

San José State University
Department of Art & Art History
Art 208, Graduate Photography Critique
Section 01, Course Number 21127
Spring 2018

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Valerie Mendoza
Office Location:	Duncan Hall of Science, 401C
Telephone:	(408) 924-4693
Email:	valerie.mendoza@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Tuesday: 3:00-5:00 <i>By Appointment only:</i> Wednesdays. 6:00-7:00 PM Wednesday appointments must be arranged <i>in advance</i> .
Class Days/Time:	Tues from 6:00 - 8:45
Classroom:	Industrial Studies Building 219C
Prerequisites:	Classified status in art or instructor consent.
Department Office:	ART 116
Department Contact:	Website: www.sjsu.edu/art Email: art@sjsu.edu

Course Format

Technology Intensive Course

You must have your own laptop computer to take this course and will need it in class whenever you are presenting. Macs are preferred and will make life easier, since demos are given on a Mac. It would also be a good idea to have the latest edition of the Adobe Creative Suite. Though specific software is not required, Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom, (if you are already in the habit of using it to organize your images) and Premiere Pro would come in handy. As an SJSU student the software is **FREE** for you! Follow the instructions at this link to download your free software: <http://its.sjsu.edu/services/software/adobe/>

Assignments, Readings, Handouts

Course materials such as syllabus, readings, handouts, etc. can be found under our class name on [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](#) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com/>. You are responsible for downloading new materials when you are notified that they are available. You should go there now and download the syllabus and first assignments. Make a practice of doing this regularly. Start a folder on your laptop and download and keep materials for our class there. That way you have what you need.

Course Description

Professional practice in the discipline of fine art photography is multi-faceted and complex. To embrace this diversity, Art 208 Graduate Photography Critique offers rotating topics that influence portfolio development, emphasize an ongoing critique of work, and build a healthy professional practice. Repeatable for up to 18 units of credit when course topic changes.

Course Content and Objective

This course will primarily be devoted to the production, discussion and critique of the ongoing work of graduate students participating in this class. Meetings will be held on a weekly basis. In the event that a lecture or exhibition of importance to our group is occurring elsewhere, we will make arrangements to meet at the designated site. The 5:00 Tuesday night lecture series is an important component of the Department of Art & Art History. Speakers are chosen by faculty from each program for their prominence in the contemporary art world. You should make every effort to attend, especially when lecturers are relevant to our Photo program. Weekly class attendance should be supplemented with individual meetings with me during my office hours.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Further develop ability to visually communicate ideas in a manner that is aesthetically and conceptually engaging
2. Further develop technical skills
3. Use technical skills to develop/continue aesthetically resolved projects with strong concepts
4. Refine understanding of the importance of professional presentation, and present your work in a compelling manner (with either a traditional or experimental approach)
5. Develop/refine ability to write about your own work and art practice, and to recognize the writings of others relevant to your work and practice.
6. In the service of the above, attend lectures regularly, participate in readings/discussions and attend field trips
7. Learn to work within deadlines: complete projects by dates you've agreed upon
8. Upon successful completion of this course, students will have the ability to: develop/continue development of a strong body of work that is professionally presented and technically sound, with thoughtful, interesting content, and a strong, well written artist statement.

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook: None - Readings will be uploaded to Canvas- see more on this later in this document.

Other technology requirements / equipment / material requirements

1. **Reminder:** You MUST have your own laptop computer to take this course. Macs are preferred and will make life easier, since demos are given on a Mac.
2. **Reminder:** You should also have the latest edition of the Adobe Creative Suite. As an SJSU student the software is **FREE** for you! For this course, software is not required, but Adobe Photoshop, Lightroom, and possibly Premiere Pro, could be helpful. Follow the instructions at this link to download your free software: <http://its.sjsu.edu/services/software/adobe/>

3. Though we provide chemistry (darkroom) and printers and ink (digital lab) you will be financially responsible for purchasing your own paper and presentation supplies. If you print a very large number of prints, you may be asked to pay for excess printing at a very reasonable rate. Most of the time this does not happen. But in extreme cases it is a possibility. You should inquire ahead if you plan to print a very large series, or print very large prints.
4. Canned air: strongly recommended for scanning
5. **White cotton gloves: strongly recommended for handling paper during printing**
6. **Large cardboard/plastic tube or large artist portfolio for transportation of digital prints – strongly recommended.**
7. Depending on the size of your computer's hard drive, you may want to buy more storage in the form of an external hard drive. Not mandatory but strongly recommended if you're short on space.
8. Presentation materials – cost varies widely depending on what you choose, but you will likely spend \$100 to \$200 or more on this class for presentation materials.

Library Liaison

Aliza Elkin: aliza.elkin@sjsu.edu Phone: 408-808-2043

Website: <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/collectiondevelopment/CDhumanities>

Readings/writing

Readings for our class "Library" - Deadline: February 13th - Each of you will provide a reading relevant to your work. The group will be expected to read this prior to your first crit, so that we are ready to discuss and/or refer to the reading while looking at your work. Your reading must be at least a few pages long, and not longer than 20 pages, which might mean using excerpts. You can also provide a few short readings, rather than one 20-page reading. Websites come and go, so please provide pdf files of the readings, rather than links to sites. We'll be creating a "library" of our class reading materials. Some of you may want to keep one another's readings for future reference. The reading can be anything: contemporary critical theory, art historical writing, philosophy, fiction, writing of a scientific nature, sci-fi, poetry - anything that you feel is relevant to your work. You will be uploading digital pdf files of your reading to our class canvas site. I will explain how to do this during the second class meeting. If you need help creating pdf files, I will go over that during the second class as well. Adobe Acrobat Pro is free as part of your software package. It allows you to work with PDF files creatively (delete pages, create multi-page documents from single-page documents, etc.). Almost any reading on a website can be saved as a pdf. Books should be scanned and turned into a multi-page pdf file. This is not an optional assignment. Failure to provide a reading will negatively impact your final grade.

Proposals - Due February 20th - Each of you will write a one-page proposal, describing the work you plan to accomplish this semester. Learning to write a proposal is a necessary survival skill for contemporary artists. Proposals are used to apply for grants, submit work to galleries, even as a part of the self-evaluation that full-time professors are asked to submit annually. Like the readings, you will upload your proposal to the appropriate Canvas folder prior to the start of class. We will read over all of your proposals together the night that they are due, February 20th. Writing your proposal may also help you with writing an artist statement, since they are sometimes similar.

Artist Statements - Due April 10th - For the final round of critiques, you will be asked to write an artist statement. As a contemporary artist, you will write many artist statements throughout your career, or you might think of it as one evolving artist statement that continues to change and develop over time, as your work changes and evolves along with you and your life. Your artist statements will be due, uploaded to Canvas, by April 10th, the week prior to when 2nd critiques begin. Please remember that your reading/writing assignments

are not optional. Take them seriously. Failure to complete all of them would mean a 20% reduction in your final grade.

Final Examination or Evaluation

Our Final Exam is scheduled by SJSU to take place on **Tuesday, May 22nd, from 5:15 to 7:30**. Please note that this is a different time than usual. Make appropriate arrangements **now**, so that you will be available to attend our final meeting on this day. Participation is mandatory, per SJSU regulations. Plan ahead to be there.

Weekly Discussion - Schedule for each class session

We will begin each class by visiting the gallery openings in the Art Building. We will meet in the classroom at 6:30. The first 10-20 minutes of each Tuesday meeting will be set aside for discussion. Think about information you might want to present to the group: Announcements on events or opportunities, problems with a class you're teaching, suggestions for the department in general, soliciting assistants for a project you're working on, etc. Discussion will be completely open during this time. We'll have to be mindful of the clock and stop the discussion after 20 minutes to leave time for the critiques or other activities to follow.

Number and Length of Critiques

The semester will primarily be devoted to critiquing your work. We will also set aside some time to attend outside events, host guest speakers, discuss readings, and engage in various other activities relevant to the class and your work. We will set aside time to assist those of you who will be participating in ATC, and will attend openings and hold crits for those of you showing work in the Art Department galleries this semester. On critique nights we will be looking at the work of three grads a night for 35 minutes each. You must sign up for two critiques. The first crit should feature work in progress. It is worth 20% of your final grade. The second, final crit should involve work much closer to completion. It is worth 40% of your final grade. Your second crit must include prints, or work in its final form (a finished video, for instance, if that's how you are working). If you're still showing us contact sheets, rough work prints, or digital images on your laptop by your second critique, expect a low grade on the "Presentation of Work/Critique" portion of your final grade in this class. I want you to push yourselves, to exceed your own expectations. Of course it is fine to share new or additional images on contact sheets or your laptop during the final crit (in addition to finished work). But I want to see work in near finished form for your last critiques, which means prints in the size you intend for exhibition purposes, if you're working with prints. Grads in the Photo program (but not enrolled in the course) have also been offered one critique each, if they want one. I will also list any exhibitions they may have in our schedule, if they let me know beforehand. The class is not as full as it sometimes is this semester. We will still need to watch the clock to make sure that everyone receives their fair share of critique time. We'll set an alarm for 30 minutes for each crit, then allow an additional 5 minutes to wrap up the discussion. There will be a 10 minute break between each crit. Depending on how many grads have exhibitions, we may have extra crit spots. On those nights, if you'd like to casually share work, or sign up for an additional critique, just let me know and I will do my best to make this happen.

Preparation for Critiques

Make the most of your critiques. It may not always feel like it, but this process really is a privilege. In the professional art world, the worst thing that can happen to you is NOT a rough critique of your work. It is being ignored altogether. Treat this opportunity as you would a studio visit from a well-known curator. Make sure you're as **well prepared** as possible, especially for your final critique, with work that is in a state of **near completion**. The first crit should be used for work in progress. What I mean by "work in progress" is work that

may not be resolved in terms of presentation, or may be missing potential additional elements. Sketches, notes or a spoken description of your work are extremely difficult to build a productive critique around and should only be considered as supplemental materials. Even your “work in progress” should be presented in as complete a form as possible. Take time and space into consideration. Giving a 35-minute performance or video screening won't leave time for feedback, which is the whole purpose of our meetings. Documenting your performance elsewhere (to which we are invited but may not all be able to attend) and showing excerpts could be an effective alternative. The same goes for video. You will encounter time and space limits in your professional lives. Use us as practice. Make every effort to give your work the thorough discussion, attention and respect it deserves.

Content, Technique and Presentation

We will consider three elements while discussing your work: content, technique and presentation. This means if we've spent the first 10 minutes discussing the quality of the technique the artist used, it's probably time to move to another element. When your work is being critiqued, please take an active role in this process. If we're spending too much time discussing an element of your work for which you're not particularly interested in receiving further feedback, please feel free to suggest moving forward to discuss the work from a different perspective.

Choosing A Date For Your Critiques

During our first class meeting we will be introducing ourselves, and you will begin the process of signing up for crit time. I'm asking that each of you sign up for at least two critiques, one earlier in the semester, and one later in the semester. I will let our new students sign up first, since they have less in the way of brand new work to show. Pick crit dates carefully. There won't be an opportunity to change them or postpone your critique later in the semester. The only acceptable excuse will be serious illness or a death (your own or someone very close to you). Technical or logistical problems will not be considered a valid reason for rescheduling. Plan ahead. If there are extenuating circumstances, you should make me aware of them as early in the semester as possible. In the event of a sudden, unresolvable problem, you will be expected to attempt to trade presentation dates with another member of the group. Know in advance that this very rarely proves possible. Since you will not be showing work often in this class (only twice), a missed critique will be taken very seriously and may be cause for failing the course or receiving a very low grade, especially if you were to miss your final critique.

Grade Reduction for Lack of Participation

Please keep in mind that for classes such as this one, active participation is very important. You are expected to attend most class meetings, including those during which you yourself are not presenting or having work critiqued, and you are expected to actively participate in discussions about the work of your peers, readings, lectures, etc. We only meet once a week, which means you've missed a week of instruction if you miss one class meeting. Expect a very low Class Participation grade if you are not an active participant.

Make Ups and Late Work

It is your responsibility to make up missed class sessions or late work. If you must miss a class, please send me an e-mail (preferably before class), so that I may let you know what you will be missing. Many class lectures and demonstrations cannot be repeated or made up and if they are graded activities, will result in missed work and/or a grade reduction. Any project deadline missed will result in lowering the project grade one letter for each week that it is late. Talk to me if you are having problems. I will make exceptions for legitimate excuses.

Extra Credit

There will be a field trip and accompanying gallery review, each worth extra credit of 1/2 letter. Dates for the field trip and a deadline for the review will be announced soon. Occasionally there are guest lecturers as a part

of the Tuesday Night Lecture series that are relevant to our class. I will announce any relevant lectures in advance and attendance at the specified lecture will be worth extra credit. I urge you to take advantage of these opportunities as they occur. There will be no additional chances for extra credit at the end of the semester.

Your final grade will be based on the following

- Participation in weekly meetings, discussions, critiques, events: 20%
- Readings/writing: 20%
- Presentation of work/critique: 60%
 - 20% for first crit
 - 40% for final crit

Note on grading - I would rather this course be “pass/fail,” but SJSU does not offer this option. All of you should be serious about your work, self-motivated, and should not require the additional incentive/threat of a letter grade. That said, I am not the sort of instructor who gives automatic “A’s” to all grads, just because they are grads. If you want an “A” you will need to earn it by impressing yourselves and one another...and me, I suppose. This doesn’t simply mean attending all class meetings and doing the work I require of you. It means creating serious, conceptually strong, aesthetically resolved work in near-finish form by the end of the semester. You are grad students, and this is your “research.” I take it seriously, and you should too. My goal is for all of you to do well. Think of yourselves as all beginning with an "A." If you remain serious about fulfilling the course requirements and work hard on your research, your "A" will remain pristine.

Detailed Letter Grade Rubric

Outstanding 100-97(A+)	Excellent 96-94(A)	Very Good 93-90(A-)	Good+/Good/Good - 89-87(B+)/86-84(B)/83-80(B-)	Average+/Average/Average - 79-77(C+)/76-74(C)/73-70(C-)	Below Average (+/-) 69-67(D+)/66-64(D)/63-60(D-)	Unsatisfactory Below 60= F
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The work created in class will be evaluated based on the following criteria.

- A **Outstanding:** thoughtful and intelligent ideas presented in a clear, organized, and engaging manner; among the very best.
- B **Above Average - Good:** the ideas are interesting and successfully presented; shows potential, but not necessarily distinctive; roughly equal in quality to the work completed by other students.
- C **Average - mediocre:** achieves minimum requirements of the assignment, but not particularly clear, nor ambitious. Quality of work is below that of most other projects submitted. May be above average idea presented in incomplete state.
- D **Unsatisfactory:** does not satisfy the minimum requirements of the assignment; generally unsatisfactory in terms of quality and clarity. Usually sloppy, incomplete and or late work.
- F You didn't submit an assignment.

Classroom Protocol

Laptop Etiquette

Please use your laptops in respectful manner. Laptops should only be open during demos or lectures when I've asked you to follow along or take notes. Laptops should remain closed during critiques, films or demos that do not require your participation. Please show respect for me and those around you.

Cell Phone Etiquette

Ringers on cell phones should be turned off during class time. Leaving the class to take a call should only be done in emergencies. The same goes for texting. Again, please show respect for those around you.

Guidelines for Letters of Recommendation

1. You should give me (or any professor) 30 days minimum forewarning for letters of recommendation (not counting holidays or breaks during which I will not be writing letters).
2. I will not be likely to grant last minute requests, though it's always worth a try, in emergencies.
3. It should go without saying that you should be a student who did very well in the class/es you took with me.
4. All pertinent documents necessary for the letter should be delivered or mailed to me.
5. If hard copies are required, stamped, addressed envelopes for each recipient should be included, along with Contact information for each.

I strongly suggest that you schedule a brief meeting during my office hours to discuss the purpose of the letter at the time of your request. I am happy to write letters of support for all who follow these guidelines.

University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc.

Mon. 2/5: Last day to drop without "W" grade. After this date, a Late Drop petition will be required.

Mon. 2/12: Last day to Add via MySJSU online and without a petition & late fee.

For more information regarding add/drop policies: <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/> - [DroppingAdding](#)

Shop Safety

If you plan to use the Shop (located in the Art Building) for realization of any of your projects, you must take and pass the Shop safety test. Using the Shop is not required for this course, though it does have a very nice mat cutter available for your use. Tests cost \$20 a year **and will ONLY be given this semester between January 24th and February 16th**. If you took and passed the test last semester, you do not need to take it again this semester. If you are interested in taking the test, you should contact the shop asap to set up an appointment: 924-4357. If you miss this opportunity, you will not be able to use the shop until after you take and pass the test next semester, during the testing period.

Important Reminders:

Student Galleries - If you would like to show your work in one of the student galleries this semester, the signup date is this coming Thursday, February 1st. Signup begins at 7:30 at the Art Gallery Office, Art 129. If you land a show, we'll work a visit into the schedule. You may use the galleries in any way you wish. Experiments are fine. The work does not at all have to be formal, matted, framed, hung on the wall...though that is fine too, of course. It's your space for a week, to do with as you wish. This is an amazing opportunity that most art schools (even expensive private ones) do not offer. Please take advantage of it.

Presentations - For the first few weeks of class, each of you will give a 5-10 minute artist presentation of your work. I will share my work during this time as well. As I mentioned in the email I sent on 1/23, first-year grads should be ready to present this coming week (Tuesday the 30th). A digital slide show (powerpoint or another

program like it) is fine for this. If you want to lay out or pass around a few hard copies, that is fine. This is just an introduction, not a critique; an oral presentation, with digital images of your work, providing a very brief introduction for the group. I know public speaking is intimidating. But try not to worry too much. Our classroom will be a pretty friendly, supportive place. You do not have to provide any sort of written material for this introduction. You will have to do this sort of presentation many times throughout your artistic career, including during first semester and first-year reviews, as well as at ATC next year, so this is good practice. Second and third-year grads will present during week 2.

As of Today, 1/30

From 6:00-6:30: Visit student galleries in art building and IS; Read greensheet together; sign up for critique dates; Watch film

For Tuesday 2/6

Critique schedule finalized. Presentations begin

For Tuesday 2/13

All Readings due! Each of you must upload your readings to the Canvas class site prior to the start of class.

For Tuesday 2/20

All Proposals due! Each of you must upload your proposals to the Canvas class site prior to the start of class. We will go over each of them in class together, so be prepared to talk about your proposal. This proposal is very important. You will not be allowed to proceed with the class without first completing it. In the proposal, discuss the idea or set of ideas you will be exploring this semester, along with the physical form in which you hope to realize them. What ideas or issues might you be addressing? How will your work be presented? Will you be using our darkroom, digital lab, or other facilities on campus? Which photographic techniques will you be using? How many prints will your series include? What size will they be? What type of framing will you use? If you're not a traditional photographer, what other elements and/or media do you plan to incorporate? If you change your mind over the course of the semester that will be fine, but you must upload an amended proposal to Canvas.

For Tuesday 2/27

Critiques begin!

For Tuesday 4/10

All Artist Statements due! Each of you must upload your Artist Statements to the Canvas class site prior to the start of class.

For Tuesday 4/17

Second round of critiques begin (Final Crits).

A detailed schedule for the entire semester follows. After your crit dates have been finalized and confirmed, I will add your critiques to the daily schedule and upload the updated version of the schedule to Canvas for you.

I look forward to working with all of you this semester. Let's make it a great one.

Art 208 / Graduate Photography Critique Spring 2018 Tentative Course Schedule

Schedule is subject to change with fair notice. Notice will be given in class, via email, and updated version will be posted to Canvas.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	Jan. 30th	Class Introduction and Overview of Upcoming Semester - Watch Film Last Day to Drop Courses is next Monday, February 5th
2	Feb. 6th	Presentations begin - First-year Grads Last Day to Add Courses is Monday, February 12th
3	Feb. 13th	All Readings due! - upload to Canvas prior to start of class Continue presentations.
4	Feb. 20th	All Proposals due! - upload to Canvas prior to start of class - we will go over each proposal together in class. Finish presentations...if we aren't done yet. Remember to do readings for those critiquing next week
5	Feb. 27th 35 min. each with 10 min. break between	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ Remember to do readings for those critiquing next week
6	March. 6th	4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____ Remember to do readings for those critiquing next week
7	March. 13th	7. _____ 8. _____ 9. _____ Remember to do readings for those critiquing next week

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
8	March 20th	<p style="text-align: center;">M i d t e r m</p> <p>10. _____</p> <p>11. _____</p> <p>12. _____</p> <p>Remember to do readings for those critiquing next week</p>
9	March 27th	<p style="text-align: center;">S p r i n g R e c e s s - E n j o y !</p>
10	April 3rd 40 min. ea with 10 min. brk between	<p style="text-align: center;">A T C - F i r s t d a y o f P r a c t i c e - t e n t a t i v e</p> <p>13. _____</p> <p>14. _____</p> <p>15. _____</p> <p>Remember to do readings for those critiquing next week</p>
10	April 10th	<p style="text-align: center;">A T C W E E K - F i n a l d a y o f P r a c t i c e - t e n t a t i v e</p> <p>Plan to attend ATC Weds. & Thurs. - MLK @ 8:55 AM (maybe Weds. only - stay tuned). All Artist Statements Due! - upload to Canvas prior to start of class.</p> <p>16. _____</p> <p>17. _____</p> <p>18. _____</p> <p>Remember to read Artist Statements for those critiquing next week.</p>
11	April 17th 2nd (Final) Crits Begin	<p>19. _____</p> <p>20. _____</p> <p>21. _____</p> <p>Remember to read Artist Statements for those critiquing next week.</p>
12	April 24th	<p>22. _____</p> <p>23. _____</p> <p>24. _____</p> <p>Remember to read Artist Statements for those critiquing next week.</p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
13	May 1st	<p>25. _____</p> <p>26. _____</p> <p>27. _____</p> <p>Remember to read Artist Statements for those critiquing next week.</p>
14	May 8th	<p>Roundtable discussion on life after grad school with former grads.</p>
Final Exam	Tues. May. 22nd	<p>5:15-7:30 in IS 219C - Our "Final" will consist of our end of the semester gathering and print exchange on either Tuesday the 15th, Tuesday the 22nd, or another night of our choosing. I'm even willing to attend on a Friday or Saturday night if all of you can make it. If we're considering Friday or Saturday nights, this could include May 11th or 12th, or May 18th or 19th.</p>

<http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/final-exam-schedule-spring.html>

*There shall be an appropriate final examination or evaluation at the scheduled time in every course, unless specifically exempted by the college dean who has curricular responsibility for the course.