



Photography with Jim Beecher

Photography Class Overview

1 – Jim Beecher

I have taught photography for over forty years.

I taught in NYC at the International Center of Photography, the 92nd St. Y, and at Nightingale-Bamford and other private secondary schools.

My photography education website is <http://www.photokaboom.com/>.

2 – Why I teach

I love seeing students having fun and having *photokaboom* experiences (*aha* moments).

3 – Class Goal

My goal for teaching was created by an experience I had as a teaching assistant in an advanced class.

I was surprised by how many of the students didn't have a solid foundation in photography.

You will.

4 – Help

Did you get my e-mail?

If not—check your spam folder. Add me to your *whitelist*—or mark it as *Not Spam*.

Please contact me at if you have a question:

- Jim@photokaboom.com
- Click *Ask Jim* at the top of my website.

I often come early to class. If you want to make sure I'm early, e-mail me to make an appointment.

Visit my website for additional resources.

5 – Camera Type

When you're at a dinner party—you don't ask the chef what kind of pans he or she

used. You know cooking is more than pans.

With photography—many people think it's all about the camera.

The person behind the camera is far more important than the camera.

Little cameras can be as good as big cameras.

That's especially true because you're more apt to have a small camera with you.

All types of cameras are welcome in class.

You *will* get more out of the class if you have a camera where you can change the exposure settings (aperture and shutter speed).

6 – Photography Cautions

- Many organizations do not allow photography on their premises. Be sure to ask.
- Be cautious photographing government buildings, other structures, property, and transportation systems. Although rare, photographers have been harassed and even arrested for innocuous and legal photographs.
- Police officers, and other government personnel, generally, do not like to be photographed. Be sure to ask.
- Do not photograph children without their parents or guardian's permission.
- [The Photographer's Right](http://www.krages.com/phoright.htm) (<http://www.krages.com/phoright.htm>)

How to Get the Most Out of the Class

Your photography benefits when you do the following.

1 – Quantity

Take/make lots of photographs.

2 – Learning Pathways

Use every learning pathway.

- Handouts
- Visual, such as the photographs seen in media, galleries, and museums
- Experiential, such as doing assignments and projects

3 – Visual Notes

Reinforce your learning with *visual* notes (to be described).

4 – Confusion Is Normal

Understand that you'll be confused at first.

You have a mastery of what you do.

It may be disconcerting to suddenly find yourself confused—especially if you haven't been a student for a long time.

5 – Photography Isn't Easy or Quick

You can't learn photography easily and quickly.

The landscape photographer, Philip-Lorca diCorcia, wrote, "Photography is the foreign language that everyone thinks they can speak."

Learning photography takes effort and time.

6 – Argh!

Because you're taking a class, your photography will be:

- Slower
- Less spontaneous
- Less fun

There's a "Rolodex" in your head.

Each card is a photography tool.

At first, you flip through the cards slowly.

As you practice, they flip by more quickly.

Your photography returns to being spontaneous and fun.

But—you won't take some photographs that you would have before.

You'll say, "That's a cute cat—but the light isn't good."

7 – Mistakes Are Good . . .

. . . as long as it isn't your best friend's wedding.

Make lots of mistakes and learn from them.

8 – Limit Your Variables

Don't try to learn everything at once.

9 – Ask

Ask lots of questions.

"Stupid questions" are the best ones.

10 – Share

Learn from each other by sharing your experiences and photographs—including the mistakes.

Camera Classes

1 – What to Bring

For camera classes, bring:

- Your camera and the manual if you have one.

Make sure your camera battery is fully charged and there's space on the memory card.

Bring an umbrella and camera protection if we're going to be in the field.

2 – During Class

Depending on the class, we may do the following activities.

1) Camera Tools

The camera tools are covered during demonstrations, in the field, and during critiques of assignments.

2) Assignments

You may be given assignments.

3) Critiques

Critiques are positive.

At home, edit your photographs down to a smaller number. The number depends on the class size. I'll let you know.

You can show prints or files from a flash drive.

4) Art of Photography

Besides learning about camera tools, we'll cover light, composition, and other topics.

3 – Missed Class

If you miss a class, please feel free to contact me about what you missed.

4 – Rain Policy

Storms in Sarasota usually pop up and disappear quickly.

Field locations usually have shelter.

Therefore, classes in the field are held rain or shine.

Please bring an umbrella and camera protection.

Should a storm system be especially threatening—expect two e-mails from me:

- The night before your class.
- At 8 A.M. the day of the class.

Feel free to contact me with concerns about weather.

Visual Notes

1 – Definition

Visual notes are photographs that you want to do *more of*—or to do *less of*.

They're your *worst* photographs—and your *best* ones.

Visual notes are your mistakes, experiments, and masterpieces.

Taking visual notes is an obvious idea to me—but I've never encountered it elsewhere.

Photography is visual.

So why not take visual notes?

Before a trip, it's unlikely that you'll:

- Read the handouts.
- Review your written notes.

But—you'll readily click through twenty or so visual notes.

2 – Create a Folder

Create a folder called *Visual Notes* on your computer's desktop.

Put your mistakes, experiments, and masterpieces into the folder.