

Aims of the course

A-Level Photography aims to develop students' technical, creative and analytical skills in relation to Photography. The course is taught through Art and Design and we encourage students to be creative with images through digital manipulation and through exploration and application of artistic techniques.

Learners will develop independence of mind in relation to developing their own ideas, refining their own intentions and personal outcomes. They will develop investigative, analytical, experimental, practical, technical and expressive skills, aesthetic understanding and critical judgement. Learners will work with a broad range of media, including traditional and new media and technologies. They will develop knowledge, understanding and application of art, craft and design through photographic media.

What are lessons like?

Photography lessons are engaging, inspiring and busy. The course is practical and therefore students will be learning and applying both technical and traditional photographic techniques. ICT is used for digital imaging, research and producing an electronic portfolio of work. Students will sometimes be off site producing photographic work and are able to create props to produce images. They will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, and they will develop essential organisational and communication skills to prepare them for higher education and the world of work.

What I will study:

Year 12 Students will:

Learn about the formal elements in Art and Photography and be able to apply these in own photographic shoots.

Learn how to use composition and viewpoint in constructing effective images.

Learn how to operate the technical components of a camera to produce images using different apertures and shutter speeds.

Learn a variety of digital imaging techniques using Adobe Photoshop.

Learn how to analyse images effectively in relation to the formal elements, media, techniques and emotions.

Produce a portfolio of work which demonstrates photographic skills.

Produce a personal response to a themed photographic question in a mock assignment.

Sit an exam after a 12 week preparatory period where students will produce final images in response to an externally set topic.

Year 13 students will:

Apply skills and techniques to produce a 'Personal Investigation' on an aspect of photography as a self-initiated brief. This includes research, analysis, shoot plans, extensive photographic shoots, developments using digital imaging techniques, final images and a critical evaluation. This will also be supported by a 3000 word essay.

This unit carries 60% of the marks for the A-level qualification.

Students will be given a preparatory paper from the exam board on the 1st February and students will select a theme on which to base their exam work. They will spend approximately 12 weeks producing preparatory research, photographic shoots and developing ideas to then produce a final piece in a 15 hour exam over 3 days.

This unit carries 40% of the marks for the A-level qualification.

How you will be assessed

The Photography course is assessed regularly upon completion of different units of study. There are timed and controlled units of work but no written exams. Students will be given regular feedback on their project work with guidance on how to improve their work throughout each project. Each unit is assessed against 4 objectives which learners become more and more familiar with. Unit 3 carries 60% of the A-level grade and Unit 4 externally set assignment and 15 hours of controlled exam time carries 40% of the A-level grade.

Cost of the course

The college pay for your tuition and registration with the awarding body. You are expected to be prepared with basic drawing tools and equipment and you may wish to use your own camera, although the college does provide loan ones. Portfolios, sketchbooks and USB memory sticks are available to buy from the faculty shop. Additional costs include trips, exhibitions and the Year 12 New York trip with Art & Design students (this trip is not compulsory).

Recommended Prior Learning

It is advantageous that students who choose to study A-level Photography have studied some aspect of Art, Design, Media or Photography but this is not essential. Students must be prepared to work hard and work independently and will be expected to conduct photographic shoots out of lesson time and on weekends.

Where can this course lead to?

Students can go on to higher level courses on completion of A-level photography. These include Diplomas and Degrees in photography and specialist pathways within photography. Photography also supports the work of students who wish to go into Graphic Design or Media courses / industries.

Why choose to study Art & Design at St Mary's?

St. Mary's College is 'Outstanding' and this reflects the hard work and dedication that is evidently in place for our students. The pastoral care, guidance and support is valuable in ensuring that we impact positively on every student in our care. We have a record of excellent results and we have well-equipped studios and workshop facilities. Students will have the opportunity to visit Universities, they will have enrichment opportunities and have the chance to enter photographic competitions. We are well-placed in a Faculty with Art and Design, Technology, Creative Media Production and Media studies, giving us strong supportive networks relating to all creative areas. We celebrate the successes of our students in an end of course exhibition.

If you would like more information on A-Level Photography, please feel free to contact Mrs. Postill or Mrs. Reading at St. Mary's College.

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