Study Guide / Review

Here's a study guide of what is covered in the course. Remember that this is just a guide and should be used for reviewing purposes. The class website and class manual have a more detailed explanation of the topics covered here.

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By the end of the course, you should know how to access each of these features and know how each one affects the photo (as well as how to use each one!).

Auto Adjustment Features

The auto adjustment features can be found by going to *Image → Adjustments → Auto Levels, Contrast, Color*

Auto Level – adjusts highlights and shadows
Auto Contrast – adjusts overall contrast and color
Auto Color – different approach to adjust color and contrast

When you choose one of these auto adjustment features, Photoshop will automatically scan the pixels in the image and do what it thinks will balance out the image. When it comes to automated processes, it's often hit-or-miss, so remember to use your own judgment. While Photoshop will do its best, the image it produces may or may not be what you want. These auto adjustment features are meant to save you time. However, if you want to have more control over what you do, you can use the Variations tool.

Brightness/Contrast

To access, click on *Image → Adjustments → Brightness/Contrast*

Sliding the Brightness cursor to the left or right will decrease/increase the brightness of the image. Brightness simply means how light or dark your image is. The same process applies to the contrast. Changing the contrast will allow you to change the difference between the bright and dark areas of a photo.

Maybe you have a photo where you've forgotten to turn on the flash or the flash wasn't strong enough. This technique is useful for an image that is too dark.

Variations

Variations allow you to adjust the contrast and color of an image by using several preview thumbnails. This tool is more comprehensive and gives you more control over the image than the auto adjustment features. Believe it or not, this tool isn't even the most precise way to edit photos. However, for this class, we won't need to worry about this.

To access the Variations, click on *Image → Adjustments → Variations*. A new window will appear.

Point and click on each thumbnail until you are satisfied with the "current pick."

Photo Filters

Sometimes when you take a picture, you might feel that the image is too "hot" (with too many reds, yellows, and browns, etc). In this case, you could add a blue photo filter to help give the photo a "cooler" feeling. Using Photo Filters is similar to what a professional photographer does when he/she puts a colored lens filter on the camera. The entire image is coated with the desired color. This is done by going to *Image → Adjustments → Photo Filter.*

You can choose from several presets or choose your own colored photo filter. You can also choose how dense you want the color to be applied (how much of a color you want to appear).

Healing Brush

The healing brush function is one of the most useful tools when editing photos. It can be used to get rid of scars (as you can see from our example), wrinkles, blemishes, etc.

Photoshop's definition of the healing brush sums up its ability nicely: "The healing brush tool lets you correct imperfections, causing them to disappear into the surrounding image. The healing brush tool also matches the texture, lighting, and shading of the sampled pixels to the source pixels. As a result, the repaired pixels blend seamlessly into the rest of the image."

Based on the starting point, Photoshop will calculate the color information surrounding a point and do it's best to fix the area based on the surrounding color information.

To use the healing brush tool:
a. First, define the starting point by holding the Alt key down and clicking the mouse button.
    Notice how the cursor changes when you hold down the Alt key.
b. Next, hold down the mouse key and drag over the area to be repaired.

Shadow/Highlight

What happens if you take a picture and forget to use the flash? Not a problem – when you have the Shadow/Highlight tool.

The Shadow/Highlight tool is useful when an image is too dark (because of a strong background lighting) or too washed out (due to too much lighting). Just as the name implies, this tool is used to adjust the shadowy areas of a photo based on the pixels surrounding the area.

To access the Shadow/Highlight tool, go to *Image* → *Adjustments* → *Shadow/Highlight.* A new window will appear. To adjust, just slide the cursor to the left or right. The automatic preview will show you what you image will look like.