

# **PHOTOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT**

## **Information Sheet**

### **Summary of program**

The Photography Department, which offers undergraduate BFA majors in fine-art photography and photojournalism, seeks to prepare students to excel as artists and as professionals in the photography field. We maintain facilities for the production of black-and-white, chemical color, and digital prints, a commitment that increasingly distinguishes us from competing programs. We immerse students in the traditions and current understandings of the medium, develop their creative potentials through open-ended assignments, candid critique, and expose them to the range of camera artists working today.

### **Departmental philosophy**

The department believes that an advanced understanding of the medium's technical and expressive possibilities as well as its cultural functions and contexts is essential for all students. These are taught in an integrated, balanced manner without privileging any one way of working. Students are encouraged to become independent and self-disciplined practitioners as a precondition for creating confident and mature work.

### **Departmental goals**

- To supply students with a thorough grounding in the history, techniques, aesthetics, practices, and critical understandings of photography.
- To provide facilities, equipment, courses, and experiences that encourage self-expression and support a broad range of artistic and career choices.
- To prepare students to comprehend current and future changes in the techniques, styles, and uses of photography and other lens-based media.
- To enhance students' awareness of the camera's role in reflecting and shaping society, culture, and history.

### **Competencies expected for graduation**

- Camera skills and technical knowledge sufficient to allow a student to create photographic images of recognizable quality and consistency.
- An understanding of the technical and aesthetic traditions of the medium from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to the present day, as well as a grasp of the history and current practices of the visual arts as they relate to photographic tradition.
- The ability to produce self-directed, coherent bodies of work that express a student's individual point of view and/or style.

- Writing and verbal skills sufficient to explain one's thought processes in the creation and contextual analysis of visual images.
- Knowledge and understanding of photography's functions in visual culture, including commercial and editorial uses and extending to all lens-based visual media.

### ***Competency expectations by year***

#### **Sophomore (2<sup>nd</sup>) Year – creativity from within**

Technique: Ability to produce artistically finished black-and-white prints.

Editing: Ability to make connections among images.

Composition: Sophisticated use of framing, shutter, depth of field, color, etc.

Research: Understanding of one's sources and ability to find needed information.

Criticism: Use of vocabulary appropriate for discussing images and representations.

#### **Junior (3<sup>rd</sup>) Year – creativity from without**

Technique: Able to choose proper medium and technique for expressive purpose.

Editing: Ability to work in series or sequence to create a convincing narrative.

Research: Ability to link style to intention; awareness of cultural contexts of images.

Criticism: Understanding of critical traditions embedded in photographic history and current practice.

#### **Senior (4<sup>th</sup>) year – a sense of self**

Ability to work independently over an extended period of time.

Ability to produce a coherent body of work expressive of student's intentions.

Ability to plan, prepare, and execute an installation of the work.

Ability to write about, discuss, and defend one's work.

Sense of future direction and vocational possibilities after graduation.

### ***Assessment measures***

- Annual departmental reviews with written evaluations (2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year)
- Student self-evaluations and faculty responses accompanying one-on-one critiques (form)
- Tracking success of students post-graduation
- Ongoing curriculum review by department faculty