



UNIVERSITY  
CENTRE  
WESTON

# Course Handbook

## BA (Hons) Photography and Visual Cultures



Vivian Maier, *Self Portrait*, 1955

University Centre Weston

in partnership with

Bath Spa University

This handbook is published for students studying at UCW on the above course and is available in a range of alternative formats on request.

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# 1. Introduction

## Welcome

Welcome to the BA (Hons) Photography and Visual Cultures degree. This course is offered in partnership between Bath Spa University and University Centre Weston (UCW). You are a registered student at Bath Spa University and at UCW, and you have access to services on both sites.

## Purpose of Handbook

This handbook gives you essential background information that will be of help in your studies on the BA (Hons) Photography and Visual Cultures course. This handbook can be accessed via your Microsoft Teams site.

Please note that the electronic version will be kept up to date and you will be notified of any significant changes. If you have taken a hard copy of any information please remember to refer back to the electronic version to ensure that you are working with the most up to date information.

For **module information** please see the respective Module Handbook.

## 2. Course content

Major, Joint, Minor or Specialised	Major
Delivered At:	University Centre Weston
Faculty:	Creative Arts
Campus	Loxton Campus & Winter Gardens
Final award	BA (Hons) Photography and Visual Cultures
Intermediate awards available	Certificate of Higher Education (120 credits)
UCAS code	W47 PVC1
Details of professional body accreditation	Not Applicable
Relevant QAA Benchmark statements	Art and Design (December 2019)  Communication, Media, Film and Cultural Studies (CMFCS) 2019
Date specification last updated	17/02/2021

### Course Distinctiveness

The **BA (Hons) Photography and Visual Cultures** programme is designed to equip you with the practical, intellectual and commercial skills required to develop and define your individual professional photographic practice.

You will be introduced to a broad range of possible careers in the photographic industries. Exploring different avenues of professional practice, you will examine the changing role of photographers in the evolving world of media and technology. You will identify where you might position yourself within the visual arts and through use of a range of platforms, develop your own creative voice.

Through testing and refining ideas and different modes of communication, you will learn how to disseminate your work effectively to identified audiences to a professional standard.

The content is primarily practice based with links to national and international creative industries and employers. In order to contextualise and inform your practice you will engage with a range of current theories and debates. You will learn about visual language and culture within historical and contemporary contexts.

On successful completion of this course you will be prepared for a career in the photographic and other creative industries or further academic study at Master's Level.

## Course team

The people below are staff who have specific responsibilities for your course.

### Programme Coordinator

The Programme Coordinator is responsible for the effective day to day delivery of the course. They have overall responsibility for the assessment of modules and the implementation of teaching and assessment procedures within the course. Please contact your Programme Coordinator if you have any questions regarding the delivery of the course.

### Personal Tutor

At the start of the course you will be allocated a Personal Tutor. Your Personal Tutor's overall role is to ensure that you receive adequate guidance. They act as a first point of contact and responsible person from whom you can obtain general academic and pastoral support. You should contact your tutor if you are ill or unable attend a session. If you need to make an appointment to see your personal tutor you can do this by approaching them personally, e-mailing, phoning or leaving a message on their voicemail.

### Module Leader

Taught modules on the BA honours Photography and Visual Cultures course have a designated module leader who has responsibility for the effective delivery of the module. Module Leaders are indicated on each module descriptor at the end of this handbook.

### Link Tutor

Each course has an identified link tutor from its validating partner University whose role it is to support the UCW team and students. The link tutor for your course is:

Name	Email	Tel
Stephen Vaughan	Senior Lecturer/Y2 coordinator BA Photography	s.vaughan@bathspa.ac.uk

## Course Structure

### Year One

Full time - Year 1 of study			
Level	Title	Credits	Code
4	Technical Skills in Photography	40	PVC4001
4	Visual Cultures	20	PVC4002

4	Experimental Media Arts	20	PVC4003
4	Documentary and Editorial Photography	20	PVC4004
4	Portfolio Building	20	PVC4005

## Year Two

Full time - Year 2 of study			
Level	Title	Credits	Code
5	Photography for Publication	40	PVC5001
5	Collaborative Work-Based Practice	40	PVC5002
5	The Archive	20	PVC5003
5	Visual Cultures in Context	20	PVC5004

## Year Three

Full time - Year 3 of study			
Level	Title	Credits	Code
6	Critical and Contextual Study	20	PVC6001
6	Exploratory Project in Photography	20	PVC6002
6	Major Project in Photography	40	PVC6003
6	Professional Development in Context	40	PVC6004

All HE programmes at University Centre Weston are delivered as a collection of modules, which build on each other to form a complete programme of study. Each module carries a credit rating, defining how much study time it takes to complete. Notionally, 1 credit equates to 10 hours study time (so 10 credits = 100 study hours). "Study hours" includes lectures, seminars, tutorials, group work, independent study and research – in fact, any time that contributes to your learning on the module.

## Course synopsis

BA Hons. Photography and Visual Cultures is a photography course that includes reference to creative practice more broadly. You engage with techniques and processes, build business and collaboration skills and develop a creative 'voice' through practical outcomes. Research into photography, creative practice and culture, underpins and gives context to the work.

### **Year one**

In year one, the focus is on skills building and experimentation. New knowledge, techniques and concepts are introduced.

### **Year two**

In year two, we develop a greater ability to manage our own projects, collaborate with others and begin to refine skills. There is a development of critical and contextual understanding through academic research.

### **Year three**

Self-directed projects on a negotiated theme enable students to devote time to a chosen discipline. Higher standards are achieved through sustained project work and a critical, reflective approach. Modules work together to provide a framework for production of a professional portfolio of work which can be used to gain employment or access to further study at Masters Level.

### 3. Course Aims

The course aims to:

- To foster the industry-specific knowledge, thinking, and subject-specific practical and vocational skills required of photographic practitioners.
- To provide a critical understanding of the photographic industry through analysing its needs, trends and history.
- To critically reflect on and investigate the range of employment and freelance opportunities in the photographic industry, enabling the development of professional careers in relevant, discrete disciplines.
- To nurture the development of a wide range of practical and academic skills, that are transferrable, and encourage innovation, creativity, responsibility and entrepreneurship.
- To provide a framework to develop critical thinking and research skills to contextualise and inform both photographic practice and approach to enable continuous professional development.
- To develop relationships between theory and practice, exploring the way work is produced and received in a digital and globalised marketplace, with reference to the social, cultural and historical contexts.
- To nurture the development of a creative voice and identity, through individual and collaborative working.

#### Course Learning Outcomes:

	<b>Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)</b>  <b>On Achieving Level 6</b>	<b>On Achieving Level 5</b>	<b>On Achieving Level 4</b>
A 1	Systematic understanding of, and ability to accurately deploy established photographic techniques, processes and equipment.	Critical understanding of, and ability to situate individual work that demonstrates a broad range of photographic techniques, processes and use of equipment.	Practical and technological knowledge of a range of photographic equipment and processes.
A 2	Systematic understanding of creative work within the broader historical and contextual dimensions of	Critical understanding of individual creative work within the broader historical and contextual	Understanding of historical and contextual dimensions of photographic practice.

	photographic practice and visual cultures.	dimensions of photographic practice and visual cultures.	
A 3	The ability to select, experiment and critically evaluate appropriate use of photographic materials, processes, and technologies in the production of work.	Independent development of ideas through to outcomes, demonstrating the ability to select and use appropriate materials and processes.	Work independently in response to industry-relevant photographic projects, drawing on a base of knowledge of appropriate materials and processes.
A 4	Ability to process, synthesise and apply individual contextual, practical and ethical research within your own creative practice.	Synthesise a variety of materials and information in the development of creative ideas.	Develop creative ideas through investigation and exploration of media and text.
A 5	Systematic understanding of the importance of working relationships and the ability to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialist and non-specialist audiences, including clients, consumers, co-creators and co-workers.	Critical understanding of the working relationships between clients and visual creatives and the ability to identify and implement the effective approaches for collaboration and communication techniques.	Knowledge of understanding of the role of the client and the relationship between clients and visual creatives.
A 6	A systematic understanding of the ethical, historical and socio-political contexts in which a project is being undertaken.	A critical understanding of the cultural and ethical socio-political histories and visual culture pertaining to the discipline of photography.	An ethical awareness of socio-political histories and visual culture pertaining to the discipline of photography.
A 7	The ability to identify and synthesize source material, to experiment and demonstrate a systematic understanding of the relationship between	The ability to make effective use of a range of source material and established techniques related to observation, investigation, and enquiry	Ability to explore a range of source material and evaluate its role in contextualising ideas and concepts.

	quality, detail and meaning of concepts and artifacts.	to realise ideas, concepts and artefacts.	
A 8	Systematic understanding of the global reach of photographic art and its transnational nature in society and culture.	Critically informed understanding of visual movements within photography and their aesthetic and socio-cultural significance.	A knowledge of the cultural and social significance of photography.

### **B Cognitive and Intellectual Skills**

	<b>Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)</b>  <b>On Achieving Level 6</b>	<b>On Achieving Level 5</b>	<b>On Achieving Level 4</b>
B 1	Ability to independently organise, understand and critically evaluate research from a range of sources, within and beyond academic texts, in order to explore a question or subject within photography or visual cultures and express the findings.	Problem solving and ability to resolve practical and intellectual challenges within photography and visual cultures from a range of sources, within and beyond academic texts, in order to explore a question or subject and express the findings.	Identify and investigate problems and evaluate resolutions within the field of photography and visual cultures.
B 2	Systematically analyse and synthesise information and experiences to formulate reasoned arguments within the field of photography and visual cultures reflecting on your creative practice.	Analyse information and experiences and formulate reasoned arguments within the field of photography and visual cultures.	Use academic conventions to present arguments within the field of photography.
B 3	Ability to critically evaluate arguments, assumptions and abstract concepts to	Identify and evaluate lines of enquiry and conduct research that supports	Identify lines of enquiry and conduct research within the field of visual

	make judgements in the development of ideas through to outcomes.	own work and strengthens academic arguments.	cultures that supports own work and develops learning
B 4	Ability to identify, select and deploy techniques and creative strategies in the development of projects, undertaking critical analysis and evaluation of the outcomes in relation to research.	Ability to critically reflect on own practice in relation to subject specific contexts, visual culture and broader social and political ideas.	Ability to reflect on own practice in relation to subject specific contexts.

### **C Skills for Life and Work**

	<b>Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)</b>  <b>On Achieving Level 6</b>	<b>On Achieving Level 5</b>	<b>On Achieving Level 4</b>
C1	Autonomous learning <sup>[1]</sup> (including time management) that shows the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility and enables decision-making in complex and unpredictable contexts.	Autonomous learning (including time management) as would be necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making such that significant responsibility within organisations could be assumed.	Autonomous learning (including time management) as would be necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility.
C2	Team working skills necessary to flourish	Team work as would be necessary for	Team work as would be necessary for

	in the global workplace with an ability both to work in and lead teams effectively.	employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and decision-making for effective work with others such that significant responsibility within organisations could be assumed.	employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility for effective work with others.
C3	Communication skills that ensure information, ideas, problems and solutions are communicated effectively and clearly to both specialist and non-specialist audiences.	Communication skills commensurate with the effective communication of information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms to specialist and non-specialist audiences in which key techniques of the discipline are deployed effectively.	Communication skills that demonstrate an ability to communicate outcomes accurately and reliably and with structured and coherent arguments.
C4	IT skills and digital literacy that demonstrate core competences and are commensurate with an ability to work at the interface of creativity and new technologies.	IT skills and digital literacy that demonstrate the development of existing skills and the acquisition of new competences.	IT skills and digital literacy that provide a platform from which further training can be undertaken to enable development of new skills within a structured and managed environment.

[\[1\]](#) i.e. the ability to review, direct and manage one's own workload

## Graduate Attributes

	Bath Spa Graduates...	In [subject], we enable this...
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1	Will be employable: equipped with the skills necessary to flourish in the global workplace, able to work in and lead teams	Through programme and module design. Teaching and assessment is written expressly with the global marketplace in mind and with direct industry consultation. Work and client-based learning prepares you directly for future employability.
2	Will be able to understand and manage complexity, diversity and change	Programme materials and module design refer to the changing nature of, and diverse complexities within, the photographic and media related industries. Yearly review and on-going consultation with industry practitioners ensures that the programme will integrate future changes
3	Will be creative: able to innovate and to solve problems by working across disciplines as professional or artistic practitioners	In engaging with creative production briefs, you utilise creativity, innovation, problem solving and teamwork. Working across disciplines is an essential component of professional and artistic practice as well as the application of creative thinking techniques.
4	Will be digitally literate: able to work at the interface of creativity and technology	Digital literacy is embedded within the programme, in subject specific activities (industry standard editing facilities, digital imaging equipment and sound mixing/design facilities) and the organisation, management and presentation of your research for formative and summative assessments.
5	Will be internationally networked: either by studying abroad for part of their programme, or studying alongside students from overseas	Collaboration is encouraged and supported with industry-based work and projects. The programme specifically engages with the lens-based media arts and cultures of other countries, through lectures, debates and guest speakers. You are encouraged to explore and develop your own professional practice

		and commercial development within a global context.
6	Will be creative thinkers, doers and makers	The ethos of the programme is to encourage creativity and the creation of professional material and products. The development of these materials and products evidences informed reflection, a creative approach to problem-solving and robust production skills.
7	Will be critical thinkers: able to express their ideas in written and oral form, and possessing information literacy	You present themselves and your ideas in a multitude of ways including essays, presentations, video essays, production paperwork, and reflective journals. These evidence the ability to critically analyse, conceptualise, thoroughly research and communicate key concepts within the lens-based media arts.
8	Will be ethically aware: prepared for citizenship in a local, national and global context	Throughout the programme all work is produced and showcased with an awareness of the community and audiences they are intended for and in the light of the current cultural landscape. Ethical awareness and collaboration are integral to the socio-cultural aspects of the lens-based media disciplines as art forms; these concepts are instilled through work-based learning and professional and academic development.

## 4. Learning Environment

### Learning and Teaching Methods

UCW has a Learning and Teaching Strategy for Higher Education which underpins our approach.

We intend that the learning programme should be both stimulating and demanding, and should lead you through progressive stages of development, towards increasingly complex and open-ended tasks, increasingly sophisticated application of intellectual/conceptual and personal (transferable) skills, and increasingly independent study.

A variety of learning methods will be used, which might include

- Lectures
- Seminars
- Experiential learning
- Reflective learning
- Skills practice
- Group work and group discussions
- Workshops
- Case studies
- Student presentations
- Information and communications technology (ICT) based activities
- Visiting speakers/expert practitioners will be used during the course

UCW actively encourages the development of technology enhanced learning and you will find staff utilising new teaching methods to enhance your learning experience.

### Work-based Learning

Collaborative exercises and work experience form an important part of the course and are primarily assessed in year 2 and 3 as elements within modules. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this work, but guidance will be given on relevant approaches.

## 5. How Quality is assured

### Quality monitoring and evaluation

The course you are studying was approved by Bath Spa University. As part of the approval process it was assured that:

- the content of the course met national benchmark requirements;
- the course met any professional/statutory body requirements; and
- the proposal met other internal quality criteria covering a range of issues such as admissions policy, teaching, learning and assessment strategy and student support mechanisms.

This was done through a process of course approval which involves consulting academic experts including subject specialists from other institutions and industry.

### How we monitor the quality of this course

The quality of this course is monitored each year through evaluating:

- external examiner reports (considering quality and standards);
- statistical information (considering issues such as the pass rate); and
- student feedback including the National Student Survey (NSS).

Drawing on this and other information, programme teams undertake an annual monitoring process, in accordance with the University's quality policy.

Once every five years an in-depth review of the subject area is undertaken by a panel. The panel considers documents, looks at student work, speaks to students and staff before drawing its conclusions.

### The role of the Programme Committee

This course has a Programme Committee comprising all relevant teaching staff, student representatives and others who make a contribution towards its effective operation (e.g. library/technician staff). The Programme Committee has responsibilities for the quality of the programme and plays a critical role in the University's quality assurance procedures.

### External examiners

The standard of this course is monitored by at least one external examiner. External examiners have two primary responsibilities, which are to ensure the standard of the course and ensure fairness and equity.

The external examiner for your course is:

Name	Role in institution	Name of institution
TBC		

As part of their role, external examiners complete an annual report for the University commenting on the learning, teaching and assessment standards of the modules and the course overall. The report will highlight areas of good practice and identify areas for development, as well as provide assurance that your course is of an equable standard to similar HE provision nationally.

External examiner reports, and the University's response, are shared with students. They are normally discussed at Staff/Student Liaison Committees and made available online, via Office 365.

## External references

The following methods are used for gaining the views of other interested parties:

- Feedback from former students;
- Employers

## 6. Module Descriptors

*Please see individual Module Handbooks.*

## 7. Appendices

### Appendix 1 - Marking Criteria

Marks will be allocated using the following qualitative guidelines:

#### **Grading scale for presentations**

##### **1<sup>st</sup>. 70%+**

A first-class presentation will be excellent in content, organization, and style. There will be a clear central strategy with strong supporting points and ample evidence for each assertion. The ideas will be engaging and original and will offer illuminating insights into the topic, materials, or works being studied. The topic will be treated in depth, drawing on a good number of appropriate sources. The organization will be clear at all levels. The presentation will not include material irrelevant to the strategy and supporting arguments. There should be very few distracting errors in style, delivery, and mechanics.

##### **2:1. 60-69%**

A 2:1 presentation will still be good, but weaker than a first class presentation in some areas. It may have good ideas but be weakened by problems of organization and delivery. Or it may be well-organized and well-constructed but offer fewer and less valuable insights than a first class presentation.

##### **2:2. 50-59%**

A 2:2 presentation will show a competent understanding and coverage of the topic, but its insights will usually not go beyond the obvious, and there will be weaknesses in two or more areas. A 2:2 may also be assigned to an inconsistent presentation that shows some excellent insights yet fails to tie them into a unified whole.

##### **3rd. 40-49%**

A third-class presentation has some virtues, but weaknesses in several areas. Examples include a presentation with relatively few sources and little breadth of coverage, a presentation with some good ideas or information marred by unclear delivery and poor organization, or a clearly delivered presentation with superficial ideas that shows a lack of engagement with the topic.

**F. 39% or below**

An F presentation is consistently weak, whether poorly delivered throughout, lacking insight into the topic or artist/event being studied, or reflecting little thought or effort. Presentations that plagiarize, that fabricate information or sources, that rely excessively on quoting secondary sources, or that do no more than repeat what is said in class sessions or in the lecture notes will also receive an F.

**Grading scale for written assignments (essays, reports, portfolios)**

**1<sup>st</sup>. 70%+**

A first-class assignment will be excellent in content, organization, and style. There will be a clear focus upon the requirements of the brief with strong supporting points and ample evidence for each assertion. The ideas will be engaging and original and will offer illuminating insights into the topic, materials, or work being studied/carried out. The topic will be treated in depth, drawing on a good number of appropriate resources. The organization will be clear at all levels. The assignment will not include material irrelevant to the brief or its supporting points. There should be very few distracting errors in style, diction, and/or mechanics.

**2:1. 60-69%**

A 2:1 assignment will still be good, but weaker than a first-class submission in some areas. It may have good ideas but be weakened by problems of organization, style and mechanics. Or it may be well-organized and well-constructed but offer fewer and less valuable insights than a first-class assignment.

**2:2. 50-59%**

A 2:2 assignment will show a competent understanding and coverage of the topic, but its insights will usually not go beyond the obvious, and there will be weaknesses in two or more areas. A 2:2 may also be awarded to an inconsistent assignment that shows some excellent insights yet fails to relate them comprehensively to the brief.

**3rd. 40-49%**

A third-class assignment has some virtues, but weaknesses in several areas. Examples include an assignment with evidence of relatively few resources and

little breadth of coverage, an assignment with some good ideas or information marred by unclear writing and poor organization, or a clearly presented piece of work with superficial ideas that shows a lack of engagement with the topic.

**F. 39% or below**

An F assignment is consistently weak, whether poorly written/constructed throughout, lacking insight into the topic or works being studied, or reflecting little thought or effort. Assignments that plagiarize, that fabricate information or sources, that rely excessively on quoting secondary sources, or that do no more than repeat what is said in class sessions or in generalized textbooks will also receive an F.

**Grading scale for creative assignments (incl. production work)**

**1<sup>st</sup>. 70%+**

A first-class assignment will demonstrate an excellent understanding of technique and style. There will be a convincing and compelling sense of creative flair in the engagement and execution of ideas. The brief will be clearly addressed and a thorough understanding of industry practices will be exhibited whenever appropriate. There should be very few distracting technical errors.

**2:1. 60-69%**

A 2:1 assignment will still be good, but weaker than a first-class submission in some areas. It may have good ideas but be weakened by problems of technique. Or it may be technically secure but with less creative flair than a first-class assignment.

**2:2. 50-59%**

A 2:2 assignment will show some understanding and coverage of technique and style but will usually not go beyond the obvious, and there will be weaknesses in two or more areas. A 2:2 may also be awarded to an inconsistent assignment that shows some excellent creative and/or technical skill but fails to comprehensively address the brief.

**3rd. 40-49%**

A third-class assignment has some virtues, but weaknesses in several areas. Examples include an assignment which deploys relatively few resources and techniques, an assignment with some good ideas or information marred by technical weaknesses, or a clearly presented piece of work with pedestrian or highly derivative ideas that show a lack of engagement with the topic.

**F. 39% or below**

An F assignment is consistently weak, whether poorly constructed throughout, lacking insight into the techniques and/or styles being studied, or reflecting little

thought or effort. Assignments that plagiarize, that rely excessively on long, unprocessed samples/quotations, or that do no more than reproduce basic exercises from class will also receive an F.

## **Appendix 2 - Policies and Procedures**

*A link to Policies and Procedures relating to HE Students can be found on Office 365.*