

A black and white photograph of a rocky coastline. The upper two-thirds of the image show the ocean with small, choppy waves. The lower third shows dark, jagged rocks with white foam from waves crashing against them. The text is centered in the upper half of the image.

THALASSA RAASCH

TEACHING PORTFOLIO

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PHOTOGRAPHY + VIDEO

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“My hope emerges from those places of struggle where I witness individuals positively transforming their lives and the world around them. Educating is always a vocation rooted in hopefulness. As teachers we believe that learning is possible, that nothing can keep an open mind from seeking after knowledge and finding a way to know.”

- bell hooks

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

In the first photography class I ever took, we received this shooting assignment: “follow a stranger home, and then spend 24 hours with them.” We were, of course, terrified. Most of us were still struggling to grasp the relationships between ISO, aperture, and shutter speed. Still my classmates and I rose to the challenge, asking people on the street, bartenders, buskers, anyone that seemed approachable. However intimidating this first assignment was, I now appreciate this as an important moment in my photographic education. First, it pushed me out of my comfort zone in a crucial way, encouraging me to take technical and personal risks. After this I knew that I could truly pursue any topic I was most interested in; I didn’t need to be a seasoned photographer to engage in the issues I was most passionate about. Second, it made me immediately recognize how the camera alters situations, and people, forcing me to develop my own relationship with this complex dynamic. At the time, I balked at this prompt. Now I recognize it as enabling a personal responsibility and courage that continues to shape my practice as an artist and educator.

As a working teacher, I recall this moment and it inspires my own core teaching tenets.

1. Create a risk-taking classroom.
2. Build a supportive peer structure based on hope.
3. Foster critical thinking and dialogue.
4. Question materials.
5. Give attention to female photographers, artists, and thinkers.

These are the touchstones of my work as a dedicated professor and school administrator. bell hook’s *Teaching to Transgress* has served as an inspiring text in this regard. Her words resonate deeply: “Educating is always a vocation rooted in hopefulness. As teachers we believe that learning is possible, that nothing can keep an open mind from seeking after knowledge and finding a way to know.”

With this in mind, I urge students to transform their situation and realize their potential. Assignments inspired by my own intense introduction to photography are used to create great learning from moments of supported risk. In my beginning course *Reinvesting the Darkroom*, weekly prompts urge students to be with their cameras in situations where there is more at stake. “Date your camera” asks students to learn the basic operation of their camera while taking it along on dates; “Follow someone home” moves students outside of their campus community to interact with a new person. These moments where the camera is aligned with vulnerability, enable technical growth and personal development in leaps and bounds; students are made to claim responsibility for their proficiency of basics even as they are encouraged to begin realizing their personal vision.

All the while, these shared risks build a classroom identity where students relate to one another more quickly and learn to support each other as they explore new ideas. This

encouraging system is reinforced through partner shooting assignments, and presenting peer work in critique as if it were your own. The combination of a risk-taking classroom, and a supportive peer structure based on the shared hope for collective and individual growth engender critical thinking and dialogue. This is further developed by writing assignments such as “Love Letter to Photography,” and “My MLK,” to constantly revisit our place as photographers in our respective environments.

Lectures, visits to special collections, and a continued emphasis on women photographers, artists, and thinkers generate an ongoing conversation and questioning of photo history, canon, and contemporary art culture. Each writing and shooting assignment incorporates visual examples from living artists and thinkers. For “Knowing Place” we examine Eugene Richard’s poignant *Dorchester Days*, and for “Follow Someone Home” we consider Sophie Calle’s playful *Suite Venitienne*. Students will begin to determine their place among a history of conflicting visual cues, and to craft a voice declaring how they exist, and react to their context in the world.

My own art education has grown from the support of generous, challenging, and caring teachers, and a hands-on learning style. I’ve always learned best by being challenged. Whether with a set of technical skills, or a difficult assignment, I’ve thrived when trusted with new information. My first photography teacher challenged me to use photography not only as a communicative tool but as an introspective process to consider my treatment of other people and ideas. While still trying to figure out what ISO was, his support enabled me to dive right in. I completed my first project about a blind couple, Randy and Sarah, in a way that was always questioning my place in their story and considering creative applications of this experience. Final installations of that work have included a braille text panel, a braille, audio installation, and postcards, keychains, toy cars that Randy and Sarah collect.

My own making exists in the friction of combining different practices, and adapting a unique conceptual treatment for each project. In one work I use photography and video to document a performance where strangers feel my face. In another work I make an interactive book where my failed photographs are buried in dirt in a larger box. These projects are human focused and driven by interactive potential.

This interactive potential drives both my art practice and my teaching philosophy. My teaching is based on a sincere care for the development of each individual student on their own terms. I consider this adaptive support crucial to the growth of the group. Building a classroom where this trust and vulnerability are welcome creates a place where mistakes and tough moments are accepted as part of art making, and peers and instructors alike can be questioned. With my students, I am crafting a classroom of open minds chasing after what we most want to know, accepting the inherent joys and challenges of tough learning.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Introduction to Photography (for non-majors):

REINVESTING THE DARKROOM

The basics:

- > The Rhode Island School of Design / Photography Department
- > Wintersession / Instructor: Thalassa Raasch / Design Center Room 417
- > 3 credit hours, elective, undergraduate / No prerequisites
- > \$100 lab fees / \$150 estimated cost of materials
- > Students should be proficient with Mac computers, and provide own Digital SLR camera and a portable hard drive.

Timeline:

January 6-February 9 (5 Weeks)

Class Meets Every Monday and Tuesday, 1pm – 6pm

- + plus two Wednesdays: Wed 1/13 1pm – 6pm Field Trip,
- + Wed 1/27 Individual Student Meetings to be scheduled between 1pm - 6pm

The course:

Reinvesting means reconnecting our impulse to take photographs to a slower, more physical way of working. It gives us an opportunity to look with fresh eyes at why we take photographs, how we take them and what photographs can mean today in the image deluge of our culture. This treatment will enrich your digital practice (so much of Photoshop is lifted from darkroom process) and is likely to get you hooked on film.

This beginning-level course aims to reinvest our experience of photography with the immediacy and physicality of the analog process. Students will learn to use a 35mm camera, develop their film, and make prints in the dark room. Lab time will be accompanied by lectures, group shooting field trips, and class critiques to contextualize and challenge our practice. Assignments such as “Love Letter to Photography,” “Date Your Camera,” and “Follow Someone Home,” encourage students to discover the medium on their own terms, and explore photography as a vehicle for expression, documentation, and personal vision. Students must be willing to take risks, be open to moments of vulnerability, and shoot through challenging moments. By the end of this course, students will have produced a final sequence of silver prints, a large collection of contact prints and working prints, and an artist statement. These will prepare them to enter higher level darkroom and digital courses, and to pursue their photographic vision in tandem with their respective major.

Intermediate Photography (for all majors):

IMAGE-MAKING ON THE MOVE

The basics:

- > 3 Credit Hours, Elective, Undergraduate.
- > Prerequisite: Introduction to Photography (Digital or Analog)
- > \$100 Lab Fees / \$250 estimated cost of materials for analog practitioners.
- > Students should be proficient with Photoshop or Lightroom, and provide own Digital SLR camera and a portable hard drive.

The course:

Photographic work has long been aligned with travel, and the American road trip. This pairing determines new relationships and justifies the dead-end dirt road. It allows entry points to larger conversations - from emotional to socio-economic, and more. The road, and considerations of place, becomes a reflective lens to consider self within this greater noise.

In this intermediate course, students take turns charting New England destinations; as a class we travel together to shoot and be in a new place every week. In-class critiques and lectures are structured around this topic, contextualized by a rich history of image makers on the move, including Mark Steinmetz, Sophie Calle, and more. Students draw inspiration from themes, topics, and artists discussed in class to craft their own experience on the road and behind the lens.

Additionally, this course deepens the technical understanding of digital photographic processing, and places emphasis on developing visual ideas for a self-directed photographic project. We will learn to scan negatives, use Camera Raw and Photoshop as a tool for building healthy image files, and make strong inkjet prints. This practice will be supported by critiques, lectures, museum visits, and guest artists. By the end of this course, students will have created and refined their individual photography projects connected to place or movement, as well as crafted an artist statement. Students from both digital and analog backgrounds are welcome.

Advanced Photography (for all majors):

TOWARDS A MOVING INSTALLATION

The basics:

- > 3 Credit Hours, Elective, Undergraduate and Graduate.
- > Prerequisite: Introduction to Photography (Digital or Analog), or Introduction to Video
- > \$100 Lab Fees / estimated cost of materials varies on individual installation practice
- > Students should be proficient with photography and video practice, and provide own portable hard drive.

The course:

Lens-based media has long been comfortable as a print on a wall, or as a projection in a theater. So many artists have been comfortable challenging this convention, making works that live and breathe across many screens and in new spaces. Too often educational institutions don't have the time or space to encourage this exploration. What happens when students are asked to consider their interests and adapt image installations to enhance their topics? What happens when students are given the space to animate their content in new ways?

In this advanced course students push their personal practice further and engage in the potential for a modern moving image. By examining a wide range of what this can mean, from internet gif art to performance pieces, from multiple channel videos to interactive pieces, students are encouraged to reimagine their art practice in new ways. Considering makers as different as Alredo Jaar, Agnes Varda, Sophie Calle, Petra Cortright, and more offers ongoing context for art making that pushes the boundaries of interaction, internet, gallery space, and public space. Through a progression of smaller projects, encouraging experimentation in production and treatment of chosen topics, students will refine their efforts towards a final inter-media project. We will also discuss different ways to publicize and disseminate work, applying self-directed ideas of this to their final projects.

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

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Goals:

- Technical: mastery of the 35mm SLR camera, the ability to develop 35mm black and white film and to make tonally rich silver-gelatin prints in the darkroom.
- Theoretical: familiarity with the critical discourse, history, and evolving canon of photography.
- Critical: integration of feedback, making informed, intentional choices about composition, subject, lighting, framing, and printing so that a personal vision can be realized in a final body of work.
- Personal vision and risk-taking: willingness to challenge oneself, personal passion in pursuing topics of choice, realizes nuanced and sincere artist statement.

Objectives:

Technical - 65%

- Project parameters - respects project assignments, work is on time, technical skill and new knowledge are applied to meet project goals. (15%)
- Image capture/film handling - shows control of exposure, developing skills, and organizes prints and film. At least 20 rolls of film, contacted and archivally sleeved, showing improvement and critical application of learned techniques and concepts throughout the semester. (20%)
- Darkroom process - strong ability to control tone, density, and local adjustments. Shows respect for cleanliness and etiquette of shared spaces. (15%)
- Print & presentation - prints throughout the semester are well made, edges are clean, and edits are well considered. A printed portfolio of 15 final prints that reflect a personal vision and demonstrate technical matters of the darkroom technique and process. (15%)

Visual/Conceptual/Critique - 35%

- Photographic language - technique is applied to communicate more complex meaning. (7%)
- Concept - projects are well interpreted, and original. (8%)
- Articulation (visual, spoken, written) - student mobilizes their critical skills to present their objectives, and project ambition in a clear and thoughtful manner. An artist statement outlining their thematic interest and final portfolio. (10%)
- Critical participation - students engage in a progressively ambitious comprehension and application of concepts and contexts from discussions, readings, and critiques. Actively respects and support classmates, participating to constructively contribute to their peers' work. (10%)

Methods:

- Respectful, diagnostic, and inquisitive group critique.
- Demonstrations and open lab (shooting and printing) work periods overseen by the instructor and TA.
- Slideshows, visiting artist talks, field trips to the RISD museum print collection and the Fleet Library Special Collections to develop an appreciation and familiarity with photographic history, and masterfully-made black and white silver gelatin prints and books.

- One-on-one meetings with the instructor in which individualized goals and references can be made explicit.

Critique Criteria:

Students are asked to be active participants in each other's critiques and larger critical discourses. Constructive conversation will form the basis of our art practice - formally within the classroom and informally in the lab, on assignment, and at home.

Opportunities to develop critical inquiry and peer growth are built throughout the course. Writing assignments, shared shooting assignments, and early conversations will guide our introduction to each other and the challenges of learning photography. Throughout the course, you will be asked to expand your involvement in various ways to realize personal and classroom goals.

Assessment:

- Final portfolio of 15 final prints and at least 20 contact sheets: 40%
- 4 shooting assignments: 25% (5% each)
- Class participation: 20%
- 3 written assignments: 15% (5% each)

A grade: student completes all assignments and meets all requirements/deadlines on time, participates actively during critiques and reading discussions during every class meeting, demonstrates a proficiency of technical skills, and shows a willingness to work hard, take risks, and participate generously. *

B grade: student meets expectations, but does not show notable enthusiasm, effort, or personal investment. Printing could be more nuanced/take more care. *

C grade: student misses classes, does not complete assignments, shows up late, and/or doesn't contribute to class discussions/critiques. Printing is sloppy, final portfolio does not demonstrate an internalization of class goals. *

D grade: student does absolute minimum to pass this course. *

F grade: failure to complete the course. *

*for more information on grading, see the grading rubric attached.

Class expectations and policies:

Students will arrive at class promptly and will pin up their assignment right away so that class can begin at 1:05 sharp. Sloppy or messy darkroom habits will not be tolerated: students must clean up after themselves. If you need to miss a class, you must email the instructor in advance, and provide a doctor's note. Each unexcused absence will result in the lowering of your final grade (from B to B- for example).

Health and Safety:

- Handle chemicals with great care - alert instructor or TA if a spill or unidentified liquid is present eye washing stations are located throughout the building.
- Razor blades must be disposed of in provided containers.
- Students will not rush but schedule ample time to work in darkroom - this avoids mistakes, spills, messes.
- Students will support fellow students when needed.

Equipment list:

- Fully manual 35mm SLR camera in good working order.
- 1 box 50 sheets Ilford Pearl RC paper (8"x10")
- At least 20 rolls Kodak Tri-X 400 ISO film (plan to shoot more like 30 if possible)
- Enclosed binder for negatives/contact sheets with rings: <http://www.printfile.com/black-safe-t-binder.aspx>
- PrintFile acid-free negative sleeves (at least 20): http://www.printfile.com/35-7b_25.aspx -8x10
- Acid-free archival box for holding prints: http://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/product/174694-REG/Lineco_733_0008_733_0008_Museum_Quality_Drop_Front.html

Photographic resources:

- Photo supplies and used equipment: B&H Photo and Video: <http://www.bhphotovideo.com>
- Film and darkroom supplies: Freestyle Photo Supplies: <http://www.freestylephoto.biz>
- Photo storage: <http://www.printfile.com>
- Used cameras: <http://www.keh.com>
- Local photo repair: <http://www.zackscamerarepair.biz> (791 Hope Street Providence, RI)

CLASS SCHEDULE:

WEEK 1

Monday, 1/11:

Class time:

Introductions, syllabus overview, class expectations, equipment check/supplies, checking out kits at the photo “cage.” BREAK. Demo of exposure and camera operation. BREAK. Intro B/W photo history slideshow and field trip to photo book section in library.

In-class demo:

Exposure and camera operation.

Learning outcome:

Comprehend how to work an SLR 35mm film camera, learns to look at and measure light, analyzes personal attraction to photography.

Assignment: (due Tuesday 1/12)

- Writing Assignment #1 “Love Letter to Photography.”
- Shoot 2 rolls of film. Brings objects for photograms.

Tuesday, 1/12:

Class time:

Lecture/slideshow, discussion of love letters and technical issues. BREAK. Demo on film development. BREAK. Demo of photograms and contact sheets.

In-class demo:

Film development, making contact sheets, making photograms.

Learning outcome:

How to develop 35mm black and white film, how to make a contact sheet, and how to make a photogram print in the darkroom.

Assignment: (due Wednesday 1/13)

- Develop your first 2 rolls of film, make contact sheets, and make 3 photograms using materials from home or found objects.
- Do Reading #1, “Photography is Difficult, Photography is Hard.”

Wednesday, 1/13:

Class time:

Critique of contact sheets and photograms, discussion of Reading #1. BREAK. Demo of printing. BREAK. Printing time.

In-class demo:

Printing with contrast filters, dodging and burning.

Learning outcome:

Personal appreciation of the technical flexibility of your 35mm camera. Greater comprehension of the variables and qualities of analog photography: how to make a silver-gelatin print from a negative in the darkroom.

Assignment: *(due Tuesday 1/19)*

- Shooting Assignment #1, "Date Your Camera."
- Make 4 prints from first two rolls of film.
- Make 4 prints from Assignment #1. Bring all prints, film, and contact sheets to class, including your test strips on Tuesday.
- Note additional MLK day assignment.

WEEK 2

Monday, 1/18: Martin Luther King Day (*NO CLASS*)

Class time:

Please attend RISD's programming.

Assignment: *(due Tuesday 1/19 by midnight in PDF form, emailed to traasch@risd.edu)*

- Take selfies at MLK events.
- Complete Writing Assignment #2, "My MLK."
- Please note your additional printing assignments are due tomorrow as well.

Learning outcome:

Engage in important social discourse, determine your place in this conversation.

Tuesday, 1/19:

Class time:

Critique of 10 prints from first rolls and Assignment #1, plus all 4 contact sheets. BREAK.

Visit to RISD special collections. BREAK. Printing time.

Learning outcome:

Troubleshooting for shooting and printing, more nuanced printing techniques, reflection on personal MLK experience, evaluate involvement in topical matters.

Assignment: (due Monday 1/25)

- Shooting Assignment #2, "Knowing Place."
- Shoot and contact 4 rolls.
- Make 6 prints.

WEEK 3

Monday, 1/25:

Class time:

Discussion of MLK responses, lecture/slideshow. BREAK. Group critique, midterm assessments, one-on-one meetings looking at contacts and printing selects from Assignment #2.

In-class demo:

Shooting in darker situations.

Learning outcome:

Merge the process of your practice and your personal photographic vision. Offer feedback to improve class time and learning structure.

Assignment: (due Wednesday 1/27)

- Shooting Assignment #3, "Follow Someone Home."
- Contact sheets, 4 prints.

Tuesday, 1/26:

Class time:

Critique of Assignment #2 and prints from #3. BREAK. Field trip to RISD Museum's print collection. BREAK. Open lab time.

Learning outcome:

Assess your strengths in critique, recognize areas of growth. Develop your eye for tonally rich prints at the RISD Museum.

Assignment: (due Wednesday 1/27 + Monday 2/1)

- Students will design and present their proposed final project- due Wednesday.
- Shooting Assignment #4 “Final Vision,” contact sheets, 5 prints - due Monday.

Wednesday, 1/27:

Class time:

Examine proposed final projects. BREAK. Printing time and individual meetings.

Learning outcome:

Design your vision for a final project and begin to shoot towards this body of work.
Support your peers’ visions and offer helpful feedback.

Assignment: (due Monday 2/1)

- Shooting Assignment #5, “Final Vision.”
- Contact sheets, make 5 prints, and do Reading #2.

WEEK 4

Monday, 2/1:

Class time:

Discussion of Reading #2. BREAK. Critique of Assignment #5. BREAK. One-on-one meetings with instructor to set individual goals for final project. Printing time.

Learning outcome:

Receive feedback on your final shooting assignment, begin to synthesize concept with class conversation to refine and advance your final project idea.

Assignment: (due Monday 2/8)

- Work on final project development.

Tuesday, 2/2:

Class time:

Looking at photo books - consider how to create a well-rounded edit in preparation for final critique. Guest Steve Smith and Nelson Chan speak about sequencing *Waiting Out the Latter Days*. BREAK. Discussion of presentation expectations for final portfolio. BREAK. Open lab.

Learning outcome:

Appreciate complex image sequencing, anticipate personal goals for your last week of shooting before the final, integrate self-critical reflections and input for a well synthesized body of work.

Assignment: (due Monday 2/8)

- Intensive production for final portfolio (shooting, developing, and printing).
- Shoot at least 2 more rolls (there is no shooting assignment), make contact sheets, and 5 last work prints.

WEEK 5

Monday, 2/8:

Class time:

One-on-one meetings with new contact sheets/work prints before the final presentations. Open lab - printing/working time.

Learning outcome:

Organize a final edit, finalize and present a body of polished work.

Assignment: (due Tuesday 2/9 + Wednesday 2/10)

Final portfolios and 20 (or more) contact sheets.

Tuesday, 2/9:

Class time:

Final presentations (9 students, 25 min per person). Guest critic (TBD).

Learning outcome:

Using the historical, technical, and conceptual frameworks that have been put in place since the beginning of the course, demonstrate your printing prowess in a final group of 15 coherent images that speak to a personal vision.

Wednesday 2/10:

Class time:

Final presentations (9 students, 25 min per person). Guest critic (TBD).

Learning outcome:

Using the historical, technical, and conceptual frameworks that have been put in place since the beginning of the course, students demonstrate your printing prowess in a final group of 15 coherent images that speak to a personal vision.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENT

Assignment #2:

AN IDEA OF PLACE

The premise:

Choose a place and photograph it with the purpose of describing it to your viewer photographically. Get away from RISD. Remember that your ID gets you on any RIPTA bus! Pick a site, building, intersection, square, park, or street, and limit yourself to that small area. Take a documentary approach to photographing it. Allow yourself more poetic moments too. Think carefully about how you want to represent this place in two dimensions. Spend as long as you can there, watch for patterns and change. How does light shift through this area? What happens here at different times of day? Return to it again, and again, to rephotograph and rediscover your idea of this place. This return, and an openness to a shifting understanding, is often the most important condition. So, return again.

Questions to think about:

- + Who occupies this place?
- + Who is just passing through?
- + Does this place somehow change with you in it? Does your presence affect it somehow?
- + What does the light look like at 7AM versus 7PM?
- + How can you describe what it feels like to be there in your pictures?
- + What did you witness there?
- + Why were you drawn to this spot?
- + What is most important to notice - action, inaction?

Goals:

- > To think about issues of representation, and of the photographer's responsibilities in being the author of that representation
- > To begin developing a personal shooting style or ethos.

Outcomes:

Representation of the site: (50 % of grade)

- Shooting of 4 rolls of film, contacted for next class.
- Several visits and re-visits of the site
- Idiosyncratic treatment - student explores various modes of representation and attention

Considered research, selection and translation of the particular site: (50 % of grade)

- An increased and personal sensitivity to space and light
- An understanding of the idiosyncrasies and people of a place

- An awareness of how their presence (and their camera's presence) is felt

Methods:

Start brainstorming a place that is both interesting to you and that you are open to returning to several times. Research and propose a place before you go out shooting. In class we will look at Eugene Richard's *Dorchester Days* to see an inspiring treatment of this idea. (Do keep in mind that Richard's work reflects many years of intimate work in a place!) Mark Steinmetz's *South Central*, and Andrea Monica's *Treadwell* will also be on hand. Once in the field, be picky about the time of day you visit - do you want harsh noontime light, or the magic of morning glow? Neither is better or worse, though they will shift the tone of how you wish a viewer to see and consider this place, thus reflecting your particular knowledge of your chosen location. Make sure to return at different times - at night, early morning, at noon. Spend as much time there as possible. Watch what happens around you. Watch how this place responds to you.

Benchmarks for Grade:Qualities of Advanced Competency:

Student not only shoots the required number of rolls, but shoots deliberately, visiting their site over several days and through many different times of day. Student crafts impeccable prints, with neat edges and nuanced tones. They craft a sophisticated photographic treatment of site that shows careful research and thoughtful reflection from their time spent at this site.

Qualities of Basic Competency:

Student shoots the required number of rolls, visits their site at least twice, and required number of prints are made. Some consideration of the site is given but it is not investigated deeply or challenged beyond a first documentary treatment.

COURSE EVALUATION

COURSE EVALUATION

Introduction to Darkroom: Midterm Feedback Form

Instructor: Thalassa Raasch

COURSE GOALS:

- > To gain confidence with a 35mm camera, darkroom practice and workflows, including developing film, and making prints.
- > To increase awareness of photography origins, history, and application of darkroom technique.
- > To begin development of a personal photographic vision in conversation with your personal practice.

How would you rate your comfort / proficiency in the following areas, on a scale of 1-5:

5 – Very Proficient.	1 – Uncomfortable.
Can fluidly apply the tools or knowledge base to the production of personal work. (Though with room for continued growth in the area through advanced/specialized study).	Do not feel adept at using the tools or knowledge base in the production of personal work.

CAMERA:

1) Making a proper exposure with settings of the camera, while deliberately controlling for depth of field, freezing or blurring of action, and level of noise.

5 4 3 2 1

DEVELOPMENT AND PRINTING:

2) Understanding of film development, film handling, and storage.

5 4 3 2 1

3) Have a system for managing a growing collection of negatives, contact sheets, work prints, and final prints.

5 4 3 2 1

4) Ability to make well printed contact sheets.

5 4 3 2 1

5) Comfort using enlarger, dodging and burning, mixing chemicals, and chemical workflow to produce working prints.

5 4 3 2 1

6) Ability to make prints from negatives that matches your intentions for tonal range.

5 4 3 2 1

CONTEXT:

7) An understanding of other photographers working in ways similar to your own, and a readiness to address comparisons made with your work.

5 4 3 2 1

CRITICAL DISCUSSION:

8) An ability to discuss intention in your work, and an understanding of how it may differ from or mirror readings of your work by an audience.

5 4 3 2 1

9) An ability to offer readings of other people's photographs, and contribute to a thoughtful dialogue about intention, process, and outcome.

5 4 3 2 1

COMMENTS:

For questions rated 1 or 2 (lacking proficiency), please use the area below to detail those areas in need of improvement, and any feedback for covering the material in a more effective manner.

GRADING RUBRIC

GRADING RUBRIC - INTRODUCTION TO DARKROOM PHOTOGRAPHY

Thalassa Raasch
RISD Photography

TECHNICAL	excelling - A	meeting - B	emerging - C	struggling - D and F
PROJECT PARAMETERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - produce quantity/quality of work and effort - work submitted: completeness as assigned and on-time - apply learned skills/ techniques and knowledge to meet project goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - produces exceptional quantity and quality of work and effort - reproduces and exceeds all project specs - applies added research to exceed project expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - very good quantity and quality of work and effort - fulfills basic project specs - applies knowledge to meet technical goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - good effort; meets the project requirements - work is complete, on-time - applies average problem-solving and learned knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - insufficient effort - work submitted late - demonstrates no problem-solving and employs very little applied knowledge
IMAGE CAPTURE / Film Handling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - exposure control and sharp focus - proper iso, development - organization of negatives and prints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - captures locate advanced technical competence and mastery - relates strong skill retention through development process - achieves no technical deficiencies - practices professional film filing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - capture demonstrates technical competence - few minor technical problems in development or film handling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - capture demonstrates technical understanding - some technical deficiencies in development or film handling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - capture shows critical technical deficiencies - significant problems throughout development and film handling
DARKROOM PROCESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global adjust: density/ contrast, tonal control, in-focus - Local adjust: heal, dodge/ burn, etc., and aesthetic adjustments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - professional workflow, process is meticulous - excellent global image control - local adjustments are employed to correct and enhance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - workflow is very good with few minor problems - solid global image control - local adjustments applied where needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - workflow reveals some problems - basic global tone control - local adjustments not well utilized, lacking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - workflow haphazard and uncontrolled - no demonstrated understanding of image management
PRINTS & PRESENTATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prints centered, with clean edges - print surface is clean, no dust, etc. - craftsmanship and project organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prepares pristine prints - excellent craftsmanship - professionally organized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prints are very good; few minor surface issues - detailed craftsmanship - project is well organized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prints are good; some minor surface or edge problems - craft and organization are good, lacking a few details 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - prints not submitted or unacceptable quality - presentation is unorganized, unacceptable

VISUAL/ CONCEPTUAL/ CRITIQUE	excelling - A	meeting - B	emerging - C	struggling - D and F
PHOTOGRAPHIC LANGUAGE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - application of technical attributes to make images that communicate meaning (focus, dof, motion, multiples, media, effects, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - uses advanced photographic language skills - engages photo technique on multiple levels to communicate and further their exploration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - conscious use of photographic language - uses technique to communicate visually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - uses some photographic language; could be more directed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no use or proven understanding of photographic language
CONCEPT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - employment of a clear project concept; originality - rendering of sophisticated subject and formulates strong content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work demonstrates marked conceptual thought and relates originality - renders highly sophisticated images and well formulated content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work shows originality and solid conceptual thinking - applies sophisticated image content to support subject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work is typical in concept, originality - applies image content that seems intentional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work demonstrates no real concept or originality - wholly unsophisticated imagery; applied content is irrelevant
ARTICULATION: visual, spoken, written <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - synthesis of the project's learning objectives, composes work that achieves these goals, and identifies the lesson's values in a broader context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - articulates complete understanding of project goals and demonstrates how they are met - expresses original thought and relates conceptual depth beyond the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - articulates the project's goals and refers to how their work achieves them - analyzes the lesson's value in a broader context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - articulates basic level of understanding about the project objectives and work - contextualizes and interprets the lesson somewhat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no proven understanding of the project's learning objectives and unclear relevance of the work produced for it
CRITICAL PARTICIPATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - engagement in review of student work, reflects on and incorporates feedback - participation in constructive review of peer work - respect for classmates, generous support and collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - welcomes feedback and actively engages their critique - participates constructively in group critiques, listens openly and generously - consistently supports classmates in the lab, classroom, and in the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - accepts feedback and engages their critique - participates occasionally in group critiques - sometimes supports classmates in the lab, classroom, and occasionally collaborates in the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - occasionally accepts feedback and sometimes engages their critique - rarely participates in group critique - rarely supports classmates or generates collaborations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - does not accept feedback or engage in their critique - does not participate in group conversation - actively does not support classmates and denies efforts for collaboration

“In those moments when you feel discouraged or lost in the studio, or when you experience rejection, rest completely assured that what you don’t know about something is also a form of knowledge, though much harder to understand. In many ways, making art is like blindly trying to see the shape of what you don’t yet know.

Whenever you catch a little a glimpse of that blind spot, of your ignorance, of your vulnerability, of that unknown, don’t be afraid or embarrassed to stare at it. Instead, try to relish in its profound mystery. Art is about taking the risk of engaging in something somewhat ridiculous and irrational simply because you need to get a closer look at it, you simply need to break it open to see what’s inside.”

- Teresita Fernandez