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Digital Image Retouching – Evaluation Assignment [Photography]

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Class targeted:

HUA 231 Digital Photography II

The students in HUA 231 are usually in their second to last semester as this is an advanced digital class. They have taken the pre-requisite HUA 131 (Digital Photography I) in earlier semesters.

Implementation Date:

Fall I 2018

Exercise Title:

Digital Image Retouching – Evaluation Assignment

"Digital Image Retouching: Evaluation Assignment" was developed in the context of a 2017-18 CTL sponsored mini-grant where the course HUA 231 Digital Photography II, which was formerly an elective, was redesigned as a required course in the Photography program. As part of the mini grant work, program's curriculum map was also adjusted to reflect the changes. The students in HUA 231 are usually in their second to last semester as this is an advanced digital class. They have taken the pre-requisite HUA 131 (Digital Photography I) in earlier semesters. The assignment will be implemented for the first time in Fall I 2018.

Digital retouching has become a staple of the commercial photography industry. This exercise shows the students the level of quality that will be expected of them after graduation, along with helping them to become market ready. Although I do this assignment with beauty images, it can be done with any type of photographs (landscape, architectural, street, etc.) as the emphasis is on the application of the newly acquired skills and workflow of the students. The evaluation of the newly acquired knowledge and the students' progress is done by comparing the *before* and *after images*. The difference is clear and immediate and does not require any photography training to assess. Making the students work on real world commercial assignments allows them to be more engaged in the learning process as they see a clear learning outcome to those exercises. This assignment allows the students a more sophisticated and comprehensive understanding of the digital process as a whole. All the steps involved in the processing of an image coalesce into a more organic and logical

knowledge structure. The students' expanded understanding of the context and new arsenal of tools at their disposal, allow them to better assess the needs of an image and then implement the necessary steps. It is aligned with the Integrative Learning Core Competency and Digital Communication Ability rubrics, and will count for 20% of the student's final grade. The first part of the exercise allows for the faculty to establish a baseline of the students' digital knowledge and understanding of what a professionally finished image should look like. Assigning this early in the semester also allows the faculty to have a good sense of the class' general knowledge; it also provides the opportunity for early syllabi adjustments if necessary. The students are able to self-assess their progress and have a true representation of their newly acquired skills. This often helps them realize how much they have progressed and is very beneficial to their self-motivation.

Assignment Stages:

Part #1: Week #2 (of 13):

The students are given two unprocessed images, from a former real-world commercial assignment.
They are told to process the images to a publication-ready state, using all the tools and techniques they have acquired during HUA 131 (Digital Photography I), which they took during previous semesters.
The assignment can take from one to two hours per image depending on the students' prior knowledge and skills.
The resulting images are reviewed and critiqued in class the following week.

Immediate Assessment:

This allows the instructor to establish a baseline of the students' prior digital knowledge and their understanding of what a finished image should look like.

Part #2: Week #10 (of 13):

The students are given the same two images and asked to once again process them to a professional publication state, using any and all new techniques acquired during the semester.
The new images are then reviewed in class the following week, and compared to the first time they were processed.

In between Parts #1 and #2, the students are introduced to more sophisticated image processing techniques such as *Advanced Sharpening*, *Smart Objects*, *Smart Filters*, *Frequency Separation, Advanced Selections and Masks* to name a few. These new tools and techniques, combined with the additional practice and experience gained throughout the semester, allow the students a more sophisticated and comprehensive

understanding of the process as a whole. All the steps involved in the processing of an image coalesce into a more organic and logical knowledge structure.

Before starting any work on an image, one must assess its needs: from exposure and contrast adjustments, color corrections, saturation levels, all the way to the removal of unwanted objects and any other necessary modifications to transform it into a finished professional photograph. The students' expanded understanding of the context and new arsenal of tools at their disposal, allow them to better assess the needs of an image and then implement the necessary steps.

They have acquired a sense of *the larger picture* and a whole new set of tools; this is why the resulting images show such an improvement the second time around.

Actual Text of the Assignment as given to the students

Part #1 - Week 2 of semester

You will open the two provided images in Photoshop and evaluate them in terms of exposure, color balance, contrast, general detail and spotting (if necessary).

You will then process them to be publication ready using any technique or procedure acquired in HUA131.

You will save both images, with all the adjustment layers you created, as psd or tiff files at 300 dpi.

The images are due next class (Class #3).

Part #2 - Week 10 of semester

You will assess the images again and evaluate your first treatment of the two images. How were the first corrections you applied in terms of color correction and balance, exposure, contrast and general detail? Did you forget to do something?

Once again you will process them to be publication ready and enhance or correct them using any new technique acquired during this semester.

You will save both images, with all the adjustment layers you created, as psd or tiff files at 300 dpi.

The images are due next class (Class #11).