

Shooting for Passion

For incoming and current college students, discovering their passion in life is often what they dream of accomplishing during their years spent in college. They explore different fields in search of a career that will bring them more than a basic income. Students want to find joy and invest in something they love. They long to find their passion.

Photography is a passion of many students pursuing a bachelor's degree in agricultural communications.

Principles of Photography, a course on the agricultural communications degree plan, ensures that graduates gain an understanding of the basic fundamentals of photography. The course encourages personal creativity, expression of style, and a glimpse into a fresh and exciting industry.

A Better Look

Brittini Drennan, graduate student in agricultural communications at Texas Tech University, completed her first photography class as a freshman and immediately developed an appreciation for the subject and its origin.

"The class provided basic knowledge of the photography industry," Drennan recalled. "I think it's important to know who the admirable leaders were and how photographs came to be and the history behind them, especially in the digital world we live in today. It makes a photographer respect it as truly an art."

Drennan said a communicator must understand how to create, display and use a photo in order to successfully convey messages. To accomplish this, one must comprehend and appreciate the art of photography.

Students enrolled in the course study past photographers and their many different styles of work. They learn about photographers' common practices and learn from their successes and failures. Instructors

also spend a lot of time informing students of current photographers in the industry, as well as advancements in the field.

Bailey Rose Eiland, junior in agricultural communications, said the basic photography course opened her eyes to a new side of photography. She took a beginner course in high school, but she fully embraced the subject after completion of the course at Texas Tech.

"Not only did I learn the basic functions of the camera, but I also learned about various photographers in the industry, some history, and different styles of photography," Eiland said.

Some agricultural communications students start their careers at Texas Tech with attitudes of indifference when it comes to taking a photography class. Many students go on to succeed in a career that is not directly related to photography. However, Eiland points out that learning the concepts and practices of photography are crucial in many professions.

"Photography may not be specifically what a student is interested in," Eiland said, "but nonetheless it is an aspect of communications."

"It is important for students to take this class because it will not only help in making them

well-rounded, but can possibly open doors of future opportunity as well. By having experience in various fields, students are able to network on larger scales."

A Creative Eye

Drennan said the course evokes creativity and personal skills.

"The photography classes allow a person to think creatively and outside the box," Drennan said. "Even if a student doesn't want to pursue photography as a career, it allows them to gain hands-on experience in an unfamiliar field of design."

"The most rewarding aspect of photography is getting to see other people smile."

Drennan said the course can spark an interest in any student. She said it pushes individuals to get out of their comfort zones and dive into something new.

The course can cause students to develop an enthusiasm for photography and encounter life-changing experiences on and off campus.

Jerod Foster, instructor in the College of Mass Communications, began his college career in the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources as an agricultural communications student. He said he declared the major with hopes to pursue a career that would allow him to utilize writing skills.

After a photography class during two weeks in Junction, Texas, Foster changed his focus of study and choice of career.

Foster developed his passion for photography when he attended an intersession photography course taught by Texas State Photographer Wyman Meinzer in Junction.

"The course gives you the chance to really see what it is like shooting out in the industry. Students shoot like they are shooting for an actual client and shoot till they get what is wanted," Foster said. "It's early mornings and late, late nights and not much sleep in between, but it is the best opportunity to shoot constantly and get your hands dirty."

Life Through a Lens

After returning from the course and a year spent practicing photography skills, Foster was asked to return to the intersession as a teaching assistant. He has served as co-instructor for the past six years, and he recently taught a travel photography study abroad course in Seville, Spain, in June. He also has shot pictures for publications like Texas Highways, Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine, Grit Magazine, The Techsan, Archways, The Commentator, and Pulse, and he is a regular contributor at the Manfrotto School of Excellence.

Foster currently is working toward a doctoral degree in mass communications. He shoots freelance for different publications while teaching classes at Texas Tech.

"I am really getting to do everything that I want," Foster said. "Getting to study something I genuinely love and enjoy is perfect, and teaching gives me great opportunities while still working toward a Ph.D."

Foster knows studying photography years ago brought him to where he is today. It began as a basic course and


evolved into a beloved career.

"Few people get to make a career out of photography and be involved in photography in so many ways," he said.

Individuals who pursue a career in photography offer different styles, techniques and skills to the industry. Photographers shoot various types of photos, such as portraits, landscapes and wildlife. Personal tastes and interests determine an individual's participation in the field and the extent of his or



her involvement in the industry.

"Photography is very personal. You can see a person's drive, interests, and dreams," Drennan said. "Photographers create stories through their images. They can tell about others' stories through their images, as well as their own. Photography is a passion of mine, and I will continue telling my story as long as I can." 

Jordan Gregory | Klondike, Texas

