Lesson 12
CONTEXT: So Many Books!

Teacher Preparation: Watch the preparatory video What Makes a Good Photobook Good? and bring in a selection of your favorite photobooks (see recommended photobooks list for suggestions).

Materials Needed: Photobooks of your choice, theme examples sheet, sample rubric for a photo-essay theme, cameras.

Masterworks: A selection of the teacher’s favorite photobooks

Students will:
• Know: Photobooks come in many varieties.
• Understand: Context influences meaning. Strong photography projects can have themes that are more or less obvious.
• Do: Be able to articulate their responses to photobooks.

Lesson Plan: (1 hr, 15 min)
• Welcome students back. Explain that each student will be making a published photobook. Ask the group what their favorite part of the class has been so far and what they’re looking forward to learning. (10)

• Share one of your favorite photobooks (an engaging book with a clear theme, like Back in the Days by Jamel Shabazz) and use open-ended questions to discuss what makes it successful. “What do you notice about this book? What is it about? Why is it interesting? What do you like about the design? How does the design reinforce the idea of the book?” (10)

• Ask pairs of students to look through a selection of photobooks and choose one to which they respond. (10)

• Ask the students to share their selected book with the class, explaining why it works well. (10)

• Brainstorm themes for student photobooks. (10)

• If your students are taking photographs during class time, choose an example theme out of a hat and take photographs that could fit into the theme. (25)

Staff Follow-Up: Download students’ files for next week’s class. Start talking to the administration about places and dates for the final exhibition, and conceptualize it for yourself given those parameters.

Going Further: If the students will be photographing outside of class time, work together to create a rubric to evaluate a successful photobook according to the class’s criteria. Watch the trailer for Jamel Shabazz: Street Photographer. Ask your students, “What would the ‘visual diary’ of your life be? How could you capture the culture and style where you live?”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHxFJgqicZw