

# Photography Basics

Jim Harrison

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## Photography Basics - Lessons

Understanding Your Camera's Basic Functions

Exposure Triangle – Shutter Speed, Aperture and ISO

Shutter Speed – Fast, Slow and In-Between

Aperture and Depth of Field

And ISO and Sensors – Noise, Resolution and Image Quality

Creative Shooting Modes – Manual, Aperture Priority, Shutter Priority and Others

Composition and Creativity

Processing Digital Images

Phone Cameras (Tentative/Optional)

## Description

Today's digital cameras' complexity can be daunting. Better understanding your camera's basic features (and some advanced capabilities) will make it a fun tool for capturing good images, and for feeding your creativity.

Whether you are a novice or a more experienced photographer, this hands-on introduction will give you the knowledge to enjoy your camera, make the photographic process satisfying, and improve the quality and impact of your images.

Photography Basics is free for APS Members (and for FBC-D members) Non-members can join for \$35 – individual, or \$50 - family.

Each session will have two or three parts: a short talk covering the topics/concepts (~20-30 minutes), hands-on picture-taking applying your new knowledge (~20-30 minutes), and plenty of time for dialog, feedback, questions and practical problem solving.

First Session: Saturday March 28, 2026

10am

First Baptist Church of Decatur

Instructors – All Master Photographers with APS

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## Lesson 3: Shutter Speed – Fast, Slow and In-Between

- Fast to stop action/movement
- Slow to show action/movement (and capture more light)
- In-between for general shooting
- Hand-held shooting
- Tripod shooting

### ***Shooting Assignments***

- Shoot (handheld) a stationary subject with a big range of shutter speeds.
  - What is the slowest shutter speed useful to you?
  - Use a tripod when needed!
- Shoot a moving subject (car, walking person, clouds, etc.) with a big range of shutter speeds. What shutter speeds did you pick and why? What shutter speed is best for your subject?
- Try panning a moving subject, handheld and tripod (if you have one available).

## Lesson 4: Aperture and Depth of Field

- Understanding Depth of Field
- Selective Focus
- Hyperfocal Distance

***Shooting Assignments*** – Shoot a scene with subjects/content from ~3-20+ feet distance using the full range of your f-stops. What works best for your subjects? A narrow or wide depth of field? Where did you choose to focus and why?

***Resource: Depth of Field Simulator*** <https://dofsimulator.net/en/>

### ***Reading***

Exposure Basics - Part 2: Creative Exposure by Don Stephens and Jim Harrison  
<https://atlantaphotographic.org/apsblog/?permalink=exposure-basics---part-2>

## and ISO and Sensors – Noise, Resolution and Image Quality

- Dynamic Range
- Noise and ISO
- Noise and Sensor Size
- Know Your Camera!

### ***Reading/Information***

Photons to Photos Data  
<https://www.photonstophotos.net/Charts/PDR.htm>

***Shooting Assignments*** – Shoot a scene with both bright (whites w/detail) and dark (blacks w/detail) subjects using the full range of your camera's ISOs. What is the highest ISO useful for your pictures?

## Lesson 5: Creative Shooting Modes

- Shutter Priority
- Aperture Priority
- Manual
- Exposure Compensation
- Metering Modes
- Exposure Bracketing
- High Dynamic Range (HDR)

**Shooting Assignments** – Shoot 3 subjects, each with a different creative shooting mode. Show & describe your images.

### **Reading**

Exposure Basics - Part 3: Additional Exposure Techniques

<https://atlantaphotographic.org/apsblog/?permalink=part-3---additional-exposure-techniques>

## Lesson 6: Composition and Creativity

- What is “Composition?”

- Why is it Important?

- The Influence of Art

- Background

- Balance

- Negative Space

- Perspective

- Symmetry

- Approaches to Composition

- Rule #1 – There Are No Rules!!

- Centers of Interest & Simplicity

- “Rule of Thirds” & other guides

- More Approaches to Composition

- Triangles, Diagonals, Leading Lines & Curves

- Patterns and Textures

- Frame in a Frame

- Complex Compositions

### **Reading**

Composition Series – Five Articles by Jim Harrison and Mike Shaefer

<https://atlantaphotographic.org/about/aps-blog/?search=composition>

**Shooting Assignments** – Shoot three different subjects using three different composition approaches. Show & describe your images.

Composition Series Articles in order by Jim Harrison and Mike Shaefer

<https://atlantaphotographic.org/apsblog/?permalink=introduction-to-composition>

<https://atlantaphotographic.org/apsblog/?permalink=understanding-composition-from-great-works-of-art---part-two>

<https://atlantaphotographic.org/apsblog/?permalink=understanding-composition-from-great-works-of-art-part-two-continued>

<https://atlantaphotographic.org/apsblog/?permalink=approaches-to-composition---part-3>

<https://atlantaphotographic.org/apsblog/?permalink=approaches-to-composition---part-3-continued>

## **Lesson 7: Processing, Printing and Displaying Your Images**

RAW Processing

Image Editing

Sizing and Sharpening

Printing

Mounting and Display

### ***Free Software Resources***

*Raw Therapee* – Free Cross-Platform Raw Processing Program

<https://www.rawtherapee.com/>

*Picture Window Pro 8* – Free Image Editing Software

<https://www.dl-c.com/Downloads.html>

***Assignment*** – Process and Edit three images to show to the class.

## **Phone Cameras (Optional Lesson - Tentative)**

Michelle Simmons Talk