



# Digital Photojournalism Curriculum

Board Approved: March 21, 2024

## Course Information

### Course Description:

Students will explore all aspects of visual journalism in a hands-on, real-world application of portrait, sports, and news photography. Topics covered will include visual composition, operation of equipment, computer editing programs, and media law and ethics. Work produced in this course will be published on multiple student-produced media platforms and offer opportunities for wider recognition and visibility. This course prepares students to produce a variety of visual journalism artifacts for various purposes.

### Transfer Goals:

- Understand the impact of storytelling in photography and how that can be used to enhance publications.
- Demonstrate ability to adhere to media law and ethics.
- Understand how to compose an image using digital media tools.
- Demonstrate understanding of how to effectively and ethically edit photos.

**Curriculum Standards:** [Missouri Learning Standards for English Language Arts 9-12](#)

**Curriculum Resource(s):** N/A

*Priority standards indicated in **bold***

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# Family Notification Procedures

<b>Grades 9-12</b>	<p><b><u>Whole Class Books</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Titles for books that will be assigned to a whole class will be available on Canvas and on course overviews/syllabi. If this changes during the class term, families will be notified.</li><li>• If a teacher plans to offer a choice from a small set of pre-identified books, those titles will be available on Canvas and on course overviews/syllabi. If this changes during the class term, families will be notified.</li></ul> <p><b><u>Library Books</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Families may contact their school's library media specialists to sign up for email notices in Destiny to be made aware of books checked out from district libraries.</li><li>• <a href="#">How Parents/Guardians Can Monitor Student Book Selections</a></li></ul> <p><b><u>Open Choice Books</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• When a class begins a unit involving the selection of open-choice books, teachers notify families and prompt them to ask their students.</li><li>• For classes where students can select choice books at a faster pace, teachers will send quarterly emails to families reminding them to regularly ask their students.</li></ul>
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# Unit 1: Basics of Photo Composition

Timeframe: 1-2 weeks

**Unit Description:** Students will understand how to use photo composition (rule of thirds, perspective, emotion) techniques to make their photographs more effective and powerful.

**Enduring Understandings:**

*Students will understand...*

- how to employ composition techniques when making a photo.
- how composition techniques affect a reader's understanding.
- that paired with technical knowledge, photographers can use artistic composition techniques to make their photos.

**Essential Questions:**

- Why do photographers use photo composition techniques?
- How do these techniques make photographers' photos better?
- How can I use composition and technical knowledge together to make better photos?

## Unit 1 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
<a href="#">SL1C</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can respond in a thoughtful way to different perspectives, including those I encounter in various forms of media.</li> <li>• I can summarize the points where I agree or disagree with others.</li> <li>• I can recognize when I need more information or research to fully understand the topic or make a well-informed judgment.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">SL2C</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>I can plan and deliver appropriate presentations concisely and logically based on the task, audience, and purpose.</b></li> <li>• <b>I can use multimedia in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.</b></li> </ul>
<a href="#">RI3D</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can read and comprehend informational text independently and proficiently.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">RI1A</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can draw conclusions, infer, and analyze by citing relevant and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">RI1B</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text using context, affixes, or reference materials.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">RI1C</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>I can look at visual elements in a text and understand what they mean. I can analyze them to draw conclusions and analyze the information they</b></li> </ul>

*Priority standards indicated in bold*

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	<b>convey.</b>
<a href="#">RL1A</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can use relevant evidence from the text to draw conclusions, make inferences, and analyze what the text is saying.</li> <li>● I can support my analysis by using specific and detailed examples from the text.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">RL1B</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can figure out what words and phrases mean in the text. I will use the context of the sentence, word parts, or look up definitions in reference materials to understand the meanings.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">RL1C</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can look at visual elements in a text and understand what they mean.</li> <li>● I can analyze them to make conclusions and understand the information they convey.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">W3A</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can review, revise, and edit my writing while considering the task, purpose, and audience.</li> </ul>

*Priority standards indicated in **bold***

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# Unit 2: Basics of Exposure/Camera Settings

Timeframe: 1-2 weeks

**Unit Description:** Students will understand how to use exposure/camera settings (ISO, f-stop, shutter speed, white balance) techniques (in conjunction with technical knowledge from Unit 1) to make their photographs more effective and powerful.

**Enduring Understandings:**

- How to set the proper shutter speed on a camera, in conjunction with the aperture, white balance and ISO.
- How to set the proper f-stop on a camera, in conjunction with the shutter speed, white balance and ISO.
- How to set the proper ISO on a camera, in conjunction with the shutter speed, white balance and aperture.
- How to set the proper white balance on a camera, in conjunction with ISO, shutter speed and f-stop.

**Essential Questions:**

- Why do photographers use exposure/camera setting techniques?
- How do these techniques make photographers' photos better?
- How can I use composition and technical knowledge together to make better photos?

**Unit 2 Standards**

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
<b>SL2C</b> , SL1C, RI3D, <b>RI1C</b> , R11B, RI1A, RL1C, RL1B, RL1A, <b>W3A</b> ,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the same “I can” statements as in the previous units.</li> </ul>

Priority standards indicated in **bold**

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# Unit 3: Basics of Editing Photos

Timeframe: 1-2 weeks

**Unit Description:** Students will understand how to use editing software like Adobe Lightroom or Photoshop (or free alternatives like GIMP) in an ethical photojournalistic way to improve their photographs.

**Enduring Understandings:**

- Cropping can both improve and decrease the quality of photos.
- Over-editing of photos can make readers disbelieve what they're seeing even when it is something the photojournalist captured and tried to illuminate.
- Using the editing sliders/menus/presets in software programs can make a photographer's photos look better.

**Essential Questions:**

- What is cropping and how can it affect my photos?
- How can altering my photo too much erode the reader's trust in what they're seeing?
- How can editing software make my photos look better?

## Unit 3 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
<b>SL2C</b> , SL1C, RI3D, RI1A, <b>RI1C</b> , RI1B, RL1C, RL1B, RL1A, <b>W3A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the same "I can" statements as in the previous units.</li> </ul>

Priority standards indicated in **bold**

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# Unit 4: Writing Captions

Timeframe: 1-2 weeks

**Unit Description:** Students will understand the purpose and format for writing a proper photojournalistic caption and its role in storytelling in the journalism setting.

**Enduring Understandings:**

- Captions are used with every published photo.
- Basic format is two sentences, one to describe action, the other to provide context to the reader.
- Captions are a vital layer in the storytelling process for photojournalists.

**Essential Questions:**

- What is a caption and why does every photo need one?
- What is the format for a caption?
- What is the role of a caption in telling the reader a story?

## Unit 4 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
<a href="#">RL2A</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can examine how an author decides to organize a story, arrange events, or play with the passage of time, and see how these choices affect the reader's experience.</li> <li>• I can analyze how the author's craft moves influence the way we feel, think, and understand the story.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">RL2C</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices and syntax on meaning and tone.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">RL2D</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can examine how characters in a story grow and change as the story progresses.</li> <li>• I can analyze how their actions, thoughts, and relationships with others shape the plot and contribute to the main ideas or messages of the story.</li> <li>• I can explore the themes of the text.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">RI1D</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can find the central ideas in a text. I can analyze the development throughout the text and provide explanations of the significance of the central ideas.</li> <li>• I can provide a short and unbiased summary of what the text is about.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">W1A</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>I can conduct research to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; gather multiple relevant, credible sources, print and digital; integrate information using a standard citation</b></li> </ul>

Priority standards indicated in **bold**

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	<p><b>system.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>I can gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.</b></li> </ul>
<a href="#">W2A</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can follow a writing process to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, style, and voice are appropriate to the task, audience, and purpose.</li> <li>● I can self-select and blend (when appropriate) previously learned genre (narrative, expository, and argumentative) writing techniques.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">W3A</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● I can review, revise, and edit my writing while considering the task, purpose, and audience.</li> </ul>

*Priority standards indicated in **bold***

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# Unit 5: News Photography

Timeframe: 1-2 weeks

**Unit Description:** Students will understand the elements of news and best practices for approaching news as a visual storyteller. They will be able to apply previous knowledge of composition and outline writing to new knowledge of how to ensure visual variety when capturing news. Students will also practice appropriate camera settings and journalistic skills necessary when approaching news subjects and events.

## Enduring Understandings:

- What news is and why it is important to capture visually.
- How news photography differs from other types of photography.
- How to apply prior knowledge of outline writing and composition, as well as tips from experienced photographers to enhance news photography skills.

## Essential Questions:

- How do I ensure visual variety when photographing news and why is that important?
- How are the professionals approaching news photography and how can I replicate those ideas in my environment?
- What makes news photography different from other types of photography that will change my approach to taking these kinds of photos?

## Unit 5 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
W1A, W2A, W3A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the same “I can” statements as in the previous units.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">RIIC</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can look at visual elements in a text and understand what they mean. I can analyze them to make conclusions and understand the information they convey.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">SL2C</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can plan and deliver appropriate presentations concisely and logically based on the task, audience, and purpose.</li> <li>• I can use multimedia in presentations to assist understanding of finding and to add interest.</li> </ul>

Priority standards indicated in **bold**

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# Unit 6: Sports Photography

Timeframe: 1-2 weeks

**Unit Description:** Students will understand the elements of news and best practices for approaching sports as a visual storyteller. They will be able to apply previous knowledge of composition and outline writing to new knowledge of how to ensure visual variety when capturing sports. Students will also practice appropriate camera settings and journalistic skills necessary when approaching sports games and topics.

## Enduring Understandings:

- The importance of shutter speed in addition to exposure balance with other settings to produce quality sports photos.
- Where photographers should be positioned on the fields and at games for optimal success in telling the story of those events.
- How sports photography should be approached comparatively with news and portrait digital journalism stories to tell the whole story.

## Essential Questions:

- What digital settings on our equipment are important to achieve the best sports photos?
- What do I need to do before, during and after taking sports photos for best results?
- How do I ensure visual variety as a sports photographer and why is that important?

## Unit 6 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
<b>RI1C</b> , W1A, W2A, <b>W3A</b> , <b>SL2C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the same “I can” statements from the previous unit.</li> </ul>

Priority standards indicated in **bold**

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# Unit 7: Portrait Photography

Timeframe: 1-2 weeks

**Unit Description:** Students will understand how to execute portrait photography sessions for journalistic assignments.

## Enduring Understandings:

- Working with subjects is a key to capturing great portraits.
- Thoroughly understanding the story being told is important to capturing an effective portrait photo.
- Careful thought must go into everything from how the subject is standing and what they are wearing to the location and the lighting.

## Essential Questions:

- What are strategies to make my subject feel at ease during a portrait assignment?
- Why is it so important to understand the focus of the story being told with portrait photography?
- Why is the location, or background, of a portrait photograph so important to think about?

## Unit 7 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
<b>RI1C, W1A, W2A, W3A, SL2C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use the same “I can” statements from the previous unit.</li></ul>

*Priority standards indicated in **bold***

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# Unit 8: Media Law and Ethics

Timeframe: 1-2 weeks

**Unit Description:** Students will understand how media law and ethics differ in photojournalism and understand key points in each.

## Enduring Understandings:

- Manipulating naturally occurring scenes erodes trust in readers.
- Photographers have a variety of places they can take photos without permission, but there are lots of other places where they need to get permission to photograph people.
- It's not always an easy cut and dry answer as to whether a photo should be published.

## Essential Questions:

- What are acceptable ways to alter a photo and what ways are unacceptable?
- What are some places where photojournalists can't take photos unless they get permission?
- What types of photos should be published and which ones shouldn't be?

## Unit 8 Standards

STANDARD CODE	STUDENTS WILL KNOW, BE ABLE TO, AND UNDERSTAND:
RL1A, RL1B, RL2B, R3A, R3C, RI3C, <b>W1A</b> , SL1C, <b>SL2C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use the same "I can" statements from other units.</li> </ul>

Priority standards indicated in **bold**

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