Overview

This assignment focuses on mastering different focus modes and tracking techniques in photography. You'll learn how to effectively utilize autofocus settings to ensure sharp images, particularly when dealing with moving subjects or specific focal points.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the differences between AF-S and AF-C modes and when to use each.
- Learn to prioritize focus points on critical details, such as the eyes in portraits or the leading edge in wildlife photography.
- Gain proficiency in using back-button focus for more consistent timing in capturing moving subjects.

Related Reading

Before you start, read these related blog posts to deepen your understanding:

What Is Focus In Photography		

Before You Shoot

- ■ Familiarize yourself with your camera's autofocus settings and modes.
- ■ Decide on a subject that will allow you to practice both static and moving focus techniques.
- ■ Select a location with a variety of subjects, such as a park or busy street.
- ■ Set your camera's ISO to a fixed value of 200.
- ■ Ensure your lens is clean and free from obstructions.

Assignment Tasks

1. Use AF-S mode while photographing a stationary subject, ensuring the focus is on the eyes at a fixed ISO of 200 and aperture priority mode set to f/2.8.

2. Photograph a moving subject, like a dog running in the park, using AF-C mode with ISO 200 fixed and shutter priority mode set to 1/500s.

3. Capture a series of portraits using eye detection focus, ensuring the focus point is on the closest eye at ISO 200 and aperture priority mode set to f/4.

4. Shoot wildlife in motion, using zone focus to track the subject while keeping ISO at 200 and shutter priority mode set to 1/1000s.

5. Practice back-button focus by photographing a friend walking towards you, setting your camera to AF-C mode with ISO 200 and aperture priority mode at f/5.6.

6. Create a macro shot of a flower, ensuring the focus is on the most detailed part of the bloom, using aperture priority mode at f/2.8 and ISO 200.

Stretch Tasks

- Challenge yourself by capturing fast-moving sports action using continuous autofocus and a combination of zone focus and shutter priority mode set to 1/2000s.
- Experiment with low-light conditions, using back-button focus to achieve sharp images while maintaining a fixed ISO of 200 and using aperture priority mode.

DO / DON'T

DO	DON'T
✓ Do match your autofocus mode to the movement of your subject.	✗ Don't rely solely on recompose focusing at wide apertures.
✓ Do prioritize the eye or leading edge when focusing on your subject.	✗ Don't forget to adjust your focus area based on the size of your subject.
✓ Do practice using back-button focus for better control.	✗ Don't use AF-S mode for moving subjects.
✓ Do keep your shutter speed fast enough to prevent motion blur.	✗ Don't shoot without checking that your focus point is on the desired area.
✓ Do experiment with different focus area options to see which works best for your subjects.	✗ Don't ignore the importance of stabilizing your camera for sharp images.

Reflection Questions

- How did your choice of focus mode affect the sharpness of your images?
- What challenges did you face while tracking moving subjects, and how did you overcome them?
- In what scenarios did back-button focus improve your shooting experience?
- How does the choice of focus area impact your composition and the overall image quality?

Technical & Creative Focus

Technical:

- Use aperture priority mode to control depth of field effectively.
- Practice half-pressing the shutter button to lock focus before taking the shot.
- Experiment with different focus area modes, such as single point and zone focus.
- Adjust your focus point to ensure it's on the most critical part of your subject.
- Practice using back-button focus to separate focus and shutter release.

Creative:

- Capture portraits with the focus on the subject's eyes to enhance emotional connection.
- Use leading edges as the focus point in wildlife photography to convey movement.
- Explore different angles and compositions while maintaining focus on your subject.
- Include dynamic elements in your frame to create a sense of movement.
- Experiment with depth of field to isolate your subject from the background.