Making a Photobook: Form and Content

Course Number DSN S 546
CREDITS: 4
Prerequisites: Junior Classification or higher
Instructor: Christine Carr

SUMMARY: Students will devise, photograph, edit and sequence a photo-based project that will be made into a print-on-demand photobook by the end of the semester. Students will also have the option to make a photobook by hand instead of having it printed.

Through discussions and critiques we will address idea development, visual communication, editing, sequencing, design and structure. Tutorials will be assigned or demonstrations given for skill development such as camera use, editing and printing, but basic skills in photography, creative project development, visual communication or computers will be useful. Along the way, we will have critiques addressing the technical, formal and conceptual progress of each project. In addition, there will be at least one guest and one visit to Parks Library special collections.

These topics will be covered throughout the course of the class:
• Defining a photobook
• Determining core concept and approach
• Shooting and editing
• Sequencing
• Text
• Design
• Personal research and development
• Book dummy
• Final critique and presentation

Students will develop their own projects along with each section. In addition, each section will be accompanied by a reading and discussion from the textbook and research and discussion of photobook examples.

Course objectives:
• Create an independently devised project demonstrating an expression of personal ideas. Demonstrate development of personal creative expression throughout the course of the semester-long project.
• Create a book dummy and a print-on-demand or handmade book with a carefully considered sequence, form and design.
• Demonstrate skill level development in photographic seeing, visual communication, image editing, image sequencing and printing.
• Demonstrate critical seeing, analysis and discussion skills, which will manifest in classroom discussion and critiques.
• Demonstrate an understanding of the connection between idea and format through decisions made about scale, design, paper and book cover.
• Demonstrate an understanding of contemporary photobook practices through research and discussion.

Grading System: A-F. Students will be assessed on participation in discussions, work for critiques, attendance, a journal, a book dummy and the final photobook.

This class would be of interest to anyone who:
• enjoys photography and books
• has a photo-based project idea that would work well as a book
• enjoys working in sequential or narrative formats
• would like to spend an entire semester developing a photo-related project idea
• would like to experiment visually or conceptually with a photobook approach