Composition

See

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Rule of Thirds

- A picture should have a single strong center of interest, minimizing competing objects.
- Generally, the center of interest should not actually be “centered.”
- *Place the center of interest roughly at the intersection of the “rule of thirds” lines or lined up with one of the lines.*

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Composition

- Guidelines for ordering elements of picture
- Be conscious of them when you are thinking about a picture
- Useful rules, but can be broken
- Conveying a message is more important than following a rule

There are no rules for good photographs, there are only good photographs.

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Ansel Adams

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Why is the bottom picture “better”?
Rule of Thirds and Motion

- People in the West tend to scan from left to right
- Our eyes begin with the top of the falls coinciding with upper “Rule of Thirds” line.
- The bottom of falls (including mist) roughly coincides the lower line.
- Our eyes are led from the falls on the left to the relatively tiny boat that roughly is located at the lower right intersection of the lines
- Creates a sense of motion.

Fill the Frame

Don’t be afraid to get close to your subject and fill the frame with the image.

If a picture’s not good enough, you probably weren’t close enough.  
-- Robert Capa
Balance
Arrange the image so that a large object on one side is balanced by something of importance on the other side.

Lines
• Lines have emotional content
• Which line would you match with each of these feelings?
  – Stability, rest, and serenity.
  – Beauty, gentleness, and grace
  – Strength, grandeur, and dignity.
  – Movement and tension.

Lines
What kind of feelings do the two pictures of sculpture by Di Suvero and Rodin, respectively, evoke?

Lines
What about these pictures?
Camera Orientation
How was camera held for these pictures? Why?

Leading Lines
• Lead the viewer’s eye through the picture
• Leading lines should
  • Be simple and not draw attention away from the subject.
  • Lead your eyes around the picture and not out of it.

What do these pictures have in common?

Leading Lines
Are the leading lines in the pictures below equally effective?
What compositional device is being used in these pictures?

Symmetry and Patterns
- You may want to reveal underlying patterns in the subject.
- For added interest, the photo also can reveal how they are violated in some way

What is a problem with this photo?

Horizon Line
- The horizon line, which divides an image in two, should be horizontal.
- The location of the horizon line also matters.
- Why is the picture on the right stronger?
Horizon Line

• A horizon line in the middle is indecisive
  – Generally, you don’t want ½ sky and ½ landscape
  – Decide on the subject of the photo!
• Rule of Thirds is good guidance for horizon line

Which is the stronger image?

Background

• Your subject should stand out against the background.
• In general a plain or natural background is better than a bright or complex one.
What do the figures add to this picture?

Scale and Landscapes

• The human figure
  – Helps establish the scale of landscapes
  – Adds human interest to the image.

Assignment 3: Composition

• Use compositional techniques we have discussed today
  – Rule of Thirds
  – Filling the frame
  – Balance
  – Lines
  – Camera orientation
  – Leading lines
  – Texture and pattern
  – Horizon line
  – Background
  – Scale