



Basic Crime Scene Photography Course Syllabus (40 Hours)

Course Target Audience

Crime scene investigators, officers and detectives with beginner to intermediate skills in camera use and crime scene photography.

Course Objectives

Establish understanding of optics, light and camera functions.

Establish understanding and skills in camera operation, image composition and proper focus and exposure.

Establish understanding and skills in crime scene, vehicle, subject & evidence photography during investigative situations.

Required Equipment

DSLR or mirrorless camera.

All lenses available while on duty.

External flash.

Sturdy tripod.

Flash sync cord.

Remote shutter release.

Flashlight.

Course Schedule

Day one. (8 hours)

Module 1 – History of forensic photography

- History of photography in criminal investigations
- Case law
- Forensic working groups on photography
- Infamous cases

Module 2 - Basics of light and optics

- Light Temperature
- Sources of light
- Light intensity
- Light angles
- Optics

Module 3 – Camera equipment & functions

- Camera body
- Lenses & lens care
- Hot shoe
- Camera/equipment handling
- Date/time
- Media storage
- Image files

Practical Exercise 1 – Camera set-up/lens removal

Practical Exercise 2 – Adjusting time, date, media storage settings

Day one written quiz*

Day two. (8 hours)

Module 4 – Basics of focus & exposure

- Exposure triangle
- Focus & focus settings
- Diopter adjustment
- Light metering
- Adjusting shutter speed, f-stop & ISO
- Histograms

Practical Exercise 3 - Light meter settings

Practical Exercise 4 – Adjusting shutter speed, f-stop & ISO for proper exposure

Practical Exercise 5 - Adjusting diopter

Practical Exercise 6 - Proper focus

Module 5 – Flash Photography

- Taking flash on/off
- Inverse square rule
- Flash mode selection
- Flash sync
- Flash positioning/flash cord
- Flash limitations

Practical Exercise 7 – Taking flash on/off and adding remote cord Practical

Exercise 8 – Flash mode adjustments

Day two written quiz*

Day three. (8 hours)

Module 6 – Principles of crime scene/evidence photography

- General rules
- Photo card
- Over-all photos
- Mid-range photos
- Close-up photos
- Macro photography
- Use of scale

Practical Exercise 9 – Focal lengths and distortion

Practical Exercise 10 - Initial and over all

photographs Practical Exercise 11 – Mid-range

photographs Practical Exercise 12 – Up-close

photographs Practical Exercise 13 - Scale distance

Practical Exercise 14 - Mock indoor scene(s)

Photo reviews

Day three written quiz*

Day five. (8 hours) (Late start option)

Module 7 – Principles of long exposure photography

- Adjusting shutter speed, aperture & ISO
- Composing long exposure photographs
- Exposure evaluation
- Bracketing
- Common issues

Practical Exercise 15 – Long exposure camera set up

Practical Exercise 16 – Long exposure of scene with artificial lights (street lights)

Practical Exercise 17 – Long Exposure of scene with natural light (moon light)

Module 8 – Principles of Painting with Light.

- Composing photograph
- Preventing “ghosting” effect
- Adding light with flash
- Adding light with flashlight

Practical Exercise 18 – Painting with light in various lighting conditions

Photo reviews

Day four written quiz*

Day four. (8 hours)

Module 9 – Vehicle & Collision Photography

- General rules
- “8-way” photos
- VIN & License plate photos
- Using flash in vehicles
- Confined/small spaces photos
- Marks/debris/roadway photos

Practical Exercise 13 – Mock vehicle search warrant

Practical Exercise 14 - Mock collision scene

Module 10 - Subject & Injury Photography

- General rules
- “4-way” photos
- Flash considerations for subject/injury
- Use of scale and color chart
- Clothing and footwear photography

Practical Exercise 9 – Subject/clothing photography

Practical Exercise 10 – Mock injury photography Photo reviews

Final cumulative test*

Certificate ceremony

*Quizzes and tests are used for students self-assessments only. Grades are not recorded by instructor.