

Course Assessment Report
Washtenaw Community College

Discipline	Course Number	Title
Photography	103	PHO 103 03/25/2025- History of Photography
College	Division	Department
Business and Computer Technologies	Business and Computer Technologies	Digital Media Arts
Faculty Preparer		Donald Werthmann
Date of Last Filed Assessment Report		

I. Review previous assessment reports submitted for this course and provide the following information.

1. Was this course previously assessed and if so, when?

No

2. Briefly describe the results of previous assessment report(s).

3.

4. Briefly describe the Action Plan/Intended Changes from the previous report(s), when and how changes were implemented.

5.

II. Assessment Results per Student Learning Outcome

Outcome 1: Recognize a variety of historically noteworthy photographs.

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Outcome-related quizzes
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2025
 - Course section(s)/other population: All sections
 - Number students to be assessed: All students
 - How the assessment will be scored: Answer key

- Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 75% of the students will score 75% or higher.
- Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
2024		

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
64	58

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

The number of assessed students **[58]** differs from the number of enrolled students **[64]** because they did not submit material that was related to the respective outcomes, or they chose to withdraw from the class.

- Section 01 assessed students: **10** | **12** enrolled
- Section D01 assessed students: **24** | **27** enrolled
- Section D02 assessed students: **24** | **25** enrolled

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

Section 01 was conducted face-to-face, on campus, whereas sections D01 & D02 were conducted online, in Blackboard. Scores from the on-campus section were tabulated manually, whereas course performance reports were generated from questions using the embedded goals tool, in Blackboard.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

1) See the attached PDF featuring data from the on-campus section that was tabulated manually by PT Faculty that taught the section.

- *pho103-Sec01_Outcomes_1+2.pdf*

2) See the attached PDF reports that were run in Blackboard with the Goals Tool. The list of bar graphs illustrates each student's performance of this outcome.

- *pho103-D01_Outcome-1.pdf*
- *pho103-D02_Outcome-1.pdf*

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: <u>Yes</u>
The standard of success is "75% of the students will score 75% or higher." 75% of 58 students is 44. 44 [75%] out of 58 students must score 75%, or higher. Results: Section 01: 6 students scored 75%, or higher. Section D01: 24 students scored 75%, or higher. Section D02: 21 students scored 75%, or higher. Narrative: The sum of students that scored 75% or higher is 51 . The Standard of Success is met.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

The Blackboard goals alignment tool was used to generate the data of the online sections. A total of ten questions were selected as samples, with two questions from each quiz, from the following five modules: Mod.4 —19th Century Landscapes, Mod.5 —The Origins of Documentary Photography, Mod.7 —Pictorialism, Mod.9 —Modernism, Mod.10 —Photojournalism. The Blackboard goals data was provided to the PT Faculty member of the on-campus section, so that they could generate matching data sets. The same questions [images] were presented to students in the on-campus section of the course for each quiz. In other words, the source of each data point collected matches across all sections. Strengths: In the on-campus section, quizzes occur in class each week, where the instructor administers an <i>open note</i> format quiz. Any information a student physically writes down in their “course notebook” during the class session is allowed to use it during these lecture quizzes. Lecture quizzes have the same questions that appear in the online sections. In the online sections, the quizzes are not proctored and not time limited, but are required to be submitted by 11:59pm Saturday, which is when the class moves on to the next learning module. This <i>open note</i> format offers students access to class

content to support their success, so expectations for seeing successful results is high.

Being self-reliant to produce, students are advised to reference the required textbooks, course lecture content, and personal notes to *recognize a variety of historically noteworthy photographs* with the following criteria:

- What is the name of the artist?
- What is the title of the image?
- What media does the image consist of?
- What year was the image made?

One question asks students to match a photographer's name with a specific image. In this case, there are five available names in a list, but only four photographs to match names with.

Here, students engage with general facts about who made an image, and what it consists of, etc. It appears that they did the work necessary to take personal notes, study textbook images & captions, and watch video content to produce a score that is 75%, or higher.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

51 is the sum of students from all sections scoring 75%, or higher. The standard of success is met, because **51 of 58 students [88%]** scored 75%, or higher.

Being an online-format class, it's impossible to know or measure how students are utilizing the textbooks and video content, if at all. In the on-campus section, students are instructed to make hand-written notes during the class lecture time and then enabled to use those notes to complete a quiz at the end of the class session.

1) For the online sections, faculty could require each student to produce a paid receipt that represents their rental or purchase of both textbooks. This clearly does not affirm whether a student actually engages with that content, but it does emphasize the idea of using the textbooks for successful outcomes.

2) In Canvas, a setting is activated that "checkmarks" visited content for students, but then it doesn't necessarily indicate whether it's been "cognitively consumed." Just because a "checkmark" indicates visiting the link, it does not affirm whether a student actually engages with it, let alone retains the content.

3) Quizzes could be set up as closed note, closed book, etc., and then proctored with a third-party software application, such as Honorlock. The sense of

accountability that traditional testing imposes on student retention can be beneficial to producing higher scores.
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Outcome 2: Interpret photographs within their historical context.

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Outcome-related quizzes
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2025
 - Course section(s)/other population: All sections
 - Number students to be assessed: All students
 - How the assessment will be scored: Answer key
 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 75% of the students will score 75% or higher.
 - Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
2024		

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
64	58

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

The number of assessed students [58] differs from the number of enrolled students [64] because they did not submit material that's related to the respective outcomes, or they chose to withdraw from the class. • Section 01 assessed students: 10 12 enrolled • Section D01 assessed students: 24 27 enrolled • Section D02 assessed students: 24 25 enrolled

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

Section 01 was conducted face-to-face, on campus, whereas sections D01 & D02 were conducted online, in Blackboard. Scores from the on-campus section were tabulated manually, whereas course performance reports were generated from questions with the embedded goals tool, in Blackboard.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

1) See the attached PDF with data from the on-campus section that was tabulated manually by PT Faculty that taught this section.

• *pho103-Sec01_Outcomes_1+2.pdf*

2) See the attached PDF reports that were run in Blackboard with the Goals Tool. The list of bar graphs illustrates each student's performance of this outcome.

• *pho103-D01_Outcome-2.pdf*

• *pho103-D02_Outcome-2.pdf*

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: Yes

The standard of success is "75% of the students will score 75% or higher."

75% of 58 students is 44.

44 [75%] out of 58 students must score 75%, or higher.

Results:

Section 01: **5** students scored 75%, or higher.

Section D01: **20** students scored 75%, or higher.

Section D02: **19** students scored 75%, or higher.

Narrative:

The sum of students that scored 75% or higher is **44**.

The Standard of Success is met.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

The Blackboard goals alignment tool was used to generate this data. A total of ten questions were selected as samples, with questions from the quiz in the following six modules:

Mod.1—Before Photographs, **Mod.3**—Early Portraits, **Mod.4**—19th Century Landscapes, **Mod-5**—The Origins of Documentary Photography, **Mod.7**—Pictorialism, **Mod.11**—"Straight" Photography.

The Blackboard goals data was provided to the PT Faculty member of the on-campus section, so that they could generate matching data sets. The same questions [images] were presented to students in the on-campus section of the course for each module quiz. **In other words, the source of each data point collected matches across all sections.**

Strengths:

In the on-campus section, quizzes occur in class each week, where the instructor administers an *open note* format quiz. Any information a student physically writes down in their “course notebook” during the class session is allowed usage during these lecture quizzes. Lecture quizzes have all of the same questions that appear in the online sections.

In the online sections, the quizzes are not proctored and not time limited, but are required to be submitted by 11:59pm Saturday, which is when the class moves on to the next learning module. This *open note* format offers students access to class content to support their success, so expectations for seeing successful results is high.

Being self-reliant to produce, students are advised to reference the required textbooks, course lecture content, and personal notes to *interpret photographs within their historical context* with questions that consist of various styles of inquiry, such as:

- Which of the following statements are true?
- Choose the most correct answer.
- This individual was considered to be a controversial figure because...?
- What art movement is this image considered to be aligned with?

Here, students are asked to go beyond rote memorization of general facts about who made an image, and what it consists of.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

44 is the sum of students from all sections that scored 75%, or higher.

The standard of success is met, because **44 of 58 students [75%]** scored 75%, or higher.

Being an online-format class, it is impossible to know or measure how students are utilizing the textbooks and video content, if at all. It appears that students did the necessary critical thinking and analysis to comprehend the historical context of the images being put into question.

Without proctoring, regulating, or restricting the use of open notes, textbooks and/or video content to support success on these quiz questions, it would make

sense to expect much higher scores. Since this is barely the case with the standard of success being met exactly, then student academic practices and critical thinking skills must still be put into question.

1) Faculty can produce instructional materials about the value & application of critical thinking skills in the context of a history class.

2) Faculty can produce instructional materials about how to talk about photographs, or any visual art. For example, composing a document that consists of straight-forward image critique processes and procedures, such as the following:

- Describe what's being seen.
- Form personal interpretations from those descriptions.
- Judge whether the art work is "good" or "bad", "beautiful" or "not", etc.
- Determine internal & external contexts regarding the time period the work was made.

Outcome 3: Identify artistic trends within the history of photography.

- Assessment Plan
 - Assessment Tool: Online discussion boards
 - Assessment Date: Winter 2025
 - Course section(s)/other population: All sections
 - Number students to be assessed: All students
 - How the assessment will be scored: Departmental rubrics
 - Standard of success to be used for this assessment: 75% of the students will score 75% or higher.
 - Who will score and analyze the data: Departmental faculty

1. Indicate the Semester(s) and year(s) assessment data were collected for this report.

Fall (indicate years below)	Winter (indicate years below)	SP/SU (indicate years below)
2024		

2. Provide assessment sample size data in the table below.

# of students enrolled	# of students assessed
64	48

3. If the number of students assessed differs from the number of students enrolled, please explain why all enrolled students were not assessed, e.g. absence, withdrawal, or did not complete activity.

The 48 students that represent this data are from Discussion Board scores of the two, online, Distance Learning sections that ran in fall 2024. The face-to-face, on-campus section is not included in this outcome because no data is available.

The on-campus section conducts class discussions in a format that differs greatly from the online Discussion Boards. Student contributions and participation in discussions are not recorded because of the more fluid and dynamic, Socratic method. Since no data is available for this outcome from the on-campus section, the number of students being assessed [48] differs from Outcomes 1 & 2 [58].

4. Describe how students from all populations (day students on campus, DL, MM, evening, extension center sites, etc.) were included in the assessment based on your selection criteria.

Both sections were conducted and facilitated online, in the Distance Learning format with Blackboard. The course performance reports were generated from questions that had embedded, assessment alignment goals. The face-to-face section of the course conducted discussions differently and no records of student contributions and participation are available.

5. Describe the process used to assess this outcome. Include a brief description of this tool and how it was scored.

See the attached PDF reports that were run in Blackboard with the Goals Tool. The list of bar graphs illustrates each student's performance for this outcome.

- *pho103-D01_Outcome-3.pdf*
- *pho103-D02_Outcome-3.pdf*

6. Briefly describe assessment results based on data collected for this outcome and tool during the course assessment. Discuss the extent to which students achieved this learning outcome and indicate whether the standard of success was met for this outcome and tool.

Met Standard of Success: No

The standard of success is "75% of the students will score 75% or higher."

75% of 48 students is 36.

36 [75%] out of 48 students must score 75%, or higher.

Results:

Section 01: No data available.

Section D01: **16** students scored 75%, or higher.
Section D02: **14** students scored 75%, or higher.

Narrative:

The sum of students that scored 75% or higher is **30**.

Only about 62% of students scored 75%, or higher.

The Standard of Success is not met.

7. Based on your interpretation of the assessment results, describe the areas of strength in student achievement of this learning outcome.

The Blackboard goals alignment tool was used to generate this data. Discussion Boards from the following three modules were used to measure how students *identified artistic trends within the history of photography*:

Mod.4—19th Century Landscapes [Compare Two Photos of Yosemite], **Mod.6**—19th Century Processes [Compare Alternative Processes], **Mod.10**—Photojournalism [Analysis of Robert Capa's "Falling Soldier"].

Strengths:

Discussion Boards are opportunities for students to share ideas, compare notes and opinions, and offer critical analysis & feedback about a specific written prompt. Students are advised to reference the required textbooks, course video content, and personal notes to identify artistic trends. In addition to composing one, required response to the prompt, then two unique replies to classmates are required. In this online course, it is the only real opportunity for students to interact, share ideas, and express opinions with each other.

8. Based on your analysis of student performance, discuss the areas in which student achievement of this learning outcome could be improved. If student met standard of success, you may wish to identify your plans for continuous improvement.

30 is the sum of students from both online sections that scored 75%, or higher.

The standard of success is not met, because only **30 of 48 students** [**~62%**] scored 75%, or higher.

It appears that students did not do the necessary work to offer either an adequate response to the prompt, or two unique replies to classmates, to produce a score that is 75%, or higher.

The quality of writing in discussion boards ranges from absolutely dismal to exemplary & outstanding. Academic rigor such as correct spelling & grammar, and use of parenthetical citations are required in Discussion Boards. Those technical aspects alone immediately put students who are less articulate in the language arts [English] at a disadvantage. Instructors commonly encounter the following:

- 1) Brevity, social media jargon, and street language.
 - 2) Lack of debate and meaningful interactions. Students tend to be too agreeable with each other as an online social courtesy, even if the information being cited by a classmate is inaccurate.
 - 3) Students go off topic, and neglect to address the actual prompt about photographic history, such as writing about painters, musicians, video games, feature-length movies, or irrelevant quotidian events.
- Perhaps assigning defined roles to students [peer group discussion] can significantly enhance engagement, and help students stay on task. For example, students could be assigned [paired?] to generate questions, whereas classmates could be assigned to respond to them. It appears that Canvas accommodates formats such as this, so further development of online discussion boards instructional design is sure to be occurring.
- Perhaps students could be assigned specific perspectives and/or points of view from which to argue, whether that could be for, or against a central argument.
- Changing up the discussion format can shift student expectations from week-to-week.

III. Course Summary and Intended Changes Based on Assessment Results

1. Based on the previous report's Intended Change(s) identified in Section I above, please discuss how effective the changes were in improving student learning.

A previous assessment report does not exist for this course.

2. Describe your overall impression of how this course is meeting the needs of students. Did the assessment process bring to light anything about student achievement of learning outcomes that surprised you?

Regardless of being a general education course that fulfills the Humanities requirement for the Associate in Applied Science Degree in Photography [APPHOT] and numerous other programs across the College, History of Photography content is designed primarily for Photography majors.

Photography students are enthused and compelled to learn about the origins of their craft, discover technical and aesthetic eras to inform their personal vision, and then be inspired to produce new works with an understanding of where they reside in human history as image makers, and/or transfer to a four-year art school. The number of graduating photography majors per academic year currently hovers around a dozen to the low-teens, but not all of them are registered for this course

in the same semester. If administration would allow one section of History of Photography to run once per academic year that was exclusively for DMA and/or Photography majors, then that would certainly be more fulfilling for those students, let alone generate standard of success percentages that could theoretically exceed expectations.

History of Photography is a Humanities elective chosen by students majoring in every discipline at WCC — from general studies to zoology. With all due respect to non-photo majors, let's face it: camera technology is ubiquitous. As a consequence, photography is perceived as being very easy to do, let alone admire the outcomes, so unfortunately it makes sense that students would project the same sense of *easy* into this class title and register for it. The idea of *easy* is the most common misperception of registered students. There is a *significant* amount of required reading and video content, and assignments that require extensive written analysis.

3. Describe when and how this information, including the action plan, was or will be shared with Departmental Faculty.

Via email and face-to-face during a scheduled in-service meeting.

4. Intended Change(s)

Intended Change	Description of the change	Rationale	Implementation Date
Assessment Tool	Update the tool for Outcome #3 from "Online discussion boards" to "Outcome-related reflection journals."	Online discussion boards are not used in the face-to-face sections; therefore, there was no assessment data for Outcome #3 from face-to-face sections. Reflection journals are used in both modalities, so future assessments will include all modalities.	2027
Other: measuring student engagement with course materials	Explore ways to communicate the importance of the textbook and video content, especially for online sections.	Currently quizzes are open note, so it is difficult to evaluate student engagement with course material.	2027

	These might include paid receipts for online sections, Canvas setting that “checkmarks” visited content, or setting up quizzes to be closed note, closed book and proctored.	Closed note tools may allow us to more granularly identify areas for improvement in student learning.	
Course Material	Explore producing instructional materials related to the value and application of critical thinking skills in the context of a history class. Explore producing instructional materials that model how to critique and discuss visual arts.	The standard of success was barely met for Outcome #2, although the assessment tool was open note. Additional information and resources may support student learning in this area.	2027

5. Is there anything that you would like to mention that was not already captured?

6.

III. Attached Files

[pho103-D01 Outcome-2](#)
[pho103-Sec01 Outcomes 1+2](#)
[pho103-D01 Outcome-1](#)
[pho103-D01 Outcome-3](#)
[pho103-D02 Outcome-1](#)
[pho103-D02 Outcome-2](#)
[pho103-D02 Outcome-3](#)

Faculty/Preparer:	Donald Werthmann	Date: 05/30/2025
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Assessment Committee Chair:	Jessica Hale	Date: 10/13/2026