



THE UNIVERSITY  
OF THE ARTS

OUR GUIDE TO SELECTING A  
PROFESSIONAL DIGITAL (DSLR)  
CAMERA

CONTINUING  
EDUCATION



## WHEN PURCHASING A DIGITAL CAMERA,

there are a host of features to consider. The most important of which are a mix of technical specifications – how the camera is built and what is inside, along with usability – how easy the camera is to use for the type of photography you may want to use it for. Features that are important to most photographers include the quality and speed of the autofocus system, sensor size, megapixel count of the sensor, and the camera's performance in various situations.





## AUTOFOCUS

Autofocus is an important feature of digital cameras. Cameras that have a well-designed autofocus system will provide a greater chance of success when making photographs. For this reason, many of the cameras chosen in this recommendation guide are listed because of their great autofocus at different price ranges. Some of the autofocus systems are great at getting a single image in focus, while other systems allow for the camera to track a image while it is moving and capture a burst of images with that object in focus through the whole burst.

## SENSOR SIZE

Sensor size can impact many aspects of images as they are recorded by digital cameras. There are a variety of sensor sizes in digital cameras, including 1” sensors, APS-C sensors, and full-frame sensors. Larger sensors can provide better low-light image capture (taking photographs in dark areas or spaces), and more detail but also cost significantly more (\$2000+ range). Smaller sensors, like an APS-C sensor, however can offer a smaller camera body, which can make the camera more appealing to carry with you while out and about and still retain a great amount of detail. For more information on sensor size, [HERE IS A HELPFUL WEBSITE](#).

## MEGAPIXEL COUNT

Megapixels describe how many pixels the camera sensor has to record light. Megapixel count in combination with sensor size can determine how well a camera will do in low-lighting situations and how much detail a camera can capture on finely textured objects (e.g. fine fabrics). 16 megapixels has become the minimum most non-smartphone digital cameras will offer, as it will provide a high amount of detail and a print roughly 16”x12”. Most cameras in this recommendation will be near the 24 megapixel range, offering a tremendous amount of detail and a great print size of approximately 20”x14”.

## CAMERA SIZE + SHAPE

Digital cameras can come in many shapes in sizes offering a different experience when operating the camera. An ideal camera will grow with a photographer but also not hinder their ability to make the images they want to make. Compact cameras are great for someone on the go, who wants to bring their camera everywhere and not worry about any extra weight. DSLR cameras offer more direct controls via wheels and dials for controlling your image and exposure, but have a larger size. The larger size usually results in a sturdier built camera but may need its own bag for carrying around.

## NO CAMERA WORKS PERFECTLY FOR EVERY PHOTOGRAPHER, SO UNDERSTANDING KEY DIFFERENCES WILL MAKE YOU A SAVY BUYER.

If you’re interested in a camera, consider renting one for a few days – it could give you some insight into its operation and handling without the financial commitment of the purchase. Many of these sites will also rent individual lenses if in the future you are considering purchasing lenses as well. We recommend the following: [LENSPROTOGO.COM](#), [BORROWLENSES.COM](#), and [LENSRENTALS.COM](#).

## SONY A6000

The SONY A6000 offers a great set of features for around \$500. The autofocus is good enough to make sure you are able to capture the fast-action moments of birds flying, kids running around or even sports. It's a compact camera that still offers a viewfinder, which makes photographing in bright light a more pleasant experience. The SONY A6000 has a 24 megapixel APS-C sized sensor, which translates into a 20" x 13" print straight out of the camera. The APS-C sensor offers a great middle-ground in terms of photographing in low-light and capturing stunning detail. The SONY A6000 is a camera that you can set to Auto and have a fun time shooting, or change to full manual to take control of the images you want to create.



### PROS

- Great Autofocus
- Compact camera size
- Electronic view finder for photographing in bright sun
- Good video controls
- Great for fast moving action because it can capture 11 frames per second in continuous shooting

### CONS

- The lens that comes with the camera is middle-of-the-road, and anyone buying this camera should consider an additional lens
- The small form factor may be uncomfortable for anyone with larger hands

### WHO IS THIS CAMERA RIGHT FOR?

The SONY A6000 would be a great camera for the family photographer, the photographer who wants a compact camera they can take everywhere and photographers that also want to capture video. It has a well-rounded feature set and can be a great camera to learn photography with.



## CANON EOS REBEL T6I

The CANON REBEL T6I offers a traditional DSLR body with interchangeable lens system, and a powerful 24 megapixel APS-C sensor. The low light capability of this camera is on par with other cameras in this price range, and the touchscreen make this camera a great camera to work with. The autofocus in the CANON REBEL T6I lags behind some other cameras, but will still perform well in most situations. The autofocus can't track a object through the frame as you are shooting, like the SONY A6000 can, but it will do what most photographers need. The camera can produce beautiful JPEG files that are ready to take to a printer or to share to with friends and family online.

### PROS

- Great JPEG files straight out of the camera
- Low light images look good
- Touchscreen interface
- Traditional DSLR style body – a little sturdier than a compact camera, but also heavier

### CONS

- Autofocus isn't as good as some competitors
- Heavier than a compact camera

### WHO IS THIS CAMERA RIGHT FOR?

The CANON REBEL T6I is a great camera for anyone looking for a traditional DSLR feel, and beginning DSLR controls. It has one dial which can make fully-manual control a bit cumbersome to learn but certainly workable after a bit of practice. The semi-automatic modes make this a great camera for taking great photographs on vacation or at family events.

## PROS

- Great autofocus system
- Discreet shooting - very quiet camera
- Small camera body makes it easy to take everywhere
- Great color renditions

## CONS

- Video quality is very poor
- Not weather-sealed

## WHO IS THIS CAMERA RIGHT FOR?

The FUJI X-T10 is a great camera for anyone who wants to be a street-shooter – photographing around town or in the city while going relatively unnoticed. The camera is a great choice for individuals interested in travel photography, photojournalism, and anyone that wants to carry their camera everywhere.

## FUJI X-T10

The FUJI X-T10 offers a unique shooting experience, very much akin to shooting with a traditional rangefinder from years past. It offers a mirrorless camera system, resulting in a smaller, lighter body that will feel familiar to many traditional 35mm film shooters. And while the camera only has a 16 megapixel sensor, Fuji utilizes a unique sensor technology that makes the 16 megapixel sensor inside the FUJI X-T10 similar to a traditional 20 megapixel sensor. The placement of the controls provide photographers with easy to access to the most important controls (shutter speed, aperture, and ISO) for great on the go shooting and a wonderful autofocus system.



## NIKON D7200

The NIKON D7200 offers the best autofocus system at this price range, and is competitive with pro-models that would be upwards of \$2000. The camera allows you to simply shoot without having to worry about fiddling with settings. All of the essential controls are put directly in front of the photographer to provide an ease of use that matches the pro-model cameras. With the advanced autofocus system and the ability to capture six frames per second, this is a great camera for capturing any of life's fast moments. The camera is built around a traditional DSLR body, and offers a great dynamic range when photographing in high contrast situations like sunset, dark rooms with bright windows or lights, and excellent performance in low-light situations.



### PROS

- Autofocus system comparable to pro-models. Fast, accurate and can track objects while photographing continuously
- Impressive low-light sensitivity
- Easy to find and use controls
- 24 megapixel sensor offers tremendous detail and low-light capabilities

### CONS

- Video is okay but not as good as some other cameras
- Sturdier construction on the camera also means extra weight

### WHO IS THIS CAMERA RIGHT FOR?

With better low light performance and incredible autofocus, this camera is a great option for anyone trying to begin a photography business. It is suitable for many situations including still life photography, weddings, events, and portraits. It is a little heavier than some cameras in a similar price range, and so is less suited for travel photography where lots of walking will be done. If you're looking for something a little lighter but in a similar category from Nikon, try the NIKON D5500. The D5500 offers a less sophisticated autofocus but many of the other advantages that the NIKON D7200 offers.

## PROS

- Unbelievable low-light abilities
- Fast and adaptive autofocus system to help track moving images
- Color renditions directly from the camera are beautiful
- RAW files have incredible dynamic range, offering files that can be edited many ways

## CONS

- Video capture is good, but the controls when in video mode are more limited

## WHO IS THIS CAMERA RIGHT FOR?

The NIKON D610 will provide you with a camera you can grow into for many years, consider it a five plus year investment that you can upgrade by purchasing or renting higher quality lenses.



## NIKON D610

The NIKON D610 offers incredible detail, outstanding color renditions and a pro-style camera body with a full-frame sensor. It features a 24 megapixel sensor, with outstanding low-light recording quality (best in class by many standards) and a very good autofocus system. The camera has a very fast recording system, allowing for burst shooting without hesitation so you can guarantee you get the shot correctly. The color in the files straight out of the camera is top notch and the video recording is decent. The camera is a little heavier, as the build is sturdier than a NIKON D7200 or similar camera. This is a camera that you can own for a long time and grow into by purchasing higher quality lenses over the time you own the camera.

## SONY ALPHA 7 II

The SONY ALPHA 7 II provides some innovative technologies that make it a great camera to own and to have fun with. The SONY ALPHA 7 II features an in-camera sensor stabilization system, which can help provide incredibly sharp images even at slower shutter speeds, and with fast moving objects. The autofocus system is faster than most and can help create stunning images. The design of the camera offers many controls at the fingertips of the photographer so there is less button adjusting and more shooting. The SONY ALPHA 7 II features a 24 megapixel full-frame sensor, with unsurpassed detail. The camera has a well-built body that is smaller than a traditional DSLR (like the NIKON D610) but still has the weight of a traditional DSLR. The controls are easy to access but the controls themselves are small (small dials), so adjusting your camera on the go can be a little harder. The SONY ALPHA 7 II doesn't perform well in low-light situations.

### PROS

- Incredible detail from the camera
- Small frame makes it easy to put in a bag and take it on the go
- Great autofocus
- Captures video well, and with lots of controls

### CONS

- Poor low-light recording when compared with similarly priced cameras
- Heavy for the small body design

### WHO IS THIS CAMERA RIGHT FOR?

SONY ALPHA 7 II is a great camera for individuals with smaller hands, or that just want a smaller camera. The SONY ALPHA 7 II is also a great choice for anyone looking to do travel photography – its small frame makes it easy to take anywhere.





**WE CAN HELP YOU REACH  
NEW PROFESSIONAL  
+ CREATIVE HEIGHTS.**

# DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY CERTIFICATE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS IN PHILADELPHIA

Our DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY CERTIFICATES provide targeted skills needed in the field – camera techniques, digital editing, technical lighting and image output. As you enhance your technical knowledge, you will build an individual aesthetic – studying works by other photographers, creating thematic work, and engaging with guest critics. You’ll learn about industry opportunities and take your images to new creative heights.



## OVERVIEW

The DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY LEVEL I certificate provides you with the basics to become proficient with your camera and image output. DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY LEVEL II starts you on the path to enter into the industry. We prepare students for the field with professional practices and solid skills training.

## STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN THESE PROGRAMS TO

- Explore fine art, portraiture, documentary, commercial, and other genres of photography as a hobby or future career.
- Gain the technical skills to shoot, manipulate and print photographs using digital technology.
- Tap into the emerging niche markets of photography.
- Learn camera techniques, lighting methods, and digital photography software for modifying and printing digital files.
- Exhibit their work or create a catalog of images.

## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

- Two tracks – DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY LEVEL I and DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY LEVEL II – each designed to be completed in three sequential semesters.
- All regular classes meet on campus once a week from 6 - 9 PM.
- Classes are supplemented with special topic presentations, field trips, and hands-on experiences. Students are required to attend six guest presentations or special programs
- Each course culminates in a final project presentation to peers.

## FOR APPLICATION AND DEADLINES VISIT

[CS.UARTS.EDU/PHOTOGRAPHY](https://www.cs.uarts.edu/photography)



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# BRAVE ADULTS, CREATIVE BEGINNINGS

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### STILL HAVE QUESTIONS? MEET US!

Contact us to make an advising appointment or to find out about upcoming events.

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#### OFFICE LOCATION

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