Overview

This assignment teaches photographers how to control depth of field by manipulating aperture settings and understanding the effects of subject distance and focal length. Students will learn to creatively isolate subjects or achieve sharp backgrounds in their compositions.

Learning Objectives

- Understand how aperture affects depth of field.
- Learn to use aperture priority mode to control depth of field.
- Experiment with subject distance and focal length to achieve desired focus effects.

Related Reading

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

What Is Depth Of Field	What Is Aperture In Photography	

Before You Shoot

- Ensure your camera is set to aperture priority mode (A/Av).
- Set your ISO to a fixed value of 200.
- Choose a variety of subjects that will allow for both shallow and deep depth of field.
- Familiarize yourself with your lens's minimum and maximum aperture settings.
- Scout locations with varying distances between your subject and the background.

Assignment Tasks

1. Photograph a portrait using aperture priority mode at f/2.8 with ISO 200 fixed, allowing the camera to set the shutter speed. Focus on the subject's eyes to achieve a shallow depth of field.
2. Capture a landscape scene using aperture priority mode at f/11 with ISO 200 fixed. Ensure everything from the foreground to the horizon is in focus.
3. Take a close-up shot of a flower using aperture priority mode at f/4 with ISO 200 fixed, allowing the background to blur for emphasis.
4. Shoot a street scene at f/5.6 with ISO 200 fixed, focusing on a subject in the foreground while allowing some depth of field in the background.
5. Create a series of images capturing the same subject at various apertures (e.g., f/2.8, f/5.6, f/8) to observe how depth of field changes.
6. Photograph a group of people at f/4 with ISO 200 fixed, ensuring the focus is on the nearest person while allowing others to fade into the background.

Stretch Tasks

- Experiment with hyperfocal distance by photographing a landscape at f/16 with ISO 200 fixed, ensuring both the foreground and background are sharp.
- Try capturing motion (like moving vehicles or people) using shutter priority mode at 1/250s with ISO 200 fixed, letting the camera set the aperture for appropriate depth of field.

DO / DON'T

DO	DON'T
✓ Do experiment with different aperture settings to see their effect on depth of field.	✗ Don't rely solely on auto mode; use aperture priority or shutter priority for control.
✓ Do focus on the main subject to ensure it is sharp and clear.	✗ Don't forget to check your background for distractions that may affect depth of field.
✓ Do vary your distance from the subject to understand how it influences depth of field.	✗ Don't assume that shallow depth of field is always the best choice; consider your subject.
✓ Do take multiple shots at different apertures for comparison.	✗ Don't hesitate to ask for feedback on your images to improve your understanding.
✓ Do consider the entire composition to ensure key elements are included.	✗ Don't ignore the importance of light; it can greatly affect your depth of field results.

Reflection Questions

- How did changing the aperture affect the mood of your images?
- What challenges did you encounter while trying to achieve a desired depth of field?
- In what situations do you think a shallow depth of field is most effective?
- How did your understanding of depth of field change through this assignment?

Technical & Creative Focus

Technical:

- Use wider apertures (e.g., f/2.8) for shallow depth of field.
- Use narrower apertures (e.g., f/8 or f/11) for deeper depth of field.
- Consider the distance between your subject and the background when setting your aperture.
- Experiment with different focal lengths to see how they affect depth of field.
- Pay attention to your composition to ensure key elements are in sharp focus.

Creative:

- Isolate your subject by using a wide aperture to create a blurred background.
- Use a narrow aperture to capture landscapes with sharpness from foreground to background.
- Experiment with focus placement, such as focusing on the nearest eye in portraits.
- Incorporate leading lines and framing to enhance the effect of depth of field.
- Try unconventional subjects or scenes to challenge traditional depth of field norms.