

Photojournalism

CRMM 4526-001/6526-001

Spring 2026

Class meeting: Tuesday/Thursday 11:20 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.

Meeman 208

Claire Runkles, PhD.

Office: 328 Meeman

Email: crunkles@memphis.edu

Phone: 660-973-7115

Office Hours: Mon/Wed, 9:00- 2:00 p.m., Tue/Thu 9:00-11:00 a.m. (Friday by appointment)

I am available for in-person, phone or video chat during office hours. I'm also available by appointment during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. CT). Contact me via email for an appointment or for questions or comments relating to our class. Your messages via Canvas and email will get responses within 24 hours.

Catalog Description

Advanced skills and photojournalism techniques for still photography and video; emphasis on action, sports, fashion, food, and portraits.

Prerequisite

JOUR 3526 or permission of instructor

Required Readings and Required Materials

Reading materials will be provided as handouts, in PDF format, or links and will be updated throughout the semester.

Other Materials

- 2 USB flash drives (thumb drives) – at least 5 GB capacity
- Memory cards for cameras (specific details will be provided)

Classroom format

The class meets two times weekly for lecture and discussion to present new concepts and skills. Students will also have time during class for hands-on instruction in skills required to successfully complete the course.

Course objectives and goals

In Photojournalism, students will learn the skills, ideas, and ethical responsibilities needed to tell stories through photographs. This course focuses on traditional newspaper and magazine photojournalism while also exploring how images are shared online for different types of organizations. Students will gain hands-on experience with the challenges photojournalists face and will practice visual storytelling through creating strong photo stories.

Course Goals

In this course students will:

- Build proficiency in technical use of dslr cameras and software.
- Develop the skills to critically evaluate their own work and that of others for aesthetics, accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Build storytelling skills of single-image, multi-image and documentary journalism coverage in the field.
- Identify careers in visual journalism.
- Build skills at contacting, interacting and interviewing subjects and develop characters.
- Develop awareness of professional ethical principles related to photojournalism.
- Develop an ability to think critically, creatively, and independently.

Students will also develop professional practices that reflect the wide range of human experiences present in society. This approach includes:

- Telling stories about individuals and communities that are often underrepresented in commercial and mass-market media
- Identifying and engaging knowledgeable sources beyond those most commonly quoted or photographed
- Approaching every subject with respect and recognizing the value of their experiences and stories
- Building awareness through engagement with communities whose backgrounds and experiences may differ from one's own
- Avoiding coverage that reflects only a single cultural or social perspective
- Applying cultural awareness, sensitivity, and empathy when discussing social issues and working in professional settings
- Examining how people represent themselves in media rather than relying on assumptions or stereotypes
- Practicing journalistic methods that incorporate a broad range of viewpoints in reporting and visual storytelling
- Evaluating ethical challenges that arise in media coverage involving representation, perspective, and portrayal

Accessing the Canvas website

1. Go to the University of Memphis eLearn home page: <http://elearn.memphis.edu>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Term Year course list available to you, click on the link for the combined course of CRMM/ART 4526/6526-001 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

Course structure, grades and attendance

You can expect a projects/workshop format, which is informal and depends on constructive interaction between students. Students are expected to show work and discuss projects during works-in-progress sessions and help each other through group discussion and critiques. In addition, there will be lectures and visual presentations featuring the work of documentary photographers and photojournalists, as well as reading assignments designed to inspire and stimulate discussion.

- **Attendance:** Attendance is required for all class periods. Attendance will be taken. Students who must miss class for illness or other excused absence must e-mail the instructor in advance. Attendance will account for 5 percent of a student's final grade.
- **Professional Development and Class Participation:** Students are expected to take part in the discussion portions of class, adding their points of view to the others on the floor and interacting with the instructor and the other students. Throughout the class we will also engage with professional development events which will total 5 percent of a student's final grade.
- **Quizzes and Discussion posts:** Students will complete quizzes and discussions on technical aspects of camera usage, editing software and lighting as well as conceptual content such as law and ethics. Quizzes will count for 5 percent of a student's final grade.
- **Assignments/ Projects / Portfolio / Folder review:** Students will do multiple photo, editing and writing assignment, portfolio, and projects. These will take on a variety of forms, including in-class and individual meetings. Detailed instructions for the assignments will go out in Canvas. The assignments will, in total, account for 85 percent of a student's final grade.

Turning in assignments

Digital assignments will be submitted through Canvas. Assignments include

- Required final edited still or video links
- Folder or link with additional still or video outtakes, as specified
- Self-critique

Assignments

You will complete a variety of assignments in the course involving making and editing photographs, writing, and video. Generally, there will be an assignment due weekly. Specifics for each assignment will be provided through the course Canvas site.

Guidelines for all assignments

Assignment Format:

- All multimedia assignments and multimedia projects are to be submitted electronically via Canvas.

- Generally, each assignment and project will come with unique formatting guidelines. Be sure to follow these guidelines exactly. Work that does not comply to these guidelines, as well as the production specifications for the assignment, will receive a grade of 0.
- Students will receive a participation grade that is based on your in-class project pitches and contribution to project critiques.
- Work will be critiqued in the classroom and must be suitable for presentation. Students are encouraged to work ahead on assignments to develop their own processes for the work.

Missed Deadlines and Late Assignments:

In this class you will work on deadline for assignments while in class and will need to submit some outside-of-class assignments by deadline as well. Deadlines are a routine part of the work life for journalists and strategic communicators in the industry.

In order to complete work by deadline, you will need to learn to manage your time and make adjustments accordingly.

Assignments are generally due at 11:59 p.m. That Canvas assignment deadline means the work must be submitted by the listed 11:59 p.m. deadline to be on-time. An assignment submitted at 12:00:00 a.m. is LATE according to Canvas. *Leave yourself ample time to meet the deadline*

Assignments MUST be turned in by deadline. However, I recognize extraordinary circumstances sometimes mean more time is needed. Therefore, if you need the deadline to move accommodate your circumstances, it is possible to do so if you reach out to your me no less than 12 hours before the deadline to request and negotiate for an extension.

In your Canvas message, you must do these things:

- 1) State how much more time you need;
- 2) Explain why you need more time;
- 3) Explain what status your assignment is in at the time of the request; and
- 4) Explain how the additional time will make it better.

If your request is reasonable and your explanations are sound, I will move the deadline so you can turn in the best possible work.

If you do NOT follow these steps to negotiate for a new deadline or your request is deemed unreasonable, the original due date will stand and late penalties will apply according to class policy.

Assignment Late Work Policy

- *If you have communicated and created a plan with your instructor due to planned extended absences, extenuating circumstances, or accommodations, refer to that plan. Accommodation will include conversation with Course Coordinator*
- 5% off for 1 second to 15 minutes after 11:59 p.m. Central Time- (Canvas Time)
- 10% off if turned in “next day” before 11:59pm Central Time (Canvas Time)
 - Your phone is not the marker of the time, nor is any other clock that is not “Canvas Time”
- 20% off if assignment is turned in 2nd day late by 11:59pm
- After 11:59:00 p.m. of the 2nd day, the assignment is a zero.

Resubmission Policy – For On-Time Assignments Only

Resubmissions must meaningfully address instructor feedback and include a brief revision memo. The revised grade may replace the original grade up to a maximum of **90%**. Late submissions are not eligible for resubmission. Assignments that are acceptable for resubmission will be noted in Canvas.

I am completely aware that you might face some stress, challenges, or conflicts during our time together. What does that mean for you? That you may need help outside of the “classroom.” I’m 110 percent committed to seeing you succeed, and I’ll help you in whatever way possible. But you have to take the initiative to ask, to come to office hours, and to contact me if you have questions.

What grades are not

They are not a reward or punishment; they are not a measure of effort; they do not represent the essence of who you are; they do not define what you can or cannot achieve.

Grading Philosophy

A=Professional quality work that could be used with little or no modification; B=Good to excellent work and exceeds requirement, but would require revision to be used professionally;
C=Satisfactory work and adequately meets requirement, but would need significant revision;
D=Barely satisfies minimum requirement and below average quality; F=Unsatisfactory work and does not meet minimum requirement

Grading for CRMM 4526

Attendance	5 Percent
Professional Development Activities	5 Percent
Folder Review	5 Percent
Quizzes / Discussion Posts	10Percent
Portfolio	10 Percent
Photo Assignments	30 Percent
Final Project	35 Percent
Total	100 Percent

A = 92.5-100%; A- = 89.5-92.4%

B+ = 86.5-89.4%; B = 79.5-86.4%; C+ = 76.5-79.4%;

C = 72.5-76.4%; C- = 69.5-72.4%

D+ = 66.5-69.4%; D = 59.5-66.4%

F 0-59.4%

CRMM 6526 Graduate Student assignment

Graduate students in Photojournalism I must complete additional assignment. Students and instructor will meet in the first week of the semester to determine the graduate component, which will either be a special project or a 10-page research paper utilizing a photo elicitation or in-depth interview methodology.

Course Calendar

The instructor reserves the right to change the schedule with notice in advance of assignments.

Tips for success

To make the most of your time and ours, you should:

- Read the readings for the week
- Be on time for class
- Come to class ready to discuss your thoughts on the readings, postings and news; to work; and to learn.
- Complete each weekly assignment in a way that stretches you beyond your current abilities.
- Do a long-term picture story as the final photo project. At least one of the weekly assignments you turn in should come from your project.
- Don't be shy about speaking up and sharing your opinions

Observations

- Often the most imaginative photographs and creative videos are made by people with little or no prior photography or documentary experience. Intelligence, curiosity and enthusiasm are keys to finding rich, active photo opportunities.
- Make lots of pictures. Keep a camera handy and prime the pump with self-portraits, sidewalk textures or other observed situations and you'll find the documentary creative juices will begin to flow.

Things that irk us

- Spending more time grading an assignment than the student spent creating it.
- Trying to squeeze more than one assignment out of one outing. Go out fresh for each assignment. Use what you learned from the last assignment to improve the next.
- Final projects that aren't begun until the week before they are due.
- Students who don't challenge themselves. If an assignment seems mundane, propose a more stimulating alternative (and get clearance before shooting it).

COURSE POLICIES

Office Hours

Office hours are a chance for you to get help with your work, go over and ask questions about material covered in class, talk about connections you're making between class material and what you're passionate about outside of Class, and to talk about how I can help you succeed both inside our classroom and in other journalism-y things you're doing, too. Office hours are generally student-directed (e.g. you decide what we talk about), but we can also help you formulate questions to ask. You are always welcomed to bring a friend to office hours if that makes you more comfortable!

Communication

The instructor will be as available as possible to help you with the course. Please make use of office hours. I recommend emailing in advance even if you do plan to show up during my scheduled office hours. I will make every effort to communicate in advance if unexpected meetings interfere with scheduled office hours.

I will respond as quickly as possible to email/telephone messages sent Monday through Friday

between 9 am and 5 pm. Do not expect prompt replies on evenings, weekends and holidays.

Classroom Civility

It is my intention to make our classroom a welcoming space. Every student in this classroom, regardless of personal history or identity, is a valued member of our community. Your experiences are valuable and important, and you should feel free to share them as they become relevant to our class. If you find there are aspects of my course, instruction, or our classroom environment that result in barriers to your involvement, please contact me privately without fear of reprisal. I firmly believe that you are valuable, important, and necessary. I promise to treat you as such, and help you see in yourself throughout the semester that you have a unique contribution to make in the world.

I hope you will join me in this mission. As such, respecting the time, backgrounds, experiences and identities of your fellow classmates is required. Any biased and intolerant behavior or writing is unacceptable. I expect a respectful, civil atmosphere in class at all times. I will expect you to contribute to class discussions. I or other students may present points of view that you do not agree with. We can disagree politely. I will expect everyone to respect other students and myself in all our interactions, whether face-to-face or electronically.

Electronic Devices

Laptop computers and tablets can be useful tools for learning, but they also can be a distraction. Research has determined students are more engaged in class and retain information better when taking notes by hand, but learning styles and needs vary. You are welcome to use laptops/tablets for your note taking and other tasks related to the course content as long as they do not become a distraction. I reserve the right to limit your use of electronic devices if the use is distracting to others. Cell phones should always be silenced and put away during class.

Accessibility

We all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible, so we can collectively make the classroom and the course more accessible. If you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the Disability Resources for Students, <https://www.memphis.edu/drs/>, 110 Wilder Tower, 901.678.2880, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. ***Additionally, there are a range of free resources available to all students on campus, including the Center for Writing and Communication and the Educational Support Program (ESP).***

ChatGPT

ChatGPT and similar AI tools, though useful in many contexts, are inappropriate for use in Photojournalism. An important outcome of this course is to strengthen your own abilities as a thinker and writer. That is only possible when you do your own work. You may not submit work that is written wholly or partially by an AI tool. Assignment submissions may be run through AI detection software. If your submission appears to have been written using AI, you may either receive a failing grade or be asked to resubmit the assignment.

On Power

A university setting creates situations where certain people have power over others. Not everyone uses that power responsibly. If a professor, TA, grad student, job supervisor, or anyone with whom you should have a professional, academic, or peer relationship seems to be pushing the boundaries of that relationship in a way that makes you uncomfortable (whether that's sexual or not), or in a way where you're not sure if you "should" be uncomfortable or not, and you need help figuring out what to do, reach out and talk to me. I will listen, and either help figure out what to do, or point you in the direction of someone who can help.

I am what is called a "mandated reporter." This means that if you tell me about someone's behavior that is targeting and harming you because of your identity, or if I witness this kind of behavior myself, I am required to report that to the Title IX office. However, you are not committed to any mandatory next step based on me contacting this office: The University of Memphis Office for Institutional Equity. Learn more about your rights and options at <https://www.memphis.edu/oie/title9/index.php> or call 901.678.2713. You also may make an anonymous report online. I promise to support you, stand with you, and advocate for you, whatever you choose to do.

If you are struggling with this class, with your University of Memphis experience, or any aspect of your life, you must let me know you're having an issue to get help or accommodations as it pertains to class. Do not wait until the end of the semester to try to pull together your life/health/grade in this class. Come talk to me, and I will do my best to help get you back on track.

Copyright in course materials

The materials you encounter in your coursework at the University of Memphis is subject to many different types of copyright protection, depending on the author as well as how it is used. In a single course you may encounter materials created by your instructor, an article that is shared with you in an extemporaneous way under the Teach Act, and materials such as course packets where each copy includes a royalty payment to the author. As a student, you are responsible for how you use course materials and must ensure that the rights of copyright holders are not violated by sharing them, posting materials online, etc.

Student work and copyright

Just like materials created by your instructor are protected by copyright, the things you create as a student are owned by you. For example, if your instructor uses TurnItIn to check for plagiarism in student papers, the University has an agreement with TurnItIn so that no papers are shared with that company and are only used to cross-reference.

Academic Freedom

Some students may consider some of the material covered in this course to be controversial or even offensive. It is not my intention to upset you but I do want you to routinely question what you know and how you came to think the way you do. If anyone becomes uncomfortable with any of the topics we cover, please come to see me before or after class. An alternative assignment can be arranged if needed.

ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOMES

Professional Values and Competencies in CRMM 4526/6526

- Apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, both in a global context and in the United States.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts.
- Present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

How professional values and competencies will be met

Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically)

- Analyze how narrative or news is communicated through still images and videography.
- Identify various steps in planning and development of photojournalistic work.
- Illustrate an awareness of technical skills needed for studio and action photography.

Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies)

- Compose work in studio and action settings.
- Show advanced knowledge of pre- and post-production editing methods.
- Produce photo and video work through a photojournalistic or documentary perspective.
- Compile a collection of work to broaden their portfolio.

How assessment of student learning will be met

Awareness

- Become aware of skills and equipment used by photographers and videographers operating as advanced professionals.

Understanding

- Understand the creative process of shooting and editing multimedia that tells a story.

Application

- Creation of projects that include photography, documentary-style video, interactive web projects and a portfolio of images; all showcasing proficiency in multimedia planning, editing and production.

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

Portfolio requirement:

As an undergraduate student in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media, you are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of your work. Portfolios begin in JRSM 3900/3905. The portfolio should contain samples of coursework and/or professional experiences and should develop as you build skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while you are enrolled in your capstone course.

You may use any type of web hosting for your portfolio, but it must have an independent and professional URL. You may use any content management system, but you are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix, or SquareSpace. It is also encouraged to purchase a URL if you plan to use the portfolio long term. You must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

You should have a professional email address you plan to use throughout your professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Professional social media links (minimum LinkedIn)

You may wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, presentations, design PDFs, audio files or writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career you seek after graduation. Your portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

Email

You must have your UofM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have all UofM emails forwarded to that account. Go to the [account management website](#) for information about implementing email forwarding. You are required to check your email daily.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

AI/Chat GPT

The use of artificial intelligence software, such as Chat GPT, is prohibited in some courses and required in others in Journalism & Strategic Media. Please refer to specific guidelines for this course in the course-specific part of the syllabus.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism & Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for

the semester for nonattendance or habitual tardiness.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade (C-) in a class required by your program of study in Journalism & Strategic Media after three attempts will be dropped from the program.

You may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. Substantially reworking the original submission, or working with the same general idea, may be permissible upon discussion and with written approval from the professor of the current course.

Academic integrity

The University of Memphis expects all students to behave honestly and follow the policies stated in the Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities. If you need more information about the University policy on academic integrity visit the [Office of Student Accountability's website](#).

In addition to University-wide policies, the Department of Journalism & Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on your own, as acts of cheating and punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, you are expected to comply with copyright and intellectual property laws and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas and to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. All creative work may be checked for policy adherence by the professor. The only exception to this policy is your online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo). By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.

Online SETEs

You are encouraged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. If completed, once the instructor has posted final grades, you can immediately see that grade. To access evaluation forms, log in to MyMemphis; click the "Student Pages" dropdown menu and select "My Resources" and find the SETE evaluation forms; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. Because Journalism & Strategic Media is a professional program, students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students needing an extension on an assignment

must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

You may be permitted to make up missing work if it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented.

AP Style and grammar

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. You are responsible for learning these rules and checking your work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, contact Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Diversity and inclusivity

The Department of Journalism & Strategic Media values diversity in all its forms. Some of these forms include ability, age, appearance, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, language, nationality, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexuality, socio-economic status, and other personal identities and experiences. As such, students are expected to participate in fostering an inclusive environment that respects the differences of others.

Students are expected to approach their work through a diverse lens. Creating messages that resonate with diverse audiences requires an understanding of a variety of perspectives, which are carried out through multiple platforms, such as digital and traditional media outlets.

The department seeks to foster healthy and positive classroom discussions and experiences. As such, faculty and students are expected to remain respectful and professional at all times.

Weather policy

Always check with local media, the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather.

Student support

If you are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, visit the Student Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/deanofstudents/crisis/index.php> or contact the Dean of Students Office at 901-678-2187, or in person in Suite 359 in the University Center for assistance. You may also talk with course instructors about the challenges you are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting you with campus or community support.