

DES103 Fundamentals of Photography

School: School of Business and Creative Industries

2026 | Trimester 1

UniSC Sunshine Coast
UniSC Moreton Bay

**BLENDED
LEARNING**

Most of your course is on campus but you may be able to do some components of this course online.

Online

ONLINE

You can do this course without coming onto campus, unless your program has specified a mandatory onsite requirement.

Please go to usc.edu.au for up to date information on the teaching sessions and campuses where this course is usually offered.

1. What is this course about?

1.1. Description

This course will develop your understanding of the foundations of contemporary photographic practices. You will learn practical and theoretical skills which will allow you to gain an understanding of composition, exposure, light and narrative whilst developing the ability to reflect upon and critically analyse your work. Through experimentation with different techniques and genres, you will explore a diversity of approaches to the creation of photographic imagery and gain an understanding of the ways in which photographic practices influence political, cultural and social ideas.

1.2. How will this course be delivered?

ACTIVITY	HOURS	BEGINNING WEEK	FREQUENCY
BLENDED LEARNING			
Learning materials – Interactive online learning activities.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Scheduled face to face workshops.	2hrs	Week 1	10 times
Seminar – Scheduled face to face seminars.	2hrs	Week 5	2 times
ONLINE			
Learning materials – Interactive online learning activities.	1hr	Week 1	12 times
Tutorial/Workshop 1 – Scheduled online workshops (Recorded).	2hrs	Week 1	10 times
Seminar – Scheduled online seminars (Recorded).	2hrs	Week 5	2 times

1.3. Course Topics

Camera techniques; visual literacy; exposure triangle; composition; depth and perspective; light (artificial and natural); genres; portraiture; ethics; professional practices.

2. What level is this course?

100 Level (Introductory)

Engaging with discipline knowledge and skills at foundational level, broad application of knowledge and skills in familiar contexts and with support. Limited or no prerequisites. Normally, associated with the first full-time study year of an undergraduate program.

3. What is the unit value of this course?

12 units

4. How does this course contribute to my learning?

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES	GRADUATE QUALITIES
On successful completion of this course, you should be able to...	Completing these tasks successfully will contribute to you becoming...
1 Identify and reflect on historical, cultural and contemporary photography practices and apply this understanding to your own image making and its influence in communication, art, science and industry.	Creative and critical thinker
2 Explain the relationship between content and form in photographs and consider this when reading images	Knowledgeable
3 Demonstrate an understanding of digital small format cameras including operation, various lighting techniques and methods for constructing composition.	Empowered
4 Understand the ethical and professional implications of photography and its relationship to image making, including the ways in which photographs can be used to help address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).	Ethical

5. Am I eligible to enrol in this course?

Refer to the [UniSC Glossary of terms](#) for definitions of “pre-requisites, co-requisites and anti-requisites”.

5.1. Pre-requisites

Not applicable

5.2. Co-requisites

Not applicable

5.3. Anti-requisites

Not applicable

5.4. Specific assumed prior knowledge and skills (where applicable)

Not applicable

6. How am I going to be assessed?

6.1. Grading Scale

Standard Grading (GRD)

High Distinction (HD), Distinction (DN), Credit (CR), Pass (PS), Fail (FL).

6.2. Details of early feedback on progress

Students will receive early feedback from week three and ongoing throughout the course.

6.3. Assessment tasks

DELIVERY MODE	TASK NO.	ASSESSMENT PRODUCT	INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP	WEIGHTING %	WHAT IS THE DURATION / LENGTH?	WHEN SHOULD I SUBMIT?	WHERE SHOULD I SUBMIT IT?
All	1	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece	Individual	30%	12 images and reflective journal	Week 5	Online Submission
All	2	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece	Individual	35%	12 images and written reflective journal	Week 9	Online Submission
All	3	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece	Individual	35%	10 images, reflective journal (including weekly task activity submission).	Week 12	Online Submission

All - Assessment Task 1: Creative Compositions

GOAL:	Composition is the foundation upon which we build our photo images by arranging, organising and combining the visual elements within the picture area to produce a harmonious and pleasing photograph. The goal for Assessment Task 1 is to develop your understanding of the methods required to create pictorial balance essential to image making.		
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece		
FORMAT:	To help with this understanding you are asked to: Identify a number of methods of composition learnt from class tutorials and your personal exploration, such as rule of thirds, colour, shape, form, contrast, and point of focus, converging lines and others you might incorporate. You are to photograph a series of images 12 using a variety of these methods and provide a written reflective journal. Please see Canvas for full details.		
CRITERIA:	No.		Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Interpretation, originality and innovation of creative compositional methods used.	2
	2	Depth of knowledge of technical capabilities both in camera and post-production software.	3
	3	Quality and depth of exploration for composition including historical or ethical considerations and appropriate scholarly referencing in reflective journal.	1 4
	4	Engagement in image creation and ability to employ visual literacy skills in crafting the visual concepts.	1 2 3 4
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Organisation		

All - Assessment Task 2: Light Exposure - artificial and natural light photographic portfolio

GOAL:	Light is essential to photography and is a photographer's most important consideration when taking images either in natural light or the warm glow of incandescent light. The goal for Task 2 is to introduce you to how the eye and lens perceive the colour spectrum under various lighting conditions and to photographically experiment with a range of artificial and natural lighting conditions.	
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece	
FORMAT:	To practise using light you are required to: experiment and photograph 12 of images that best describe a broad range of the colour spectrum in various lighting conditions across both natural and artificial light. This will be submitted with a reflective journal. Please see Canvas for full details.	
CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Understanding of light as demonstrated by images which show appropriate choices of natural and artificial light. 2
	2	Depth of knowledge of technical capabilities both in camera and post-production software. 3
	3	Quality and depth of exploration for light including historical or ethical considerations and appropriate scholarly referencing in reflective journal. 1 4
	4	Engagement in image creation and ability to employ visual literacy skills in crafting the visual concepts. 1 2 3 4
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Applying technologies	

All - Assessment Task 3: Urban Landscape Photography

GOAL:	Both street photography and urban documentary use the art of observation and documentation of chance encounters in everyday life. This portfolio draws on the skills you have gained already in the course by thinking on your feet to recognise good composition, work with existing natural and/or artificial light and make technical decisions quickly. Your goal is to authentically and ethically create interesting and engaging images which capture the social landscape within the urban environment.	
PRODUCT:	Artefact - Creative, and Written Piece	
FORMAT:	Create a portfolio of 10 images which engage with the social landscape and sit within the broader street and urban photographic genres. You will submit a video critical reflection to accompany the images. Please see Canvas for full details.	
CRITERIA:	No.	Learning Outcome assessed
	1	Understanding, originality and innovation in the interpretation of the genre and stylistic elements of street and urban landscape photography. 2
	2	Depth of knowledge of technical capabilities both in camera and post-production software. 3
	3	Engagement in image creation and ability to employ visual literacy skills in crafting the visual concepts. 1 2 3 4
	4	Quality and depth of exploration of the genres including historical or ethical considerations and appropriate scholarly referencing in reflective journal. 1 4
GENERIC SKILLS:	Communication, Applying technologies	

7. Directed study hours

A 12-unit course will have total of 150 learning hours which will include directed study hours (including online if required), self-directed learning and completion of assessable tasks. Student workload is calculated at 12.5 learning hours per one unit.

8. What resources do I need to undertake this course?

Please note: Course information, including specific information of recommended readings, learning activities, resources, weekly readings, etc. are available on the course Canvas site– Please log in as soon as possible.

8.1. Prescribed text(s) or course reader

There are no required/recommended resources for this course.

8.2. Specific requirements

This course requires some commercial software or hardware which is provided at USC campuses for student use. If you elect to do this course online, you may either; attend a campus at which it is available, discuss alternative open source solutions with your course coordinator that would enable you to demonstrate the learning outcomes, or if you prefer you may acquire this software and / or hardware at your own expense.

9. How are risks managed in this course?

Risk assessments have been performed for all field activities and low to moderate levels of health and safety risk exists. Moderate risks may include working in an Australian bush setting, working with people, working outside normal office hours for example. It is your responsibility to review course material, search online, discuss with lecturers and peers and understand the health and safety risks associated with your specific course of study and to familiarise yourself with the University's general health and safety principles by reviewing the [online induction training for students](#), and following the instructions of the University staff.

10. What administrative information is relevant to this course?

10.1. Assessment: Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the ethical standard of university participation. It ensures that students graduate as a result of proving they are competent in their discipline. This is integral in maintaining the value of academic qualifications. Each industry has expectations and standards of the skills and knowledge within that discipline and these are reflected in assessment.

Academic integrity means that you do not engage in any activity that is considered to be academic fraud; including plagiarism, collusion or outsourcing any part of any assessment item to any other person. You are expected to be honest and ethical by completing all work yourself and indicating in your work which ideas and information were developed by you and which were taken from others. You cannot provide your assessment work to others. You are also expected to provide evidence of wide and critical reading, usually by using appropriate academic references.

In order to minimise incidents of academic fraud, this course may require that some of its assessment tasks, when submitted to Canvas, are electronically checked through Turnitin. This software allows for text comparisons to be made between your submitted assessment item and all other work to which Turnitin has access.

10.2. Assessment: Additional Requirements

Eligibility for Supplementary Assessment

Your eligibility for supplementary assessment in a course is dependent of the following conditions applying:

- (a) The final mark is in the percentage range 47% to 49.4%; and
- (b) The course is graded using the Standard Grading scale

10.3. Assessment: Submission penalties

Late submissions may be penalised up to and including the following maximum percentage of the assessment task's identified value, with weekdays and weekends included in the calculation of days late:

- (a) One day: deduct 5%;
- (b) Two days: deduct 10%;
- (c) Three days: deduct 20%;
- (d) Four days: deduct 40%;
- (e) Five days: deduct 60%;
- (f) Six days: deduct 80%;
- (g) Seven days: A result of zero is awarded for the assessment task.

The following penalties will apply for a late submission for an online examination:

- Less than 15 minutes: No penalty
- From 15 minutes to 30 minutes: 20% penalty
- More than 30 minutes: 100% penalty

10.4. SafeUniSC

UniSC is committed to a culture of respect and providing a safe and supportive environment for all members of our community. For immediate assistance on campus contact SafeUniSC by phone: [07 5430 1168](tel:0754301168) or using the [SafeZone](#) app. For general enquires contact the SafeUniSC team by phone [07 5456 3864](tel:0754563864) or email safe@usc.edu.au.

The SafeUniSC Specialist Service is a Student Wellbeing service that provides free and confidential support to students who may have experienced or observed behaviour that could cause fear, offence or trauma. To contact the service call [07 5430 1226](tel:0754301226) or email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au.

10.5. Study help

For help with course-specific advice, for example what information to include in your assessment, you should first contact your tutor, then your course coordinator, if needed.

If you require additional assistance, the Learning Advisers are trained professionals who are ready to help you develop a wide range of academic skills. Visit the [Learning Advisers](#) web page for more information, or contact Student Central for further assistance: +61 7 5430 2890 or studentcentral@usc.edu.au.

10.6. Wellbeing Services

Student Wellbeing provide free and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal, academic, social and psychological matters, to foster positive mental health and wellbeing for your academic success.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email studentwellbeing@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 1226.

10.7. AccessAbility Services

Ability Advisers ensure equal access to all aspects of university life. If your studies are affected by a disability, learning disorder mental health issue, injury or illness, or you are a primary carer for someone with a disability or who is considered frail and aged, [AccessAbility Services](#) can provide access to appropriate reasonable adjustments and practical advice about the support and facilities available to you throughout the University.

To book a confidential appointment go to [Student Hub](#), email AccessAbility@usc.edu.au or call 07 5430 2890.

10.8. Links to relevant University policy and procedures

For more information on Academic Learning & Teaching categories including:

- Assessment: Courses and Coursework Programs
- Review of Assessment and Final Grades
- Supplementary Assessment
- Central Examinations
- Deferred Examinations
- Student Conduct
- Students with a Disability

For more information, visit <https://www.usc.edu.au/explore/policies-and-procedures#academic-learning-and-teaching>

10.9. Student Charter

UniSC is committed to excellence in teaching, research and engagement in an environment that is inclusive, inspiring, safe and respectful. The [Student Charter](#) sets out what students can expect from the University, and what in turn is expected of students, to achieve these outcomes.

10.10. General Enquiries

In person:

- **UniSC Sunshine Coast** - Student Central, Ground Floor, Building C, 90 Sippy Downs Drive, Sippy Downs
- **UniSC Moreton Bay** - Service Centre, Ground Floor, Foundation Building, Gympie Road, Petrie
- **UniSC SouthBank** - Student Central, Building A4 (SW1), 52 Merivale Street, South Brisbane
- **UniSC Gympie** - Student Central, 71 Cartwright Road, Gympie
- **UniSC Fraser Coast** - Student Central, Student Central, Building A, 161 Old Maryborough Rd, Hervey Bay
- **UniSC Caboolture** - Student Central, Level 1 Building J, Cnr Manley and Tallon Street, Caboolture

Tel: +61 7 5430 2890

Email: studentcentral@usc.edu.au