

Middle School Photography: Drawing with Light Course Syllabus

What you will learn in this course

Middle School Photography: Drawing with Light

A picture is worth a thousand words.

Photographs play an important role in our world today. We photograph to preserve memories, document events, and create artistic works. This course introduces students to the basics of photography, including camera functions and photo composition. Students will learn what it takes to create a good photograph and how to improve photographs of animals, people, and vacations. They will also begin working with their photographs using photo-editing software. Through a variety of assigned projects, students will engage their creativity by photographing a range of subjects and learning to see the world through the lens of their cameras.

Unit 1: Introduction to Photography

In this unit, we will begin our exploration of digital photography. We will learn about some of the early history of photography and some basics on how cameras work. We will discuss what basic equipment is needed for photography and we will talk about how to get digital images from a camera to a computer.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Define photography.
- Discuss the early history of photography.
- Discuss how cameras work.
- Discuss how to transfer images from a camera to a computer.

Unit 2: Meeting Your Camera

In this unit, we will learn more about point-and-shoot cameras. We'll discuss some of the common features of these cameras, including some of the settings and buttons that are usually included on them. We'll also learn more about how to take care of your camera.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Discuss the basic functions and features of point-and-shoot cameras.
- Discuss some of the common risks to digital cameras.
- Discuss how to care for your camera so that it will continue to work effectively.

Unit 3: Choosing a Subject

In this unit, we will discuss how photographers choose a subject. We'll discuss what makes a good subject for a photograph and some of the rules of design that photographers may use in their photographs. We'll also identify and discuss some of the different types of photographs.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Understand some of the differences between good photographs and great photographs.
- Discuss the purpose of photographs.
- Discuss the elements of art and design.

Unit 4: Elements of Composition

In this unit, we'll learn more about composing good photographs. Composing a photograph means that we think about the items we are taking a picture of and try to arrange those items in a way that people will like when they see the photograph. Photographers use many different techniques to compose their photographs, including the *rule of thirds* and *framing*.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Learn about different ways to focus photographs.
- Define and discuss the *rule of thirds*.
- Understand and use the technique of *framing* in photographs.
- Discuss portrait and landscape orientations of photographs.

Unit 5: Backgrounds & Foregrounds

When photographers create a photograph, they look at a three-dimensional scene or object and have to figure out how to turn that into a two-dimensional image. This is not always easy to do. To add depth to images and to prevent them from looking flat, photographers often work with three different parts of an image: the *foreground*, *middleground*, and *background*. In this unit, we'll learn more about these three areas of a photograph and how they can work together to prevent images from looking flat and can, instead, give the photo depth and greater dimension.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Define *foreground*, *middleground*, and *background*.
- Learn how framing (from Unit 4) can be used in the foreground of an image.
- Discuss some of the problems that can occur in foregrounds and backgrounds. These problems can affect the quality of a photograph.
- Study some of the techniques and methods that can be used to draw attention to the subject of the photograph.
- Discuss how using the foreground, middleground, and background can add depth to a photograph.

Middle School Photography Midterm Exam

- Review information acquired and mastered from this course up to this point.
- Take a course exam based on material from the first five units in this course (Note: You will be able to open this exam only one time.)

Unit 6: Managing & Editing Photos

In this unit, you will learn more about managing and editing photos once they are transferred to a computer. We'll discuss the common types of files that are used to save digital images and the good and bad points of each. We'll also learn more about managing the digital files and common photo-editing functions.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Discuss the common file types used to save digital images.
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages (good and bad points) of different file types.
- Discuss the importance of photo management.
- Discuss common photo-editing functions.

Unit 7: Vacation Photos

If you've ever sat through a slideshow of someone's vacation photographs, you probably already know that not everyone takes good shots of their travels. We want to capture the beauty, excitement, fun, and unique aspects of the places that we travel to as well as the personality of the people that we travel with. But, often these characteristics just don't appear when we print the photographs. In this unit, we'll learn more about how to improve our vacation photographs so that the next time you show someone photos of your travels, you'll wow them with the photographs that you took.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Discuss how to prepare to photograph a vacation.
- Identify some common vacation photographs.
- Discuss some of the problems that people have when photographing vacations.
- Discuss tips for improving classic vacation photographs.
- Think about how to use these vacation photograph tips in your hometown.

Unit 8: The Wild Side

In this unit, we will learn more about photographing animals. We'll discuss some of the common problems that photographers have when photographing animals and discuss some tips for avoiding these problems. We'll also spend some time learning about photographing birds and pets.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Identify common problems found in photographs of animals.

- Discuss some tips for taking better animal photographs.
- Discuss how to photograph birds.
- Discuss how to photograph pets.

Unit 9: Photographing People

In this unit, we will learn more about photographing people, including how to create self-portraits. We'll study some tips for improving photographs of people, including working with light. In addition, we'll discuss the choice of posed versus candid (non-posed, natural) photographs. Finally, we'll look at creating self-portraits and some creative ways of capturing your own image in digital form.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Discuss how lighting can affect photographs of people.
- Discuss tips for improving images of people.
- Identify some of the pros and cons of posed and candid photographs.
- Discuss self-portraits and how to create unique self-images.

Unit 10: Photographer Etiquette & Display

In this unit, we will learn more about the rules and laws that photographers should follow. Although you may be taking pictures only for fun, you should still be polite and respectful to other people and follow the laws that relate to photography. We will also discuss how to print your digital images and how to display them once you have printed them.

What will you learn in this unit?

- Discuss photography etiquette.
- Understand and discuss some of the laws that influence and affect photography.
- Understand and explain to someone else how to print a photo.
- Discuss displaying your photography.

Middle School Photography Final Exam

- Review information acquired and mastered from this course up to this point.
- Take a course exam based on material from units six to ten in this course – the last five units. (Note: You will be able to open this exam only one time.)