Overview

This assignment focuses on understanding and utilizing histograms to evaluate exposure in your photographs. By practicing with priority modes, students will learn how to achieve proper exposure while maintaining control over depth of field or motion freeze.

Learning Objectives

- Understand how to read histograms to assess exposure levels in images.
- Learn to use aperture priority or shutter priority modes effectively to control exposure.
- Practice evaluating and adjusting settings based on histogram feedback.

Related Reading

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

What Is Dynamic Range In Photography	Exposure Bracketing A Guide For Photographers	

Before You Shoot

- Familiarize yourself with your camera's histogram display settings.
- Set your camera to either aperture priority or shutter priority mode.
- Fix your ISO at 200 to maintain consistent exposure across tasks.
- Choose a location with varied lighting to test your exposure skills.
- Bring a notebook to record your observations and histogram readings.

Assignment Tasks

1. Use aperture priority mode at f/4 with ISO 200 fixed, allowing the camera to adjust shutter speed. Capture a portrait and evaluate the histogram for highlights and shadows.

2. Use shutter priority mode at 1/1000s with ISO 200 fixed to freeze action. Photograph a moving subject and assess the histogram to ensure proper exposure.

3. Select a brightly lit outdoor scene and use aperture priority mode at f/2.8 with ISO 200. Observe the histogram and ensure you're not clipping highlights.

4. In a dimly lit environment, switch to shutter priority mode at 1/60s with ISO 200 fixed. Capture a still life and analyze the histogram for shadow details.

5. Experiment with a backlit subject using aperture priority mode at f/5.6 and ISO 200. Check the histogram to ensure the subject is properly exposed without losing background detail.

6. Take a series of photos in varying lighting conditions using shutter priority at 1/250s with ISO 200. Compare histograms to see how exposure changes with light.

Stretch Tasks

- Create a series of images focusing on different subjects (e.g., architecture, nature, people) using both priority modes. Analyze and compare how the histogram differs across subjects.
- Conduct a low-light photography session using aperture priority mode at f/1.8 with ISO 200. Capture images and assess histograms to adjust your technique based on results.

DO / DON'T

DO

- ✓ Do check your histogram after each shot to understand exposure.
- ✓ Do experiment with different subject distances to see how depth of field affects histograms.
- ✓ Do use the exposure compensation feature to adjust for tricky lighting situations.
- ✓ Do take notes on your settings and histogram results for each shot to track your progress.
- ✓ Do review your images on a computer screen to analyze histogram performance in detail.

DON'T

- ✗ Don't ignore clipping indicators on the histogram; they can lead to lost details.
- ✗ Don't shoot in manual mode for this assignment; focus on priority modes.
- ✗ Don't set your ISO to auto; keep it fixed at 200 for consistency.
- ✗ Don't rush through your shots; take time to assess and adjust each image's exposure.
- ✗ Don't rely solely on the camera's LCD for exposure feedback; always check the histogram.

Reflection Questions

- How did your understanding of exposure change after using the histogram?
- What challenges did you encounter while trying to achieve proper exposure with priority modes?
- In what scenarios did you find the histogram particularly helpful or confusing?
- How might you apply the lessons learned about histograms in future photography projects?

Technical & Creative Focus

Technical:

- Understand the shape and distribution of the histogram for optimal exposure.
- Learn how to identify clipping in the histogram and its implications.
- Practice adjusting exposure compensation based on histogram feedback.
- Explore the differences in histograms between images with varied depth of field or motion.
- Use the camera’s tools to overlay histogram data while shooting.

Creative:

- Experiment with different aperture settings to create varying depth of field while monitoring the histogram.
- Use shutter priority mode to capture movement and analyze resulting histogram data.
- Incorporate foreground elements to enhance compositional balance while observing exposure.
- Try shooting during different times of day to observe how light affects histogram results.
- Combine creative framing techniques with exposure adjustments to see their effect on the histogram.