Digital Photography
and
Lighting Classes
By Bret Roebling

Introduction to photography
Week 1) beginner (bring camera)

- Introductions,
- What Makes A Good Photograph
- Camera Parts and Use
- Overview Assignments
- Q and A

Camera Functions, ISO, Shutter Speed and Aperture
(Week 2) beginner and intermedia (bring camera)

- Camera Functions
- Shutter Speed and Effect on Images
- Aperture (F-Stops) and Effect on Images
- Assignments
- Q and A

Lens Selections and Introduction to natural Lighting
(Week 3) beginner, intermediate and advanced (bring camera)

- Lens Selection
- Natural Light & Modifiers
- We will guide you through
- The basic concepts of how to use light to create great images.
- Assignments
- Q and A

Understanding lightroom modules and in-depth guide to developing your work.
(Week 4) beginner, intermediate (bring camera and laptop)

- Work Flow From import to archive
- Library module (quit developing, tagging, key Words and metadata)
- Develop module (making a print, the best it can be)
- Map module (Map tagging and sharing)
- Book module (create and make your own book)
- Slideshow module (creating a slideshow)
- Print module (getting the best print out of your image)
- Web module
- Assignments Q and A

Studio Lighting and Light Modifiers
Photography lighting in-depth guide from beginners to advanced
(Week 5) (bring camera)

- How light works in photography and how to use it to your advantage
- Light Ratios
- Working with a single light source
- Working with multiple light sources
- My 5 best setups
- Techniques to save you time
- What equipment you need for stunning results.
- Assignments Q and A

Accessories & Photo Walk Special Photo Situations
(Week 6) beginner, intermediate, advanced (bring camera)

- Flash and Outdoor lighting for beginners.
- Cost effective accessories that make your job easier and more efficient.
- Special Photo situations
- Assignments Q and A

This is a photo walk and tips on how to photograph Birds, Flowers, fireworks and fluffies")
Bring your Camera and Tripod

Increase your incoming photography
(week 7) (bring camera and laptop)
- You can double your income with in person sales.
- What is in person sales?
- Why you can't afford not to go to IPS.
- The process of converting a churn and burn style business model into an IPS model
- The initial contact conversation and qualifying your customers.
- The consultation, collecting the creation fee to guard against no-shows.
- Conducting the photo session.
- Calling and editing your images in Lightroom.
- How to protect your images
- how to project your images change true to size using Lightroom.
- Conducting the sales, no pressure presentation.
- Ordering, packaging and delivering the prints.

You will know how to complete workflow from the initial contact with the client to delivering the product

FOREWORD by Bret Roebling

Welcome to my photography class! I am very happy you are here - we're all of
like mind -we all love creating images with our cameras! With the advent of
the Digital Photography age, it's easier than ever to create and save and
manipulate images. Some people are happy to just "point and shoot". This
course is designed to take you a little further down the path to achieving your
goals!
We will have a mix of theory and practical uses of those theories. This can get
pretty complex - so depending on where you are in your experience, you may
be bored at times, or lost! Feel free to ask questions as we go! No dumb
questions after all! (I MAY give a dumb answer here and there, however).
Each week we will cover different camera features, and why they matter to us.
These will apply no matter your type of camera, even though the actual
buttons and controls may be in a different place. The principles are the same.

I want you to have FUN too! This shouldn't be stressful! We all learn at different
rates and have different minds and hearts. That's what makes this so cool! ENJOY
yourself and if there's anything I can do to help make this a better experience, please
let me know!
*Raise your hand at anytime during any portion of the programs and ask questions! My
motto is "no one left behind!"*

Now, before we get into the "nuts and bolts,
Here's Me

What IS a GOOD Photograph, anyway?

"Everyone has a different idea of what is a GREAT photograph. Is it the subject, the lighting, the technical accomplishments like sharpness, focus, or the subject matter, an endearing expression, or a fantastic sunset?

"Who knows? What makes a sunset pretty, what makes a baby cute, what makes your eyes tear up at a photo and laugh at another? What makes you happy when you see it and disgusted at another scene? If I knew THAT, this class would be being held in Hawaii tonight! But, no, we're here in my converted Basement on the Asbury Cemetery Road

So, we'll study your camera and it's controls, and why and when we should even care about them. Why not just set your camera on "AUTO" settings and call it good? Well, I will try to help you understand the REASONS you want to get OFF of the AUTO settings from time to time, and when not to.

Photography makes it easy for anyone to create images without needing any artistic ability or training: just set AUTO and go.

You can't paint unless you study and practice. In studying painting, you are always taught image structure.

Anyone can take pictures. Formal courses of photographic study rarely, if ever, cover the basics of image structure. All they teach is technical mumbo-jumbo, which can is a waste because cameras do all of the technical stuff for us today anyway.

Even professional photographers are rarely taught about the basics of image structure, which is why so many photographs are so awful.

The lack of structure is why so many photographs don't make it.

And....?????

Every image needs a basic structure. Without an underlying structure, it is just another boring photo.

Every image needs strong underlying compositional order so that it grabs the eye from a hundred feet away.

If it can't grab the eye from a distance, it will never be an interesting photo, regardless of how many fine details it might have. Details don't matter if there's no story behind it.

It's not about the subject.
Here's another secret: in *photographic art*, it's never about the subject. (In portraits, it IS a bit more about the subject.)
It's always about the underlying compositional structure. Subjects that may be there are chosen because they support or create a structure, not the other way around. What a subject does in real life is irrelevant. In a good photo, subjects are chosen to provide the shapes or colors we want to lay down the basic design of an image. The actual subject doesn't matter. Your choice of a subject should be made to give a strong underlying design to the image. What that subject is or does consciously is irrelevant. As far as photographers are concerned, photos subjects are used purely as big colors and shapes, exactly as you'd cut these colors and shapes out of construction paper to make a composition.

Composition
When composing, ignore details. Be sure to exclude everything not directly contributing to the image.
As you compose, only look at the boldest, broadest and most basic lines and shapes in your image in the most overall and general sort of way.

I often look away from my finder to see the finder out of the corner of my eye. This lets my brain ignore details and what the conscious subject might be, and hopefully see the image's far more important underlying structure more clearly. The only thing that matters are the bold, broad strokes. It's a photograph, not a painting, so duh, the details will take care of themselves.

The broad strokes won't. You, and you alone, have to force them exactly where you want them before you take the picture. Nothing in an image is what it seems. Even though viewers might say "that thing in the corner is a rain boot," when composing, it's a yellow shape you are using for no reason other than as a color blob in your image.

When composing, forget the subject. You are using every item in the image as a compositional element, exactly as you'd arrange pieces of cut-out construction paper to make an interesting composition. Move the camera forward or back to fit your elements as you want them.

Move left or right, and especially use the forgotten dimension of moving up and down, to re-arrange items in your frame as you want them.

Eye Path Our eyes are first attracted to the brightest, or the contrastiest, or the most colorful part of an image. After we've directed the eye, the eye starts to wander around and see what else there is to see. After you've caught a viewer's eye, you have to be sure that it stays in your image, and doesn't wander out. Keep details out of the corners, and be sure that important elements aren't cut by the frame edges. How do we move mountains? Easy: turn the camera, or walk a few steps left or right to move them relative to the tree in your frame.

Distractions

Anything that isn't directly helping the composition takes away from it. It's just like editing: the fewer words you use, the better the writing. Details that don't add to the overall structure of the image make it weaker. Is there an annoying tree in the sky on the left? If it has nothing to do with the rest of the image. I always crop that out, otherwise, viewer's eyes keep going back to it, which pulls eyes off the image. It is a distraction, which makes for a poorer image.

Punchline

The best images have a punchline. Who wants to hear a joke or see a movie without a good ending?
A punchline is what you find after you look around the image.
A punchline doesn't have to be hidden. A punchline can be as simple as a row of soldiers, and one at the end is doing or wearing something different.

Color

Books have been written about color. Go to your library, or an art library, and read them. I'll only touch the basics here. Warm colors, red, orange and yellow, appear to move forward towards the viewer. Our eyes are attracted to them first. Cool colors, greens, blues and violets, recede away from the viewer. An easy way to make your image three-dimensional is to have an orange object in front of a blue background. Movies do this all the time.

Put orange on blue, and in comes forward. Put a red building on blue and the red comes out and hits you.

Colors need to be in harmony. There are a zillion ways to analyze this, but as a photographer you have it easy. What looks good is good. Painters have it harder, since they need to design and synthesize their colors from their own imaginations.

Colors tend to be harmonious when you have two colors balanced from opposite sides of the color wheel. You can get fancy and have two variations of a similar color balancing another opposing color. You can try to have three colors, all equally spaced on the color wheel.

I'm simple: I like brilliant orange, as lit by the late afternoon sun, highlighted against the dark blue of a sky.
Warm colors get us riled up. Cool colors are peaceful. Follow your own eyes, and read lots of books if you want to know the formal analyses.

If you shoot color, you must pay attention to color. You can't just shoot in color and expect the colors to come out magically wonderful. You have to look for them.

If color doesn't add to your image, don't shoot color. Shoot black-and-white. Don't shoot color because it's what your camera does at default. If you aren't actively going to be sensitive to colors, don't shoot them.

Light

Lighting is the most important technical issue in photography. Pro photographers pay close attention to it, while hobbyists sadly ignore it. For our purposes here, lighting is the biggest contributor to light and dark, to colors, and to shapes and lines. The direction of light and shadow defines our lines and shapes. Lines, colors, shapes, light and dark are 99% of our image
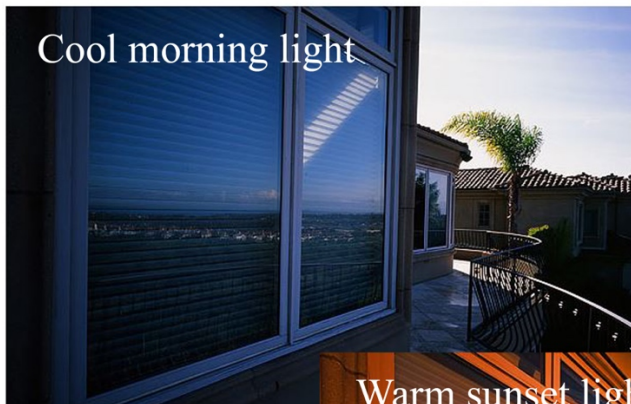
The 12 elements listed below are in accordance to the importance

*Impact is the sense one gets upon viewing an image for the first time. Compelling images evoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder or another intense emotion. There can be impact in any of these twelve elements. **Technical excellence** is the print quality of the image itself as it is presented for viewing. Retouching, manipulation, sharpness, exposure, printing, mounting, and correct color are some items that speak to the qualities of the physical print. **Creativity** is the original, fresh, and external expression of the imagination of the maker by using the medium to convey an idea, message or thought. **Style** is defined in a number of ways as it applies to a creative image. It might be defined by a specific genre or simply be recognizable as the characteristics of how a specific artist applies light to a subject. It can impact an image in a positive manner when the subject matter and the style are appropriate for each other, or it can have a negative effect when they are at odds. **Composition** is important to the design of an image, bringing all of the visual elements together in concert to express the purpose of the image. Proper composition holds the viewer in the image and prompts the viewer to look where the creator intends. Effective composition can be pleasing or disturbing, depending on the intent of the image maker.*

*__Presentation__ affects an image by giving it a finished look. The mats and borders used, either physical or digital, should support and enhance the image, not distract from it. **Color Balance** supplies harmony to an image. An image in which the tones work together, effectively supporting the image, can enhance its emotional appeal. Color balance is not always harmonious and can be used to evoke diverse feelings for effect. **Center of Interest** is the point or points on the image where the maker wants the viewer to stop as they view the image. There can be primary and secondary centers of interest. Occasionally there will be no specific center of interest, when the entire scene collectively serves as the center of interest. **Lighting —the use and control of light**—refers to how dimension, shape and roundness are defined in an image. Whether the light applied to an image is manmade or natural, proper use of it should enhance an image. **Subject Matter** should always be appropriate to the story being told in an image. **Technique** is the approach used to create the image. Printing, lighting, posing, capture, presentation media, and more are part of the technique applied to an image. **Story Telling** refers to the images ability to evoke imagination. One beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might collect his own message or read her own story in an image.*

How to hold your camera - One of the common problems that many new digital (and film) photographers have is 'camera shake' where images seem blurry – usually because the camera was not held still enough while the shutter was depressed. This is especially common in shots taken in low light situations where the shutter is open for longer periods of time. Even the smallest movement of the camera can cause it and the only real way to eliminate it is with a tripod.

Adding to camera shake is a technique that is increasingly common with digital camera users of holding the camera at arms length away from them as they take shots – often with one hand. While this might be a good way to frame your shot the further away from your body (a fairly stable thing) you hold a camera the more chance you have of swaying or shaking as you take your shot.

Tripods are the best way to stop camera shake because they have three sturdy legs that keep things very still – but if you don't have one then another simple way to enhance the stability of the camera is to hold onto it with two hands. While it can be tempting to shoot one handed a two hands will increase your stillness (like three legs on a tripod being better than one).

Exactly how you should grip your camera will depend upon what type of digital camera you are using and varies from person to person depending upon preference.

There is no real right or wrong way to do it but here's the technique that I generally use:

Tuck your elbows into your sides and lean the camera out a little from your face (around 8- 12"). Alternatively use the viewfinder if it's not too small or difficult to see through (a problem on many point and shoots these days).

Add extra stability by leaning against a solid object like a wall or a tree, or by sitting, or kneeling down if you have to stand, and don't have anything to lean on for extra support, put your feet shoulder, width apart, and give yourself a steady stance, the more steel you can keep your body the more still the camera will be
Holding a camera, and this way will allow you flexibility of being able to line up shots quickly, but also help you hold still for the crucial moment of your shutter being open

Another quick bonus tip on how to hold a camera – before you take your shot take a gentle but deep breath, hold it, then take the shot and exhale. The other method people use is the exact opposite – exhale and before inhaling again take the shot. It's amazing how much a body rises and falls simply by breathing – being conscious of it can give you an edge.

Of course each person will have their own little techniques that they are more comfortable with and ultimately you need to find what works best for you – but in the early days of familiarizing yourself with your new digital camera it's worth considering your technique.

One last note on how to hold a camera – this post is about 'holding a camera' in a way that will help eliminate camera shake. It's not rocket science – but it's amazing how many people get it wrong and wonder why their images are blurry.

There are of course many other techniques for decreasing camera shake that should be used in conjunction with the way you hold it. Shutter speed, lenses with image stabilization and of course tripods can all help.

The Rule of Thirds

is perhaps the most well-known principle of photographic composition.

The "Rule of Thirds" one of the first things that budding digital photographers learn about in classes on photography and rightly so as it is the basis for well balanced and interesting shots.

What is the Rule of Thirds

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 9 parts. As follows.
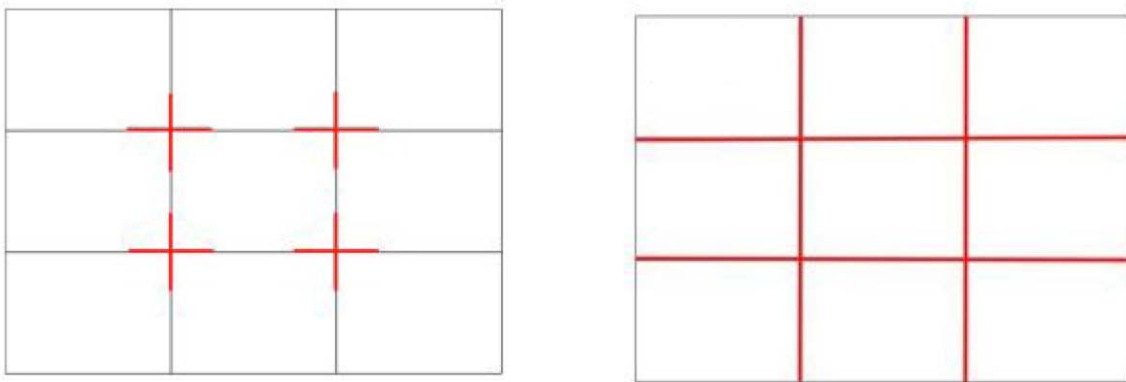
As you're taking an image you would have done this in your mind through your viewfinder or in the LCD display that you use to frame your shot.

As you're taking an image you would have done this in your mind through your viewfinder or in the LCD display that you use to frame your shot.

With this grid in mind the 'rule of thirds' now identifies four important parts of the image that you should consider placing points of interest in as you frame your image.

Not only this – but it also gives you four 'lines' that are also useful positions for elements in your photo.

Rule of Thirds in Photography

The theory is that if you place points of interest in the intersections or along the lines that your photo becomes more balanced and will enable a viewer of the image to interact with it more naturally. Studies have shown that when viewing images that people's eyes usually go to one of the intersection points most naturally rather than the center of the shot – using the rule of thirds works with this natural way of viewing an image rather than working against it.

Using the Rule of Thirds
Come naturally to some photographers but for many of us takes a little time and practice for it to become second nature.
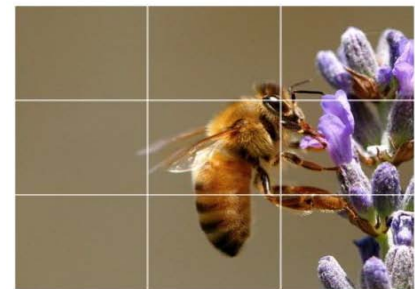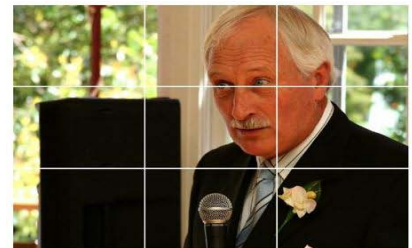
In learning how to use the rule of thirds (and then to break it) the most important questions to be asking of yourself are:

What are the points of interest in this shot?

Where am I intentionally placing them?

Once again – remember that breaking the rule can result in some striking shots – so once you've learnt it experiment with purposely breaking it to see what you discover.

Lastly – *keep the rule of thirds in mind as you edit your photos later on*. Post production editing tools today have good tools for cropping and reframing images so that they fit within the rules. Experiment with some of your old shots to see what impact it might have on your photos.

Notes