explore their ideas through photography.
- Have fun!

CLASS EXPECTATIONS/STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence. - bell hooks

- **Classroom Respect:** Throughout the semester, I hope we will build a community of trust, respect and inspiration. Please be respectful of your peers by remaining present. I ask that each of us keep distractions to a minimum. No phones are to be used during class, unless the assignment requires you to. There will be short breaks during class where you will have the opportunity to use your phone, etc. I expect you to be present and engaged when both you and your peers are sharing work. Communication and participation is extremely important.
- **Computer Skills:** Students must have basic computer and file management skills for Mac Computers. Custom tutoring services are available through the Learning Commons and [PASOS](#).
- **UNM Email & Canvas Access:** All UNM-Valencia students are required to have a UNM Net ID which can be created by going to: <http://it.unm.edu/accounts/>. UNM Net ID will give you access to the computer labs on campus, UNM Canvas, and UNM Email. Make sure to update this information as your method of contact under personal information on Lobo Web.
- **Computer Lab Responsibility:** Please be advised that use of computer labs on UNM properties is governed by "Policy 2500: Acceptable Computer Use" which can be found at <http://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/2000/2500.html>. Food and drink are also prohibited in any computer lab.

PROJECTS:

You will turn in **five major projects** over the course of the semester. Some of these projects will be shorter and more technical in nature, while others will be more involved and conceptual. Each is designed to help you gain familiarity with the overall practice of photography both as a technical medium and as a conceptual, art-making *practice*.

Each project will conclude with in-class critiques. Work should be presented for critique in a professional manner (clean, scratch-free prints, well thought through images). Part of learning to make strong photographic images is understanding the diverse ways in which people see images and the underlying histories we each bring to looking at works of art. This process is best carried out through discussion. Failure to attend a critique results in a zero for that project. Attendance at critiques in this course is comparable to attendance at exams in lecture courses. It is imperative that you are present and participating fully both as the artist and viewer in critique. We are building a community where you help each other grow and that requires work and participation.

For your **Final Project, you will submit a written proposal** to me (Anna) in advance. You may choose to expand upon a previous project from this course. If you are not happy with a project/grade, you may re-submit a project later in the semester for consideration.

There will be a number of in-class assignments designed to help you with these various projects. These will be graded as part of in-class assignments & attendance/participation.

GRADING:

Grading is based on the effort and labor you put into the work. This means in *your own* work, and in your *participation and support* of each other. Good work doesn't happen in a vacuum and I believe that showing up, listening to each other and supporting each other is absolutely necessary in the art field.

I'll be asking you to participate in a compassionate learning community where we collaborate and create together. This will be accomplished by sharing your work with peers, offering feedback, and generally contributing to each other's growth. I will be using this labor-based approach to determine your final grade. That grade will not be a reflection of what I, or your classmates, think of the content of your work. Instead, the grade will be a reflection of your effort, participation, and communication throughout the course, and the learning growth that you demonstrate over the semester. My goal here is to value the labor you put into this course. I hope this structure encourages you to create art without the risk of academic consequences. If you show up to class on time, prepared, engaged, present, and eager to learn, take risks, communicate, allow yourself to fail and grow, you will do well in this course. I expect excellent participation, meaning being prepared and present. For more on Labor-Based Grading feel free to read [this site](#) or come talk to me.

Evaluation Breakdown:

Visualizing Sound/Photo Forage Projects - 5%

Narrative Project - 10%

Spaces and Places - 10%

Portraits and People Project - 10%

Final Project - 20%

Reading/Writing - 5%

In Class/HW Assignments - 20%

Participation/Attendance - 20%

A: Outstanding work that goes above and beyond expectations. Successfully fulfills the requirements of the assignment. Demonstrates superior technical skills and creativity. Constant active and thoughtful participation.

B: Meets the requirements of the assignment while demonstrating good (or improving) technique. Consistent participation.

C: Assignment meets minimum requirements but the technique is not entirely refined. Needs improvement. Low participation.

D: Less than satisfactory completion of the assignment. Work is below average or incomplete. No participation.

F: Failure to complete minimum expectations. No time or effort was put into the course.

ATTENDANCE/IN-CLASS EXERCISES:

Attendance is mandatory, and for the entire class time. On days that have them, completion of in-class exercises is required for your attendance as well. I will not inquire as to the reason for your absence, meaning there will be no distinction between excused/unexcused. After your **fifth** absence, you will lose a letter grade. I reserve the right to drop you from the course on your **sixth** absence. Tardiness of 15 minutes or more, or leaving class early will count as missing half a class. It is required for you to remain in class during lab days, unless we have a previous discussion. Bring material to investigate/edit/shoot/print etc during this time. Your success in this class is directly impacted by the effort you put in. If you show up and are engaged in the practice of photography you will succeed. Do not let attendance ruin your grade and experience! If you know you will need to miss a day, or something comes up unexpectedly, please *communicate* that with me before class time. I understand we are living in complicated times and unexpected illness/family issues can come up.

*In the event that you do miss a class, it is your responsibility to connect with another classmate to get caught up on any missed material. If you want to check in to review your progress you can always

schedule a time to discuss with me during office hours. My contact information is above. Communication is critical. We will cover a lot of information during class and I want everyone to succeed.

CANVAS:

We will be using Canvas as a part of the course. The *discussion* feature will be used as a space to communicate resources, share in-class assignments and ask questions. I will post project and exercise assignments and any readings in this location throughout the semester. Most assignments will also be turned in via Canvas for me to review.

Support for UNM Canvas: <https://canvasinfo.unm.edu/support/index.html>

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS:

A Digital Camera: A **digital** camera of 8 megapixels or more that allows you to manually control the shutter speed and aperture. This can be a **DSLR** or **mirrorless camera**, but no analogs or point-and-shoot please: **this is a digital photography class**. The lenses for these cameras detach, so if you are buying a new camera make sure it comes with a camera body AND a lens. If you already have a camera but are unsure about it, or if you are looking at purchasing one but you aren't sure if it's the right kind, **please email me a link to what you are thinking of purchasing** and I'll make sure it'll work for the course. Facebook Marketplace, Craigslist and eBay are great for cheaper, older digital cameras. I also recommend checking out the **used or pre-owned** cameras from [B&H](#), [KEH](#), or [Adorama](#).

*Tip: You can use your UNM email address to register for a Student account with these companies which will give you **discounts** on equipment!

A memory card for the camera, at least 2 GB. This sometimes comes with the camera, but please double-check! They'll be specific to your camera, but most will be an [SD card](#) like this one, but you may need a Compact Flash card.

An external hard drive: You will need **one** external hard drive of 100 Gigabytes or larger (Flash drives aren't big enough for the catalogs we'll be making). You will need a USB connecting cable to use it during class and whichever cable will work for your laptop if you use one at home. There are two kinds of external hard drives, SSD and HDD. SSD (Solid State Drives) are a little more expensive but are more durable because they have fewer moving parts. HDDs (Hard Disk Drives) are cheaper but are a little fragile.

**We use Mac computers in the classroom. Please make sure the external hard drive you purchase is Mac Compatible or Mac AND PC compatible if you use a PC at home.

Paper for printing our photos. Please order 50 sheets of Canon Pro Luster Paper. I recommend purchasing from B&H or Amazon. You can start with a pack of 50. Ink cost is covered through your course fee.

*Useful, but not required: **tripod, lens cleaning kit**

A note on borrowing cameras: We have a few cameras available for students to borrow. If you need to borrow one, speak with me and the lab manager to arrange. If you decide to borrow a camera from someone you know, please be aware that I will not accept late or incomplete assignments because the person you borrowed the camera from needed it back. A camera is a required material for this class, just as your other classes require textbooks, and you are expected to have access to a camera for the entire semester at all times. If you are having a hard time acquiring materials please speak with me to sort it out.

As a UNM Student you have access to **Adobe Creative Cloud:** [Register here](#).

[Adobe Creative Commons](#) is a resource center in Zimmerman Library at the Main campus that can help with Lightroom/Photoshop questions/data management etc. Check their website for updated hours.

Our printers are in the Maker Space and the contact for assistance is our Art Department Lab Tech Sophia Wasteneys - swasteneys@unm.edu.

SUPPORT INFORMATION, RESOURCES, & TUTORIALS

Computer & Internet Access:

Access to a computer, or similar device, and high-speed internet is required for this class. If you do not have access to a computer with high-speed internet you might be able to check out a laptop from the Valencia Campus Library or Main Campus Library. **There are also limited DSLR cameras and other equipment available for check-out from the VC library.** Contact the library directly to find out what's available.

Check for access to a computer and internet on campus and at other public resources:

- UNM Valencia Campus Computer Labs:

[Library Computers](#)

[The Learning Center Labs](#)

[UNM Albuquerque Main Campus Computer Labs](#)

UNM Valencia Online Tutoring Services:

Custom tutoring services are available through The UNM Learning Center at 925-8900 or <https://valencia.unm.edu/campus-resources/pasos/pasos-resource-center/tutoring/index.html>.

Email tutor@unm.edu to schedule an appointment. Consider scheduling an appointment with the Writing Center to help you with the writing assignments.

Online Tutorials:

Much of the content for this class is posted online as instructor-created PDF presentations and Adobe or third-party video tutorials. Students may also need, or want, to find additional tutorials on their own through YouTube and other sources. A wonderful resource for video tutorials is LinkedIn Learning (formerly Lynda.com). ALL of the LinkedIn Learning content can be accessed for FREE with an Albuquerque Public Library card and 4-digit pin number. To access LinkedIn Learning with an ABQ library card, go to: <https://www.lynda.com/portal/Patron?org=cabq.gov> Use library code: cabq

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Each student is expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in academic and professional matters. Any work presented under your name in class must be made by the student from initial idea to finished product during the duration of the class (Spring 2026). Any file or print made by anyone but the student will NOT be accepted; nor will work that was made prior to this class or for another class. Turning in the work of others as your own will result in an automatic failure of the course (a letter grade of F with academic dishonesty), forfeiture of all course fees and tuition paid without the possibility of withdrawal from the course, and possible suspension from the University. ARTS 1410, like all studio and academic classes, demands a commitment of time in order to perform successfully. No student should ever have another student's work in their possession without the consent of the artist, this applies to both digital files and prints. Since the monitors in the classroom and lab are shared, please remember to log out of your account when you leave. If you have any questions regarding appropriation vs. plagiarism please reach out to me to discuss.

Respectful and Responsible Learning: We all have shared responsibility for ensuring that learning occurs safely, honestly, and equitably. Submitting material as your own work that has been generated on a website, in a publication, by an artificial intelligence algorithm, by another person, or by breaking the rules of an assignment constitutes academic dishonesty. It is a student code of conduct violation that can lead to a disciplinary procedure. *Please ask me for help in finding the resources you need to be successful in this course. I can help you use study resources responsibly and effectively.* Off-campus paper writing

services, problem-checkers and services, websites, and AI can be incorrect or misleading. Learning the course material depends on completing and submitting your own work. UNM preserves and protects the integrity of the academic community through multiple policies including policies on student grievances (Faculty Handbook D175 and D176), academic dishonesty (FH D100), and respectful campus (FH CO9). These are in the *Student Pathfinder* (<https://pathfinder.unm.edu>) *Support: Many students have found that time management workshops or work with peer tutors can help them meet their goals. These and other resources are available through [Student Learning Support](#) at the Center for Teaching and Learning.

COVID-19 HEALTH & AWARENESS:

UNM is a mask friendly, but not a mask required, community. To be registered or employed at UNM, Students, faculty, and staff must all meet UNM's [Administrative Mandate on Required COVID-19 vaccination](#). If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, please do not come to class. If you have a positive COVID-19 test, please stay home for five days and isolate yourself from others, per the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) guidelines](#). If you do need to stay home, please communicate with me at arotty@unm.edu; I can work with you to provide alternatives for course participation and completion. UNM faculty and staff know that these are challenging times. Please let us know that you need support so that we can connect you to the right resources and please be aware that UNM will publish information on websites and email about any changes to our public health status and community response.

HARASSMENT:

UAP 2720 and 2740:

Our classroom and our university should always be spaces of mutual respect, kindness, and support, without fear of discrimination, harassment, or violence. Should you ever need assistance or have concerns about incidents that violate this principle, please access the resources available to you on campus. In an effort to meet obligations under Title IX, UNM faculty, Teaching Assistants, and Graduate Assistants are considered "responsible employees" by the Department of Education (see pg.15 - <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/qa201404-title-ix.pdf>). This designation requires that any report of gender discrimination which includes sexual harassment, sexual misconduct and sexual violence made to a faculty member, TA, or GA must be reported to the Title IX Coordinator at the Office of Equal Opportunity (oeo.unm.edu). For more information on the campus policy regarding sexual misconduct, see: <https://policy.unm.edu/university-policies/2000/2740.html> No form of harassment will be tolerated in this class.

CITIZENSHIP & IMMIGRATION STATUS:

All students are welcome in this class regardless of citizenship, residency, or immigration status. I will respect your privacy if you choose to disclose your status. UNM as an institution has made a core commitment to the success of all our students, including members of our undocumented community. The Administration's welcome is found on our website: <https://campusclimate.unm.edu/undocumented/index.html>

As an educator, I fully support the rights of undocumented students to an education and to live free from the fear of deportation. I pledge that I will not disclose the immigration status of any student who shares this information with me unless required by a judicial warrant, and I will work with students who require immigration-related accommodations.

Resources:

[El Centro de la Raza](#)

<https://www.immigrantdefenseproject.org/know-your-rights-with-ice/>

<https://mijente.net/blog/prepare-raids-new-defend-rights-materials-available/>

ACCESSIBILITY / ACCOMMODATIONS:

UNM is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for students with documented disabilities. As your instructor, it is my objective to facilitate an inclusive classroom setting, in which students have full access and opportunity to participate. To engage in a confidential conversation about

the process for requesting reasonable accommodations for this class and/or program, please contact Accessibility Services Team at vcaccess@unm.edu. See [here for more information](#).

CREDIT HOUR STATEMENT:

This is a three-credit-hour course. Class meets for two 2 hour and 30 minute sessions of direct instruction for 15 weeks during the spring 2026 semester. Please plan for a minimum of six hours of out-of-class work (or homework, study, assignment completion, and class preparation) each week.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

Founded in 1889, the University of New Mexico sits on the traditional homelands of the Pueblo of Sandia. The original peoples of New Mexico Pueblo, Navajo, and Apache since time immemorial, have deep connections to the land and have made significant contributions to the broader community statewide. We honor the land itself and those who remain stewards of this land throughout the generations and also acknowledge our committed relationship to Indigenous peoples. We gratefully recognize our history.