

GCE A level Art & Design: Photography (Eduqas)

Course outline:

The word photograph was first used by Sir John Herschel in 1839 and is based on the Greek words 'phos', meaning 'light', and 'graphé', meaning 'drawing' – so "drawing with light". Photography is used by artists to record, document, manipulate and present examples of everyday life, in ordinary and extraordinary circumstances. It is also used as the vehicle for artistic expression, communicating personal ideas about the world around us. Photography can be applied as a creative process across art, craft and design and is widely used in social, commercial and scientific contexts. With the development of digital technology and the smartphone, photography is more popular than ever before. However, whilst anyone can snap and run, the photographic process is an art form through which a multitude of methods can be used to creatively explore a broad range of subject matter. Different styles of photography can be used by an artist, for instance documentary photography which is used to make straightforward and accurate representations of people, places, objects and events is a vital way to illustrate world events. Some artists see the camera as a tool for social change, using it to shed light on injustice, inequality and those side-lined in society. Conceptual photography is photography that illustrates an idea; artists have used it as a means to stage a false reality or capture an idea. In contrast, subjective photography explores the inner psyche and human condition rather than reflecting the outside world.

On the A level Photography course there will be the freedom to explore various photographic styles to communicate your thoughts, ideas and impression of a range of subject matter. You could use photography to explore the visual elements of art to develop your confidence, competence, imagination and creativity. Any art based subject provides you with valuable opportunities to develop your experimental, analytical and documenting skills and your understanding of art, craft and design in history and in contemporary society. The artistic process encourages reflection and critical judgements of your work and that of other artists. These are valuable skills which can be applied to other subject areas and future employment.

The A level Photography course is made up of two components:

Component 1: Personal Investigation (60% of A level 120 marks)

The Personal Investigation consists of two integrated parts:

1. Your practical portfolio - a major in-depth critical, practical and theoretical investigative project/outcome/s based on themes and subject matter that have personal significance
2. Your personal study - an extended written element of 1000 words minimum, which may contain images and texts and must clearly relate to practical and theoretical work using an appropriate working vocabulary and specialist terminology.

- extended written, critical, contextual and analytical material can take a variety of forms, such as a personal study, an illustrated essay, a digital presentation or blog, illustrated study sheets, a written report, a journal, an article or review and should reflect upon your work and that of other practitioners.

- both the practical/theoretical work and the written element will be assessed together using the assessment objectives. You will be required to select, evaluate and present your work for assessment.

- the personal investigation theme will be determined by you and your teacher, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated.

Component 2 Externally Set Assignment (40% of A level – 80 marks)

The Externally Set Assignment consists of two parts:

Part 1: Preparatory study period

- The externally set assignment materials are released from 1 February (in the second year of the course) and will consist of a series of visual and written stimuli, which are presented to you at the start of the preparatory study period.
- You select one of the stimuli and use it as a starting point from which to elicit a personal response.
- Responses are developed during the preparatory study period. They should take the form of critical, practical and theoretical preparatory work/supporting studies which inform the resolution of ideas in the 15 hours sustained focus study.
- The preparatory study period is from the release of the externally set assignment materials until the start of the sustained focus work.

Part 2: 15 hour period of sustained focus work

- You will create your final ideas from the preparatory work during the designated 15 hours exam time and they must show how your planning relates to the outcome/s.
- The period of sustained focus work must be completed under supervised conditions.
- Both the preparatory work and sustained focus work will be assessed together, using the assessment objectives.
- You will be required to select, evaluate and present your work for assessment.
- The Externally Set Assignment will be set by WJEC, assessed by the teacher and externally moderated.

How you will be assessed

All your work will be assessed against the following equally weighted Assessment Objectives.

AO1

Develop ideas through sustained and focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding.

AO2

Explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops.

AO3

Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions, reflecting critically on work and progress.

AO4

Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

When working on Component 1 and 2 you will receive booklets of weekly set tasks for class and homework. The set tasks are designed to ensure your work addresses different aspects of the four assessment criteria, this will establish a clear understanding of how to develop your work independently and work successfully, it also allows you to develop your own ideas individually. Your teachers will set individual weekly/bi-weekly personalised targets (negotiated with you) related to your chosen themes focusing on how you could progress and the best way to develop work to meet the higher levels of the assessment criteria. At certain points throughout the course your work will be assessed against some or all of the assessment criteria, you will receive written feedback regarding the strengths in your work and areas for development. The Externally Set Assignment is released in February (A level). The paper consists of externally set themes, suggested starting points and contextual references from which you can develop your preparatory studies leading up to the Timed Test in exam conditions when you will produce the artwork/s which represent the culmination of your preparatory investigations.

There is still an emphasis on the value of drawing within this A level. Drawing is a fundamental aspect of the creative process and of visual language. This should also strengthen practice, support progression and meet the demands of higher education and/or the creative industries.

The context of drawing within a photography course could include:

- the purposeful use of drawing to record information
- the application of drawing in the designing, visualisation or expression of ideas
- the potential of drawing to communicate possibilities, such as compositional arrangements.

Entry requirements:

No formal Art related qualification is required.

It would be beneficial to have Grade 4 or above in GCSE Art & Design or a portfolio of relevant practical evidence to show to the Art Department for consideration.

A level Photography can be studied alongside A level Art & Design: Fine Art.

Where the course could take you

You can progress from this qualification to further education courses such as the BTEC Level 3 Foundation Diploma in Art and Design (QCF) or direct to a BA Honours degree with an art and design focus.

Previous students from St. Peter's have gone on to study the Art Foundation course at CRC. The Photography A level could lead you on to a degree in Visual Communication, Photography, Fashion Photography, Creative Advertising or Marketing.