

## **PHOT 287 - Documentary Photography**

### **Three (3) Credits**

#### ***Course Description:***

In this course, students will learn all aspects of documentary photography including choosing a project, accessibility, funding, release forms, legal issues, output for the projects, and trends such as social media, the internet, and video. Students will work independently on an eight-week documentary project. This is a photo intensive class, so the students will produce a high volume of photos each week, and gain valuable editing skills as well as developing their photographic skills.

#### ***Pre-/Co Requisites:***

PHOT 180  
PHOT 190  
PHOT 150

#### ***Instructor:***

Todd Vorenkamp

#### ***Office:***

Nelson Science Center Room 104

#### ***Office hours:***

Online – Email instructor – usually respond within 24 hours  
On Campus – Friday's during studio time or by appointment

#### ***Phone:***

DCB Photo Studio – 701-228-5657 – The studio manager handles all calls to this number.

#### ***Email:***

[todd.vorenkamp@dakotacollege.edu](mailto:todd.vorenkamp@dakotacollege.edu)

#### ***Lecture/Lab Schedule:***

Online – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - fall and spring semesters  
On-Campus - Video communication and face-to-face. Schedule is Monday/Wednesday from 0930-1050hrs CST/CDT plus 3 lab hours per week on Friday between 0900 and 1700hrs or by arrangement.

#### ***Textbooks:***

None

**Course Objectives:**

1. To understand trends in documentary photography
2. To learn about careers in documentary photography
3. To discover the different aspects and types of photos associated with documentary
4. To understand ethics as they apply to documentary
5. To learn post production and distribution methods as they pertain to modern documentary
6. To work as a group on a photo intensive, semester long project
7. To learn photo editing skills

**General Education Competency:**

1. Use techniques to create original photographs
2. Possess a base knowledge of art forms
3. Use base knowledge to critique photographic works
4. Evaluate relationships of content and form in a photograph

**Relationship to Campus Theme:**

This course addresses the campus theme by having students compare and contrast traditional film methods in photography with current digital technologies while anticipating future changes in photographic technologies.

**Classroom Policies:**

1. Be respectful of other students, technicians, instructors, and guests.
2. You must participate in discussions in order to receive full credit.
3. Respect and care for all equipment whether it's yours or the colleges.
4. Be on time.
5. Be courteous.
6. Be humble.

**Student E-mail Policy:**

Dakota College at Bottineau is increasingly dependent upon email as an official form of communication. A student's campus-assigned email address will be the only one recognized by the Campus for official mailings. The liability for missing or not acting upon important information conveyed via campus email rests with the student.

**Academic Integrity:**

According to the DCB Student Handbook, students are responsible for submitting their own work. Students who cooperate on oral or written examinations or work without authorization share the responsibility for violation of academic principles, and the students are subject to disciplinary action even when one of the students is not enrolled in the course where the violation occurred. The Code detailed in the Academic Honesty/Dishonesty section of the Student Handbook will serve as the guideline for cases where cheating, plagiarism or other academic improprieties have occurred.

**Disabilities and Special Needs:**

Students with disabilities or special needs (academic or otherwise) are encouraged to contact the instructor and Disability Support Services.

**Title IX:**

Dakota College at Bottineau (DCB) faculty are committed to helping create a safe learning environment for all students and for the College as a whole. Please be aware that all DCB employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as advocates, counselors, clergy and healthcare providers) are required to report information about such

discrimination and harassment to the College Title IX Coordinator. This means that if a student tells a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or other related misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the College's Title IX Coordinator. Students wishing to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility can find a list of resources on the DCB Title IX webpage.

**Disclaimer Statement:**

The instructor of this course reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus without prior notice.

**Course Requirements:**

Each class will consist of weekly lectures, assignments, discussions, and critiques. Your final grade in the class will be determined by your photo portfolio (1600 points) and professionalism (1600 points). Point values double for 16-week courses.

All grades will be assessed based on the rubrics outlined below under "GRADES."

**Grades:**

**Grading Philosophy:**

Please understand that I do not care about your grades, I care about your education. My job is to teach you, your job is to learn what I teach you, and hopefully more. If we both do our jobs, grades shouldn't be necessary.

The best way to succeed in my class is to NOT focus on - "what's my grade," or "what do I need to get an A?" - but instead focus on - "how much can I learn." If you embrace this, you won't be doing assignments for grades, you'll be doing them in order to learn, and the grade will become secondary and take care of itself.

**Final Grades:**

Your final grades in this class will be determined by two factors. Your photography grade and your professionalism grade. Each is worth 50%. (see semester point breakdown below the rubrics.)

**Photography Grades:**

**Weekly Assignments:**

ALL assignments must be created for this class. You MUST create new work every week. Work created for other classes, or created in the past, will NOT be accepted.

Your weekly photography grades are benchmark grades that will not affect your final photography grade. Study your rubric grades and your critiques each week to evaluate where you need to strengthen the proficiency in your work and make appropriate changes to re-shoot your weekly assignments for your portfolio.

**Final Portfolios:**

You are here to learn, and not everyone will succeed on their first attempt. As such, not all images will meet a professional standard the first time you tackle a new assignment. Therefore, your final grade for photography will be based solely on your final portfolio grade, and not your weekly assignment grades.

Your final portfolio will consist of examples of your work throughout the semester. You are allowed to re-shoot every assignment for a better grade; therefore, it is expected that your portfolio will contain work of a professional standard.

I will offer critiques on final portfolios up to a week before they are due so students may continue to re-shoot assignments to strengthen their portfolio before submitting them for a grade.

All photography will be assessed using the following rubric and scores.

### **Photography Rubric:**

#### **Aesthetics – Weekly (0-50 points) – Portfolio (0-400 points)**

We are learning to create professional images that would sell to a magazine, stock photography house, or hang in a client's living room or art gallery. EVERY assignment should be done with this in mind.

While aesthetics can be purely subjective, there is still a professional standard for appearance that we are striving for. Students must look beyond the subject and consider the entire frame of the image when considering aesthetics. Does this look like a professional image?

#### **Principles of design – Weekly (0-50 points) – Portfolio (0-400 points)**

Composition and design are basic visual rules that apply to all 2-dimensional art. This part is not subjective. Composition. Color, line, texture, pattern, rhythm, scale, movement, depth, dominance, balance and other principles of design are important when creating a successful image.

#### **Intent – Weekly (0-50 points) – Portfolio (0-400 points)**

What was the photographer's intent, and did they successfully create an image that expresses that intent?

For classes, the intent will be the criteria for the assignment. For example, if the assignment is freezing motion, then did the photographer successfully freeze motion with the camera? Is the viewer interpreting what the photographer wanted to say? Is it clear what the photographer was trying to accomplish?

#### **Technical skills – Weekly (0-50 points) – Portfolio (0-400 points)**

This one is fairly simple as it's all about using the photography equipment properly. Is the photograph in focus, is the white balance correct, is the exposure correct, were all the camera settings correct, was lighting equipment used properly, was post-production done correctly, etc?

### **Weekly Assessment per Category in rubric (4 categories total)**

**A = 45-50 pts:** The student is showing mastery of the skillset being taught.

**B = 40-44 pts:** The students is showing a high level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**C = 35-39 pts:** The student is showing a basic level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**D = 30-34 pts:** The student is showing a substandard level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**F = 0-29 pts:** The student is showing a complete lack of competency for the skillset being taught.

### **Final Portfolio Assessment Per Category in rubric (4 categories total)**

**A = 360-400 pts:** The student is showing mastery of the skillset being taught.

**B = 320-359 pts:** The student is showing a high level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**C = 280-319 pts:** The student is showing a basic level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**D = 240-279 pts:** The student is showing a substandard level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**F = 0-239 pts:** The student is showing a complete lack of competency for the skillset being taught.

### **Semester Total Points Assessment: (point values double for 16-week course)**

**A = 1450-1600 pts:** The student is showing mastery of the skillset being taught.

**B = 1280-1449 pts:** The student is showing a high level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**C = 1135-1279 pts:** The student is showing a basic level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**D = 970-1134 pts:** The student is showing a substandard level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**F = 0-969 pts:** The student is showing a complete lack of competency for the skillset being taught.

### **Professionalism Grades:**

Your Professionalism grade is worth half of your total grade for the semester. Your professionalism rubric/grade is attached to your discussions and critiques each week and will be determined by your professionalism in class each week based on the following rubric.

### **Professionalism Rubric:**

Professional is defined by Merriam-Webster's dictionary as "characterized by or conforming to the technical or ethical standards of one's profession."

#### **Punctuality/Deadlines (0-50 points)**

Meeting deadlines for your clients or employers, and showing up on time for shoots, is the hallmark of a professional photographer. This certainly applies to your photography class assignments. Was the assignment turned in before the deadline? If it was not, had an extension been granted via email correspondence with the instructor and was the adjusted deadline met? If you are an on-campus student, were you on time for class?

#### **Grammar & Spelling (0-50 points)**

Sadly, in the world of text-messaging and email shorthand, the art of writing is fading into obscurity. Writing well, especially in current times, can separate and elevate a photographer above the competition. Good writing is noticed by the reader—consciously or subliminally. Poor writing is also noticed in a negative way. Are the written portions of your photography assignments crafted with proper grammar, punctuation, and capitalization? Did you spellcheck and proofread your written work

before uploading? When sending correspondence to your classmates and instructors, are you using proper writing? Do your emails include a proper subject line, greeting, message, and salutation?

**Communication (0-50 points)**

Another hallmark of a successful professional photographer is effective communication. Beyond proper writing, the professional photographer must be diligent about replying to emails from their clients and/or employers. Did you receive correspondence inside the classroom or via email from your instructor or fellow students? Did you reply promptly and in a courteous and professional manner? Are you using industry standard terms when discussing your work?

**Participation/Networking (0-50 points)**

Creating art can be a solitary activity and many of the world's famous artists were known loners, but, in the virtual classroom, interaction with your instructor and classmates will do more to enrich your learning experience than anything else. Replying to critiques from the instructor and fellow students, engaging your classmates in the discussion section, and having a dialog with your instructor and classmates is critical to you extracting the maximum learning opportunities from the program as well as, potentially, developing live-long friends and professional connections. Use of industry standard terminology is important in this category as well.

**Weekly Assessment per Category in Rubric (4 categories total)**

**A = 45-50 pts:** The student is showing mastery of the skillset being taught.

**B = 40-44 pts:** The students is showing a high level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**C = 35-39 pts:** The student is showing a basic level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**D = 30-34 pts:** The student is showing a substandard level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**F = 0-29 pts:** The student is showing a complete lack of competency for the skillset being taught.

**Semester Total Points Assessment: (point values double for 16-week course)**

**A = 1450-1600 pts:** The student is showing mastery of the skillset being taught.

**B = 1280-1449 pts:** The students is showing a high level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**C = 1135-1279 pts:** The student is showing a basic level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**D = 970-1134 pts:** The student is showing a substandard level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**F = 0 - 969 pts:** The student is showing a complete lack of competency for the skillset being taught.

**Final Grade:**

Final Grade = Photography (1600pts) + Professionalism (1600pts) –  
[Point values double for 16-week courses.]

**A = 2900-3200 pts:** The student is showing mastery of the skillset being taught.

**B = 2580-2899 pts:** The student is showing a high level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**C = 2260-2579 pts:** The student is showing a basic level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**D = 1950-2259 pts:** The student is showing a substandard level of competency in the skillset being taught.

**F = 0-1949 pts:** The student is showing a complete lack of competency for the skillset being taught.

### **Late Assignments:**

In the professional world, punctuality and meeting (or beating) deadlines are important to not only impressing those you work for; they are important to keeping your job! You should always strive to upload assignments before they are due. This is a hallmark of professionalism as a student, employee, and employer.

Late assignments will earn a ZERO in the deadline section of the professionalism rubric and cannot be made up.

There are extenuating circumstances that prevent assignments from being turned in on time. If you anticipate one of these circumstances, you must bring it to my attention as soon as possible and get clear, written (email) approval to turn the assignment in late. Never assume that my acknowledgement of receipt of notification that an assignment will be late is permission to turn in an assignment late. When I give you permission to be late with an assignment, I will state it very clearly (Example: "You have permission to turn in the Week 2 assignment late on [new deadline]."). If you do not see verbiage like shown in the example, do NOT assume you have permission to turn in an assignment late. If you feel that I am unclear, please continue to engage me until we reach clarity.

In online classes, assignments are known well in advance of the deadline. If you see a busy week or weekend on the horizon, you are responsible to manage your time so that you can get your assignments in on time. Getting your photography work done early so that you can concentrate on other classes or extracurriculars is likely always an option.

### **Grading Scale:**

A (90 – 100%) B (80 – 89%) C (70 – 79%) D (60 – 69%) F (below 60%)

## **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

### **Online**

The online classes are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You may log on at any time and watch recorded lectures, interact in discussions, and turn in and view homework assignments. Online students can complete the entire program without ever coming to campus. **Online students are required to own, or have access to, all of the equipment needed to complete the courses. The equipment list is available in the online classroom, or from your instructor.**

### **On-Campus**

On-campus students live on campus, or in the area of Bottineau, ND. You will meet in the photography classroom during scheduled meetings times for classes. The same as you would for any other on-campus class. On-campus students will have access to all of the camera gear needed to complete the courses, however it is recommended that photography majors purchase their own cameras as soon as possible after entering the program, if they don't already have a camera.

**Photography Lab** — Along with scheduled lecture times, on-campus students are also required to attend photography lab hours. These hours are obtained by working in the studio outside of regular class hours, or photographing college activities and events and assisting the campus photographer on photoshoots.

**Hands-on Learning** — The photography instructor will lead hands-on photo shoots in class and for projects outside of class. On-campus students are required to attend these projects, along with the regularly scheduled lectures as part of their photography lab hours.

### **Hybrid Course**

A hybrid course combines online, on-campus, and video conferencing education. All on campus photography courses are hybrid.

**Why Hybrid?** — The hybrid courses offer a great deal of flexibility and options to the photography students.

**Lectures** — With the hybrid courses, online students will now have the option of joining in on the live lectures via telecommunications, while the on-campus students will now have access to all of the online recorded lectures to use when needing a refresher.

**Homework** — All homework, whether an online or on-campus student, will be turned in online. This allows for more interaction and learning with a larger group of photo students who will share and critique each other's work.

**Critiques/discussions** — All critiques and discussions will take place in the online forum. This allows for larger group participation, more feedback from your peers, networking and building photographic relationships for future collaborations, and a broader perspective of peers offering feedback on your work. The instructor will critique live, via telecommunications during regular class times, through recorded video critiques, or a combination of both.



**Hands-on Learning** – (see description above) On-campus students are required to attend all hands-on learning projects as part of the lab component of the on campus program. All online students are invited, although not required, to attend all hands-on learning projects held each month on campus.

**Attendance:**

If you aren't in class, you aren't learning the material.

**ONLINE STUDENTS** - The main advantage of online courses is that you can “attend” class whenever you want. This is also one of the largest disadvantages to online education because, without a set meeting time, it takes a great deal of self discipline to make sure you log in and get your work done.

Moodle tracks your log in time and, if you don't log in enough hours, you cannot pass the class. Credit hours are based on a certain number of hours spent in the classroom, you are required to have a certain number of hours per credit in order to pass.

**ON-CAMPUS STUDENTS** – along with the daily lectures, on campus students work together doing hands-on practice for each assignment during class. If you are not in class, you are missing out on a great deal of information and practice that is impossible to “make up” later.

Credit hours are based on a certain number of hours spent in the classroom, you are required to have a certain number of hours per credit in order to pass.

***Tentative Course Outline:***

Week 1 – Introduction, lecture, choose project

Week 2 – Homework and critique

Week 3 - Homework and critique

Week 4 – Homework and critique – Midterm project

Week 5 – Homework and critique

Week 6 – Homework and critique

Week 7 – Homework and critique

Week 8 – Final project

## **Photography Program Internship/Field Study Guidelines (Practicum)**

Students in Dakota College at Bottineau's (DCB) photography classes will do internship or field study experiences as part of their educational training. These applied experiences will help them to be "job ready" when they enter the profession. The classes for which internship or field study instruction will be provided are as follows:

PHOTO 180	PHOTO 292
PHOTO 190	PHOTO 234
PHOTO 240	PHOTO 232
PHOTO 250	PHOTO 290
PHOTO 285	PHOTO 289
PHOTO 210	

The DCB photography program will not assertively or opportunistically promote its services outside of the campus environment in order to not be in competition with the private sector. The program will take measures that will help prevent it from requisitioning work otherwise accomplished by persons in the profession.

Pictures taken by photography students as part of their course of study will not belong to them. Ownership rights will lie with the parties for whom the photographs have been taken. Students will sign a waiver stating that the product of their internship or field study photography work belongs to the subjects of the photos or to their representatives.

All revenue generated by student internship or field study experiences will be invested back into the program to cover operation and equipment costs. Dakota College students, instructors, or staff will gain no monetary benefit from their participation.

Students participating in an internship or field study exercise will be supervised and provided guidance by their instructor and advisor. No applied training event will be approved that does not have proper authorization from the photography program's instructor/advisor. However, although the students will be taught and directed by the institution, the actual engagement in the educational experience may or may not be done under direct supervision of their instructor.

Transportation to the locations where the photos will be taken will not be provided by the institution.