

Flying Start 2018

Photography

“Life is like a camera. Focus on what's important. Decide what to include and what to leave out. Capture the good times. Develop from the negatives. And if things don't work out, just take another shot.”

Ziad K. Abdelnour

The A level Photography course is perfect for anyone who wants to develop their artistic, creative and analytical skills. Students who choose Photography at A level tend to be passionate about it, and their love of the subject and the time they are willing to invest in their work is evident in the artwork that they produce, and the grade that they attain.

Like many things in life, the more time, energy, commitment and effort that you put into your work, the more you will get out - both in terms of final grade and in terms of your own personal enjoyment, engagement and satisfaction. Students who work hard on their projects tend to end up with the highest grades and produce the most stunning artwork.

“Hard work beats talent, when talent doesn’t work hard.” - Jerry Schmidt

Imagine how hard you worked in the week before a GCSE coursework deadline, or the week before one of your GCSE exams. That level of commitment, energy and effort is our expectation of students throughout the duration of the course. If you are not someone who likes photographing, creating and investigating the work of other artists, then this is not the course for you. If you are thinking about photography as an A level just because you like taking pictures on your phone, this is not the course for you. If you LOVE photography, then you are in the right place, and you are about to develop into a REAL artist. We will do all we can to help you achieve this.

This exciting visual subject focuses on both traditional darkroom processes and contemporary digital photography where you will develop editing techniques using manipulation software. You will explore the technical aspects of the subject as well as its application as an art form, developing your ideas from the initial concept to final pieces.

“If you’re gonna do it, do it right.” - George Michael

Not everything you create will be entirely successful, but every assignment that you complete will help you in your journey to become a better artist - providing that everything you do reflects genuine effort and determination. It is important to realise that not everything you create will be as good as you want it to be, and not everything you create will be a pleasure to complete or to look at. This is unimportant. What matters is that with every piece of work you attempt, you do your best and try your hardest. **If you want to be a successful photographer, you have to be prepared to put in the time and energy.**

Some specialist equipment is required. Being a good A level photography student is about commitment, creativity, resilience and resourcefulness. It is about listening to advice and refining your ideas. It is about showing determination to reach your artistic potential. It is about working hard- both in school and independently. The summer practical assignment that is described in this document is your first opportunity to show clear evidence that you possess these attributes. Students need to bring their completed summer assignments to the first lesson in September. We look forward to seeing your work, if you want to discuss this with us please don’t hesitate to come and see us.

Equipment needed for the course

Students buy their own photographic paper and films sold by the Art Department at cost price. We operate a debit system with all students paying money into an account to pay for basic equipment. This works out at approximately £30-£40 per term. Ideally, students will need to purchase a manual SLR camera and should also have a digital camera with a memory card with a minimum of 16GB capacity, a USB memory stick or external hard drive, a basic kit of scissors, pencils, hand towel and overall/apron and a four ring A4 binder. A tripod would be an advantage but is not essential. Many students become inspired by the photographic medium and as the course progresses they may find they want to purchase extra items such as a photographic changing bag or even a DSLR camera; staff advice is always available should you decide to make further purchases.

For most students, Photography A level will be a completely new course, with most students never having had the opportunity to study Photography at GCSE level. As such, a really good strategy might be to spend some time watching some of the following videos. These can provide students with insight regarding what photography is really about...

Recommended Documentaries:

'Dougie Wallace - What do Artists do all day?' <https://vimeo.com/194869208>

'Dennis Morris - What do Artists do all day?' <https://vimeo.com/159335380>

Albert Watson - <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3ilhkl>

BBC Photography season <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04vb8yl/members/all>

You might also like to investigate the following websites...

Recommended Websites:

www.photonhead.com (try the 'simcam' to familiarise yourself with how a camera works)

<http://www.studentartguide.com/articles/creative-photography-ideas>

www.eastman.org

www.photographersgallery.com

Of course, the best thing you can do to become a better photographer in preparation for the A level course is to spend time taking photographs. The more time energy and effort that you can invest in this process, the better.

A level photography is, as you would expect, different from the photography each of us are used to in our day to day lives. Try to think about the MEANING of your work when taking photographs - what is your image trying to achieve? What message are you trying to get across to your audience? Try to take photographs that demonstrate your commitment and creativity- this is not just about clicking away and taking hundreds of pouting selfies!

The best advice for taking photographs is this:

"Think like an artist, not like a tourist!"

Be true to yourself. Be willing to work hard. Be willing to work out of your comfort zone. Learn from the challenges that you face. Ask questions. Persevere. Respond to advice. Practise. Do your best. Do more than you are asked to do. Create. Enjoy.

Recommended Suppliers of Camera Equipment

At Chenderit we mainly use the following Cameras with 50mm f1.7 lenses:

SLR CAMERAS

Pentax K1000

Vivitar V3000

DIGITAL SLR CAMERA

Canon EOS 450D

SUPPLIERS

**SLR and Digital SLR Cameras,
Second-hand and Re-conditioned**

Studentphotostore.co.uk

(Operated by Pixel-Store Group)

136 Albert Road, Plymouth PL2 1AQ

T : 0845 860 5775

W : www.pixel-store.co.uk

Camerajungle

E5 Barwell Business Park, Leatherhead Road, Chessington, Surrey KT9 2NY

T: 0208 949 0123

W: camerajungle.co.uk

Sendean Cameras

SLR Repairs

9-12 St Annes Court, London, W1F 0BB

T: 0207 734 0895

Digital Repairs

22-23 St Cross Street, London EC1N 8UH

T: 0207 242 7733

W: www.sendeancameras.co.uk

Supplies: Repair and Service to Cameras, but also have cameras to sell

There are second hand sellers online that have a range of manual film SLR cameras. Ensure you buy both a camera body and lens – a zoom lens will be useful (for example 35-80 mm). **The main features required** 35mm SLR camera with a fully manual exposure mode and manual focusing and a TTL (through the lens) light meter. Models to look out for include: Praktica MTL, Canon EOS, Nikon F80, Nikon F65, Pentax MZ M, Pentax MZ 5N, Pentax ZM, Pentax K1000, Olympus OM10, Konica Minolta X-700 to name a few. It is sometimes possible to buy a camera second hand from students who have graduated the course or upgraded their cameras.

Summer Assignment: Celebrating and talking about the work of other artists

When the course starts in September, one of the first things that we will want to do is to get to know everyone in the group a little bit better. As such, each student will be asked to prepare a **five-minute presentation on a piece of photography artwork that they find particularly inspiring**. Students who are unable to complete this assignment over the summer will still be expected to present to the rest of the class in September. Each student needs to create a PowerPoint presentation about a specific piece of photography artwork that they have selected and prepare a supporting speech that they will be able to deliver. In September, each student will present this to the rest of the group and try to persuade them why that particular piece of art is particularly significant. You can include as many slides as you want.

You can decide to investigate any photographer that you like, but a good place to start would be one of these:

Ansel Adams - Black and white landscape photography

Martin Parr - Documentary photography

Karl Blossfeldt - Natural form photography

Henri Cartier Bresson - Black and white street photography

David Bailey - Black and white portrait photography

The presentation must include a high quality image of the selected photography artwork, the name of the photographer and the date it was created. The presentation could also include:

- Details of how the artwork has inspired other artists
- Details of how the artwork relates to other work by the same artist
- Details of how the artwork was created
- Details of the emotional response the artwork has on the viewer
- Details of the history of the artwork and how it affected the history of photography
- Details of the initial response to the artwork by the world at the time
- Details of when the student first saw the artwork
- Details of where the artwork can be found
- Details of why the photograph is significant to the history of photography
- Details of why the photograph is significant to the student

Practise your presentation- please make sure that it lasts no less than four minutes and no longer than six minutes. The best presentation will win a prize. An actual prize, donated by Mr Christy.

Summer Assignment: Developing your practical skills

To make the absolute best start to the A level course, we would like all students to complete some practical work over the summer holiday. Using a digital camera please take a minimum of 36 images from which you should then select:

12 images that represent your identity

12 images inspired by a photographer (see the list above)

12 images exploring your local area.

You will need to have the images printed off in a physical hard-copy format by the time you return to school in September. It is fine to use your phone to take these images, so long as you are able to print each image off to create a quality print.

Remember: the more you use your skills, the better photographer you will become.

The best portfolio of photographs, created in response to these assignments, will win a prize. Work will be judged by the consensus of Mr Christy and Mr Lloyd-Jones.