The Art of Black & White Photography
ASSIGNMENTS

Course Handbook (March, 2019)

Welcome!

This is your handbook for 'The Art of Black and White Photography: ASSIGNMENTS'.

Over the following nine pages you will find everything you need to work your way through this four week course: the course calendar, a brief for each of the weekly assignments, and details regarding how to prepare and upload your images and assignment notes.

Course Calendars
Important dates and times for your course, including assignment submission dates.

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The Assignments
Detailed instructions for each of the four assignments.

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Other Information
Details about how to upload your images and notes and the webinars.

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Course Calendar

March, 2019

March	Week	Assignment due	Webinar (date and time)
	1	Tuesday 5th	Sunday 10th, 4.00pm GMT
	2	Tuesday 12th	Sunday 17th, 4.00pm GMT
	3	Tuesday 19th	Sunday 24th, 4.00pm GMT
	4	Tuesday 26th	Sunday 31st, 4.00pm GMT

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Quick Tip

The type of image that will work best for this assignment is one that contains a broad range of reasonably saturated colours. The reason for this is that both the Channel Mixer and Black and White tool allow you to vary the tonal balance of your black and white image in relation to the colours within the original.

As such, a more saturated image, with a high degree of colour variation between its different elements, will allow you to manipulate the tonal range and balance both more easily and effectively.

Assignment One

For this assignment you will be submitting TWO images.

The purpose of this assignment is for you to explore the various conversion methods discussed in Sections Two and Three of 'The Art of Black and White Photography', choosing the method that provides the best possible conversion for each of your images.

You should pay particular attention to identifying your primary subject, delineating it from the background, and creating a balanced image with a good range of tones.

I'd suggest that you use either the Channel Mixer or the Black and White Tool, but – depending on the nature of your original image – you may decide to use one of the other methods discussed.

I would also like you to include a summary of the technique and settings you used to convert your images, along with a description of why you feel the method you used and the settings you applied achieve the best possible aesthetic and creative outcome.

Further notes for Assignment One

Note 1
You can choose any image for this assignment but I would prefer you NOT to use a portrait, as this is the topic we'll be covering in Assignment Three.

Note 2
For the purpose of this assignment DON'T make any further adjustments to your images after the black and white conversion, i.e. use a single underlined adjustment layer to edit each one. The aim for this assignment is to create the best possible image from the outset.

Assignment Two

For this assignment you will be submitting ONE image.

The purpose of this assignment is for you to explore the tools and techniques discussed in Section Four of 'The Art of Black and White Photography'.

Specifically, you will be working with the Curves tool and masks, to adjust both the tonal range and contrast of an image, either globally, selectively, or both.

Additionally, and if appropriate, you can use two or more conversion techniques within the same image to create a more effective final result.

As with Assignment One you should pay particular attention to identifying your primary subject, delineating it from the background, and creating a balanced image with a good range of tones.

I would also like you to write a summary of the various changes that you made to your image, identifying the purpose of each Curves adjustment layer and how it contributes to the image as a whole.

Further notes for Assignment Two

Note 1
You can choose any image for this assignment but I would prefer you NOT to use a portrait, as this is the topic we'll be covering in Assignment Three.

Note 2
While there is no limit to the amount of adjustment layers you can add to your image for this assignment, make sure that each one is a) effective, and b) makes a positive contribution to the image as a whole.

Quick Tip

Adding a vignette is a very effective method of focusing the viewer's attention 'into' an image.

It makes the visual experience more immersive insofar as it draws attention away from the edge of the image: the boundary between the scene, as experienced, and its reality as a two-dimensional representation of that reality.

Assignment Three

For this assignment you will be submitting TWO images, processed with reference to the tools and techniques discussed in Section Five of 'The Art of Black and White Photography'.

Your first image should be a portrait of a woman or child, the second of a man or older person. In the case of the former you should aim to produce a soft, bright portrait: minimizing any skin blemishes or other imperfections. For the latter you should aim to emphasize and accentuate your subject's facial details.

In both cases you should also make a range of further adjustments: adjusting the brightness and contrast of different areas of the image, selectively brightening your subject's eyes, and (possibly) blending one or more black and white conversion technique.

For both portraits I would also like you to include a summary of the changes you made: including which technique, or combination of techniques you used, and why.

Further notes for Assignment Three

Note 1
While emphasizing facial detail works well for portraits of men – e.g. by biasing the black and white conversion towards the blue channel – it's a technique that rarely produces a flattering portrait of a woman.

That said, flattering and effective are most certainly not the same thing. Bear this in mind while processing your images for this week's assignment.

Quick Tip

It's often said that 'the eyes are the window to the soul'. They're also the key to a good portrait, so make sure that you pay special attention to them when you process your images for this assignment.

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Quick Tip

The key to producing a good toned or colorized image is to realize that in adding a tone (or tones) you change the mood or feeling of an image, often quite significantly.

So think about what mood or feeling you want to create:

Cold or warm?

Light-hearted or moody?

Urban or organic?

Complimentary or unexpected?

Assignment Four

For this assignment I would like you to submit TWO toned or colorized images. Both should be converted to black and white, then the first should be toned using either a Gradient Map, the Color Balance tool, the Channel Mixer, or the Selective Color tool, while the second MUST be toned using a Curve.

Use a different/contrasting tone (or tones) for each image.

For your first image I would like you to include a summary of the technical and aesthetic reasons for your choice of technique. For both your first and second image I would like you discuss the creative and aesthetic rationale behind your choice of tone (or tones): what mood, feel or emotion were you trying to create?

I would also like you to comment on whether you feel you achieved these aims.

Further notes for Assignment Four

Note 1
For both images, if appropriate, you can re-use an image you used for a previous assignment.

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Preparing your images for upload

We would like you to upload your images as Photoshop files (.psd), with all the adjustment layers you used to edit your image. As Photoshop files can be quite large, before you upload them we'd like you to:

1. Resize them to no bigger than 1500px on the longest size.
2. Convert them to 8 bits per channel (assuming that you're editing in 16 bits per channel).

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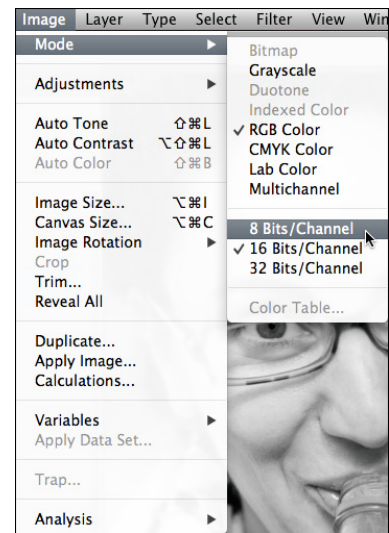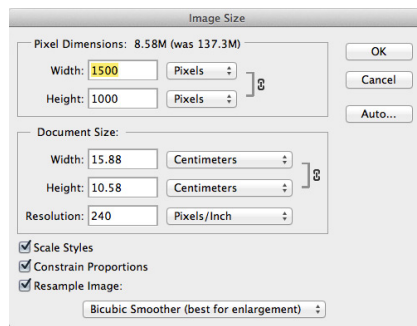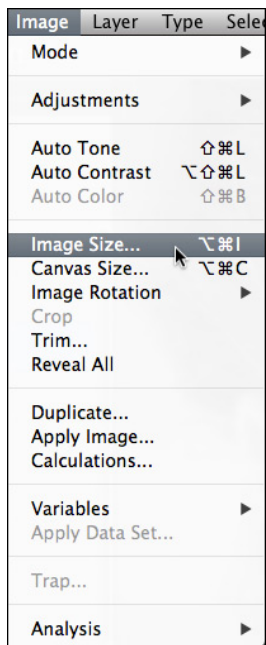
# Uploads, notes and critiques

Your assignment images and notes need to be uploaded to the Dropbox folder for your course. If you've just signed up and downloaded this handbook you won't have been invited to share the Dropbox folder yet. Don't worry; we'll email you an invite soon.

In the meanwhile, if you don't have a Dropbox account, just use the following URL:

https://www.dropbox.com/

This will give you 2GB free cloud-based storage.

Before the course begins we'll send you an email inviting you to share the folder for your course. This will look something like the following:
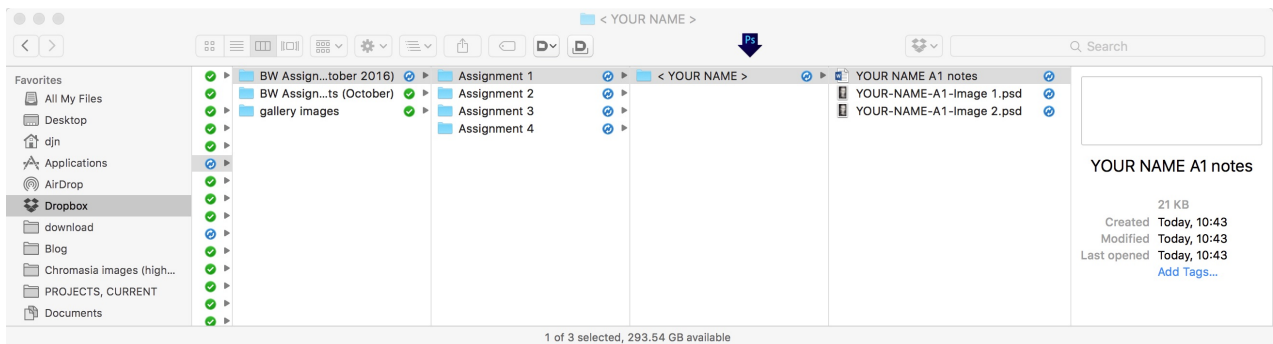
When you've prepared your images and notes you should now be able to drag and drop your first assignment folder containing your image(s) and notes into the Assignment 1 folder.

Here's how we'd like you to do it:

1. Within each assignment folder (Assignment 1, Assignment 2, and so on) create a new folder using your name for the folder title.

2. When you create your Photoshop files name them as follows 'YOUR NAME A# Image#'. So for Assignment 1 this might be 'Joe Bloggs A1 Image 1.psd

3. When you create your notes (one document for each assignment), name them as follows 'YOUR NAME A# notes'. So for Assignment 1 this might be 'Joe Bloggs A1 notes.doc (you can upload your notes as a Word file (.doc or .docx) or text file (.txt).

4. When you've prepared your assignment images and notes, just upload them to your named folder within the relevant assignment folder.

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The Critiques

David's critiques of will be added to your notes file. For each of your submitted images David will provide a detailed, informative and helpful critique: identifying the strengths and weaknesses of your approach, along with a range of suggestions on what you need to do to improve the images. Additionally, and when appropriate, David will also edit your PSD files to illustrate the points he makes.

Your Email Address

Please note: when we email you to invite you to the shared Dropbox folder and the weekly webinars we will use the email address associated with your PayPal account. If you would prefer us to use a different address please email David to let him know:

djn1@chromasia.com

The Webinars

You will receive an email each week, inviting you to attend the webinar on Sunday afternoon (4.00pm GMT). If you can't make it to a specific seminar, don't worry as we record them all and make them available for download the following week.