

Digital Photography II

Level: 3

Career Cluster: Media Arts

Program: Design and Digital Arts

Pathway: Graphic Design

Course Catalog Description

Digitally based course in which students strengthen their technical and creative photography skills through digital camera systems, studio and mobile capture, image editing software, digital asset management, client-based projects, and portfolio development for online and print presentation.

Summary

Advances students' technical, creative, and professional photography skills through digitally based studio and on-location experiences. Students apply advanced camera techniques, lighting strategies, non-destructive editing, retouching, and digital workflows while using professional equipment and software to produce high-quality images for commercial and artistic purposes. The course emphasizes client-based projects, ethical and legal practices, workflow management, digital file organization, image export, and presentation for web, portfolio, and print contexts. Through critique, reflection, and portfolio development, students refine their visual storytelling abilities and prepare for postsecondary education and careers in photography, design, content creation, and related media industries.

Notes

The updated course represents a clear evolution from the original Commercial Photography II A/B course by expanding from a primarily production- and technique-focused curriculum into a more comprehensive, industry-aligned program. The original course emphasized advanced camera operation, lighting, studio work, and commercial photography applications with a focus on producing client-ready images. In contrast, the revised course organizes these skills into clearly defined learning strands that emphasize the full professional workflow, including client-based projects, digital asset management, workflow efficiency, and delivery for multiple platforms. Additionally, the updated course strengthens career readiness by integrating structured components such as portfolio development, leadership, work-based learning, and a formal final assessment project. These enhancements improve alignment with current CTE expectations by emphasizing real-world application, professional practices, and postsecondary readiness while maintaining the advanced technical photography skills central to the original course.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Career Exploration and Postsecondary Opportunities

Objective: *Students will explore and analyze career pathways related to digital photography, visual media, and creative technology by examining professional roles, digital tools, work environments, ethical and legal expectations, certifications, professional organizations, and Colorado postsecondary education options to make informed academic and career decisions.*

- 1) Identify employment opportunities in digital photography, photo editing, content creation, and related visual media fields.
including commercial photography, digital imaging, retouching, and media production
 - a. Recognize the work typically performed, digital tools and technology used, and nature of work environments
 - b. Identify potential certifications within the careers
 - c. Find membership organizations associated with the careers
 - d. Understand the necessary education associated within the careers
- 2) Define professionalism within the context of digital photography and visual media production.
 - a. Criticism and evaluation
 - b. Presentation
 - c. Assessment
- 3) Recognize laws, regulations, and ethics significant to digital photography, image editing, and media publication.
- 4) Identify postsecondary opportunities offered in the state of Colorado
 - a. Technical college, community college, 4-year institutions
 - b. Certificates, associates, bachelor, and advanced degree opportunities

2. Ethical Decision-Making, Copyright and Legal Compliance

Objective: *Students will apply ethical and legal standards in digital photography by making responsible decisions related to copyright, privacy, intellectual property, and professional conduct.*

- 5) Demonstrate ethical conduct when interacting with clients and collaborators, including confidentiality and privacy of sensitive content.
- 6) Apply copyright laws, fair use principles, and duplication guidelines to photographic work.
- 7) Model respect for intellectual property when editing, morphing, or manipulating images.
- 8) Differentiate among copyright, Creative Commons licenses, and public-domain imagery.
- 9) Evaluate ethical implications of image use in commercial and editorial contexts.

3. Career Development and Professional Readiness

Objective: *Students will build career-ready habits and materials by evaluating opportunities, managing time, and planning professional digital photography work using current industry platforms and workflows.*

- 10) Maintain and update a professional digital portfolio documenting work experience, certifications, and photographic samples.
- 11) Evaluate and compare employment opportunities in photography and related design fields.
- 12) Apply planning and time-management strategies to meet project deadlines.
- 13) Create basic digital quotes, budgets, schedules, and asset plans for photography projects.
- 14) Analyze how business practices support sustainable creative careers.

4. Advanced Digital Photography and Client-Based Practice

Objective: *Students will apply advanced digital photography practices by working within real-world constraints such as client direction, timelines, quality expectations, and digital delivery requirements.*

- 15) Interpret client instructions and creative briefs accurately.
- 16) Apply production schedules and digital workflow plans to execute photography projects efficiently.
- 17) Analyze how photography functions in competitive commercial environments.
- 18) Deliver completed digital photographic products that meet client expectations and publishing requirements.
- 19) Evaluate client satisfaction and revise work accordingly.

5. Composition, Design Principles and Visual Analysis

Objective: *Students will analyze and apply design principles to create visually compelling digital photographs aligned with professional standards.*

- 20) Recognize and apply elements and principles of art in digital photography and visual media contexts.
- 21) Apply advanced compositional and layout principles in digital photography.
- 22) Analyze visual balance, hierarchy, negative space, and background control.
- 23) Evaluate professional-quality photographs using design and photography standards.
- 24) Justify compositional decisions using discipline-specific vocabulary.

6. Camera Systems, Lenses and Technical Decision-Making

Objective: *Students will analyze and select digital camera equipment, lenses, and capture settings based on project needs, creative intent, and professional standards.*

- 25) Identify appropriate cameras and lenses for specific photographic applications.
- 26) Differentiate between lens types and their impact on image outcome.
- 27) Evaluate equipment choices based on lighting, subject, and delivery format.
- 28) Apply technical settings to achieve consistent, professional results.

7. Lighting Techniques for Professional Photography

Objective: Students will apply advanced lighting techniques to produce technically strong and visually expressive digital photographs.

- 29) Apply three-point, studio, portrait, and product lighting techniques.
- 30) Analyze how lighting affects mood, texture, and form.
- 31) Evaluate lighting setups for professional quality and consistency.
- 32) Refine lighting approaches based on subject and project goals.

8. Digital Workflow, File Formats and Image Output

Objective: Students will manage a professional digital photography workflow by preparing images for print and digital use using industry-standard processes.

- 33) Identify and apply appropriate resolution settings and digital file formats.
- 34) Prepare images for various outputs including web, print, and portfolio presentation.
- 35) Analyze workflow efficiency from capture through final delivery.
- 36) Evaluate image quality based on technical and aesthetic standards.

9. Print Production, Presentation and Finishing Techniques

Objective: Students will prepare photographs for digital and physical presentation by selecting appropriate export settings, presentation formats, materials, and finishing methods.

- 37) Identify appropriate digital export settings and photographic papers for different project goals.
- 38) Analyze mounting, matting, and framing solutions for presentation.
- 39) Apply professional finishing techniques to photographic work.
- 40) Evaluate presentation effectiveness based on audience and context.

10. Critique, Evaluation and Reflective Practice

Objective: Students will evaluate photographic work critically by applying design principles, digital imaging standards, industry expectations, and reflective thinking.

- 41) Evaluate photographs using principles of art and digital photography standards.
- 42) Apply critical-thinking skills to analyze strengths and areas for improvement.
- 43) Discuss and write about photographic work using design terminology.
- 44) Reflect on feedback to improve future photographic outcomes.
- 45) Compare personal work to professional exemplars to guide growth.

11. Portfolio Development

Objective: Students will develop and refine a professional photography portfolio by selecting, organizing, presenting, and revising work that demonstrates technical skill, creative growth, and readiness for postsecondary and career opportunities.

- 46) Select photographs that demonstrate range in technique, subject matter, and creative intent.

- 47) Organize and sequence portfolio work for digital and print presentation.
- 48) Evaluate portfolio quality using industry expectations, audience needs, and presentation standards.
- 49) Revise portfolio selections and supporting materials based on critique, reflection, and personal goals.

12. Leadership

Objective: *Students will demonstrate leadership in digital photography settings by collaborating effectively, communicating professionally, taking initiative, and contributing responsibly to individual and group projects.*

- 50) Demonstrate responsibility, initiative, and dependability in classroom and production environments.
- 51) Collaborate with peers to plan, execute, and evaluate photography projects.
- 52) Apply professional communication skills during critique, client interactions, and team production tasks.
- 53) Reflect on leadership strengths and areas for growth in collaborative creative work.

13. Work-Based Learning

Objective: *Students will connect classroom learning to authentic workplace experiences by applying technical, communication, and professional skills in real-world photography and media production contexts.*

- 54) Apply photography and digital imaging skills in authentic workplace scenarios.
- 55) Demonstrate professional habits such as punctuality, preparedness, communication, and accountability.
- 56) Document work-based learning experiences through logs, reflections, presentations, or portfolio evidence.
- 57) Evaluate how workplace expectations and industry feedback inform future learning and career planning.

14. Final Project Assessment

Objective: *Students will complete and assess a culminating photography project by integrating technical knowledge, creative problem solving, workflow management, presentation skills, and reflective evaluation.*

- 58) Plan and produce a final photography project that demonstrates mastery of course skills and concepts.
- 59) Apply creative and technical decision-making throughout the development of the final project.
- 60) Present the final project using appropriate professional formats, rationale, and supporting materials.
- 61) Evaluate the completed project against criteria for technical quality, creativity, communication, and overall effectiveness.

15. Career and Technical Student Organizations

Objective: *Using the CTSO Resource Document, chapter activities will provide some of the best opportunities CTSO members will have to learn by doing. A successful program of work creates a positive learning atmosphere in the classroom. CTSO members learn how to accept responsibility, work as a team, manage a budget, and handle success and failure. Per the CTE Admin Handbook, CTSOs are embedded into curriculum.*

Professional Development

Prepare each member for entry into the workforce and provide a foundation for success in a career. Becoming a professional does not stop with acquiring a skill, but involves an increased awareness of the meaning of good citizenship and the importance of labor and management in the world of work.

Community Service

Promote and improve goodwill and understanding among all segments of the community through services donated by CTSO chapters, and to instill in its members a lifetime commitment to community service.

Business and Industry Connections

Increase awareness of quality job practices and attitudes, and increase the opportunities for employer engagement and eventual employment.

Financial Leadership

Plan and participate in activities to allow all members to carry out the chapter's projects. Educate members on their own personal finance for current and future success.

Public Relations

Make the general public aware of the good work that students in career and technical education are doing to better themselves and their community, state, nation, and world.

Social Activities

To increase cooperation in the school and community through activities that allow CTSO members to get to know each other in something other than a business or classroom setting.

Academic Standards Alignment

Colorado CTE courses are required to integrate academic and essential skills into course content. The following academic standards have been identified as aligned to this course and should be integrated throughout instruction.

[CO CTE Academic Standards Resources](#) (Rubrics, integration strategies, etc)
[CDE Colorado Academic Standards Online](#) (Online standards lookup tool)

Note: Mathematics and Science standards will be added in the future. Visit the [Colorado Academic Standards](#) page for the most current version.

Reading, Writing and Communicating Crosswalk

Course: Digital Photography II

Colorado Academic Standards – Reading, Writing, and Communicating

Standard	Prepared Graduate Competency	Description	Course Evidence / Alignment
Standard 1: Oral Expression and Listening	Prepared Graduate 1 – Collaboration	Collaborate effectively as group members or leaders who listen actively and respectfully; pose thoughtful questions, acknowledge the ideas of others; and contribute ideas to further the group's attainment of an objective.	Students collaborate in advanced digital photo production environments, coordinate roles during shoots, and engage in formal critique to refine professional-quality photographic work.
Standard 1: Oral Expression and Listening	Prepared Graduate 2 – Oral Presentations	Deliver effective oral presentations for varied audiences and varied purposes.	Students present photographic concepts, digital mood boards, client pitches, production plans, and final portfolios to peers, instructors, and authentic clients.
Standard 2: Reading for All Purposes	Prepared Graduate 4 – Informational Texts	Read a wide range of informational texts to build knowledge and to better understand the	Students read and apply complex informational texts such as client

		human experience.	contracts, production briefs, lighting diagrams, editing workflows, digital asset guidelines, and industry standards.
Standard 2: Reading for All Purposes	Prepared Graduate 5 – Language in Context	Understand how language functions in different contexts, command a variety of word-learning strategies to assist comprehension, and make effective choices for meaning or style when writing and speaking.	Students use precise professional photography and visual media vocabulary appropriate for technical discussions, client communication, and portfolio presentation.
Standard 3: Writing and Composition	Prepared Graduate 7 – Informational Writing	Craft informational/explanatory texts using techniques specific to the genre.	Students write detailed project proposals, client documentation, image rationales, reflections, captions, and professional digital portfolio materials.
Standard 3: Writing and Composition	Prepared Graduate 9 – Writing Process	Demonstrate mastery of their own writing process with clear, coherent, and error-free polished products.	Students revise and refine written and visual materials to produce polished, publication-ready digital images and professional documents.
Standard 4: Research Inquiry and Design	Prepared Graduate 10 – Research and Ethics	Gather information from a variety of sources; analyze and evaluate its quality and relevance.	Students research markets, photographic styles, advanced digital techniques, and legal requirements.

Free Resource Links

1. Career Exploration and Postsecondary Opportunities

- ONET Online (career profiles, photography skills, job outlook)
<https://www.onetonline.org/>
- My Next Move (career exploration, photography pathways)
<https://www.mynextmove.org/>
- College Board BigFuture (postsecondary programs, photography majors)
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>

2. Ethical Decision-Making, Copyright and Legal Compliance

- Creative Commons (copyright, licensing, image use)
<https://creativecommons.org/>
- U.S. Copyright Office (copyright law, photography rights)
<https://www.copyright.gov/>
- Nolo Legal Encyclopedia (legal issues, photography rights)
<https://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia>
- Pixabay License Guide (image usage, attribution rules)
<https://pixabay.com/service/license/>

3. Career Development and Professional Readiness

- LinkedIn Learning (career skills, portfolio, networking)
<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/>
- Indeed Career Guide (job search, professional skills)
<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice>
- Freelancers Union (freelance work, pricing, business tools)
<https://www.freelancersunion.org/resources/>
- SCORE Business Resources (career development, planning)
<https://www.score.org/resources>

4. Advanced Digital Photography and Client-Based Practice

- Digital Photography School (advanced photography techniques)
<https://digital-photography-school.com/>
- Photography Life (client shoots, professional techniques)
<https://photographylife.com/>
- Fstoppers (industry techniques, client workflows)
<https://fstoppers.com/>
- PetaPixel (professional photography, case studies)
<https://petapixel.com/>

5. Composition, Design Principles and Visual Analysis

- Canva Design School (composition, visual hierarchy)
<https://www.canva.com/learn/design/>
- Adobe Photography Tutorials (composition, visual storytelling)
<https://creativecloud.adobe.com/learn>
- Getty Museum (visual analysis, composition examples)
<https://www.getty.edu/>
- Khan Academy Art (visual principles, critique)
<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-history>

6. Camera Systems, Lenses and Technical Decision-Making

- Cambridge in Colour (camera systems, lens behavior)
<https://www.cambridgeincolour.com/>
- DPReview (camera reviews, lens comparisons)
<https://www.dpreview.com/>
- Nikon Learn and Explore (camera systems, lenses)
<https://www.nikonusa.com/en/learn-and-explore/index.page>
- Canon Learning Center (lens selection, technical use)
<https://www.usa.canon.com/learning-center>

7. Lighting Techniques for Professional Photography

- Strobist (lighting techniques, flash photography)
<https://strobist.blogspot.com/>
- Adorama Learning Center (studio lighting, setups) <https://www.adorama.com/alc/>
- BandH Explora (lighting tutorials, equipment guides)
<https://www.bhphotovideo.com/explora>
- Profoto Lighting Tutorials (professional lighting, setups)
<https://profoto.com/int/profoto-stories>

8. Digital Workflow, File Formats and Image Output

- Adobe Lightroom Tutorials (workflow, editing, exporting)
<https://helpx.adobe.com/lightroom/tutorials.html>
- Adobe Photoshop Tutorials (image editing, workflow)
<https://helpx.adobe.com/photoshop/tutorials.html>
- Capture One Learning Hub (workflow, image processing)
<https://learn.captureone.com/>
- Pixlr (image editing, export formats)
<https://pixlr.com/>

9. Print Production, Presentation and Finishing Techniques

- Blurb (print design, photo books, presentation)
<https://www.blurb.com/>
- Shutterfly (printing services, photo products)
<https://www.shutterfly.com/>
- MPIX (professional printing, finishing options)
<https://www.mpix.com/>

- Canva Print Guide (print formats, resolution, preparation)
<https://www.canva.com/learn/print-design/>

10. Critique, Evaluation and Reflective Practice

- AIGA Resources (design critique, evaluation methods)
<https://www.aiga.org/resources>
- Behance (portfolio critique, peer feedback)
<https://www.behance.net/>
- Dribbble (design critique, community feedback)
<https://dribbble.com/>
- PhotographyCourse Critiques (analysis, improvement strategies)
<https://photographycourse.net/>

11. Portfolio Development

- Adobe Express Portfolio Maker (portfolio building, visual presentation)
<https://www.adobe.com/express/create/portfolio>
- Canva Photography Templates (portfolio layouts, presentation design)
<https://www.canva.com/templates/s/photography/>
- Slidesgo Photography Portfolio Template (portfolio presentation, visual organization)
<https://slidesgo.com/theme/photography-portfolio>
- Bulb Digital Portfolio Platform (digital portfolio creation, reflection)
<https://my.bulbapp.com/>

12. Leadership

- MindTools – Leadership Skills (communication, teamwork, decision-making)
https://www.mindtools.com/pages/main/newMN_LDR.htm
- SkillsYouNeed – Leadership (collaboration, conflict resolution, professionalism)
<https://www.skillsyouneed.com/lead/>
- TED Talks – Leadership (communication, influence, teamwork)
<https://www.ted.com/topics/leadership>
- Indeed Career Guide – Leadership Skills (initiative, teamwork, workplace readiness)
<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/leadership-skills>

13. Work-Based Learning

- CareerOneStop – Work-Based Learning (internships, apprenticeships, career exploration)
<https://www.careeronestop.org/ExploreCareers/learn/work-based-learning.aspx>
- Colorado Work-Based Learning (state guidance, employer connections)
<https://cdle.colorado.gov/work-based-learning>
- ACTE Work-Based Learning Resources (career readiness, employability skills)
<https://www.acteonline.org/professional-development/work-based-learning/>

- Professional Photographers of America (careers, certifications, industry expectations)
<https://www.ppa.com/>

14. Final Project Assessment

- PBS LearningMedia – Media Production Projects (project ideas, assessment, rubrics)
<https://www.pbslearningmedia.org/>
- National Geographic Photography (project inspiration, storytelling, professional examples)
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/>
- Adobe Creative Cloud Tutorials (advanced photography projects, workflows)
<https://creativecloud.adobe.com/learn>
- Rubistar (project rubrics, assessment tools)
<https://www.rcampus.com/rubistar/>



Technology Student Association – National Competitive Events

Photographic Technology

Objective: *Students will capture, edit, document, and present a professional photographic portfolio that meets TSA Photographic Technology requirements for image quality, technical settings, editing process, copyright compliance, and presentation.*

- Research the annual TSA Photographic Technology theme and plan original images that respond to the required challenge criteria.
- Capture original photographs using professional composition, lighting, camera settings, lens selection, exposure, and visual storytelling techniques.
- Apply commercial photography practices such as studio lighting, product photography, portraiture, color control, and client-centered image planning.
- Edit images using appropriate digital workflow techniques such as color correction, black-and-white conversion, retouching, cropping, sharpening, and local adjustments.
- Document camera settings, image interpretation, metadata, editing decisions, and software tools used in the final portfolio.
- Prepare required references, resources, copyright checklist, and consent/release forms when needed.
- Present and explain the photographic portfolio using TSA criteria for technical quality, creativity, composition, documentation, and theme connection.

Resources

- Technology Student Association – Photographic Technology competition guidelines
<https://tsaweb.org/competitions-programs/tsa/themes-problems>
- Adobe Lightroom – Photo editing and image organization
<https://www.adobe.com/products/photoshop-lightroom.html>
- Adobe Photoshop – Photo editing and digital image tools
<https://www.adobe.com/products/photoshop.html>
- Purdue OWL – Copyright and fair use resources
<https://owl.purdue.edu/>



Technology Student Association – National Competitive Events

Digital Video Production

Objective: *Students will plan, produce, document, and present an original digital video that meets TSA Digital Video Production requirements for storytelling, technical production, copyright compliance, and interview presentation.*

- Research the annual TSA Digital Video Production theme and develop an original video concept.
- Analyze the story, audience, purpose, visual style, and production needs before filming.
- Create a storyboard and digital video script that guide the production process.
- Capture and edit original video using appropriate camera operation, lighting, composition, sound, pacing, and visual storytelling techniques.
- Apply photographic principles such as exposure, color, framing, depth, shadow, negative space, and background control to the video production.
- Document the production through a portfolio that includes purpose, storyboard, script, hardware/software list, references, permissions, consent forms, and work log.
- Participate in an interview explaining the video concept, production process, technical decisions, and creative choices.

Resources

- Technology Student Association – Digital Video Production competition guidelines
<https://tsaweb.org/competitions-programs/tsa/themes-problems>
- Adobe Premiere Pro – Video editing and production tools
<https://www.adobe.com/products/premiere.html>
- DaVinci Resolve – Video editing, color, audio, and post-production tools
<https://www.blackmagicdesign.com/products/davinciresolve>
- YouTube Creator Academy – Video production and storytelling resources
<https://www.youtube.com/creators/>