



## EXPERIMENTAL PHOTOGRAPHY: AN INTRODUCTION

The Evergreen State College | S U M M E R 2023  
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**Fees/Special Expenses:** \$125 fee charged w/ tuition covers lab use and all chemistry and paper. Beyond that, expect to spend up to \$25 on your own for various supplies.

**\*\*Readings, resources, handouts + most current syllabus:**  
<https://sites.evergreen.edu/expphoto>

### WHAT IS A PHOTOGRAPH?

To explore this question, we'll learn a broad range of techniques rooted in 19th-century photographic printmaking that predate traditional negative-to-positive gelatin silver printing. Contemporary art is experiencing a revival of these traditional methods, applied in hybrid and intermedia practices. We'll focus on the meaning and modes of **cameraless photography** and abstraction and explore the language of the photogram, a cameraless image closely related to the monoprint, in lumenprints, cyanotype, Van Dyke brown, and in the darkroom. We'll make negatives by hand with ink, paint, and more. From hand-coating paper with emulsions to timing sun exposures, we will work together to better understand how to put these methods to use in your own creative practice.

This course is equally suited to students new to photography who want to learn basic photographic principles through experimental, low-tech methods; advanced photography students who are ready to incorporate non-silver, non-digital techniques in their practice and experiment with new materials; and students with a background in 2D media who are interested in exploring the rich intersections among drawing, painting, printmaking and photographic processes.

This class is specifically designed to support you as you test the boundaries of your common understanding of "photography," boldly take risks, and pursue informed experimentation with processes and materials.

To get the most out of this class, I recommend you take these 3 weeks to truly IMMERSE yourself and get OBSESSED! The time will fly by, and there's so much to learn and do.

**SCHEDULE:** Photoland and Lib/Evans 1326

- **3-Week Intensive: Mon June 26-Fri July 14**

- **First day of class is MON June 26, 10-5. Last day of class is FRI JULY 14, 10-1. Eval conferences 2-5.**

- **8-Cr Students: Mon/Wed/Fri 10:00-5:00**

- **4-Cr Students: Mon/Wed 10:00-5:00 and Fri 7/14 10-1 for final critique**

### EXPECTATIONS and WORKLOAD:

This class is an intensive on top of an intensive—single-session (5-week) courses are already intensive (doing in 5 weeks what is normally done in 10) and we meet for 3 of those weeks, allowing us to focus our energies even more.

**8-credit students meet 3 full days/week**

**4-credit students meet 2 full days/week**

As a studio art class, our time in class will be divided between

- learning through demonstrations (30%)
- working on techniques and assignments in class (50%)
- group discussions of your work, discussion of readings, and artists' work (20%)

**\*To earn full credit in the program, you will also need to work outside of class hours to practice techniques to fulfill assignment expectations.**

- 8-cr students add ~3 hrs/week of work outside of class hours
- 4-cr students add ~1.5 hrs/week outside of class hours

You can work on lumenprints, cyanotypes, & anthotypes **at home**, and other processes in Photoland, **which will be open 2 days/week OUTSIDE of our class meetings, during the daytime hours. TU/TH 11a-2p**

## PHOTOLAND POLICIES + HOURS:

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- You will receive a copy of Photoland policies on the first day of class and staff and faculty will go over this with you
- For info call (360) 867-6274. Website: <https://sites.evergreen.edu/photoland>
- Lockers are available for you in or just outside Photoland. See staff for info.
- In addition to our regular class hours, Photoland is open for your use **TUESDAYS + THURSDAYS 11a-2p**

## ASSIGNMENTS:

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- **Creative Exercises:** For each technique we cover, you'll be expected to make a set of prints and share them in critique for discussion. See details and due dates below and on the handouts.
- **Critique:** Each week we'll share work regularly, talk about our techniques, problem-solve, and talk to each other about what we see in the work. Be prepared to listen and take notes on discussions of your own work, as well as fill in information when needed. Each critique each one of you will be asked to start the discussion of one other classmate's work
- **Artist Report: Due Wk 3, Wed 7/12 :** Choose an artist from the links/resources on our course WordPress site whose work is interesting to you. Give a ~7-10-minute presentation, including a good number of images, in which you:
  - 1) introduce the artist and describe their overall practice
  - 2) present one of their works in detail, describing how it was made and offering some visual analysis, as we do in critique
  - 3) tell us briefly why the work is inspiring to you and inspires your own creative practice.

\*\*These are interactive presentations, so everyone is encouraged to participate and ask questions\*\*
- **Seminar Reading: [8-cr students only] Due Fri Wk 1 6/30 + Wk 2 7/7.** After reading, prepare the following:
  - CHOOSE 1 passage (or one image of an artwork, if relevant) from each reading that most interests you
  - COPY it into your notebook, noting the author/title and page number
  - MAKE NOTES on it, including noting key terms/vocabulary and definitions where relevant.
  - RELATE something in the reading to your own photographic and/or creative practice, or your engagement with photographic material in everyday life. Underline the passage, note the page number, and write a few notes on these connections to share with the class.
- **Portfolio:** Due to Julia at the end of our final class/critique on Friday 7/14. This contains all the creative work you've made in the class, organized so that work shown at weekly critiques is on top, in order from most recent to earliest, then after that is work not shown at critiques. Make sure your name and notes are written in pencil on the back of each print. This will be returned to you at your evaluation conference.
- **READING GUIDELINES:**

Print all readings (unless otherwise noted) and bring them to class. Be sure to underline and mark up/make notes on the printed text itself as well as make notes in your notebook on ideas or questions you have for discussion. The better you get at marking up readings and making notes, the more fun reading is and the better you'll retain the material.

## EVALUATION

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### EVALUATION PROCESS / CONFERENCES:

- 8-credit students will have evaluation conferences. Conferences are **optional** for 4-credit students.
- Sign up for conferences [HERE](#)
- Conferences will be held Friday, July 14, 2:00-5:00 in Lib 1326
- Share your self-evaluation writing with Julia via [my.evergreen.edu](http://my.evergreen.edu) by your conference
- If you'd like to have a conference but that time doesn't work for you, we can find a time that works. Check with Julia.

### SELF-EVALUATION

- Below are the Evaluation Criteria for this program. Write 3-4 sentences on each of these areas, noting how you did and providing a specific example for each from your experience and/or work.
- **Share this writing with Julia via [my.evergreen.edu](http://my.evergreen.edu) by the time of your evaluation conference.**

### EVALUATION CRITERIA

- **Effort:** Amount of time and concentration applied and level of dedication to meeting or exceeding the minimum requirements for assignments. The effort put forth in critique discussions.
- **Inventiveness:** Amount of experimentation, risk-taking, and creative exploration.

- **Quality:** Level of demonstrated comprehension and application of technical processes and concepts in your work and in critique discussions.
- **Improvement:** Growth from original capacities to where you are now, in all aspects of your learning in this class.
- **In order to earn full credit in this class,** you must attend regularly (more than 1 absence can result in loss of credit, particularly if catch-up work isn't completed), turn in all assignments, and participate in all critiques. See **Learning Agreement** for more class policies.

## WEEK 1 • Photogenic drawing AKA Cameraless Photography, Part 1: The Photogram--silver gelatin + cyanotype; the Handmade Negative

- **MON 6/26**
  - **Introductions + Discussion:** What is a photograph? course overview; Intro to Photoland, B+W darkroom;
  - **Demo** silver gelatin/B&W photograms
  - **Studio Time:** silver gelatin/B&W photograms
  - **Intro** cyanotype
  - **READINGS/RESOURCES:**
    - [Intro to black & white darkroom printing](#) [Reference for those new to B+W darkroom work. Some pages are not relevant to our work. Read, but print only if you think you need it. You'll easily remember the basics after a day of work in the darkroom.]
    - [What is a Photogram?](#) Tate Modern
    - [Intro to Darkroom Photograms](#) Harvard Art Museum
- **WED 6/28**
  - **Demo:** Cyanotypes [Cyanotype Assignment Handout](#)
  - **Studio Time:** cyanotypes
  - **Share/Discuss:** work made so far
    - **READ for TODAY'S WORKSHOP:** [print the one that will be most helpful to you. You'll want to have one with you as you work!]
      - [Cyanotype - the classic process - AlternativePhotography.com \(quick quick start\)](#)
      - [Cyanotype photograms - AlternativePhotography.com \(quick quick start\)](#)
      - Sarah Van Keuren [Cyanotype quick-start](#) (10 pages, text, no images)
      - [Video demo](#) of the cyanotype process [10 min]
      - What does a properly exposed print look like before you develop it? See [here](#)
      - [Cyanotype exposure times guide \(from around the world\)- AlternativePhotography.com](#) (but always use your own eyes to tell when your print is fully exposed!)
- **FRI 6/30 8-credit students only**
  - **Critique:** What can a photograph be? View + discuss photograms, cyanotypes
  - **Seminar:** What is a photograph? (see readings below)
  - **Demo:** handmade negatives, anthotypes
  - **Studio Time:** work on all processes learned thus far
    - **DUE for FRI critique:**
      - 3-4 best silver gelatin/B&W photograms
      - 3-4 best cyanotypes
      - Also, bring 2-3 "failures" so we can view and learn from them.
      - *When choosing what pieces to bring, consider that our emphasis in this discussion will be on how the work demonstrates basic skills (technical and compositional) and how it demonstrates experimentation and risk-taking. I encourage you to venture boldly into the unknown! If you want extra constraints, choose a verb from [Richard Serra's verb list](#) to direct your experimentation.*
    - **READ for SEMINAR:** (please print & bring to class. See READING GUIDELINES above for how to prepare)
      - [Barnes, "Traces: A Short History of Cameraless Photography"](#) [PDF]
      - ["Exploring the Photogram"](#) [link]

- **TECHNICAL READING**

- [Malin Fabbri "Anthotypes"](#) PDF [this is a book-length manual – no need to print or read all of it, but flip through and read pp 16-25]
- [The Chlorophyll process](#) [LINK]

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**WEEK 2** • Photogenic drawing AKA Cameraless Photography, Part 2: Cyanotype Experiments, Van Dyke Brown, Lumenprints; Chemigrams

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- **MON 7/3**

- **Critique:** “What can a photograph be?” When you arrive @ 10, work together to divide up wall space and pin your prints.
- **Demo:** cyanotype bleaching/toning; wet cyanotypes, lumenprints [Lumenprint Assignment Handout](#)
- **Studio Time:** work on all techniques
  - **DUE for MON CRITIQUE:**
    - 6 prints that demonstrate the explorations you're most excited about of the processes introduced in week 1.
    - Also, bring 2-3 “failures” so we can view and learn from them.
    - *When choosing what pieces to bring, consider that our emphasis in this discussion will be on how the work demonstrates basic skills (technical and compositional) and how it demonstrates experimentation and risk-taking. I encourage you to venture boldly into the unknown! If you want extra constraints, choose a verb from [Richard Serra's verb list](#) to direct your experimentation.*
    - **8-cr students:** By today you should have several of the following types of prints: silver gelatin photograms, cyanotypes, and photograms from handmade negatives.
    - **4-cr students:** By today you should have made several of the following types of prints: silver gelatin photograms and cyanotypes.
  - **READ for WORKSHOP** (technical readings):
    - [James, "Cyanotype Processes"](#) (116-122, on bleaching/toning)
    - [Van Keuren, Cyanotype Quick Start](#) (pg 15-17, on bleaching/toning) PDFs
    - [Anderson on Lumenprints \(pp 9-13\)](#)
    - [Arnold, Lumenprint Instructions \[Note! We will not be fixing or toning lumenprints, so you can skip those parts of the instructions\]](#)
    - [Lumenprint video demo](#)

- **WED 7/5**

- **Demo:** Chemigram process; Van Dyke Brown; other demos/reviews as needed
- **Studio Time:** work on techniques
  - READ for WORKSHOP (technical)
    - [Christina Z. Anderson on chemigrams](#) [LINK]

- **FRI 7/7 8-credit students only**

- **Critique:** What's new?
- **Explore:** contemporary experimental photographic work
- **Seminar:** toward a reinvention of photography
- **Studio Time:** work on techniques
  - **DUE for FRI CRITIQUE:**
    - 3+ new prints that demonstrate progress from work shown at Monday's critique
  - **READ for SEMINAR**
    - [Greene, "Imaginary Whole-Plates, or Notes Towards the Reinvention of Photography"](#)

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**WEEK 3** • Photogenic drawing AKA Cameraless Photography, Part 3: Camera Obscura; Individual Excursions - ---> Celebrating the Fruits of our Labor

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- **MON 7/10**

- **Critique:** What's new? toned cyanotypes, wet cyanotypes, lumenprints, chemigrams, chemilumens, cyano-VanDykes, other combinations
- **Explore:** Intro to/visit camera obscura OR cyanotypes on the Evergreen beach!
- **Demos:** as needed

- **Studio Time:** work on techniques
  - DUE for CRITIQUE: Bring 4 (or more) new prints to show. Bring failures too!
- **WED 7/12**
  - **Share:** Artist Reports
  - **Studio Time**
    - **DUE: Artist Report.** Choose an artist from the links/resources on our course website whose work is exciting to you. Give a 5–7-minute presentation with \*mostly images in which you:
      - 1) briefly introduce the artist and describe their overall practice
      - 2) present one of their works in detail, describing how it was made and offering some visual analysis, as we do in critique
      - 3) tell us briefly why the work is inspiring to you and inspires your creative practice.

\*\*These are interactive presentations, so everyone is encouraged to participate and ask questions\*\*

- **FRI 7/14 Sem 2, E4115 [note new location!] - ALL STUDENTS -**

**9:30-10:30a** Finalize work and hang work for critique (Photoland opens at 10 so make sure you've planned accordingly! Ideally, collect all your prints BEFORE Friday)

**10:30-1:00** final show/critique

**2:00-5:00** Evaluation conferences in Lib 1326. Sign up [HERE \(optional for 4-credit students\)](#)

**DUE at CRITIQUE:**

1. **6-10 prints** that demonstrate strength in several processes or depth of exploration of a single process/technique AND thematic or compositional coherence and/or experimentation.
2. **Portfolio of all work completed in the class.** This contains all the work you've made in the class, organized so that work shown at weekly critiques is on top, in order from most recent to earliest, then after that is work not shown at critiques. Make sure your name is written in pencil on the back of each print. This will be returned to you at your evaluation conference. If you don't elect to attend a conference, you can pick this up at Photoland by calling/emailing to set up a time. **[confirm]**
3. **A written Reflective Statement:** You'll be invited to share something from this writing in class
  - a) Consider what you've made and learned in these past weeks as you reflect on one or more of the following questions in free-write style.
  - b) Consider making a list first, if that seems an easier way to begin, noting ideas and terms that come to mind.
  - c) Be generative! There are NO WRONG ANSWERS!
    - What did you think a photograph/y was when you started the course?
    - What do you think a photograph is now?
    - How has your thinking and your creative process changed in these weeks?
    - What was the most challenging thing to learn?
    - What was the most exciting moment/s for you?
    - How does the work you're showing today reflect any of the above?

*OR, if you'd like to approach it more philosophically:*

- What is a photograph?
- What is photography?
- What can be a photograph?
- What can a photograph be?

I agree to participate in Experimental Photography with a sincere commitment to making the program a satisfying learning experience for everyone involved. By enrolling and participating in this program, I agree to the following:

- 1) I understand that my peers and I share a mutual responsibility for making this class a productive learning environment for ALL of us. I will be an active, respectful, and supportive participant in this class.
- 2) I recognize that the nature of dynamic and productive intellectual inquiry requires an honest and clear articulation of ideas, a sincere consideration of diverse perspectives, and a willingness to find every opportunity to recognize and push myself beyond my preconceived notions, old habits of thought and ways of doing things, and intellectual limits. I will do my best to address these aspects of my learning.
- 3) I recognize that in a productive learning environment it is not only common but crucial that, as a student and someone who seeks to learn alongside others in the community, I practice humility and experience some vulnerability. Part of what makes us feel safe to take creative and intellectual risks and experience vulnerability in public is having a shared feeling of safety and acceptance. That said, I also understand that safety and acceptance are not synonymous with comfort; I will be prepared to learn across our differences, however small or significant, to engage in disagreement respectfully, and be prepared to experience productive discomfort. I also will work on recognizing that I, as a person, am not always identical to the ideas I contribute to discussions. Our ideas may differ, but this does not mean that we as classmates exist on opposite sides of unbridgeable gulfs.
- 4) I understand that listening closely and carefully to my peers in discussion is not only one of the central ways that I will learn in this class but also the best way to build community and trust. I agree to actively work to improve my listening skills and my ability to draw my peers into the conversation, especially if I am already comfortable with public speaking and tend to participate often and easily in discussions. I agree to actively work to improve my confidence and skills, if needed, in public speaking and participation in discussions, if I tend to be quieter.
- 5) I have read the Photoland Handbook and agree to abide by Photoland and program safety precautions and policies in the interest of everyone's health and well-being, including my own.
- 6) I agree to pay attention to my work process and my effect on our shared lab space. I agree to clean up after myself thoroughly every time I work in Photoland. Before I leave for the day, I agree to look around to see/ask if there is anything I can do to help clean up.
- 7) I understand that I will need to communicate effectively with Photoland staff by being sure to reserve time in the labs in advance when I work outside of class time, communicate effectively about my needs while working in shared spaces, and be generous and collaborative with my peers to make sure everyone's learning is supported, not only my own.
- 8) I agree to notify faculty and/or Photoland staff of any accidents, spills, chemical contaminations, etc. for the good of the class and all users of Photoland. We are all learning, and accidents happen, but I will do my best to pay attention and be conscientious.
- 9) I understand that if I repeatedly disrespect facilities, resources, my peers, and/or staff by not following the above guidelines, I may forfeit my ability to use Photoland.
- 10) I understand that cell phones and laptops are distractions when in class and when working in Photoland and are to be stowed away unless there is a valid need. No cell phones in the darkroom for light safety reasons. Please step out of the room if you need to text or take a phone call.
- 11) I understand and agree to the following terms concerning credit and evaluation:
  - I understand that credit is not the same thing as positive evaluation. I must meet the stated requirements and standards to receive credit. Evaluations of student work by Faculty are written narratives of specific student performance in program activities.

- Credit will be awarded based on **consistent attendance** and **full participation in all program activities**, and **completion of all assignments and projects by the given deadline (unless an extension has been arranged in advance. Talk to me!).**

- Full participation includes:

- Completing all assignments on time
- Active participation in discussions, critiques, and workshops
- Attendance at **all** class sessions (missing a class in this format and intensive can be difficult to make up)
- Evaluation conferences are optional for 4-credit students. I will have eval conferences with 8-credit students.

-Evaluations:

- Self-evaluations are due by your evaluation conference, shared with Julia via my.evergreen.edu.
- Please write an evaluation of Julia's teaching and the class and submit it on my.evergreen.edu by the end of the session.

12) I will inform faculty promptly of any health issues, mental or physical, that might impede my efforts in the program, and I will work with both my faculty and resources in Student Services to implement reasonable accommodations. Students with learning differences or disabilities should contact Access Services for accommodations (ph. 360-867-6348/TTY: 360-867-6834). Students with questions or concerns about the program should contact faculty directly (via e-mail or in-person).

13) I will abide by the principles of the Evergreen Social Contract and Student Conduct Code.

14) I understand that relevant elements of this agreement also apply to any off-campus field trips.

I agree to the above terms and to address our work and lives in the program together with good humor, mutual respect, and cooperation.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_

## SUPPLIES

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### 1. SUPPLIES TO GET/BUY:

A supply case/box, with these things:

- a watch with an alarm you can set to time your exposures
- folder/portfolio/box to keep your prints clean and safe (you won't be working with 35mm, so no need for those negative sleeves)
- acrylic paints, inks, and brushes for handmade negatives (google "cliché verre" for some background)
- notebook
- pencils
- pens
- sharpies
- scissors
- ruler
- all kinds of objects for photograms: papers, objects, plants, flowers
- optional:
  - isopropyl alcohol/100 proof vodka (if making anthotypes)
  - an apron with pockets for working in Photoland
  - for bleaching/toning cyanotypes at home:
    - sodium carbonate (washing soda, in the laundry detergent aisle. NOT sodium bicarbonate/baking soda)
    - black and green tea bags
- and more, TBA

### 2. SUPPLIES provided, covered by student fees and Photoland:

- developing trays
- contact printing frames
- chemistry
- foam brushes (you may need more)
- clothesline and clothespins for drying prints
- construction paper
- a few sheets of transparency film for handmade negatives [you may want to buy more if you get into this technique]
- spray bottles
- black plastic garbage bags for blocking out windows for the camera obscura assignment (8cr)
- lightproof black plastic bags for storing light-sensitive papers
- B+W RC photo paper for photograms and lumenprints
- Canson watercolor paper for all your handcoating work in cyanotype, anthotype, etc. This paper is particularly suited to this work. If you want to get some more inexpensive paper to experiment with, I recommend any 140 lb. HOT PRESS Watercolor paper. Cold press watercolor paper will work too, but it has a texture that some find distracting and others like. It's up to you.