

# TURN OUT THE LIGHTS

## Using Night Photography to Teach Exposure to ACOM Students

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### INTRODUCTION

The use of innovative instructional methods in photography courses can improve students' creativity (Kennedy & Akers, 2018) and understanding of camera functions, including exposure (Anchell, 2015).

Once undergraduate students learn the basic skills, photography teaches them to think critically, independently, and creatively (Bogre, 2014).

This innovative idea is the use of a challenging night photography experiential learning activity to teach exposure concepts at the beginning of a two-week, entry-level agricultural communications photography course.

### HOW IT WORKS

During the first two days of the two-week semester, students received introductory lectures in the classroom about the basics of exposure.

The night photography activity occurred in two phases on the third day of class:

- (1) In-class session: Introduced techniques, viewed long exposure photos
- (2) Field outing to a farm: Students practiced night photography

During the field outing, students were instructed to set their cameras to various exposure settings while the instructor light-painted subjects.

Back in the classroom, students were asked to critique their work.

### RESULTS TO DATE / IMPLICATIONS

While many students admitted the night photography outing was challenging, most found this initial field experience to be beneficial to their overall understanding of exposure as well as the value of quality equipment.

### FUTURE PLANS / ADVICE TO OTHERS

Night photography will continue to be used as a field experience in the course.

Providing an equipment list at the beginning of the course is important to give students plenty of time to acquire the different camera items needed for the outing.

Instructors should place a specific emphasis on the importance of a sturdy tripod and a camera-compatible shutter release remote.

### COSTS / RESOURCES NEEDED

Students are responsible for purchasing their own cameras, lenses, and needed accessories, including a tripod and shutter release remote, as well as a Adobe Creative Cloud subscription for photo organization and editing.

Establishing a relationship with a landowner in a location away from city lights is helpful when organizing an effective night photography outing in an agricultural setting.

### REFERENCES

- Anchell, S. (2015). *Digital photo assignments: Projects for all levels of photography classes*. Focal Press.
- Bogre, M. (2014). *Photography 4.0: A teaching guide for the 21st century*. New York, NY: Focal Press.
- Kennedy, L., & Akers, C. (2018). *Searching for creativity: Using scavenger hunts in an agricultural communications photography course*. Innovative idea poster presented at the annual meeting of the Western Region American Association for Agricultural Education, Boise, ID.

*Student reactions to night photography experience*

**"I REALLY DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT MY CAMERA GOING INTO IT, BUT BY THE END OF THE NIGHT, I WAS START TO FEEL CONFIDENT IN HOW TO USE MY CAMERA."**

**"I COULD NOT GET MY SETTINGS RIGHT, AND ALL OF MY PICTURES WERE VERY GRAINY. BUT I LOVED DOING THIS. I DEFINITELY LEARNED A LOT ABOUT MY CAMERA AND LIGHT DURING THIS EXPERIENCE."**

