



Overview

This assignment focuses on mastering focus modes and tracking in photography, emphasizing the importance of selecting the appropriate autofocus settings for different subjects. Participants will learn to effectively use focus modes to enhance the sharpness of their images, particularly in dynamic shooting scenarios.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the difference between AF-S and AF-C modes and when to use each.
- Learn to select the correct autofocus area for various subjects.
- Develop skills for precise focusing on critical details like eyes in portraits or leading edges in wildlife photography.

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 how to switch between AF-S and AF-C modes.
- Set your camera to either aperture priority mode or shutter priority mode, depending on your shooting scenario.
- Choose a fixed ISO value of 200 to maintain consistent exposure.
- Select a location with subjects that exhibit movement or require precise focusing.
- Gather your gear, including a lens suitable for your intended subject (e.g., a portrait lens or a telephoto for wildlife).

Assignment Tasks

1. Use AF-S mode with a single point autofocus to shoot a portrait of a stationary subject, ensuring the focus is on the subject's eyes.
2. Switch to AF-C mode and practice tracking a moving subject, such as a pet running or a person walking, using a zone autofocus area.
3. Set your camera to aperture priority mode at f/4 with ISO 200 fixed and photograph a group of people, ensuring the focus is sharp on the closest person.
4. Use shutter priority mode at 1/500s with ISO 200 fixed to capture a sports event, focusing on the leading edge of the athlete as they move.
5. Photograph a bird or wildlife in motion using AF-C mode and a wide autofocus area, ensuring the subject is in focus as it moves.
6. Practice back-button focus by setting your camera to shoot a series of images of a subject in dynamic motion, ensuring sharp focus throughout.

Stretch Tasks

- Create a series of portraits that utilize varying focus techniques, such as selective focus on the eyes with a blurred background.
- Conduct a timed session where you switch between autofocus modes and areas to capture different subjects in a single location.



DO / DON'T

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Do match the autofocus mode to the subject's movement.✓ Do prioritize focusing on the eyes for portraits to enhance sharpness.✓ Do practice using back-button focus for more control over your shots.✓ Do maintain a high enough shutter speed for the focal length you are using.✓ Do experiment with different autofocus areas to see which works best for various subjects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ Don't rely on focus-recompose techniques at wide apertures; focus directly on the critical detail.✗ Don't use AF-S mode for moving subjects as it may result in missed shots.✗ Don't set your ISO to auto; keep it fixed at 200 for consistency.✗ Don't forget to stabilize your camera when shooting at slower shutter speeds.✗ Don't neglect to check your autofocus settings before starting your shoot.

Reflection Questions

- How did using different autofocus modes impact your ability to capture sharp images?
- What challenges did you face while tracking moving subjects, and how did you overcome them?
- In what scenarios did you find back-button focus to be particularly beneficial?
- How does the choice of autofocus area influence the composition and outcome of your photographs?

Technical & Creative Focus

Technical:

- Use AF-C for moving subjects to maintain focus as the subject moves.
- Select a single point autofocus for portraits to ensure sharpness on the subject's eyes.
- Utilize expanded or zone focus areas for tracking moving wildlife.
- Practice back-button focus to separate focusing from shutter release.
- Ensure your shutter speed is appropriate for your focal length to avoid motion blur.

Creative:

- Experiment with different autofocus points to create unique compositions.
- Try shooting from various angles to see how focus affects the depth of field in your images.
- Incorporate leading lines in your composition to guide the viewer's eye to the point of focus.
- Use negative space creatively while focusing on your subject to enhance the overall composition.
- Capture candid moments by anticipating movement and focusing on the subject's eyes.