

# SM3735: ALTERNATIVE PROCESS IN PHOTOGRAPHY

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## Effective Term

Semester A 2026/27

## Part I Course Overview

### Course Title

Alternative Process in Photography

### Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

### Course Number

3735

### Academic Unit

School of Creative Media (SM)

### College/School

School of Creative Media (SM)

### Course Duration

One Semester

### Credit Units

3

### Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

### Medium of Instruction

English

### Medium of Assessment

English

### Prerequisites

SM1013 Introduction to Photography

### Precursors

Nil

### Equivalent Courses

Nil

### Exclusive Courses

Nil

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

With the advanced development of cameras, picture-taking has been simplified as a “press-a-button” process just to secure a “perfect” image. The craftsmanship of photography has been basically minimised in order to allow this instant activity. However, the loss of this craftsmanship may reduce the creative medium of photography into a tool of mass production of images only.

This course aims at re-discovering the creative possibility by exploring hands-on the essence of photography as its literal origin “drawing with light”. You will learn to use and experiment with historic and alternative processes in photography of pre-digital era and explore the archetypical possibilities of the photographic medium on your own. We will use historical processes inside and outside the darkroom to understand the magic of analogue photographic image creation. You will build your own camera, mix your own light sensitive emulsion, experiment with different techniques and chemicals, transfer instant photographs and finally explore what lies beyond our visible spectrum.

You are invited to combine these techniques with new media and develop an independent project by applying one or more experimental techniques.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

| CILOs |                                                                                                                                      | Weighting (if app.) | DEC-A1 | DEC-A2 | DEC-A3 |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| 1     | Learn the basics of creating images with light                                                                                       |                     | x      | x      |        |
| 2     | Explore creativity in contrast to sophisticated programmes offered by high-end professional machines for image production            |                     | x      |        |        |
| 3     | Explore:<br>Alternative processes inside and outside the darkroom<br>Develop your photographic vision beyond ordinary image creation |                     | x      | x      |        |
| 4     | Experiment with non-silver photographic printing                                                                                     |                     |        | x      |        |
| 5     | Associate, combine and integrate practical knowledge of optics and chemistry into the assignments                                    |                     |        | x      | x      |

#### A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

#### A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

#### A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

### Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

| LTAs |                      | Brief Description                                                                                                         | CILO No. | Hours/week (if applicable) |
|------|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------|
| 1    | Lecture presentation | Techniques and results of different media will be introduced with work examples of early masters and contemporary artists | 1, 2     | 1                          |

|   |                    |                                                                                                         |         |   |
|---|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---|
| 2 | Workshop practice  | A series of workshops based on different techniques and approaches provides all the hands-on knowledge. | 3, 4, 5 | 1 |
| 3 | Classroom critique | Sharing and reflecting on assignments with immediate responses on learning and teaching.                | 2, 3, 5 | 1 |

**Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)**

|   | ATs                                                                                                              | CILO No. | Weighting (%) | Remarks ("- for nil entry) | Allow Use of GenAI? |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Cyanotype                                                                                                        | 1        | 10            | -                          | No                  |
| 2 | Pinhole photography                                                                                              | 2, 5     | 10            | -                          | No                  |
| 3 | Polaroid Manipulation                                                                                            | 3, 5     | 10            | -                          | No                  |
| 4 | Considerate and sustainable imaging and darkroom techniques (Chemigram, anthotypes, alternative developers, etc) | 3, 5     | 10            | -                          | Yes                 |
| 5 | Advanced darkroom techniques (Solarisation, Sandwiching, Colouring, Toning, Photogram, etc)                      | 4        | 10            | -                          | No                  |
| 6 | Independent project, concept development, execution and presentation                                             | 3, 5     | 40            | -                          | Yes                 |
| 7 | Class participation, workshop practice, presentation                                                             | 3, 4, 5  | 10            | -                          | No                  |

**Continuous Assessment (%)**

100

**Examination (%)**

0

**Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)**

0

**Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)**

0

**Assessment Rubrics (AR)****Assessment Task**

## 1. Photo Project

**Criterion**

Students should demonstrate ability to utilize primary and secondary sources, execute creative ideas and projects. The threshold of ‘discovery’ lies in a student’s proactively turning theory into praxis, to transform course material into self-owned authorship.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

- Work has strong affective quality and the articulation of personal styles and signature
- Excellent appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Work raises questions and instill insights about the process of conception, creative strategization and production
- Innovative exploration by combining knowledge from different disciplines (e.g. mathematics, psychology, physics, anthropology, etc.) to create an inter-disciplinary project
- Efficient adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available with constructive adjustment

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

- Strong appreciation, exploration and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Proper adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available and constructive feedback/ suggestions

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

- Basic appreciation and/or application of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Limited ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

**Marginal (D)**

- Marginal appreciation of the aesthetic and expressive qualities of the medium
- Marginal ability to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Limited adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

**Failure (F)**

- No appreciation of the aesthetics and expressive qualities of the medium
- Fail to create project/ work that demonstrate the processes of thinking and creative exploration
- Minimal adjustment of plans and strategies in response to resources (time, space, equipment, etc) available

**Additional Information for AR**

All A+/A/A- grade assignment should comply with the highest performance of discovery-oriented learning, motivation and perfectionism to achieve the final result.

**Part III Other Information****Keyword Syllabus**

Pinhole camera

Cyanotype

Chemigram

Polaroid emulsion transfer

Advances darkroom techniques, Solarisation, sandwiching, toning, photograms

Sustainable darkroom practices

Independent creative project

## Reading List

### Compulsory Readings

| Title |                                                                                                                                   |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | Airey, Theresa, Creative photo printmaking. New York: Amphoto Books, 1996. TR330 .A37 1996                                        |
| 2     | Lahue, Kalton C., Darkroom techniques. Los Angeles: Petersen Pub. Co., c1973. TR148 .L34 1973                                     |
| 3     | James, Christopher, The book of alternative photographic processes. Albany, N.Y.: Delmar/Thomson Learning, c2002. TR350 .J35 2002 |
| 4     | Renner, Eric, Pinhole photography: rediscovering a historic technique. Burlington, Mass.: Focal Press, c2004. TR268 .R46 2004     |
| 5     | White, Minor, Minor White: rites & passages. Millerton, N.Y.: Aperture, c1978. C0323761                                           |
| 6     | Snelling, Henry: The History and Practice of the Art of Photography, 1849                                                         |

### Additional Readings

| Title |                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1     | Artists for further study about cyanotype: Anna Atkins, Christian Marclay,                                                                                                                                         |
| 2     | Artists for further study about pinhole camera: Paolo Gioli, William Anne Wright, Lesley Krane, Thomas Bachler, Ruth Thorne-Thomsen                                                                                |
| 3     | Artists for further study about polaroid manipulations: Ellen Carrey, Chuck Close, Lucas Samaras                                                                                                                   |
| 4     | Artists for further study about darkroom effects: Man Ray, Richard Caldicott, Ansel Adams, William Henry Fox Talbot, David Miller, Tim Noble & Sue Webster, Christian Boltanski, Helen Chadwick, Hiroshi Sugimoto. |
| 5     | Artists for further study about infrared photography: Minor White, Weegee                                                                                                                                          |
| 6     | Artists for further study about Chemigram: Pierre Cordier                                                                                                                                                          |
| 7     | Flusser, Vilém, Towards a philosophy of photography. London : Reaktion, c2000. TR183 .F5813 2000                                                                                                                   |
| 8     | George Eastman Museum, Videos of Historic Processes and workshops                                                                                                                                                  |
| 9     | Alternative Processes Overview <a href="https://www.alternativephotography.com/">https://www.alternativephotography.com/</a>                                                                                       |