

Photography

Examination Board: OCR

Staff Lead

O Hurd-Thomas, BA (Hons), MA, PGCE

Why Study Photography?

Because you have a desire to create exciting and visually interesting imagery.

Because you want to develop the ability to reflect upon images created and develop/improve them further.

Because you have a willingness to engage with, understand and write about how other photographers have used the photographic medium to communicate.

Because you have the ability to manage time/resources/workload to meet deadlines.

Because you are sensitive to the need to present work in a considered, clear and professional manner.

This is essentially an arts-based photography course, that focuses on the use of the photographic medium for personal creative expression.

In Year 12 the Practical Portfolio will represent a development of the skills outlined above over a three month period. The emphasis is on breadth, introducing students to a wide variety of photographic practices, both contemporary and historical. This is followed by a self-directed project drawing on the skills learnt in the first part of the course, and Year 12 is completed with a summer exam, responding to an internally set starting point.

Career Paths & Degree Courses

The photographic industry has many facets and, whilst the emphasis on this A level course is on arts-based photography the course provides a starting point for all sectors of the industry. It would be possible therefore to consider careers in photojournalism or editorial photography, fashion & advertising, police or medical imaging as well as fine art

approaches to the medium. Intelligent image-making skills are an asset in related careers in the print/publishing sector, or even fields as diverse as archaeology, environmental science and graphic design.

Given the increasing emphasis on creative thinking as a core skill in the world's most successful companies, an arts-based Photography A level is an excellent counterpoint to a more academic set of A levels, and is widely considered to be valuable by employers.

Course Costs

All Year 12 and 13 Photographers are asked to pay an annual studio fee of £15 towards the costs of using the darkroom, of printing their final photographs and their folder.

Every year we try to organise a trip to visit galleries either in the city centre or further afield, in locations such as London or St Ives. If finance is an issue, we will always try and find ways to support students so that they can attend.

It is clearly an advantage to have your own digital camera, and we are happy to give guidance on what to buy if you need this. Students are expected to regularly visit and view photography both in a gallery context and online in their own time throughout the course.

Requirements

At least five 9-4 grades at GCSE, with a minimum average grade score of 4.5. A grade 6 or above at GCSE Photography. In exceptional circumstances students who have not achieved a 6 may be admitted at the discretion of the Head of Department. If they have not studied Photography for GCSE students must meet with Head of Department and show evidence of photography skills.

Year 12	Year 13
Practical Portfolio; A broad introduction to a variety of photographic practices, initially following a series of mini-projects set within the department. All work is thoroughly grounded in the research and appreciation of lens-based practices both historical and modern. This leads to a presentation of research and development and final piece(s) in a final portfolio. Work from the Year 12 practical portfolio may also form part of the student's Year 13 Personal Investigation.	Personal Investigation; A development of the work done in Year 12 but with an emphasis on depth of engagement with photographers and processes that leads to one or two major projects. The direction of study is increasingly student led, and once again leads to a mature presentation of ideas and research, together with final portfolio work. Includes a related written element of a minimum 1000 words of continuous prose. The Personal Investigation accounts for 60% of the marks on the A Level course.
Year 12 Summer Exam; Students respond a starting point set by the photography teachers. A period of supported development work during Spring of Year 12 leads to a 10 hour controlled test in which an outcome is to be produced. Work from the Year 12 practical portfolio and summer exam may also form part of the student's Year 13 Personal Investigation.	Controlled Assignment; Soon after Christmas in Year 13 the students respond to one of a range of starting points set by the exam board. A period of supported development work leads to a 15 hour controlled test in which an outcome is to be produced. The Controlled Assignment accounts for 40% of the marks on the A Level course.