Digital Imaging Layers and Masks

I. What students can expect to learn

- Defining layers and their value.
- Organizing artwork on layers – getting to know layers – the layer's palette
- Layer use – Creating, adding, renaming, show and hide, lock and unlock, duplicate and delete layers
- Value of layer masks
- Layer Masks – Adding a layer mask, setting tool box color defaults for painting on mask, painting on the mask, editing the mask
- Saving your work – .psd layered photoshop file or flattened version (jpg, tif or pdf format)

## II. Launching the Program

- Resetting program defaults (Shift + Opt + Cmd and double click program icon on dock).
- Value of resetting the default in an educational setting – even playing field

III. Defining Layers

- **Layers as a virtual pane of glass:** Layers offer flexibility and versatility and allow for blending parts of the image with a source image (background layer).
- **Layers for extensive changes to artwork**: Layers allow switching layer positioning, known as changing the stacking order, to effect images differently. To add text, and for combining photos, you will need to use layers.
- **Why use layers**: You may modify image content within the layer without altering other layers.

V. Getting to Know Layers

- **Layers Palette** (right side of Photoshop workspace)
  o List of all layers within a document.
  o Layers have a thumbnail of contents of layer. You may enlarge thumbnail view by going to the palette options on the top right of the layers palette and clicking large thumbnails.
  o Layers with text on them have a "T" in the thumbnails.
- **Versatility:** The ability to create, rename, duplicate and delete layers is realized.
- **The Background Layer**: Default position for opened image.
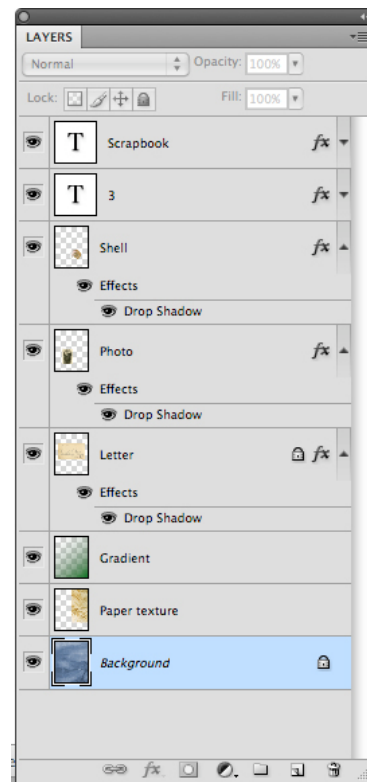
V. Using Layers

- **Activating a layer:**
    - Changes you make only apply to active or targeted layer.
    - Click on thumbnail, click on the name of layer or click anywhere on the gray area to the right.
    - Active layer turns blue.

- **Adding a layer:** You may do this in several ways
    - Click new layer icon on the bottom of the Layers Palette.
    - Go to Menu> Layer > New > Layer.
    - Use keyboard short cut Shift + Command + N
    - Working smarter and saving time with keyboard shortcuts.

- **Renaming a layer:**
    - Double click the layer name in the Layers Palette and type new name. Renaming is crucial to the identification of multi-layered documents that have many layers. Advanced documents may have 100s of layers.

- **Show/hide a layer:**
    - Click the box with the eye-shaped Show/Hide Layer icon. Toggle the icon by clicking once for hide, and clicking again for show.

- **Duplicating a layer:** You may do this in several ways
    - Click the context box on the top right side Layers Palette and go down to duplicate layer
    - Drag the layer to the new layer icon on the bottom of the layers palette
    - Use keyboard shortcut Shift + Command + J
    - Go to Menu > Layer > Duplicate Layer
    - Duplicate the background layer to preserve a "copy" of the original that remains untouched.

- **Locking/Unlocking a layer:** Locked layers are restricted from certain kinds of editing and arranging
    - Background layer is locked by default.
    - To lock a layer or parts of a layer, target the layer and click the lock image pixels, or lock position, or lock all, icons on the layers palette.

- **Deleting a layer:** You may do this in several ways
    - Click the layer to target it and drag it to the trash can in the layers palette.
    - Go to Menu > Layer > Delete.

VI. Layer Masks

- If you are working with one or more layers you may want parts of the layer(s) below the top layer to be visible. You may want to blend only parts of one image and another image. Layer masks make this possible.
- **Add a layer mask to a layer:** You may do this in several ways.
    - o Target the layer where you wish to create a mask.
    - o Click the Layer Mask icon on the bottom of Layers Palette.
    - o The mask appears as a white rectangle that appears to the right of the layer's icon.
    - o To create a reverse mask (black) hold down the option key then click the Layer Mask icon.
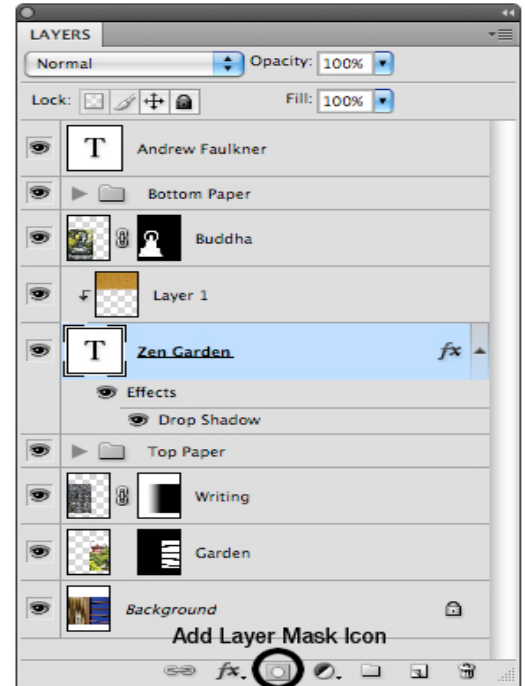
- **Using layer masks:** You may paint on the mask to hide/reveal pixels in the layer(s) below the layer you're working on.

    - o Select the mask: Click directly on the mask. A black dashed line will appear around the mask to let you know it is selected.
    - o Pick a brush from the Tools Palette. Go to Menu> Window> Brushes in the menu bar and select a hard or soft brush for painting.
    - o Painting with the brush. The brush paints to the foreground color displayed in the Tools Palette. Whatever color is in the foreground position, that is the color the brush paints with. Press "D" to reset the default colors; black is the foreground default and white is the background default. Press "x" to reverse the colors. You may only paint with white or black on a mask.
    - o Reveal the image by painting with black on the white mask.
    - o Conceal the image by painting with white on the black mask.
    - o If you make an error by painting in an unwanted area, you can reverse the brush color (press "x") and paint over the area with the alternate color.

VII. Key Features of Layers and Masks

- **Layers are transparent panes that protect the source image –** Layers allow you to modify layers independently.
- **Multiple Layers** – Images and text can be combined in multiple layers to create artwork and collage.
- **Layers Palette** – Gives the artist access to add, rename, show/hide, duplicate, lock and delete layers.
- **Layer Masks** – Gives the artist the ability to reveal and conceal elements of layers and create visual interaction.

Notes: