

Flash Photography

~~ Course Outline ~~

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(A) INTRODUCTION

In this lesson, you're urged to study your flash as a tool, understanding all the menu functions and buttons. We look at how flash illumination varies with the "guide number" of the unit, and the distance to the "target". You're urged to use the "scientific method", in making your first experiments with flash light.

We introduce you to the flash meter, as a reliable way to always measure exactly how much light your flash will produce. Then we discuss how the use of the lens aperture will control how much light reaches the film, and you're sent off to do some assignment photos, while experimenting with these basic ideas.

(B) MANUAL TECHNIQUES FOR BALANCING FLASH WITH AMBIENT LIGHT

We begin this session by looking at all the different areas where we might use flash, to enhance our images. One of the most important is using the flash to "fill in" dark shadows, so that they reveal detail.

This lesson concentrates on knowing how much flash light to use, to provide proper "fill" working together with the ambient light of the great outdoors.

A close look is taken at the technique of "dragging the shutter" ... that is, using a shutter speed much slower than the usual camera flash sync speed, to burn in detail in backgrounds, while using the flash to illuminate the foreground. Are all *your* flash shots dead black in the background? That's about to end!

After you're mastered the theory, you get to go "on assignment", to practice these techniques, and to learn how to document them. Comparison of techniques is an important learning technique, and this assignment emphasizes that.

(C) AUTOMATICALLY BALANCING AMBIENT LIGHT WITH FLASH

This lesson takes another look at what we examined in the prior lesson, but now emphasizes the use of the wonderful automatic features of the modern flash unit. Nowhere is this more useful than in using flash as "fill light", wherever it may be necessary. The advantage of using "automatic" is that if the ambient light changes, your image quality will not.

This lesson introduces the option of using "front curtain sync" or "rear curtain sync", and explains what differences you might see in your photographs.

Finally, we discuss the influence (or the lack of it!) of the camera shutter speed on your flash photography. Hopefully, by now we're "filling in" some of those black holes in your understanding of flash photography!

(D) SPECIAL EFFECTS USING AUTOMATIC FLASH CAPABILITIES

This session really concentrates on using fill flash in special applications - for doing serious portraiture using bounce flash in a number of ways, using "rear curtain" sync at night for a 'different' look, using flash with interior shots with outdoor scenes visible through windows, and even changing the color of the flash lighting, for special applications.

This is where you discover how to photograph a fire, with people sitting all around, all around!

(E/F) PROBLEM SOLVING ASSIGNMENTS

These two "lessons" are really separate assignment, where advanced problems in lighting are presented, and you are sent off to try and solve them.

The first sets a number of different photographic situations in which you may use your flash, and even allows you to exercise your artistic imagination.

The second is a "serious" portraiture session, where the demands of the photographic session become increasingly intense, requiring good control of the intensity of a number of flash units.