

Studio Lighting Syllabus

Photography has been described as painting with light. But most photographers pay very little attention to the light when taking their photographs. One way to raise your awareness of light and how it affects your shot is to learn studio photography. In the studio, whatever light is on your subject is there because you allowed it to be, and the way that the light illuminates your subject is the way that you set it up to do so. In the studio, you must think about light – and that discipline can help improve your photography whether in the studio or outside it. That is the premise of this workshop.

The first portion of the workshop will focus on portraiture. This may extend to seven or eight weeks. The numbering in the outline below is by topic, not by week. The second portion of the workshop will explore tabletop photography, where participants will bring in materials for still life compositions; glass objects of interest to them; coins or silverware; and fabric or wood objects to photograph over the final weeks of the workshop.

The first day will begin with a brief introduction to post-processing. I will use the free Nikon application NXStudio to show the kinds of manipulations we will be doing in post. We will then try our hand at bounce flash, which will give us material to practice our post-processing on. If the participant is using my camera, they will be given their own SD card to keep their raw images on.

I will introduce each topic with a quick demo of how to set up the light and discuss what it is good for and what are some of its pitfalls. Then the participants will set up their own shots practicing the new techniques on other participants. The resulting images will be emailed to the other class participants after post-processing for peer review out of class.

The primary reference for the workshop will be *Light – Science and Magic* by Fil Hunter, Steven Biven, Paul Fuqua, and Robin Reid.

Topical Outline

1. Bounce light flash portraits
 - a. Using flash: synch speed, TTL, light temperature
 - b. Flags
 - c. Broad side lighting vs short side lighting
2. Single continuous light portraits with panel light
 - a. Classic lighting setups: Butterfly, loop, Rembrandt, split
3. Single light portrait with monolight
 - a. Off-camera triggering
 - b. Light modifiers (beauty dishes, umbrellas, grids) and catch light
 - c. Modeling light
4. Two-light portraits
 - a. Use of incident light meter
 - b. Light ratio of key : fill light
5. Three or more light portrait
 - a. Rim, hair, background, accent light
 - b. Full length portraits and posing
6. Still life
 - a. Colored lights
 - b. Cucoloris
7. Glass
 - a. Refraction
 - b. Lighting for dramatic effect
8. Metal
 - a. Specular reflection and the family of angles
 - b. Closeup photography, depth of field, focus stacking
9. Accenting texture in wood or fabric