

JOU3601 Photographic Journalism

Visiting Lecturer Daron Dean / photoj@ufl.edu
Spring 2026



"Light makes photography. Embrace light. Admire it. Love it. But above all, know light. Know it for all you are worth, and you will know the key to photography."

– [George Eastman](#) (1854-1932)

"If your pictures aren't good enough, you aren't close enough."

– [Robert Capa](#) (1913 –1954)

Course Goals:

- Learn to create honest photographs with journalistic content and visual impact that are technically sound and communicate an idea to the viewer.
- Learn to see, appreciate and use natural light in your photographs.
- Learn to evaluate your own photographs critically as well as the work of others based on accepted professional standards.
- Learn the mechanics of photography and the basic elements of composition.
- Learn to crop, size and make tonal adjustments to photos using Adobe Photoshop.
- Learn to write captions — using AP style — that add context and value to your photographs.
- Learn the best practices for organizing and storing digital images and video files.
- Learn to become an originator of stories and assignments rather than someone who just executes them.
- Understand the duties, responsibilities and ethics of a photojournalist, including the importance of reflecting the diversity of your community with your coverage.

Supplies: Assignments are to be photographed with a professional digital SLR or mirrorless camera. Camera kits, comprised of a [Canon EOS R6 Mark II camera and a 24mm-105mm f/4 lens](#), are available to check out for the semester. **You are responsible for obtaining at least one 128GB SD card for checked-out camera kits.** (I recommend [Sandisk](#).) Also required is a [reporter's notebook](#) to write down information in the field that will later be used for captions. Be sure to organize your digital files, IDs, notes, etc. This is important for contest entries. Names, dates and captions will continue to be critical as you build your portfolio. Always back up your work on an **external hard drive!** I recommend the [LaCie Rugged series](#).

Textbooks:

- [A Short Course in Photography: Digital](#) by Barbara London and Jim Stone, 4th edition. There will be mandatory reading assignments each week throughout the semester. ISBN-10: 0134525817
- [The Associated Press Stylebook](#), 57th edition. (Older editions are OK.) This book is an invaluable resource when it comes to writing captions. *AP Stylebook Online* is a searchable, customizable, regularly updated way to take advantage of the same information. ISBN-10: 154160511X

Attendance: You are expected to be on time and in all class/lab meetings. If you are absent, talk to a classmate to find out what you missed. You are responsible for all information presented regardless of whether you were present or not. Your meaningful participation is essential to the success of the class, and 100 points for class participation will be one of your grades. Every time you are late, you can count on 10 points being deducted from your 100 possible for the semester. Be prepared and respect others. The class is typically lecture, presentation, demonstration and awesome.

Assignments: In general, you will be given one assignment a week, which will usually be due the following Thursday by the end of class. Occasionally, you will have several weeks' notice. A photo gallery of an event, a final project and three quizzes are also planned. **ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE PHOTOGRAPHED IN MANUAL (M) MODE.**

What to turn in: Most assignments are due by the end of our Thursday class. At every publication, deadlines are sacred. Therefore, no assignment will be accepted late without penalty. Work that is late, even by one minute, will be penalized 10 points.

- **In Canvas:** Size your toned photograph(s) to **15 inches on the longest side at 300 PPI**. Name each file "FirstNameLastNameAssignmentNumberA, B, C (etc.).jpg." For example, for Assignment #2, DEPTH OF FIELD/MOTION, my files would be named "DaronDean2A.jpg, DaronDean2B.jpg, DaronDean2C.jpg". Select the highest image quality when saving photos. Be sure to include the caption in the Description field in File Info in Photoshop, as well as a text entry in "Comments" when you upload your assignment to Canvas.
- **Google Drive:** Due from every assignment is a folder with your **entire take**. Do not delete anything. Name the folder "FirstNameLastNameAssignmentNumber." For example, for Assignment #2, DEPTH OF FIELD/MOTION, my folder would be named "DaronDean2." Upload your folder [HERE](#).

Critique: We will spend some time in class critiquing your work. You will be expected to discuss your photographs and the experiences you went through to make them, so the entire class can benefit from what you learned. Remember that criticism works best when it is constructive and all of us, **including myself**, will always have room for improvement. Leave your ego at home.

Grades: All work will be graded on a numerical scale from 0 to 100. At the end of the semester, you will have 16 grades. Your course grade is determined by averaging all of them. Photo assignments will be evaluated using the following criteria:

30% for Effort

20% for Content

20% for Technical Excellence/Composition

20% for Captions

10% for Proper Submission of Assignment

- **Effort:** Taking a photo is easy – you push the button. Exploring an idea as a visual journalist is difficult. I expect you to spend at least 45 minutes shooting a regular weekly assignment. For a typical assignment, I would expect, at the very least, 50 images (more for the sports assignment). More importantly, I expect you to try different angles - exploring ideas visually by working individual scenes, waiting for moments and being aware of the world around you.

- **Content:** Does the photograph tell a story? Is the image relevant to the assignment? Is the image visually compelling with good use of light? Is the photo graphically appealing? Does the photograph stand out for its originality?
- **Technical Excellence/Composition:** Does the photo have a strong composition? Were the Three Big Tips followed? Is the photograph properly exposed? Is the photo in focus? Is the photo toned properly in Photoshop? Does the photo have the proper color balance? Were shutter speed and aperture properly set?
- **Captions:** Professional photojournalists take captions seriously. You are expected to put thought and energy into them. Captions are written in the present tense and, at the very least, should answer who, what, why, where and when, usually in that order. **You are responsible for the names of the subjects in your photographs.** In most cases, I expect you to include a quote from your subject. Captions are written in AP style and are free of spelling errors. They are important to the viewer's understanding and appreciation of the moment captured, and they play a huge part in making the viewer care about the subject. Fifty points (of a possible 100 points) will be deducted from an assignment for a fact error. Missing captions will result in a 0% for the assignment. Be sure to include your byline at the end of your caption: (Photo by Your Name)

Example of a well-written caption: *Sandi Macik lights a cigarette while sitting in a hammock on the front porch of her Vilano Beach, Fla., home Saturday, January 10, 2026. "This is my happy place," Macik said. (Photo by Daron Dean)*

- **Proper Submission of Assignment:** Are your images sized correctly? Are captions in the Description field in File Info in Photoshop? Did you also include your caption in the comments section with your Canvas submission? Did you name your files correctly? Did you upload a correctly named folder with your entire take to the Google Drive?

Redo: If you are not satisfied with your grade on an assignment, you may redo it. You are allowed one 100-point redo, which will be **DUE by 9 p.m. Sunday, April 12.** **If you are redoing an assignment that was not turned in, the highest grade possible is an 80.**

Lab: Open lab hours will allow you time to complete work outside of class. Times are posted throughout Weimer Hall.

Office hours: My office hours are on Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in **#2016**, located in the Graduate Studies and Research Division near the elevator on the second floor of Weimer Hall. I am also available to meet at your convenience in-person (on or off campus) and via Zoom [HERE](#). You are welcome (and encouraged) to contact me 24/7 with any questions or concerns at **(352) 317-7399** or by email at **photoj@ufl.edu**. Don't ever hesitate to call. If I'm busy, I'll call you back ASAP. We will also have a class group text for announcements.

Additional Information:

- Photojournalists are expected to always have their equipment with them. Get in the habit now. I expect you to have your camera with you always.

- Keep original unaltered digital files original. ALWAYS “save as” for photographs you are working on.
- WARNING: When shooting assignments, use common sense photographing in situations where people may not want to be photographed. Getting injured or arrested is seldom worth the trouble.
- Be aware that any item from the college's equipment that is checked out to you is your responsibility. This includes paying for full repairs and for anything that is missing. The school has received reimbursement checks from students ranging from \$100 to more than \$1,000 in the past. You are encouraged to have as much of your own equipment as possible.
- This website includes current UF grading policies [HERE](#).
- The university takes a firm stand on dishonest work. Cheating of any kind, including work generated by Chat GPT and other AI programs is not tolerated, and I am obligated to report violations to the Honor Court.
- Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. Go here to get started with the Disability Resource Center [HERE](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.
- Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available [HERE](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or [HERE](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students [HERE](#).
- *Disclaimer: This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, these plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.*

[National Press Photographers Association Code of Ethics:](#)

Preamble

The National Press Photographers Association, a professional society that promotes the highest standards in visual journalism, acknowledges concern for every person's need both to be fully informed about public events and to be recognized as part of the world in which we live.

Visual journalists operate as trustees of the public. Our primary role is to report visually on the significant events and varied viewpoints in our common world. Our primary goal is the faithful and comprehensive depiction of the subject at hand. As visual journalists, we have the responsibility to document society and to preserve its history through images.

Photographic and video images can reveal great truths, expose wrongdoing and neglect, inspire hope and understanding and connect people around the globe through the language of visual understanding. Photographs can also cause great harm if they are callously intrusive or are manipulated.

This code is intended to promote the highest quality in all forms of visual journalism and to strengthen public confidence in the profession. It is also meant to serve as an educational tool both for those who practice and for those who appreciate photojournalism. To that end, The National Press Photographers Association sets forth the following.

Code of Ethics

Visual journalists and those who manage visual news productions are accountable for upholding the following standards in their daily work:

1. Be accurate and comprehensive in the representation of subjects.
2. Resist being manipulated by staged photo opportunities.
3. Be complete and provide context when photographing or recording subjects. Avoid stereotyping individuals and groups. Recognize and work to avoid presenting one's own biases in the work.
4. Treat all subjects with respect and dignity. Give special consideration to vulnerable subjects and compassion to victims of crime or tragedy. Intrude on private moments of grief only when the public has an overriding and justifiable need to see.
5. While photographing subjects do not intentionally contribute to, alter, or seek to alter or influence events.
6. Editing should maintain the integrity of the photographic images' content and context. Do not manipulate images or add or alter sound in any way that can mislead viewers or misrepresent subjects.
7. Do not pay sources or subjects or reward them materially for information or participation.
8. Do not accept gifts, favors, or compensation from those who might seek to influence coverage.
9. Do not intentionally sabotage the efforts of other journalists.
10. Do not engage in harassing behavior of colleagues, subordinates or subjects and maintain the highest standards of behavior in all professional interactions.

Ideally, visual journalists should:

1. Strive to ensure that the public's business is conducted in public. Defend the rights of access for all journalists.
2. Think proactively, as a student of psychology, sociology, politics and art to develop a unique vision and presentation. Work with a voracious appetite for current events and contemporary visual media.
3. Strive for total and unrestricted access to subjects, recommend alternatives to shallow or rushed opportunities, seek a diversity of viewpoints, and work to show unpopular or unnoticed points of view.
4. Avoid political, civic and business involvements or other employment that compromise or give the appearance of compromising one's own journalistic independence.
5. Strive to be unobtrusive and humble in dealing with subjects.
6. Respect the integrity of the photographic moment.
7. Strive by example and influence to maintain the spirit and high standards expressed in this code.

When confronted with situations in which the proper action is not clear, seek the counsel of those who exhibit the highest standards of the profession. Visual journalists should continuously study their craft and the ethics that guide it.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

LIVE assignments are timely and have a tight deadline in the hopes of publication.

+ assignments can be completed at any time during the semester.

WEEK 1

READ: Chapter 1, Camera

Tuesday, Jan. 13: Introductions; Introduction to the course; **Assign #1 Bio/Self-Portrait**; Syllabus review

- **ASSIGNMENT #1 BIO/SELF-PORTRAIT:** Write a one-page autobiography. I want to know who you are, what you're interested in and what you have done – photographically and otherwise. Include your immediate and long-term goals, a list of camera equipment you currently use, your phone number, email address and resume (if you have one). Please include a selfie as well.
Due by 9 p.m. Friday, Jan. 16 (50 points)

Thursday, Jan. 15: Discuss the Triangle of Photography; Discuss Make, Take and Fake; Discuss the Hearst Journalism Awards Competition

WEEK 2

READ: Chapter 2, Lens

Tuesday, Jan. 20: Discuss the Three Basic Tips; Discuss Features

Thursday, Jan. 22: Check-out UF Canon R6 Mark II mirrorless camera kits for the semester (**bring your SD card today**); Discuss camera gear care and maintenance; Discuss basic camera operations; Discuss Practice assignment; **Assign Practice assignment**

- **PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT:** Get comfortable with your camera. Shooting on M (manual) mode, practice taking photos, adjusting your exposure along the way. Shoot inside and outside during the daytime. Be adventurous and experiment shooting in low light or at dusk/night. Go to multiple locations. Follow the 3 Tips. All photos taken in this class should be journalistic (no friends, relatives or roommates) and unposed. You've been looking your entire life. Now it's time to start seeing!
Photo (1) AND folder with entire take DUE by the end of class, Thursday, Jan. 29. (Not graded)

WEEK 3

READ: Chapter 3, Light and Exposure

Tuesday, Jan. 27: Continue basic camera operations discussion; Introduce the Camera simulator

Thursday, Jan. 29: Discuss Depth of Field and Motion; Discuss the shutter speed shake rule (SSSR);
Assign #2 Depth of Field/Motion; Discuss Photoshop; Work on/**submit Practice Assignment**

- **ASSIGNMENT #2 DEPTH OF FIELD/MOTION:** This assignment requires that you make three different types of pictures. With the two DOF photos, use objects bigger than a football and have other “stuff” behind your subject, 10 feet or more away. Set your lens’ focal length to 24mm.

(A) For the **Shallow DOF** part of the assignment, shoot pictures with your lens set to its largest aperture (smallest f/stop number: f/4). Your camera meter will suggest the proper shutter speed – don’t forget about the SSSR. Your subject should be about 1-2 feet away in low light. The background in the finished photo should look blurry. If the meter’s suggestion is for less than 1/15th, you’re in light that’s too dim and you’ll get shaky photos, so move to a brighter area or increase the ISO.

(B) For the **Great DOF** part of the assignment, have the *same subject the same distance away*. Shoot outdoors in bright light, setting your camera to its smallest aperture (biggest f/stop number: f/22) letting your camera meter determine the shutter speed. Again, focus on your subject. The background should turn out sharp as well. Yes, parts A and B could be done in the same location outdoors.

(C) For the **Stop Motion** part of the assignment, take *posed* stop-motion photos outside in bright light with a shutter speed of 1/2000th, letting the meter suggest the right f/stop, taking care to “fill the frame.” Be sure the person is in focus; the background sharpness doesn’t matter. *Get their feet way off the ground!* The 1/2000th photo should freeze subject motion and be posed. Person is to be moving right/left (or) up/down in these photos. Do not photograph moving cars or animals. Using Photoshop, tone parts A and B (same subject), and C. For captions, just type Shallow DOF, Great DOF, or Stop Motion and your byline.

Photos (3) AND folder with entire take DUE by the end of class, Thursday, Feb 5. (100 points)

WEEK 4

READ: Chapters 4, Digital Workflow Basics

Tuesday, Feb. 3: Critique best of Practice Assignment; Continue camera operations discussion using the Camera simulator

Thursday, Feb. 5: Discuss Head Shots; **Assign #3 Head Shots;** Discuss digital workflow, organization and storage; Work on/**submit Assignment #2**

- **ASSIGNMENT #3 HEAD SHOT:** Make these journalistic vertical close-up photos of someone's face. Fill the frame and use an ultra-plain, out-of-focus, one-tone background. This assignment calls for posed pictures in soft, natural (sun) light that you find. *Do not shoot at 24mm because the face will look bowed/stretched/awful.* Do you have Rembrandt or rim light? Is your subject facing the main light? Eye contact is required here (have your subject look at the camera). Avoid bright, direct sunlight. Photograph two subjects, each in different locations. Vary their poses.
Photos (2) and folder with entire take DUE by the end of class, Tuesday, Feb. 12. (100 points)

WEEK 5

READ: Chapter 5, Image Editing

Tuesday, Feb. 10: Critique #2 Depth of Field/Motion

Thursday, Feb. 12: Discuss Composition; Discuss Quality of Light; **Assign #4 Quality of Light**; Discuss captions; Work on/**submit Assignment #3**

- **+ ASSIGNMENT #4 QUALITY OF LIGHT:** The way light looks will make or break many pictures. It changes all the time. Find natural *daytime* sunlit situations that look interesting, yet fleeting, because of the ever-changing light. Look indoors and outdoors, up and down. On a sunny day, shoot early in the morning or late in the evening. Remember the Golden Hour! Strong backlighting produces silhouetted subjects. Find unposed scenes as you catch a unique moment. You must have a human element somewhere in the photo and remember to capture one of the three main topics that were presented in class. Do not use flash. Submit two unposed photos. No family/friends/acquaintances.
Photos (2) and folder with entire take DUE by the end of class, Tuesday, Feb. 19 (100 points)

WEEK 6

READ: Chapter 9, Seeing Like a Camera

Tuesday, Feb. 17: Critique #3 Head Shot; Review for Quiz #1

Thursday, Feb. 19: Discuss Environmental Portraits/Person Working; **Assign #4 Environmental Portrait/Person Working**; **Quiz #1**; Work on/**submit Assignment #4**

- **ASSIGNMENT #5 ENVIRONMENTAL PORTRAIT/PERSON WORKING:** This assignment requires shooting two different photos. Use different subjects in different locations for each part.

For the **Environmental Portrait**, background and surroundings are important, although your subject still needs to show up well. You're in control of this **posed** session. Watch the composition to help make a nice portrait. Can we tell the subject's occupation? We need some atmosphere.

For the **Person Working**, shoot **unposed** photos of someone doing an interesting visual job. Avoid dull, sitting-behind-the-desk photos, on the phone/typing or construction workers a million miles away. Look for an unusual angle. The person must be recognizable. Don't forget to show the subject's face. The Person Working location is not as important as the Environmental Portrait. No family/friends/acquaintances.

Photos (2) and folder with entire take DUE by the end of class, Tuesday, Feb. 26 (100 points)

WEEK 7

READ: Chapter 7, Organizing and Storage

Tuesday, Feb. 24: Critique #4 Quality of Light

Thursday, Feb. 26: Discuss Interaction; **Assign #6 Interaction;** Discuss Event coverage, **Assign #11 Event;** Work on/**submit Assignment #5**

- **+ ASSIGNMENT #6 INTERACTION:** Take unposed feature photos in situations involving only three people (no extra bodies in the background!) Show how these people are interrelating, or not. Watch the composition and ask, “What is my bonus element?” Avoid tonal mergers. These are candid photos, and the subjects should not be posing or looking at the camera. Remember, only three people! Do they “pop out?” An exception is made for this assignment ONLY: No IDs are required, to free up your creativity. No family/friends/acquaintances!
Photos (2) and folder with entire take DUE by the end of class, Tuesday, March 5. (100 points)
- **LIVE + ASSIGNMENT #11 EVENT:** Find and cover an event, photographically. This assignment can be shot anytime during the semester. Using varying angles, composition and camera settings, capture and submit eight images that tell the story of the event for publication on WUFT.org. No family/friends/acquaintances. **THE EVENT MUST BE APPROVED BY ME FIRST.**
Photos (8) and folder with entire take DUE by 9 p.m. SUNDAY, April 12. (100 points)

WEEK 8

READ: Chapter 6, Printing and Display

Tuesday, March 3: Critique #5 Environmental Portraits/Person Working

Thursday, March 5: Discuss Weather; **Assign #7 Weather;** Discuss Pulitzer Prize winning photographs; Work on/**submit Assignment #6**

- **+ ASSIGNMENT #7 WEATHER:** How can you relate the current weather situation to readers in an interesting photo? It's usually done with people in the pictures doing weather-related activities. Find candid situations that have potential for compelling photographs. Draw on tips you've picked up from other assignments. Telephoto (105mm) is your friend. Look for people enjoying or confronting the weather. Remember facial expressions always help. Photos must be “found” – not posed. No family/friends/acquaintances. Get published in the *Alligator* if timely and successful!
Photos (2) and entire take DUE by the end of class, Tuesday, March 12. (100 points)

WEEK 9

READ: No reading assignment this week

Tuesday, March 10: Critique #6 Interaction; review for Quiz #2

Thursday, March 12: Discuss Sports; **Assign #8 Sports; Quiz #2;** Work on/**submit Assignment #7**

- **+ ASSIGNMENT #8 SPORTS:** This can be from any sport. You can shoot indoors (it's much harder to get sharp), outdoors, game or solo action (but avoid shooting only solo action; your take should show other efforts). Can you capture peak action? Is the scene "frozen?" How close can you get? Do the subjects stand out? Is there a strong center of interest? You must have one unposed "sports action" photo and one unposed "sports feature," or two "sports action" shots that are not similar. Let's see faces! Choose a situation where you and your lens can get close enough to capture. Use telephoto. Yes, these can be at a practice. Try to show competition. No family/friends/acquaintances.

Photos (2) and folder with entire take DUE by the end of class, Tuesday, March 26. (100 points)

WEEK 10

READ: No assignment this week

Tuesday, March 17: Spring Break (no class)

Thursday, March 19: Spring Break (no class)

WEEK 11

READ: No assignment this week

Tuesday, March 24: Critique # 7 Weather

Thursday, March 26: Discuss Final Project; **Assign #10 Final Project Pitch & #12 Final Project;** Work on/submit **Assignment #8**

- **FINAL PROJECT:** This project will take up the final 2-3 weeks of the course, and the pictures will be all journalistic (nothing posed). You are documenting life – not directing it. No faked photos! As with all journalism assignments, you may not photograph family/friends/acquaintances. Find someone with a story to tell. Recording and editing excellent audio is a big part of the grade. Produce a **Picture Story** on **one person** you can be around for an extended period. Document their life: maybe school, work, home, sports or recreation. Plan on visiting 3+ locations. You'll need about 20-30 great *horizontal* pictures and a 90-second sound bite. No longer – be concise! This assignment counts as three regular assignments (300 points) and should demonstrate you can recognize and capture good moments. Full submission procedures will be explained in class. Your presentation can be made with software of your choice, including Premiere Pro, Final Cut, iMovie, etc. Do not use any moving transitions/effects.

ASSIGNMENT #10 FINAL PROJECT PITCH (story idea) DUE by 9 p.m. SUNDAY, March 29. (50 points)

ASSIGNMENT #12 FINAL PROJECT due by 9 p.m. Wednesday, April 15. (300 points)

WEEK 12

READ: Chapter 8, Using Light

Tuesday, March 31: Critique #8 Sports

Thursday, April 2: Assignment #9 Quick Shoot

ASSIGNMENT #9 QUICK SHOOT: Using all tips from the course, produce two publishable images (with captions) specific to topics drawn “from a hat.” This is a timed exercise done in the lab period.

Photos (2) and folder with entire take DUE by the end of class, TODAY, April 2. (100 points)

WEEK 13

READ: Chapter 10, History of Photography

Tuesday, April 7: Critique Assignment #9 Quick Shoot; Discuss the History of Photography

Thursday, April 9: Discuss Photojournalism seminars and workshops; Create title slides/work on Final Projects; review for Quiz #3

- **One optional REDO is DUE by 9 p.m. Sunday, April 12.**

WEEK 14

Tuesday, April 14: Quiz #3

Thursday, April 16: Critique Assignment #11 Event

- **Return UF camera kits to Equipment Steve in room G-020 by 3 p.m.**

WEEK 15

Tuesday, April 21: Watch Assignment #12 Final Projects