Course Name: **Online Photography for Study Abroad: This Is My World**

Department: **Art & Art History**  College: **Arts & Letters**

Primary contact name, phone number, and email (*normally this will be the lead instructor*)

**Prof. Peter Glendinning, 353-7798, glendinn@msu.edu**

Faculty and Staff Involved in Developing and Offering the Course *please list full name, position at MSU, email address, and project role for each person*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>MSU Affiliation</th>
<th>PROJECT ROLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peter Glendinning</td>
<td>Prof. of Art &amp; Art History</td>
<td>Course designer and instructor</td>
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Type of Course:

- **FULLY ONLINE** (no required face to face component)
- **BLENDED/HYBRID** (some face to face time is replaced by online learning)
- **TECHNOLOGY-ENHANCED FACE-TO-FACE** (a face-to-face course which uses technology for teaching and learning in an innovative way)

Semester(s) offered in 2010-2011 and number of students enrolled:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEMESTER</th>
<th># STUDENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2010</td>
<td>29</td>
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Please address these categories:

**I. Course Description (400 word limit)**

(*broadly, what does the course teach, how is student performance assessed, what aspects of the course are online or technology-enhanced)*

**STA 491, This Is My World: Online Photography for Study Abroad**, is a new course first offered in Summer 2010. It is the first online course in photography at MSU, has no pre-requisites, and is designed for students enrolled in any MSU Study Abroad program. The course goals are to educate students in basic technical, compositional, and art-oriented aspects of digital photography, in the context of the exploration of the new “worlds” they discover in Study Abroad experiences. An additional goal is to broaden the individual international experience to one that is shared with “classmates” across the globe, through online sharing of photographs and comments from a diverse range of places and perspectives.

Students studied assigned readings in their textbook, “A Short Course in Digital Photography,” and registered in the class section associated with the book's website. They engaged a series of instructor-produced MSU-ANGEL PowerPoint and video lectures, and publisher-hosted online lessons (including required online chapter quizzes) prior to departure for their programs to prepare for successful photography. Lessons included information related to technique, artistic content and composition, equipment to pack, and practical tips on cultural sensitivities related to tourist-photographers. The goal was to study photography before departure so that they would be prepared from a technical, creative, and cultural standpoint to be making photographs, rather than studying how to make photographs, while abroad.
Prior to departure each student also purchased a [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com) account, and learned about the process of uploading photographs along with the image editing software “picnik.” They registered at flickr sites for the class, and reviewed the information related to composition and camerawork that was posted there by the instructor.

During Study Abroad programs, they made photographs in response to at least 15 of 25 possible assignments, uploaded all to their own flickr site, then posted their best on group assignment sites. They were also required to post comments related to technique, composition, and content of their peers’ photographs. They read their peers’ comments on their own pictures, and also made comments related to similarities and differences in geographic, cultural, and other aspects of their varied international experiences.

The assignments were constructed in groups of 5 each, with titles and descriptions that were specific enough to create parameters, but broad enough to be interpreted creatively by each student as they explored what the theme “This Is My World” (TIMW) meant to them. The groupings were:

**The People of My World**
- TIMW#1 Friends
- TIMW#2 Strangers
- TIMW#3 In Uniform
- TIMW#4 Workers
- TIMW#5 Self Portrait

**The Landscapes of My World**
- TIMW#6 Nature
- TIMW#7 Architecture
- TIMW#8 Landmark
- TIMW#9 Weather
- TIMW#10 Night View

**The Things of My World**
- TIMW#11 Foods
- TIMW#12 Animals/Pets
- TIMW#13 Signs
- TIMW#14 Transportation
- TIMW#15 Technology

**The Activities of My World**
- TIMW#16 Fun/Playtime/Leisure
- TIMW#17 Business/Retail
- TIMW#18 Sports
- TIMW#19 Religious/Ceremonial
- TIMW#20 Music/Art/Theater

**The Essence of My World**
- TIMW#21 The Mysterious
- TIMW#22 Light and Shadow
- TIMW#23 The Beautiful
- TIMW#24 The Ugly
- TIMW#25 The Colors

The instructor checked his flickr account daily, reviewing any new photographs uploaded by students before they posted them to any assignment groups, sharing his comments on individual photographs’ technical and artistic aspects. He reviewed over 12,000 photographs.

Students selected a final portfolio of photographs to submit on CD in completion of course requirements.

II. Learning and Interaction Goals of the Online Course
(what learning and interaction outcomes did you hope to achieve in your use of technology, why is this an award-worthy course)

The course outcome goals can be grouped in three areas, each one supported by different aspects of technology. First it was important that the student gain knowledge in the technical aspects of digital photography and online storage/manipulation prior to departure, so they would be ready to begin making technically successful images from the first day of their overseas experience. Second, that they gain knowledge in approaches to successful composition of 2-D images, and the range of content that being abroad might hold for them. Third, and most importantly in terms of innovation, students learned from one another and their professor as they engaged the daily process of creating new pictures while in vastly different locations and learning situations outside the USA. They continued that learning and an internal dialogue with their own pictures and external one with their classmates even after their Study Abroad program was complete, right up to and including meeting each other for the first time (in most instances) at the exhibit of their photographs held in Kresge Art Center in February 2011. Online and other technology aspects were vital in all respects, but it was the human element of connection which was most important.
1. The Pearson Publishing site for “A Short Course in Digital Photography” held important demonstrations of technical aspects, interactive analysis of creative photographs, and quizzes for each chapter. Each student was required to achieve at least an 80% score on the chapter quizzes, and expected to study the technical sections of the site. The instructor developed additional materials (after learning Camtasia Studio and Adobe Presenter software, writing scripts, preparing and uploading files, etc.) related to photographic controls, which were placed on the course ANGEL site, including: setting up and selecting features from the camera “menu” to optimize performance; editing photographs using Picnik software; how to download and properly store digital photographs; and, what typical elements are found in the camera bag of a well-prepared photographer.

2. The Pearson site was also a source of information on creative content and compositional principles, through analyses written by the textbook author of individual photographs. Those materials were supplemented by the instructor through development of additional lecture materials (again through Camtasia and Adobe) placed on ANGEL and also on the group www.flickr.com site.

3. www.flickr.com was integral to the goal of creating an ongoing dialogue about photography between the student and their instructor and classmates. Each time a student uploaded new photographs to their personal account, the instructor was notified and could review them and add his comments related to individual pictures or groups of photos. As students reviewed their photographs they selected their best and copied them from their personal sites to the assignment groups where all their classmates could see them and comment on them as well. Each student was further required to upload at least 2 photographs to each of a minimum of 15 assignments (at least 30 photos), and also to make at least 2 substantive comments about their classmates’ photographs on each of a minimum of 15 assignment groups (at least 30 comments). The assignment groups became the forums for exchanges of both images and ideas as students responded in writing to each others’ creative problem solving. They reflected on how the student in Japan handled the same assignment so differently from the student in Greece, not only because of different creative inclinations but because of different cultural, geographical, and political situations. This interchange moved from the cyberworld to the real world as 50 of the best pictures, 2 for each of the 25 assignments, were printed and hung in a month-long exhibit in Kresge Art Center’s Gallery 114. At the opening reception for the exhibit, students who might never have considered themselves artists prior to their participation in the course, were honored for their achievements by the over-250 people in attendance (many of whom were family members). The reception also gave many of the students the opportunity to meet each other and share ideas in person for the first time.

4. III. Points of Interest and Innovation

(Please discuss course highlights and including URLs and/or screen shots of key components of the course you want to bring to the attention of the judges. Possible outstanding aspects of the course might include student interaction, rich media content elements, interactive learning objects, assessment, effective incorporation of polling and surveys, facilitated teamwork, peer review, portfolio creation, etc.)

A main point of innovation in this course has nothing to do with technology, but was made possible by technology. That point is the goal of creating a shared experience for broadly diverse students who, by the very nature of MSU’s Study Abroad structure, are generally quite focused on a narrow range of subjects studied in specific (albeit “overseas”) geographic and cultural venues. The expansion of the boundaries of the traditional Study Abroad experience from being one quite site-specific and content-specific to one that could extend to the farthest reaches of the globe through the shared study of the universal “language” of photography, is one of the most exciting things about the course for the instructor (and it seems for most of the students too).

The course was offered as an “enhancement” of the Study Abroad experience, but in some ways it was really transformative in its expansion of the geographical and cultural boundaries of the study locations. Ben Owen’s description is typical of his classmates’: “It allowed me to compare pictures from my categories to others photos from different cultures. It was very interesting to compare similar things and see the differences.”

To make that idea of transformation of the Study Abroad experience a reality through photographic education took development and organization of materials that could only be offered successfully through online teaching.
and learning. Since much of the learning had to occur before departure in the Summer, during the latter half of Spring semester for students who were already fully scheduled for Spring classes, it would be impossible to coordinate all the inherent conflicts to offer traditional classroom instruction. Without complete online lessons, quizzes, and student/teacher interactions, the course would not have been possible simply for that reason alone.

Since photography had never been taught even partially online at MSU, the instructor had the opportunity (and necessity) of re-envisioning aspects of instruction that he had taught for his entire career since 1978 in new ways. Those materials ranged from the essentials of camera controls to new topics such as organization and maneuvering through websites critical to the learning and sharing so essential to the course. He also had to determine the best ways to teach and learn in environments that were almost as new to him (www.flickr.com and Pearson’s site) as they would be to the students.

How best to convey even the simplest aspects of photographic control, from shutter speeds and other critical settings, without the student and their camera present for hands-on involvement was important. Additional consideration related to overcoming the dramatic camera design differences in the nature and position of controls over the extensive menu and format options of digital cameras, so each student could control their camera regardless of its design. Even the basic elements of what to put in a camera bag had to be handled online. The Pearson website for the textbook, the ANGEL site for the class, and also capabilities on www.flickr.com were used to hold this information, and convey it through videos, PowerPoint slide lectures, and image commentaries.

The ANGEL Lessons page, with links to flickr and Pearson sites, as well as the syllabus and “cool info”

The ANGEL page from which lessons on technical and creative topics (aka cool info) could be found.
“Camera Bag Stuff” lesson began with an overview and continued to describe various essentials that were essential to successful photography, including backup items in case of loss or damage.

An example of technical information available on the Pearson Publishing pages for required readings.

The problem of where and how to accomplish the sharing and discussing of images, usually done in a classroom setting with actual prints, was also a major one to be solved. The www.flickr.com assignment group pages provided the forums in which students and the instructor could share images and comments. After reviewing their photographs in their “home” flickr site, and considering any suggestions or comments the professor had made to them, students decided on a select number of pictures to put forward for group discussion on each of the assignment groups they had chosen to complete. While the minimum number of assignments required was 15 all but 3 students chose to contribute to at least 4 more, and some contributed to all 25.
“The Colors” was one of the 25 assignment topics, and this shows the initial page for that group. Student contributions were uploaded to the “Group Pool” for each assignment, and could be individually selected for viewing or seen as part of a larger group for comparison of images.

Additionally, the students for this class would probably not be art majors and not have any prior training in the basic elements of art. The process of conception of artistic expression as a unique blend of creative content interpretations engaged by the artist at work, and the essential theories of composition/design the artist uses to organize their expressions and give them a tangible format in real time and space were things that 26 of the 29 who eventually enrolled had never formally studied. Presentation of foundational principles in art were made a part of the learning experience conveyed through ANGEL, Pearson, and flickr online teaching and learning sites.
This shows the opening page to the 53+minute lecture on composition/design of the visual elements, featuring landscape and portrait photographs the instructor made in many different countries. The slide show included a voice-over lecture by the instructor describing the various principles each image exemplified.

One of the slides for the Visual Elements and Design slide show, this one related to the “Golden Mean” design principle with a photograph from St. Marks Square in Venice. Each slide was accompanied by lecture notes for accessibility of non-hearing students or those without audio options.
Additional slide/lecture materials were placed on the instructor’s www.flickr.com site. Topics there included “Visual Elements and Design Principles,” “Photographing People Abroad,” “Vantage Point,” “The Frame,” “The Detail or Symbol,” and the important aspect of finding new content in a given setting by “Working a Scene.

Introductory page on www.flickr.com with thumbnail photos and notes related to the subject “The Detail or Symbol.” Similar introductory pages with subsequent examples were placed for various other topics.

Example for “The Detail or Symbol” concept, posted to instructor’s flickr Sets, with explanatory notes.
Most students would have little or no experience in photographing people they did not know, much less people in whose countries and cultures they were “outsiders.” It was important to convey a sense of respect for the people they would interact with, and the fact that people are not “souvenirs.” A “People Principles” lecture was developed for the purpose of conveying this important information, with voice-over by the instructor and lecture notes for those who preferred to or needed to read rather than hear the lecture.

A final point of innovation was not completely online, but was an important outcome for the students in the class, their friends and family members, visitors to the Kresge Art Center ranging from students and faculty to members of the public to Alumni Distinguished Scholar candidates.

Through the sponsorship of the Provost’s Office for Undergraduate Education and others, the instructor created an exhibit of fifty prints which were selected from the over-12,000 photographs produced for the assignments (two pictures from each of the twenty-five assignment topics) which was mounted in Kresge’s Gallery 114. At the opening reception, students wore “picture tags,” identifying themselves by one of their photographs in the exhibit rather than their names, and enjoyed sharing the show with their friends (many of whom had never set foot in Kresge Art Center before, being students in other majors across campus), and families. They also had the opportunity to meet many of their online classmates for the first time, and exchange experiences and ideas.

The exhibit was so successful that it was held over an additional two weeks (so that it could be enjoyed by Alumni Distinguished Scholarship candidates in particular) as an example of Art and Art History Department excellence. It travels next to the Crooked Tree Art Center in Petoskey where it will hang until the end of March, and thereafter will be sent to enhance the education of high school art students on a free lending basis.

Through this traveling exhibit, the international experience of our students will be extended in the MSU Land and World Grant tradition throughout the State of Michigan, and also be conveyed to broader audiences through an online display of both words and images on the Art & Art History Dept. website (TBD). The exhibit was featured in an article in the MSU State News, January 17, 2010, and can be found at: http://www.statenews.com/index.php/article/2011/01/art_exhibit_showcases_study_abroad

The exhibit poster and a few related photographs are below.
This is My World

An Exhibit of Photography by MSU Study Abroad Students

Opening Reception Monday 1/17, 5-7pm

This exhibit of photographs from Studio Art 491, Photography for Study Abroad 2010, showcases artwork created by students in MSU’s first online photography course. Students were enrolled in MSU Study Abroad program subjects other than the art of photography, adding this course to enhance their experience of the new worlds they discovered abroad through their own photography and sharing their images online.

The exhibit was made possible through the enthusiasm of the students, and by support of the Undergraduate Education Office of the Provost, the Dean of International Academic Student Life, the Office of Study Abroad, College of Arts & Letters, and the Department of Art & Art History.

Alexandra Lasky and Lao Yu (who had never met in person before) with PG at the opening reception 1/17/11
The exhibit of 50 prints was accompanied by a display of 150 more photos on a monitor in the hall outside.

IV. Accessibility

(It is not a requirement that winning entries be accessible to learners with visual, auditory, mobility, and cognitive disabilities. However, if your course content is accessible, or if it incorporates an innovative approach to accessibility, please describe.)

All PowerPoint slide lectures were recorded in Adobe Presenter, which allowed the instructor to place the lecture notes he read from for the audio portion directly into the presentation for those who could not listen to them either for reasons of physical disability or technical issues. The “classroom critique” aspect of the class transposed as written commentaries in response to individual assignment group photographs, essentially a “chat room” environment, which was accessible to all regardless of hearing ability.

V. Evidence of Effectiveness with Students

(Please include evidence such as comparative test scores, SIRs results, short student letters of support, your own observations of project or group performance, etc.)

Comments received from students about their experiences related to the course follow.

Kyle Keener: “This course had a positive impact on my study abroad program because, in making myself take lots of photos, I found that I was more likely to stop, if only briefly, and consider the daily life of my subjects or the people around them.”
Eve Avdoulos: “Making photographs for the course opened my eyes to the world in ways that I wouldn't have expected. I became more attuned to details around me: colors, shapes, lights and shadows, textures, and people. This course enabled me to look at the big picture as well as all the fine details the world presents. I absolutely loved seeing photographs taken by other students in my class. Not only did it create a drive in me to visit those places but it allowed me to, in a sense, virtually experience those destinations. I also enjoyed seeing how students interpreted the required themes. To see the topic of color, for example, explored in so many different areas of the world was very awesome, and without this class, that experience would have not been possible.”

Ben Owens: “Making photographs abroad allowed me to get a closer look at the new world that was around me. It allowed me to appreciate the differences in others’ worlds, and open my eyes to new surroundings.”

Jessica Santarossa: “Taking photographs for class made me look at the world in a different way. It wasn't simply taking the photo of the sunset, or the food or the people, it was the challenge of capturing the feeling of that moment. I think that it allowed me to slow down and take in the moments. Looking at other students work was inspiring. While still on the trip it allowed me to try new perspectives or angles to gain a different look to my own work.

Yao Lu: “I paid more attention to the people around me. When shooting portraits of strangers, I had a lot more communication with the locals. I loved that somehow through the body language or drawings on paper, I got to know people whom I encountered on the other side of the world. My favorite portrait is of an old man. I was shooting the sunset by Lake Biwa while he was waiting to shoot pictures too. I was glad to share the moment with a stranger who was into photography too.”

As a faculty member, I have been most gratified by the responses from colleagues and art students about the quality of content and composition in the photographs they have seen in the exhibit. They are uniformly astonished when I tell them that out of the 29 students in the class only 3 were majors in our department. That, for me, is the greatest testament to the success the students had in the class. Whether their major was animal husbandry or zoology, or anything in between, they took their role as an artist, as a person with the ability to convey unique expressions through photography, seriously. They also took the importance of sharing their insights into cultural, social, and geographical aspects of their Study Abroad “worlds” seriously, and reflected those priorities in the comments and photographs they posted online. Through the online forums for each assignment, they shared with frankness and helpfulness their kudos and constructive criticisms, and helped their classmates across the world grow in their understanding of both their new worlds and of themselves.

VI. Plans for Sustainability
The instructor and department are committed to continuing to offer the course for future summers, subject to the ordinary budget parameters, and will offer it during Fall and Spring semesters for Study Abroad and overseas internship students beginning in 2011 as well.

The course materials are being enhanced based on the first year’s experience, including: additional PowerPoint presentations on backup storage of digital images, nature photography, and file formats for various types of output (print/web); information on camera types that would be appropriate for the course will be updated; and, an ongoing web-exhibit of works in progress for broader dissemination of the students creative efforts.

The 50-print exhibit will continue to travel to Michigan high school art programs as an outreach activity of Art & Art History, after its showing at the Crooked Tree Art Center in Petoskey ends in April 2011. The exhibit will be accompanied by a DVD holding the PowerPoint lecture on Visual Elements and Design, and hopefully generate encouragement for students to develop ideas about how they might similarly respond through creative photography to their own part of the state. The instructor is developing a proposal to create an outreach activity for all high school art programs in Michigan, based on the model of this class, in which learning and sharing through creative photography can become an ongoing part of his service activities. It is also hoped that as high school teachers and students learn more about MSU Study Abroad programs and the Department of Art & Art History, they will take that into consideration as they consider options for higher education.