



**Center for International Programs and Sustainability Studies**

**Course name: Cultural Photography**

**Course code: PHOT 2130**

**Total contact hours: 48**

**Pre-requisites: None**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The objective of this class is for students to develop tools to experience, explore and document culture through photography.

Through this process students will consciously study and record their current surroundings from a more socially and historically aware perspective, as opposed to a superficial observation.

The basic functions of a camera are studied in order to have an efficient control when taking a photograph in any scenario, as well as the fundamentals of digital image manipulation.

Additionally, students will reflect on the definition of culture, as well as the ethics involved in capturing images of other people and their surroundings.

Through this process, students will be able to approach cultural exploration while taking into consideration creative as well as the human aspect of photographic creation.

## **AUDIENCE**

This course is structured for International Students attending the Study Abroad program at Universidad Veritas. However, courses are not exclusive to foreigners so a few native students could enroll in this course. Some of the courses are also taught in Spanish as part of our Bachelors in Sustainability Management.

This is a theoretical-practical course and explores/responds to the following inquiry according to the professional/disciplinary profile:

**How to create photographic images in a social context that takes into account its cultural background, while also aiming to eliciting an emotional reaction in the viewer?**

In order to respond these questions, we will study the following **generative topics**:

- Basic knowledge of the functions of the camera and fundamental concepts of photography (Exposure control, depth of field, focal length, among others).
- Basic digital image editing and manipulation.
- Understanding the basis of design and photographic composition.
- Ethics of the image and photography.
- Importance of cultural heritage documentation and its impact on the dissemination and preservation of culture.
- Practical application of cultural photography in the Costa Rican context.

Throughout the course the following **skills** will be promoted:

- Ability to properly use a range of photographic cameras: from mobile phone cameras to professional cameras.
- Ability to promote the correct and ethical use of photography.
- Ability to observe and analyze the environment in greater detail.
- Ability to analyze the impact of cultural photography on social networks and other publications.

Among the **values and attitudes** that will be promoted among students are the following:

- Creative thinking.
- In depth observation.
- Collateral thinking.
- Communicative intelligence.
- Empathy for social situations within a community.
- Interest in learning to learn.

### **COMPETENCIES, CRITERIA AND EVIDENCE**

The competencies for the Veritas University are reflexive and integral actions that respond to the professional profile and to the problems of the context, with suitability and ethical commitment, integrating the know how to be, the know-how to do, and the know how to know in a perspective of improvement.

Below are both the disciplinary and general competencies, linked to their criteria and evidence of performance for this course.

<b>Type of competences</b>	<b>Performance criteria (Sub-competences)</b>	<b>Learning Assessments</b>
<b>Disciplinary</b> Integrate the technical knowledge of the camera with the rules of composition and study of the subject in order to create a well-planned photograph.	Understand the operation of a camera as well as its different functions.	Practical exercises.
	Discuss the work of photographers, who work on the topic of cultural and humanitarian photography.	Study of photographers. Research report.
	Promote the revision of ethical issues related to photography.	Class discussion on ethics.

General		
Integrates the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to learn continuously throughout life, considering the effective development in the knowledge society.	Learning to learn.	Daily in class photography practice.
Integrates the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to learn interpersonal communication techniques.	Communicate thoughts of the discipline orally, iconically, and in written form.	Register of thematic discussion.
Integrates the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to learn teamwork and leadership techniques.	Execute teamwork and leadership.	Register of collaborative work.
Integrates the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to learn interpersonal communication techniques.	Relate well to others. Manage and solve conflicts. Negotiate reliably and empathetically. Speak responsibly. Listen attentively.	Presentation of research.  Participatory workshop on regulatory frameworks and their practical application.

## **COURSE CONTENT**

### **Unit 1. Basic knowledge of the functions of the camera and fundamental concepts of photography**

- 1.1 Brief history of photography and its impact.
- 1.2 Theory of photography (ISO, aperture, shutter speed, exposure control, depth of field, focal length, among others).
- 1.3 Practical examples of photography.

### **Unit 2. Culture and photography**

- 2.1 Definition of culture and subculture.
- 2.2 Influence of photography in the documentation and conservation of cultural heritage.

### **Unit 3. Understanding the bases of photographic composition**

- 3.1 Theoretical and conceptual bases of composition.
- 3.2 Practical aspects of photographic composition.

### **Unit 4. Digital image editing and manipulation**

- 4.1 Definition and basic aspects of a digital image.
- 4.2 Basic image editing.

### **Unit 5. Essay and documentary photography**

- 5.1 Definition of essay and documentary photography.
- 5.2 Outstanding essay and documentary photographers.

## **Unit 6. Ethic foundations of image and photography**

- 6.1 Basic foundations of Author Copyrights in photography.
- 6.2 Case studies illustrating ethic-related problems in photography.

## **Unit 7. Practical application of cultural photography in the Costa Rican context**

- 7.1 Guided tours to practice cultural photography and street photography.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This course implements a methodology that integrates the correct control of manual camera functions with the analysis of the Costa Rican culture from its most daily version to the nationalist vision of it, in a university context where you can practice freely within an ethical framework.

The students develop a personal methodology to create images within a cultural context, through the technical and compositional study of the image.

The role of the professor is to mediate, facilitate and guide the teaching and learning process, allowing students to build and self-regulate learning, based on their previous and significant knowledge; the student is active, the teaching-learning process is collective and socialized. It also fosters social integration, the development of group work skills, community feeling and respect, without neglecting individualization.

This methodology is supported epistemically in the learning model by comprehensive competences and promotes communication, research, mediation and negotiation skills, through participatory workshops to solve problems and practical cases.

## EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

In order to guarantee good development of the course, therefore, to guarantee learning, the following resources are available: an updated bibliographic database, multimedia equipment that students can use for their individual presentations; whiteboards and other school equipment for weekly sessions, and readings provided by the educator. Most of the lessons will take place in the classroom. During independent work periods, students will be able to attend the institution.

A campus library, study rooms, and computer labs are available for the students' independent work time. Free Wi-Fi connection for students, educators, and staff is 15 provided on campus, which gives students the possibility to work not only in the library or computer labs, but also around campus.

## LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Evaluation compiles and evaluates evidence by taking into account feedback providing pre-established criteria. The course evaluation must be aligned with the competencies and the teaching methodology. There is a rubric for each evaluation resource. Even though the rubric grants a grade, it is also a quantitative and qualitative description of the students' performance. The rubrics include the core and discipline key competences

ASSIGNMENTS	PERCENTAGE
Practical exercises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Self-portrait (pt. 1) 5%</li> <li>○ Self-portrait (pt. 2) 5%</li> <li>○ Focal length and perspective 5%</li> <li>○ Shutter speed 5%</li> <li>○ Depth of field 5%</li> <li>○ Photographic composition 10%</li> <li>○ Lighting 10%</li> </ul>	<b>55%</b>

○ Camera effects 10%	
Classwork: ○ Classroom participation 5% ○ Presentation on personal cultures 5%	<b>10%</b>
Research: ○ Identification and analysis of the work of an outstanding photographer related to cultural photography	<b>10%</b>
Final Project	<b>25%</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **LEARNING STRATEGIES AND RUBRICS**

The following learning strategies will be developed:

### **1. Self portrait**

Students will create a photographic self-portrait that depicts one or several aspects of their personality. They may not physically appear in the self-portrait. There are two self-portraits, one due the second class and the second one due on the very last class of the course. Each one accounts for 5% of the final grade.

### **2. Focal length and perspective**

Students will create a set of 2 images. Both images will depict the same scene, one will be shot with a short focal length and the other one with a long focal length. All images must



depict a single specific aspect of costarican culture. The assignment accounts for 5% of the final grade.

Indicator			
Composition and communication. The composition of the image allows for a clear communicative intention.	3 pts. Optimal The composition of the image allows for a clear communicative intention.	2 pts. Acceptable The composition of the image partially allows for a clear communicative intention.	0 pts. Insufficient The composition of the image doesn't allow for a clear communicative intention.
Technical aspects. The image is correctly focused and exposed.	2 pts. Optimal The image is correctly focused and exposed.	1 pts. Acceptable The image is partially focused and/or exposed.	0 pts. Insufficient The image is not correctly focused nor exposed.

### 3. Shutter speed

Students will create a set of 3 images:

- One showing blurred subject.
- One showing blurred background.
- One showing 'frozen' motion. For this image they must make sure to depicting a scene which is evidently in motion (i.e. avoid a car rolling on the street or an electric fan).

All 3 images will show an aspect of Costa Rican culture and there must be a clear relation between the three images. The assignment accounts for 5% of the final grade.

#### 4. Depth of field

Students will create a set of 4 images:

- Two images with a long depth of field.
- Two images with a short depth of field.

It is necessary for the images' depth of field (whether short or long) to be **as obvious as possible**. All images will show an aspect of Costa Rican culture and there must be a clear relation between the images. The assignment accounts for 5% of the final grade.

#### 5. Photographic composition

From the pictures taken during the field trip downtown, students will select three images and analyze their composition according to the parameters studied in class. For each of the previous pictures they will create a new image that follows the same composition parameters. Students will upload all 6 images. The assignment accounts for 10% of the final grade.

#### 6. Lighting

Students will create a set of two images of the same person. Each image will depict the person with drastically different lighting. In both images the person will display the same pose from the same camera angle. The person will stand out from the background as much as possible, by taking into consideration depth of field, composition, exposure, etc. The assignment accounts for 10% of the final grade.

#### 7. Camera effects

Students will create two different images using an in-camera effect. For each image they will submit two versions: with and without camera effect, for a total of four images. The images must be related to the selected topic of their Final Project. They may use the

techniques studied in class, or explore some new ones. They may also use their cell phone camera. The assignment accounts for 10% of the final grade.

### 8. Presentation on personal cultures

Students will create a presentation in which they will describe their own personal culture both at a macro (i.e., Country, State) and a micro level (i.e., school, neighborhood, family, interest groups). The presentation will last no longer than 10 minutes. The assignment accounts for 5% of the final grade.

<b>Indicator</b>			
The concept of culture The presentation conveys a clear understanding on the concept of culture and its application to a personal environment.	3 pts. Optimal The presentation conveys a clear understanding on the concept of culture and its application to a personal environment.	2 pts. Acceptable The presentation partially conveys a clear understanding on the concept of culture and/or its application to a personal environment.	0 pts. Insufficient The presentation doesn't convey a clear understanding on the concept of culture nor its application to a personal environment.
Presentation The presentation is exhibited in a clear manner.	2 pts. Optimal The presentation is exhibited in a clear manner.	1 pt. Acceptable The presentation is exhibited in a partially clear manner.	0 pts. Insufficient The presentation is not exhibited in a clear manner.

## 9. Identification and analysis of the work of an outstanding photographer related to cultural photography

Students will create a short presentation on one of the photographers proposed by the teacher, or they may also suggest another photographer.

The presentation will include a short biography, the reasons for the relevance of their work, as well as a sample of 6 to 10 images on a specific documentary, series, or essay. It will be presented in the classroom in no more than 10 minutes. The assignment accounts for 10% of the final grade.

Indicator			
Research The presentation conveys a clear and thorough research process on the photographer's career and their works.	6 pts. Optimal The presentation conveys a clear and thorough research process on the photographer's career and their works.	4 pts. Acceptable The presentation partially conveys a clear and thorough research process on the photographer's career and their works.	0 pts. Insufficient The presentation doesn't convey a clear and thorough research process on the photographer's career and their works.
Presentation The presentation is exhibited in a clear manner.	4 pts. Optimal The presentation is exhibited in a clear manner.	2 pts. Acceptable The presentation is exhibited in a partially clear manner.	0 pts. Insufficient The presentation is not exhibited in a partially clear manner.

## 10. Final Project

Students will select a specific aspect of Costa Rican culture and create a photographic essay consisting of 12 to 20 images. Digital color and contrast correction are encouraged. Also,

students may digitally edit a maximum of 4 images and said images must clearly indicate they were digitally altered.

## ASSESSMENT

Competency assessment is the process by which evidence is collected and a judgment or opinion is made, considering pre-established criteria to give feedback in order to improve the suitability of the course or program. The evaluation of the course must be coherent with the competences and the teaching methodology. For each item of evaluation there is a rubric, which, although it gives a score, is a quantitative and qualitative description of the student's performance. The rubrics include the performance criteria of the general and disciplinary competences.

## ATTENDANCE

### Regarding classes:

1. Students are only allowed a two (2) **non-consecutive (back-to-back) class absences**. A student shall fail the course if more than two absences are registered by the professor. Administration does not control attendance.
2. Three **late arrivals** to class (arrival after the first 15 minutes) are treated as one absence. Attending class 30 minutes late without an official justification will also count as an absence.
3. In the case of an **absence from any assignment evaluated in class** (presentations, evaluations, field trips, etc.) a student will be given a grade of zero unless an official document is presented within **one week** of the absence.
4. If a student presents an official document to excuse the absence, the missed assignment is to be presented on that same day.

**Regarding field trips:**

5. An unjustified **absence on a field trip** will immediately result in the loss of all points assigned to that specific trip. However, if an official document justifying the absence is presented, 50% of the assignment points may be obtained upon presentation of a complementary research assignment, to be agreed upon with the professor, within one week of the field trip.
6. An absence on a field trip may be justified should two course field trips coincide. In such a case, and to avoid losing points, students shall be able to opt for carrying out a research assignment.

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

Professors have the right to expel a student from the classroom should he / she/ they:

1. Be disruptive in the classroom.
2. Behave in a disrespectful way.
3. Be under the influence of alcohol.
4. Be under the influence of any illegal drug.
5. Shows hygiene or odor problems that may disturb other students.

**ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

The use of cell phones, smartphones, or other mobile communication devices is disruptive and is therefore prohibited during class. **Please turn all devices OFF and put them away** when class begins. Devices may be used only when the professor assigns a specific activity and allows the use of devices for internet search or recording. Those who fail to comply with the rule must leave the classroom for the remainder of the class period. Using devices while the professor or other peers are lecturing, or presenting is perceived as a lack of interest and disrespectful.

## STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM POLICIES

The student must comply with the provisions of the Study Abroad Program Policies available on the Canvas platform.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

**Omohundro, J. T.** (2008). *Thinking like an anthropologist: a practical introduction to cultural anthropology*. Boston [u.a.: McGraw Hill.

The complete guide to outdoor photography. (2002). Newton Abbot: David & Charles.

**London, B.** (2002). *Photography* (7<sup>a</sup> ed.). Estados Unidos: Prentice Hall. [IMF.T 0055]

**McCollough, F.** (2008). *Complete Guide to High Dynamic Range Digital Photography*. United States: Lark Books. [IMF.W 0056]

**Varis, L.** (2001). *Digital Photography for Creative Professionals: From photo shoot to image output*. Estados Unidos: Rockport. [IMF.W 0002]

## CHRONOGRAM

Week	Session	Content	Teaching Strategy	Assignment	Due Assignment
1	1 May 31	A brief history of photography and its impact. What is a camera? Basic camera	Presentation of the course. Topic analysis Lecture	Self portrait pt.1	

		components Basic camera functions: focus, shooting modes.	Practice Exercises		
	2 Jun 2	Optics and lenses: Focal length and perspective. Photographic exposure: Shutter speed and f stop.	Lecture Practice Exercises	Focal length and perspective	Self portrait pt.1
2	3 Jun 7	Photographic exposure: ISO Exposure compensation Definition of Culture	Lecture Practice Exercises Class discussion	Shutter speed	Focal length and perspective
	4 Jun 9	Depth of field Field trip: From Veritas to the Central Market	Lecture Practice Exercises Field work	Depth of field	Shutter speed
3	5 Jun 14	Photographic composition	Lecture Practice Exercises	Photographic composition	Depth of field
	6 Jun 16	Principles of digital imaging Digital image editing	Lecture Practice Exercises		Photographic composition
	Jun 18	Field trip: From a Farmer's Market to a mall	Field work		



4	7 Jun 21	Introduction to photographic lighting The camera flash Documentary and essay photography	Lecture Practice Exercises	Lighting Outstanding photographers Final project	Lighting
	8 Jun 23	Camera effects Presentation on outstanding photographers	Lecture Practice Exercises Student presentations Final project review	Camera effects Personal cultures	Outstanding photographers
	Jun 25	Field trip: San Ramón de Alajuela	Field work		
5	9 Jun 28	Ethics and photography Presentation on personal cultures Final project review	Lecture Student presentations Final project review		Camera effects Personal cultures
	10 Jun 30	Final project evaluation Course review			Final project Self-portrait