



# Portrait Unit

*Unit plan for Portrait Photography*

*By; Kristen Dietz*

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

The purpose of this unit is to provide students with a greater understanding of portrait photography using both natural and studio lights. Students will learn the basics of portrait composition, model positioning, lighting techniques, and the proper use of a DSLR.

## NYS STANDARDS

1. Creating and performing in the arts.
2. Knowing and using art materials and resources.
3. Responding to and analyzing works of art.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To view and discuss professional photography portraits.
2. Using the DSLR camera in manual mode.
3. Producing successful portraits
4. Students will reflect on their own portraits referencing the elements and principles of design and their execution of the assignment.

5. Students will respond to their peers work keeping the goals of the assignment in mind and should also reference the elements and principles of art.
6. Students will produce 2 digital portfolios; one for studio portraits and one for environmental portraits.

# Environmental Portrait Photography

*Lesson Plan for Photography*  
*by Kristen Dietz*

Subject/ Grade level

Photography 10-12

Time Span-2 weeks

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Students will be introduced to a selection of environmental portraits. The students will see both master photographs as well as peer work. The presentation will be shown on the proxima from online sources as well as past student images.

## NYS STANDARDS

1. Creating and performing in the arts.
2. Knowing and using art materials and resources.
3. Responding to and analyzing works of art.

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

1. Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized in each treatment.
2. Use established criteria to classify, select, and evaluate texts to make informed judgments about the quality of the pieces.
3. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Students will understand what a good composition is for a portrait.
2. students will understand how to use natural light to produce a well exposed photograph.

## PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students have are proficient in creating a contact sheet using Adobe Bridge. As a class we have discussed the use of a DLSR camera, composition and lighting.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Proxima
2. Exemplars of environmental photography.
3. Handouts

## PROCESS

Students will gather around the table in order to view the Proxima. Using the Proximma, I will show students a number of famous portrait photographers such as Annie Leibovitz, Helmut Newton, Jimmy Nelson and many others. The example shown are portraits that are taken in natural light as opposed to studio light. When showing students these examples, I highlight several key elements that are present in the photographs. These include; successful composition, lighting, intent, facial expression, candid or posed, and exposure. We also discuss the meaning of a portrait and where it originated as an art form. Questions are posed; What is the meaning of a portrait? What can it tell us about the person? I will ask students to come up with ideas to help their models show their personality through the photographs.

## ACTIVITY

Students will review the handout for the assignment. Students are expected to take at least 30 portraits using natural light. They may photograph different subjects, not more than 1 at a time. The 30 photos are due one week from the assigned date. Students will

create a contact sheet of at least 30 Photos and then begin the editing process. . Students will spend the following two weeks using class time to edit the photos. At the completion of the project, students will provide a digital portfolio of 10 edited photos along with a reflection statement.

## ASSESSMENT

At the completion of the assignment, students will be graded on the following:

1. effort
2. creativity and originality
3. comprehension of concept
4. project completion in a timely manner
5. participation
6. class and individual critique

Students will participate in a class critique at the midpoint of the project. At the end of the project, students will hand in a portfolio of 10 edited images along with an artist statement.

## CLOSURE

I will review important photography tips for photographing outside or inside using natural light. I will also review the use of a DSLR and the correct settings for a portrait. These include aperture, focal point, shutter speed, ISO and white balance.

# ENVIRONMENTAL PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY ASSIGNMENT

Portrait photography is one of the best ways to show your subject's personality and character. Throughout time portraits have been a way to documents someone's appearance as well as their personality.

The face is what makes a portrait a portrait, so make sure we can see your subject's face. You may include the whole figure, but getting closer will often produce a stronger image. Remember to shoot vertically for most if not all of your photographs.. You may use more than one person as your subject (only one person per photo please).

## TIPS TO REMEMBER:

Change your vantage point.

Get in close to your subject.

Use adequate lighting.

Rule of thirds.

Create an interesting composition.

Pay attention to what is in your frame.

Use creative sources of light for the alternative piece.

Pay attention to your background—is it busy?

What color backdrop are you going to use?

Props can be great—scarves, hats, umbrellas, glasses, etc. BE CREATIVE

## THE ASSIGNMENT:

This assignment will require you to photograph people in natural lighting situations. You have a week to take at least 30 images. You will create a contact sheet and hand it in as your homework assignment. You will have an additional week to edit your 10 best portraits and hand them in via the dropbox.

### Project Requirements:

#### Homework:

- Create a pinterest inspiration board of 20 environmental portraits.
- Create a contact sheet of 30 images.

Final project requirements to be handed in as a digital portfolio::

- 10 edited images
- Artist statement
- contact sheet
- pinterest inspiration board

# Environmental Portrait Critique/ Artist Statement

*An artist statement is a general statement is a general introduction of your work as an artist. It is the what, how and why of your work from your own perspective. It helps you convey the deeper meaning or purpose of your work to the audience.*

**Here are some questions to consider when writing your artist statement. You will be writing a statement about your environmental portraits.**

Which photo do you feel is your best environmental portrait photo?

Describe your images?

How would you define a portrait?

Describe how you manipulated the lighting?

How would you describe natural lighting challenges to?

What do you observe about this portrait?

What can you say about this image?

How would you solve the problem of:

- not enough detail in the shadows
- blurriness of the subject
- too much negative space

# Studio Portrait Photography

*Lesson Plan for Photography*  
*by Kristen Dietz*

Subject/ Grade level

Photography 10-12

Time Span-3 weeks

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Students will be introduced to a selection of Studio portraits. The students will see both master photographs as well as peer work. Some master photographers include: Richard Avedon, Annie Leibovitz, Jimmy Nelson, Irving Penn, Mario Testino and more if needed. The presentation will be shown on the proxima from online sources as well as past student images.

## NYS STANDARDS

1. Creating and performing in the arts.
2. Knowing and using art materials and resources.
3. Responding to and analyzing works of art.

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

1. Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized in each treatment.
2. Use established criteria to classify, select, and evaluate texts to make informed judgments about the quality of the pieces.
3. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.



## OBJECTIVES

1. Students will understand what a good composition is for a portrait.
2. Students will understand how to studio lighting is different from natural lighting.
3. Students will understand how to create a connection between the model and the photographer.

## PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students have are proficient in creating a contact sheet using Adobe Bridge. As a class we have discussed the use of a DLSR camera, composition and lighting.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Proxima
2. Exemplars of Studio photography.
3. Handouts

## PROCESS

Students will gather around the table in order to view the Proxima. Using the Proximma, I will show students a number of famous portrait photographers such as Annie Leibovitz, Helmut Newton, Jimmy Nelson and many others. Having used these photographers previously for environmental photography, I will be able to explore the differences between their natural lighting photographs and their studio produced photographs. When showing students these examples, I highlight several key elements that are present in the photographs. These include; successful composition, lighting, intent, facial expression, candid or posed, and exposure. I will briefly discuss the use of studio lighting, but I will go into depth using a separate lesson. We again discuss the meaning of a portrait and where it originated as an art form. Questions are posed; What is the meaning of a portrait? What can it tell us about the person? I will ask students to come up with ideas to help their models show their personality through the photographs. The environment of a studio setup is very different than an environmental setting. A

photographer may need to use props to make the model feel more comfortable.

## ACTIVITY

Students are expected to take at least 30 portraits using the studio lights. They may photograph different subjects, not more than 1 at a time. This process will take place over the next few weeks. In order for all students to use the studio lights, they must sign up during class time. Students will create a contact sheet of at least 30 Photos and then begin the editing process. This project will take place while students are photographing at home. At the completion of the project, students will provide a digital portfolio of 10 edited photos along with an artist statement.

## ASSESSMENT

At the completion of the assignment, students will be graded on the following:

1. effort
2. creativity and originality
3. comprehension of concept
4. project completion in a timely manner
5. participation
6. class and individual critique

Students will participate in a class critique at the midpoint of the project. At the end of the project, students will hand in a portfolio of 10 edited images along with an artist statement.

## CLOSURE

I will ask students to consider the differences between photographing in natural vrs. studio lighting. What are some advantages? What are some challenges? Tomorrow I will ask students to look at and respond to famous portrait photographers in a written assignment.

## RESOURCES

<http://www.photographydo.com/portrait-photography/50-famous-portrait-photographers-you-need-to-see>

<http://digital-photography-school.com/6-portrait-lighting-patterns-every-photographer-should-know/>

## Photo Analysis

### Famous Photographer: Portraits

For our next part of the portrait project, we will be using studio lights. Research a famous portrait photographer and find three examples of their work. Specifically look for photographers who have used studio lighting. I have found a few links listed below that should provide some good examples for you. Save the photo on your desktop and insert it into your word document or a google doc. Please discuss the following in 1-1½ PAGE typed analysis (3-4 paragraphs).

*You should have an opening paragraph, body and conclusion. Be mindful of spelling and grammar. Please write in complete sentences.*

- Describe one of the three photos and where you found it, please give name of artist.
- Did the artist work in film or digital photography?
- Why did this artist draw your attention?
- What are some elements and principles of art you find to be the strongest in this photograph? Please give specific examples.
- What is the focal point of the photograph?
- Describe the lighting. Is the lighting even, dramatic, or drastic?

#### Websites

<http://www.photographydo.com/portrait-photography/50-famous-portrait-photographers-you-need-to-see>

<https://filtergrade.com/best-portrait-photographers-to-inspire-you/>

After you have completed the writing portion, please share them with my gmail.

[dietzk75@gmail.com](mailto:dietzk75@gmail.com)

If you cannot share it with me, please put it in my dropbox.

# Studio Lighting

*Lesson Plan for Photography*  
*by Kristen Dietz*

Subject/ Grade level

Photography 10-12

Time Span-3 weeks

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Students will learn how to use professional studio lights and how to use the DSLR camera properly with the lighting equipment.

## NYS STANDARDS

1. Creating and performing in the arts.
2. Knowing and using art materials and resources.
3. Responding to and analyzing works of art.

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

1. Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized in each treatment.
2. Use established criteria to classify, select, and evaluate texts to make informed judgments about the quality of the pieces.
3. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Students will understand how to set up a DSLR to use with the studio lights.
2. Students will learn how to properly set up and manipulate the studio lights.
3. Students will learn six different types of lighting using the studio lights.

## PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students were introduced to professional photographers and their work with studio lights. Students also reviewed and responded to artists work through written response.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Proxima
2. DSLR camera
3. Studio lights
4. Reflector
5. Handouts

## PROCESS

I will gather students towards the back of the room where the studio lights are set up. I will also have the proxima on to show the various types of lighting examples. Students are asked to take notes during the presentation. I will begin by explaining the proper setup for the camera before beginning the photoshoot. The camera should be set to the following settings: shutter speed 125, ISO 100 or 200, white balance flash, and begin with the aperture to f8. I will then explain how the camera communicates with the lights via a wireless transmitter. We will then go over the proper use of the lighting equipment and the backdrop stand. We will discuss the six different types of lighting listed on the handout. I will have students come up as my models to show the results of changing the location and height of the lights. I will also show students how to use the reflector to bounce light back onto the subject. Students will be shown how to store the lights when they have finished photographing. Students will be asked to sign up on the calendar to reserve studio time. Students will be using their classmates as models.

## ACTIVITY

Students are expected to take at least 30 portraits using the studio lights. They may photograph different subjects, not more than 1 at a time. This process will take place over the next few weeks. In order for all students to use the studio lights, they must sign up during class time. Students will create a contact sheet of at least 30 Photos and then

begin the editing process. This project will take place while students are photographing at home. At the completion of the project, students will provide a digital portfolio of 10 edited photos along with an artist statement.

## ASSESSMENT

At the completion of the assignment, students will be graded on the following:

1. effort
2. creativity and originality
3. comprehension of concept
4. project completion in a timely manner
5. participation
6. class and individual critique

Students will participate in a class critique at the midpoint of the project. At the end of the project, students will hand in a portfolio of 10 edited images along with an artist statement.

## CLOSURE

How will your images differ using the studio lights?

## RESOURCES

<http://digital-photography-school.com/6-portrait-lighting-patterns-every-photographer-should-know/>

# Studio Portrait Assignment

For this portion of the portrait project you will be using professional studio lighting. You will be required to hand in **10 completed studio portraits**. Within those 10 images, you will need to include 3 different types of lighting. There are 6 different types of lighting I will be discussing, you need to show me 3 of the 6. You may choose to create your own lighting for the other 7. You may also choose to use props in your photos, please plan those ideas out and try to use props that relate to your subject or relate to a narrative you are creating.

You will also have to hand in a contact sheet of 30 photos for your studio portrait session.

## 6 types of Studio lighting

- Split lighting
- Loop lighting
- Rembrandt lighting
- Butterfly lighting
- Broad lighting
- Short Lighting

**Split lighting** is exactly as the name implies – it splits the face exactly into equal halves with one side being in the light, and the other in shadow.

**Loop lighting** is made by creating a small shadow of the subjects noses on their cheeks.

**Rembrandt lighting** is identified by the triangle of light on the cheek. Unlike loop lighting where the shadow of the nose and cheek do not touch, in Rembrandt lighting they do meet which, creates that trapped little triangle of light in the middle.

**Butterfly lighting** is aptly named for the butterfly shaped shadow that is created under the nose by placing the main light source above and directly behind the camera.

**Broad lighting** is when the subject's face is slightly turned away from centre, and the side of the face which is toward the camera (is broader) is in the light.

**Short lighting** is the opposite of broad lighting. As you can see by the example here, short lighting puts the side turned towards the camera (that which appears larger) in more shadow.

<http://digital-photography-school.com/6-portrait-lighting-patterns-every-photographer-should-know/>



# Studio Portrait Critique/Artist Statement

*An artist statement is a general statement is a general introduction of your work as an artist. It is the what, how and why of your work from your own perspective. It helps you convey the deeper meaning or purpose of your work to the audience.*

**Here are some questions to consider when writing your artist statement. You will be writing a statement about your studio portraits.**

Which photo do you feel is your best studio portrait photo?

Describe your images?

How would you define a portrait?

Describe how you manipulated the lighting?

How would you describe studio lighting challenges?

What do you observe about this portrait?

What can you say about this image?

How would you solve the problem of:

- not enough detail in the shadows
- blurriness of the subject
- too much negative space

# Portrait Critique

*Lesson Plan for Photography*  
*by Kristen Dietz*

Subject/ Grade level

Photography 10-12

Time Span-1 - 2 class periods

## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

Students will be reviewing and discussing their best examples from both the environmental portrait and studio portrait assignments.

## NYS STANDARDS

1. Creating and performing in the arts.
2. Knowing and using art materials and resources.
3. Responding to and analyzing works of art.

## COMMON CORE STANDARDS

1. Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized in each treatment.
2. Use established criteria to classify, select, and evaluate texts to make informed judgments about the quality of the pieces.
3. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

## OBJECTIVES

1. Students will reflect on their own portraits referencing the elements and principles of design and their execution of the assignment.
2. Students will respond to their peers work keeping the goals of the assignment in mind and should also reference the elements and principles of art.

## PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students have had prior critiques for previous projects throughout the semester with their peers. They also respond to their work through individual assessments for specific projects. During the project students are given advice and direction from the teacher.

## MATERIALS NEEDED

1. Proxima
2. Student examples

## PROCESS

1. Students will gather around the table facing the screen. Ask students to respectfully give all of their attention to their peers by putting away their phones.
2. Review the goals of the project broken down into two different types of portraits, environmental portrait, and studio portrait.
3. When responding to the work, remember to refer to the elements and principles of art.
4. Begin showing each students work on the screen.
5. The students have chosen their favorite photo from each category; ask the student how they identified these as their best work?
6. Ask students in the class to respond to the work. Some questions might be: What can you say about this image? How did the student illustrate their understanding of lighting, composition, camera settings, and creativity?
7. Ask for input from students about how each student solved the problem of working with natural light and studio lights.
8. Ask the class what challenges they faced with each lighting situation and what was the most rewarding?
9. With a few minutes left in the period, ask students to recall which images they think were the most successful and why?
10. If all student work was not reviewed the critique will continue tomorrow.

## ASSESSMENT

At the completion of the assignment, students will be graded on the following:

1. effort
2. creativity and originality
3. comprehension of concept

4. project completion in a timely manner
5. participation
6. class and individual critique

## CLOSURE

Ask students to identify what their biggest challenges were during the assignment and identify their strengths after completing the assignment.

## ASSESSMENT

Students will be expected to participate in the class critique and show understanding and mastery of lighting and composition skills.