Photographic Composition Techniques

Objective: Practice the composition techniques learned in our lesson and to demonstrate a clear understanding of each concept.

The techniques

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Rule of Thirds (2)	Selective Lighting (2)
Informal Balance (1) / Formal Balance (1)	Fill the Frame (2)
Grouping (2)	Selective Focus (2)
Low Horizon Line (1)	High Horizon Line (1)
Leading Lines (2)	Framing (2)
Rhythm/Repetition (2)	Angle- (1 up, 1 down, 1 straight)
High Key (1)	Low Key (1)
Orientation-portrait/vertical (1)	Orientation-landscape/horizontal (1)

Look at the following pages to see examples of each technique.

Criteria for Project Photographic Composition Techniques

1. All photos that you use for this assignment MUST be originals of yours that you took specifically for this assignment.
2. Submit the amount of photos listed next to the composition technique.
   You will be submitting a total of 26 images to complete this assignment.
3. You can digitally change the images, keep them in color, or change them to black and white or sepia. Explore not only the techniques but your camera as well.
4. Save your images in the Folder called "COMPOSITION TECHNIQUES" into a sub-folder that you will make yourself and call "YOUR NAME".   Rename each image with the composition style it represents (ex. Leading line; framing; high key etc.) Don't forget that saving correctly is part of your grade. If you turn in your photos but do not have them named correctly, your project will be counted late/incomplete until you get it saved correctly.

Rule of Thirds

Your camera may or may not put the grid lines on your viewfinder. If it does not, just make sure your subject is NOT CENTERED!
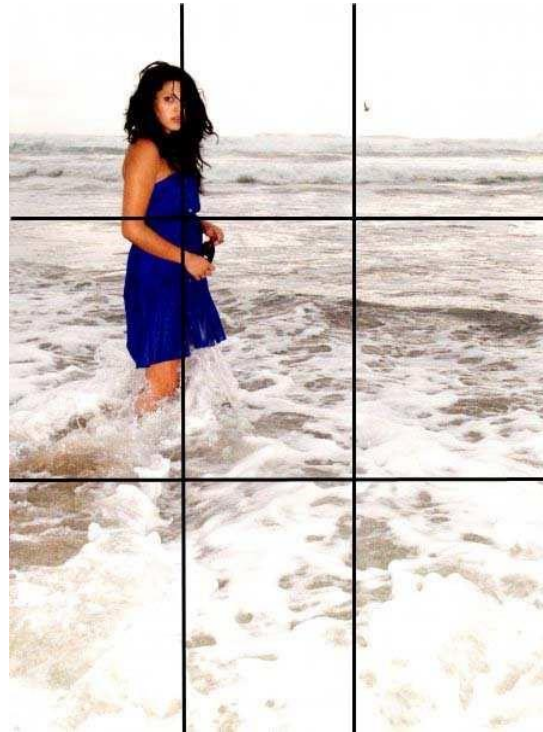
The basic principle behind the rule of thirds is to imagine breaking an image down into thirds (both horizontally and vertically) so that you have a grid with 9 squares.

The theory is that if you place points of interest in the intersections or along the lines of the grid, your photographic composition becomes more balanced and will enable the viewer to interact with the image more naturally. Studies have shown that when viewing images people's eyes first go to the intersection points on this imaginary grid rather than to the center of the shot. Therefore, using the rule of thirds works with this natural way of viewing an image rather than working against it, helping you to create dynamic compositions.

Informal/Formal Balance

INFORMAL BALANCE

Informal or "asymmetrical" Balance is uneven or unequal balance. The objects have nearly the same "visual weight" on either side of the vertical center of the photograph composition, but are different in size, shape, texture, or value.

FORMAL BALANCE

Formal balance is equal or symmetrical balance. Each side of the vertical center of the photograph has equal weight and similar or exactly the same shape, texture, and value contrast.

Selective Focus

Selective focus is achieved by using a larger lens aperture which creates a SHALLOW DEPTH OF FIELD. Meaning, the thing closest to the camera is in focus and the distance is not in focus. Selective focus draws the viewer's eye to a point of interest by blurring the background. This technique is very useful in portrait and close-up photographs.

Leading Lines
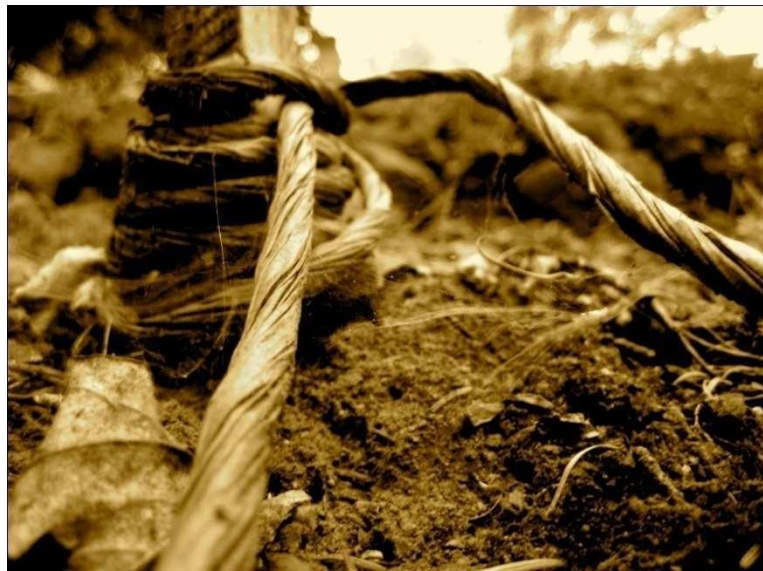
Leading lines draw the viewer's eye to the point of interest or help create the illusion of depth and/or distance in a composition.

Lighting

Lighting adds dramatic effect to your photographs. Usually you want the light source behind YOU when shooting photographs. "Backlighting" occurs when the light source is in front of the lens (and behind your subject), creating dark silhouettes. "Side-lighting" is effective in communicating strong emotion. "Floor-lighting" is a technique of placing a single light source in front of and below the subject and the camera to create suspense and mystery.

Grouping

A group is three or more people or objects. Group portraits are usually stationary and posed with people looking at the lens. However, group photos can also incorporate candidness and action. Positioning people or objects in layers will create the illusion of "depth".

Horizon Line/Wide depth of field
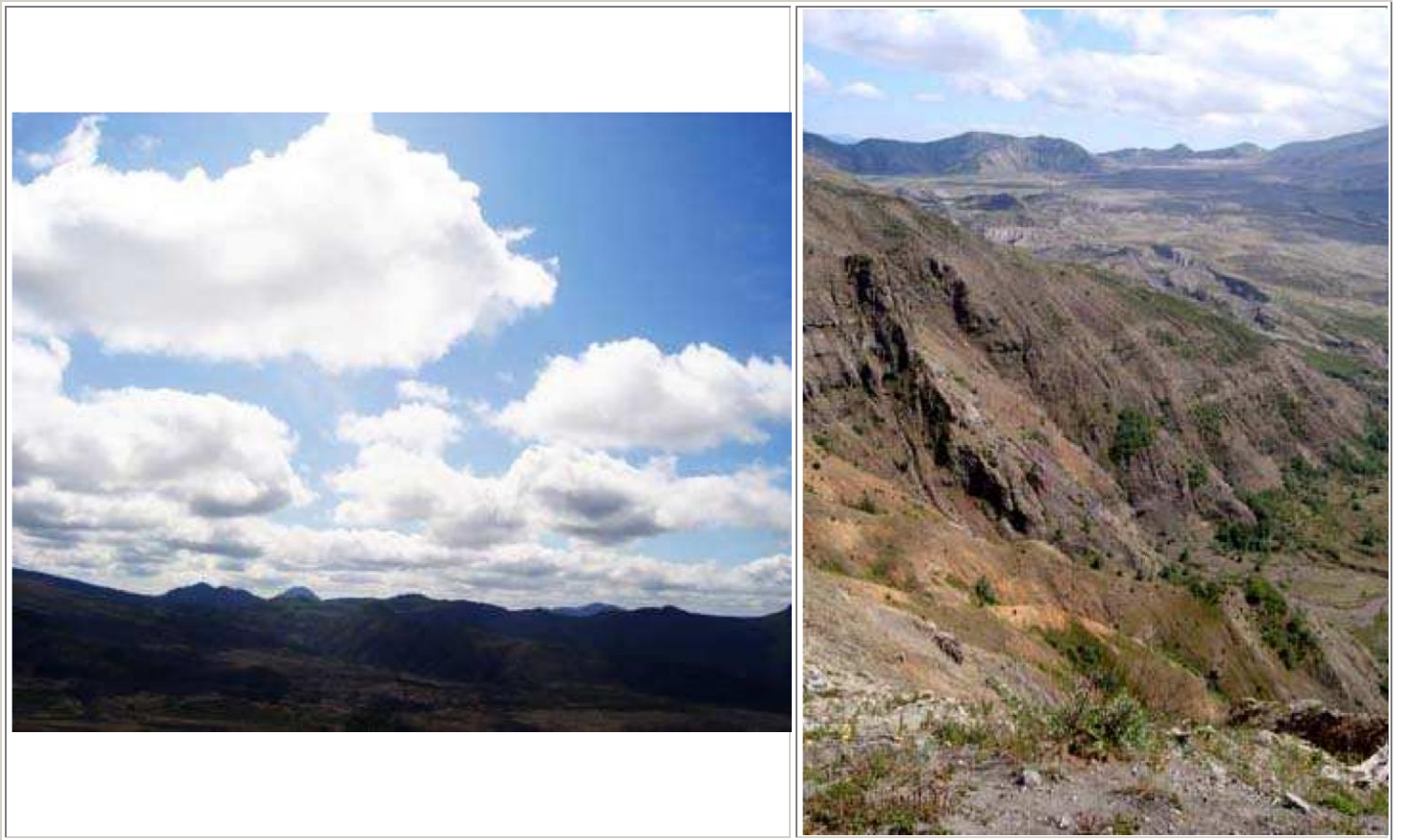
The horizon line in a photograph can be high or low depending on what you want to emphasize. A "high" horizon line as in the example above on the right, emphasizes the rocky, mountainous "foreground" of the landscape photograph. The "low" horizon line of the example on the left emphasizes the bright, cloudy sky in the "background" of the photograph. Landscape photographs are usually taken with a smaller aperture setting which create a wider depth of field (meaning everything in the foreground and background is in focus.)

Framing
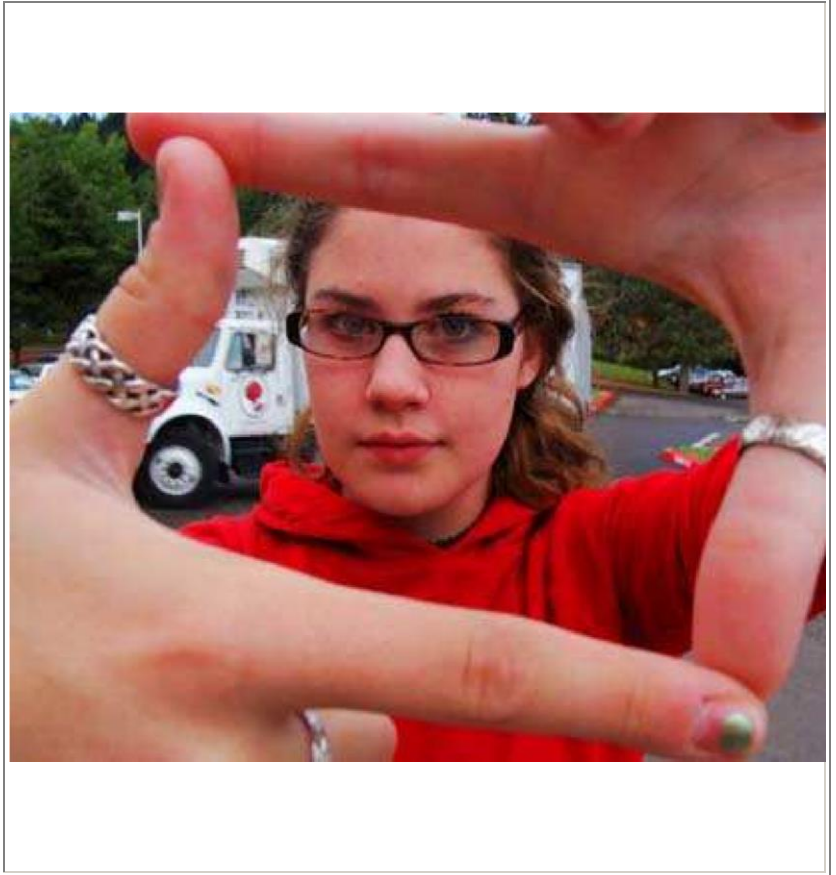
Framing is a technique that creates the illusion of depth and draws the viewer's eye to a focal point of interest. Think of focusing the viewer's attention on the main subject by photographing the subject THROUGH something else.

Rhythm

Rhythm is a Principle of Design where objects are repeated in a photo to create a feeling of depth, movement or emphasis.

Angle

UP

DOWN

STRAIGHT

The angle of an image is adjusted to create interest in an image. You will shoot an example of an up angle and a, down angle and straight angle. The up angle can create towering figures. The down angle can make subjects seem smaller. The straight angle is how most images are shot. Play with your angle and create interesting up and down angled shots.

The angle is based off the *direction your camera is pointing* not the direction the subject is looking. For example, when you shoot up at a person, they may be looking down . . . but this is an up angle because you and the camera are low looking UP. If you are confused still, please come see me.
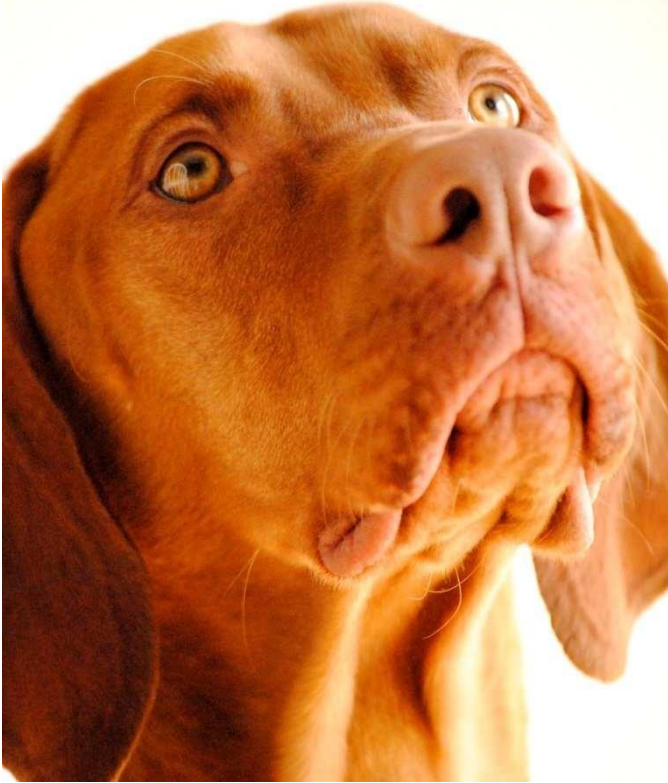
Low/High Key

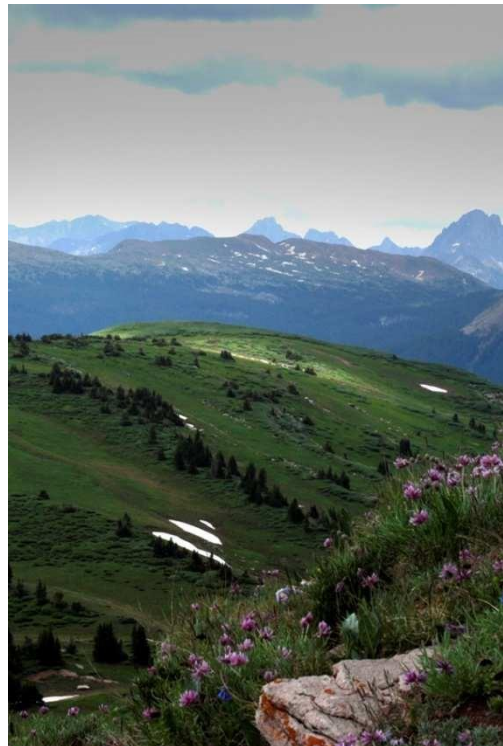| Low Key	High Key

The intensity of an image can create mood. A Low Key image is going to be darker, less intense and give a feeling of being inactive . . . more quiet. A High Key image is going to be bright and intense thus creating a feeling of action and a much *louder* image.

Orientation

Portrait

Landscape

The orientation of an image can help to create a better photograph. There will be instances when a photo looks better in portrait than landscape orientation and vice versa. So, find something that looks better in portrait than landscape, and something else that looks better in landscape than portrait. The examples above show a good and bad example of each so you understand what I mean by it looking better. The composition is better in the first image because the orientation is correct.

Fill the Frame

The easiest way to communicate about your subject is to simply get closer. Get closer….Still closer! Beginning Photography students tend to want everything in their photo. If you have everything in the photo it is difficult for the viewer to understand what you want them to look at. Narrow your view down so that you have only one thing, the main subject, in your photo. This will communicate a great deal more about the subject than if your viewer has to figure out what the main subject is supposed to be. With this project different lenses will be more helpful to do a better job. With "Fill the Frame" a macro lens (for close ups) and either a telephoto or zoom lens for things far away to be bigger in the photo. Look at the picture here for an example of a "Fill the Frame" shot. Notice that we can see more details of the grill and license plate. Our attention is limited to those things instead of the whole truck. Filling the frame is basically the same as "crop and zoom".