Aperture Essentials
Welcome to the Aperture Essentials class! Over the next four weeks we'll be exploring the major features in Apple Aperture. Whether you're moving up from iPhoto, or diving straight into this advanced application for managing and editing your images, you'll find Aperture to be not only powerful, but fairly easy to learn. My goal in this class is to get you over any humps in the learning curve and hopefully show you a few new tricks along the way.

Importing
The first step in any workflow is importing your media. If you're moving over from iPhoto, the easiest way to do this is to select File > Import > iPhoto Library. This will bring your entire library over, with all Events intact. You will see though that any projects created, such as books, slideshows, etc, are not imported. There are a couple of reasons for this. First, Aperture doesn't include a Cards or Calendars option. And while Books and Slideshows are supported, they are very different and much more capable than those of iPhoto.

If you'll be importing your images directly from a memory card, or from files on your drive, you have a few decisions to make. In this first week, we'll be focusing on getting your images in, and then organizing them. Finally, in part 2, we'll look at the basic image editing features such as white balance and exposure correction.

**Smart Image Management - Importing with Metadata**

One of the most time consuming aspects of digital imaging is keeping track of the thousands of images we capture every year. With many collections containing tens of thousands of photos, finding the ones you're looking for can be frustrating as well as hit or miss.

Luckily, Aperture has very capable image management features. Image management begins with the importing of your photos from memory card to computer.

If you're importing from a camera, and you want Aperture to start automatically when you plug the memory card or camera in, you can set this option by going to Aperture > Preferences. Select the Import tab, and then choose Aperture from the popup menu labeled "When a camera is connected, open:"
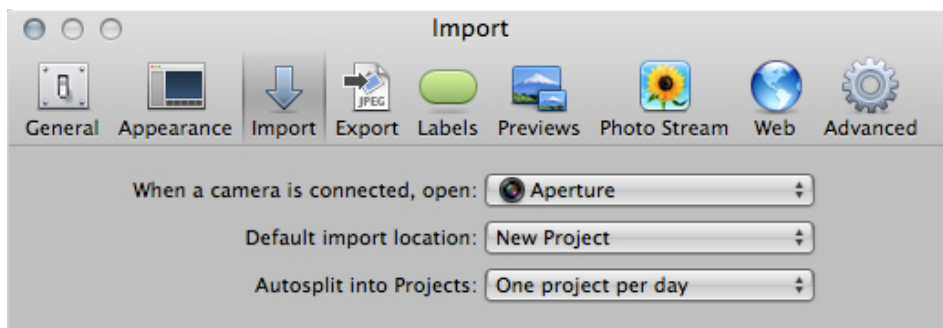
While you are in the Preferences dialog, I'd like to have you make an additional change for this class. Because I'd like to see both the original image and the edited version, we are going to use the option to create a new version when making adjustments. To do this, click on the Advanced tab, and check the box at the bottom of the options:
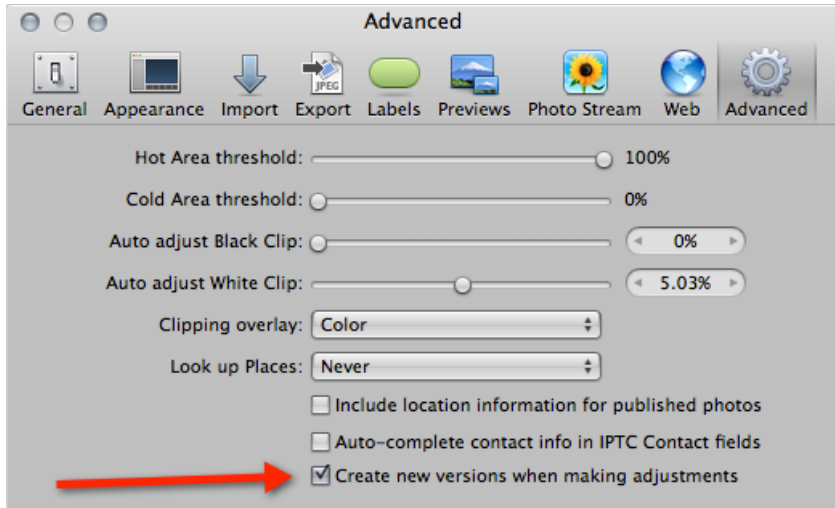
In Aperture, you start by selecting where the images are going to be stored - either in a library file, or as external files on your drive. The choice is up to you, but storing in the library has its advantages in both performance and ease of backup.
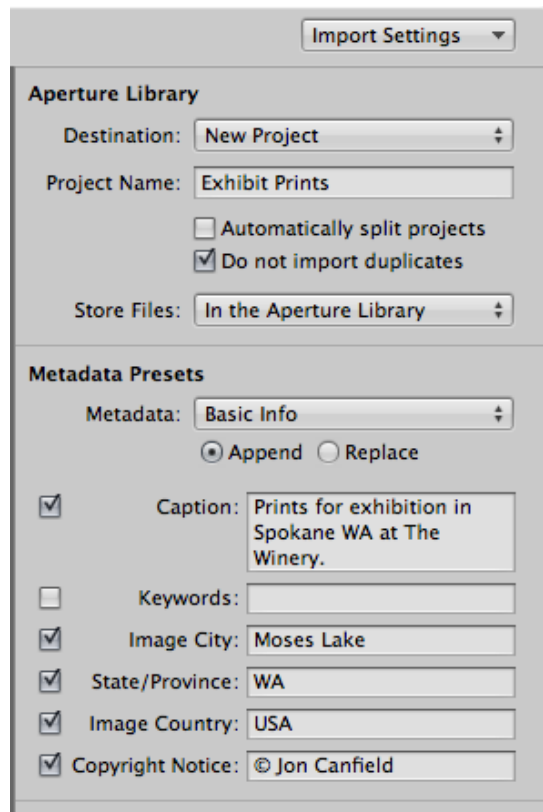
By default, you don't see any options other than where to store the files and what to name the new project they will be placed in. If you click on the Import Settings popup menu, you'll have a number of options available. The key option to select is Metadata Presets.
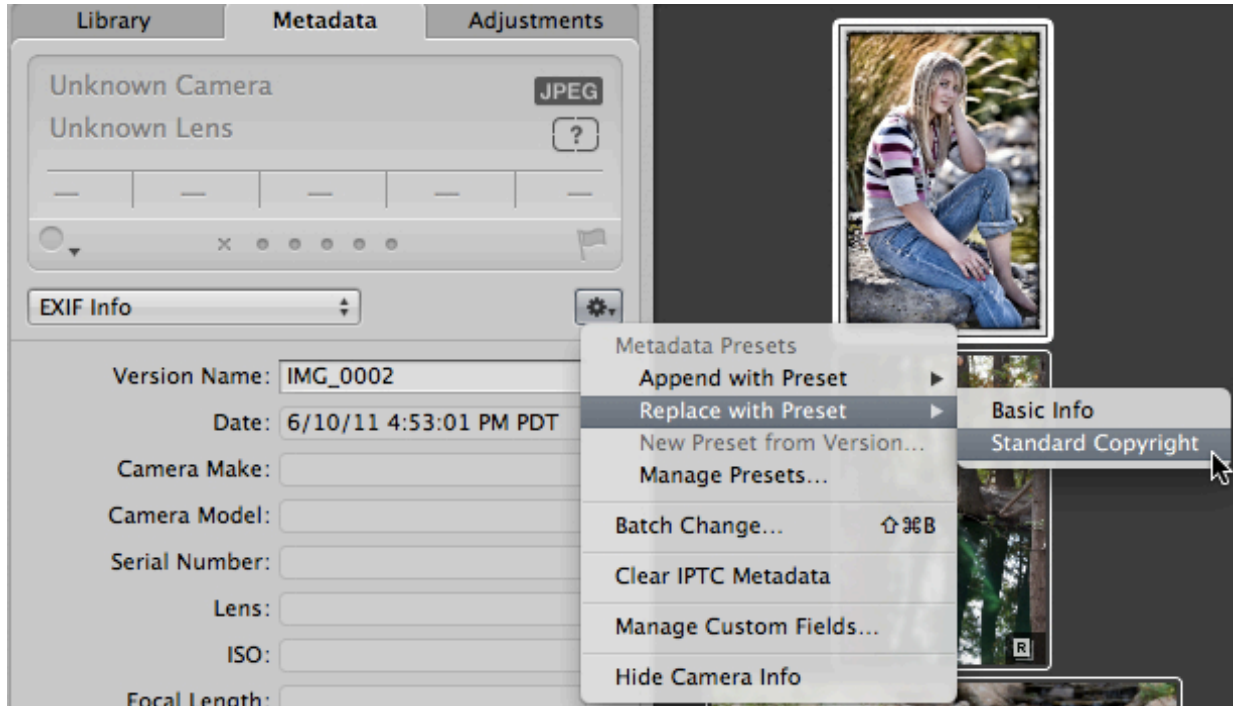
As you can see in the above screen shot, I have the basic Info preset selected for my Metadata. Aperture allows you to create your own custom presets though that will match your specific needs. If you click on the popup menu that shows Basic Info, you'll see a choice for Edit. This opens up a new dialog box that has all of the information fields you could possibly need:

I create a new preset called Standard Copyright by clicking on the settings button in the lower left of the dialog. Here, I enter in the information that is common to every image I shoot - copyright and contact details, including web and email addresses, and copyright and usage information.

Now, when I import images, this information is automatically applied to each image. The only things I need to worry about are adding caption and keywords, which change with each subject and aren't appropriate to save in a preset.

If you've already imported your images, you can apply this preset to your current library as well. Just select the images in your Library, and in the Metadata Inspector, select Replace with Preset from the settings button.

The Library Module
Once you have your initial images imported, you can begin to organize them. Aperture uses a Project metaphor to store groups of images. The Library Inspector, on the left of your screen, shows a similar grouping to the iPhoto library window. Projects are groups of related images - either by subject or by date. Photos are a flat view of every image in your library. Faces, Places, Flagged, and Photo Stream are all different organizational options that we'll be covering in the videos this week.
On the right, you'll see icons for each of your projects. Moving the mouse across these projects will skim, or preview the images within that project. Below the project name you'll see a date range and number to show both when the images were captured, and how many are in the project.

In the Projects & Albums section you'll see more options than you might be used to in iPhoto. Unlike iPhoto, you can always see all of your projects - there's no need to go back to the All Events view to change to a different set of images. You might also notice that projects can contain other elements - albums, books, slideshows, etc. This makes it much easier to organize a large library of images in a logical way.
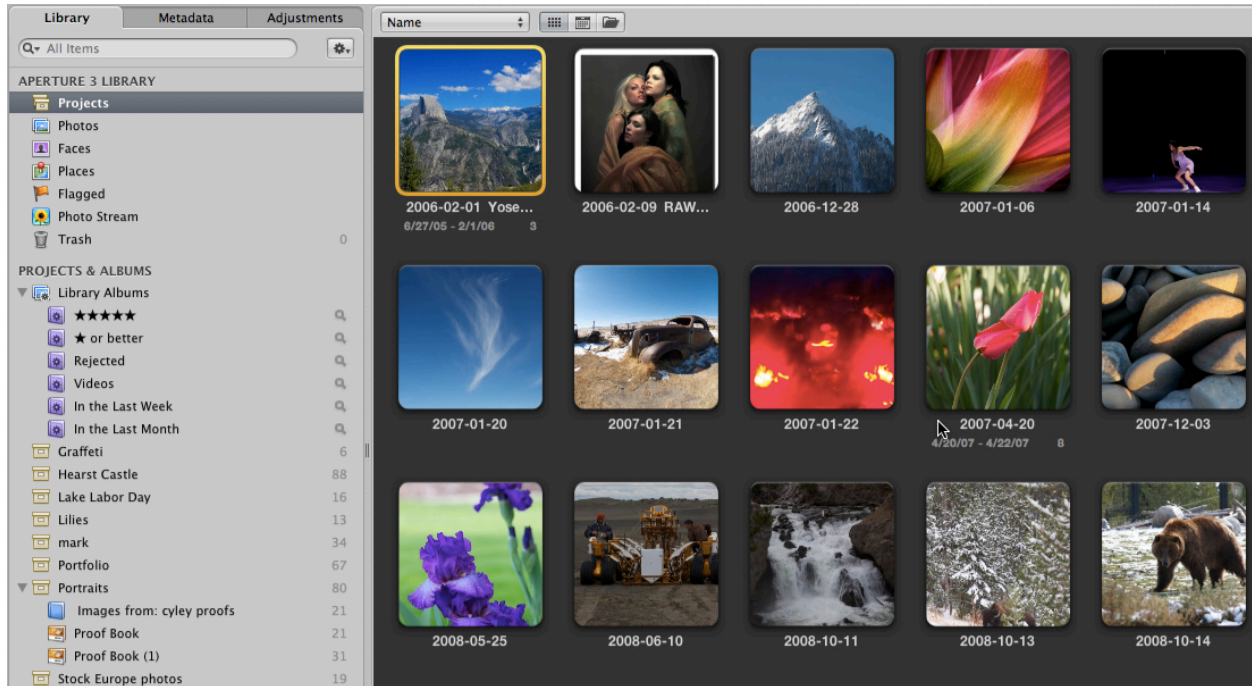
We also have Folders. Folders are containers for other items - whether they are projects, albums, etc. You can't put anything directly into a folder, they just group similar items together. For example, I might have a folder for Places. WIthin this, I will have projects for different places I've photographed. I can then take this a step further. Within the Places folder, I have a National Parks folder. Within that, I have a separate project for each national park I've visited.

To organize your images, you simply drag and drop to move them from one project to another, or to move an item into a folder.

One feature that I find very useful is Stacks. By grouping similar images together, whether a sequence of shots, a set of versions that I've edited, or some other very closely related criteria, the Stacks command lets you store images in smaller groups - think of them almost as sub folders:
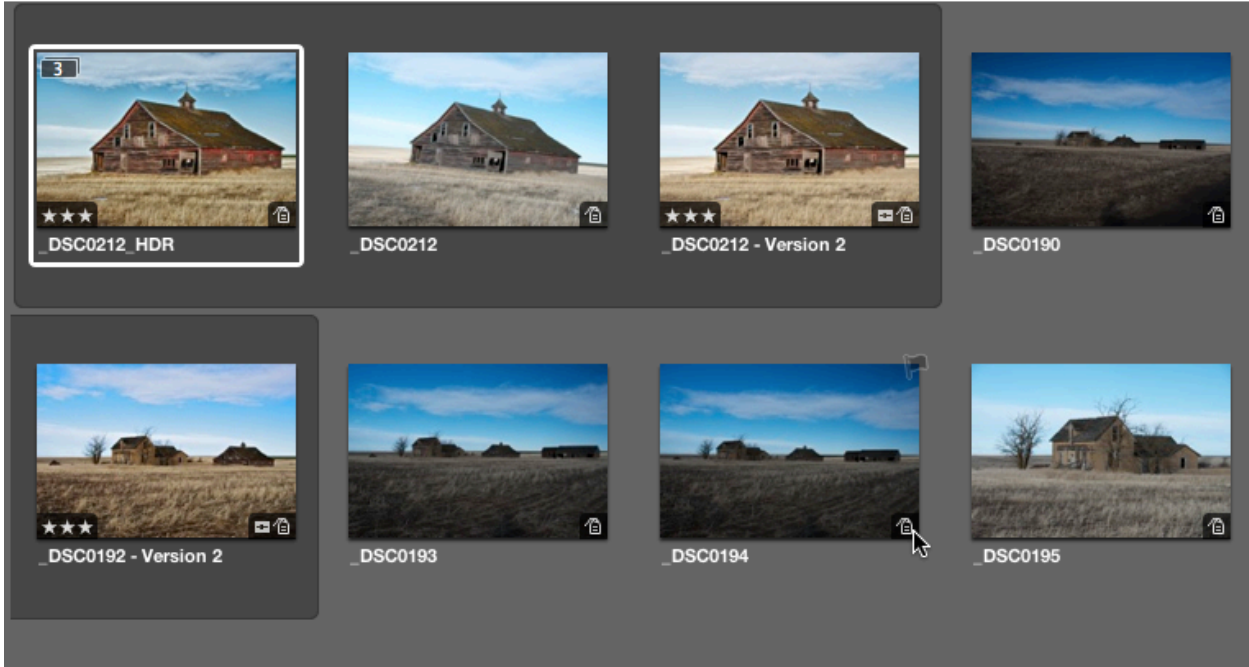
In the image above, the first three images are part of a Stack. You can see that there is a darker background around these three shots, and the first image has a 3 icon in the upper left. This is the expanded view. By clicking on the icon in the upper left, I can expand or collapse the stack:
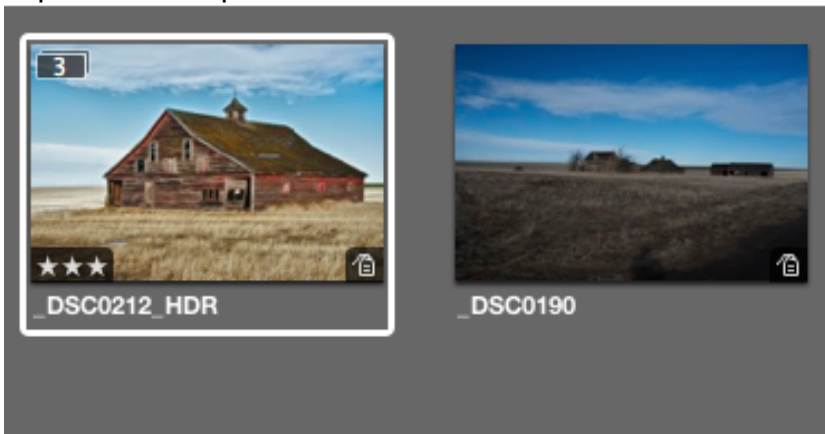
This lets me browse through a very large set of images quickly, only expanding out the sets that I want to see. If you've taken my advice and enabled the new versions with adjustments option in Preferences, you'll see stacks automatically created. For existing images, you can turn Stacks on by selecting the images you want to use and then choosing Command+K or going to Stacks > Stack.

I cover all of the organization options in the videos that accompany this lesson, so please refer to the video for examples of how to move files, rename projects, and create albums.

Metadata

Aperture supports an extensive set of options to manage metadata - the information associated with your images, such as resolution, shooting information, keywords, and more. While metadata might seem boring, it can make a huge difference in how easily you find that one photo in a library of thousands. While it's much easier to add things like keywords at the time of import, that often isn't the way the real world works. Aperture makes it easy to go back after import and add or update metadata on your images.
The easiest way to do this is to go project by project (assuming of course that you organize your projects by subject!). In this case, I would create the keywords by selecting the Metadata tab in the Inspector, and then selecting Caption & Keywords from the popup menu options.
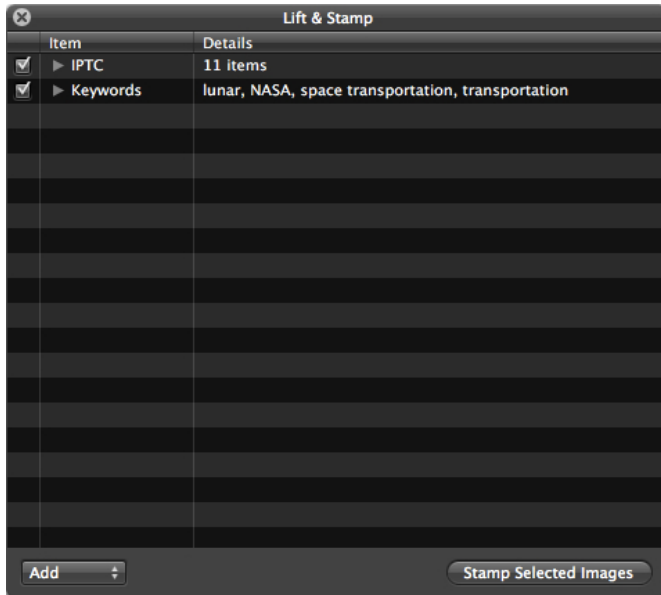
Now, type in the keywords for your image. The more complete you are, the easier you'll find it later to find specific images, so give this some thought. Your needs might be fairly light, or perhaps you'll decide you don't need keywords at all, but when you do, Aperture is there to help out.
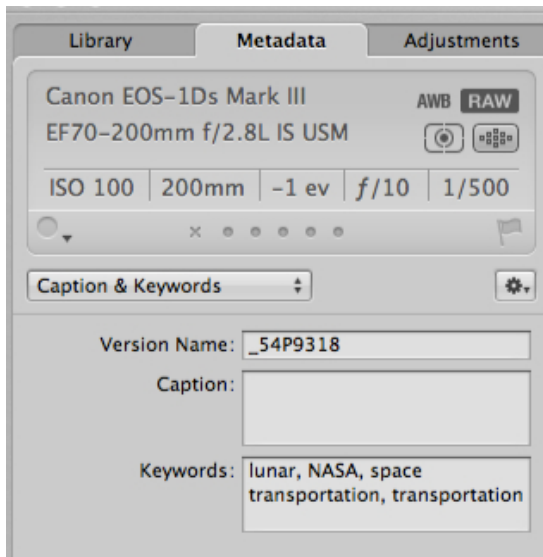
After creating the keywords on the first image, select Metadata > Lift Metadata. This will open a new window that shows the selected metadata options. Now, you'll select all the other images that you want to apply the same keywords to - if everything in the project it's simplest to choose Select All (Edit menu, or Cmd+A).

Now, select Stamp Selected Selected Images. All of your selected images will be updated to have the same keywords applied to them in one operation.
You'll also see in the lower left of this Lift & Stamp dialog an Add or Replace option. If you want to keep existing keywords, select Add. If you want to replace all of the keywords, select Replace.

If you don't want to add all of the keywords, you can click on the triangle next to Keywords, and then delete any keywords you don't want to apply to the rest of your images.

		Lift & Stamp	
	Item	Details	
☑	▶ IPTC	11 items	
☑	▶ Keywords	lunar, NASA, space transportation, transportation	

Add ⬍   Stamp Selected Images

Along with the metadata options you can select, there is a wealth of information shown at the top of the Metadata inspector. You'll see the camera model and lens used, as well as the ISO setting, focal length, aperture, shutter speed, and metering modes. Not all cameras support this information, but most of the common ones will give you all the info you could want about how your image was captured.

Once I've imported and applied basic metadata to my images, I take a quick pass through them to rate as well as delete the obvious losers. Once again, Aperture makes this type of work easy. I will typically use the Split View for this work, giving me a film strip of all my images at the bottom of the screen, and a larger version of the image above.
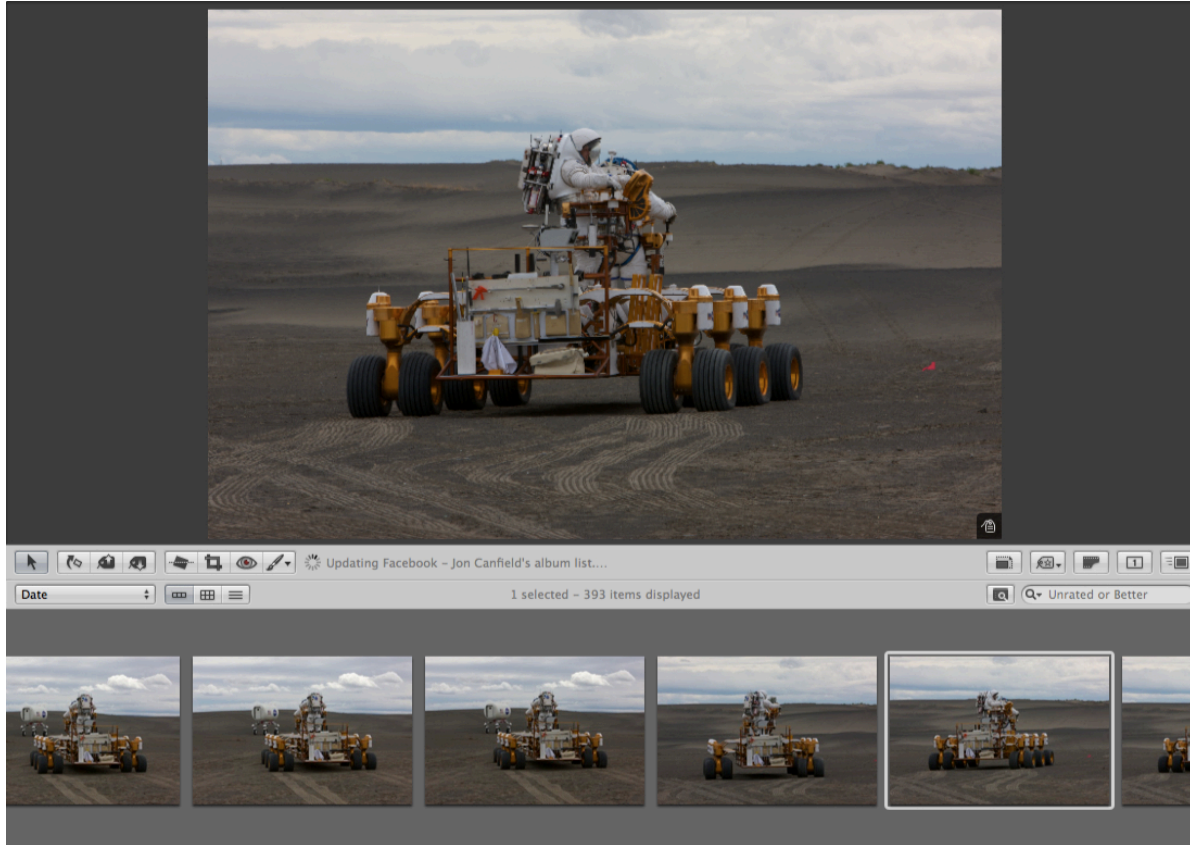
One of the things I like about Aperture is the number of shortcuts that are a single keystroke to implement. Rating is a perfect example of this. I will begin with the first image in the project, using the the left and right arrow keys to go between images. To rate a photo, I'll use the 1 - 5 keys, or the 9 key to reject an image. In my workflow, I use 1, 2, or 3 stars with 3 representing my best image. 4 stars are reserved for images that have been submitted for publication, while 5 stars are for images that have been published.

Once I've gone through the images, I use the Reject album that is part of the Aperture library, selecting all of the images in this album and deleting them at once by holding down the Command key and pressing Delete (or by dragging the photos to the Aperture Trash).

Depending on your workflow, you might also find using Labels useful. Labels are a color code that is associated with your images to help categorize them. I personally don't use labels, more because I can never remember what an individual color is used for than anything else, and I also find that ratings are a more intuitive way for me to work.

If you would like to use labels, you can find them in the Metadata panel with the ratings:
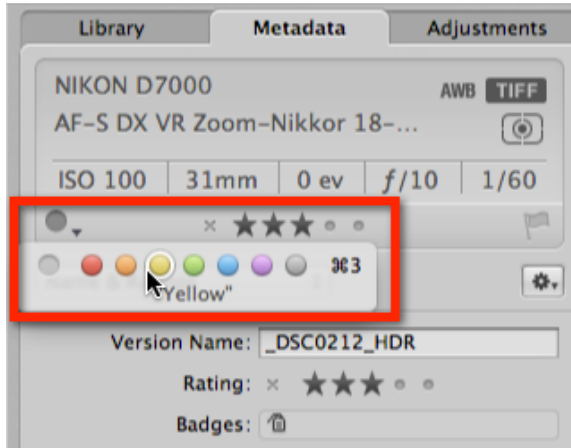
You can also access labels and ratings from the Metadata menu, or by using Command + a number key.

Assignment
Your assignment is at the end of the videos for this week. However, to make things easier for uploading, I suggest creating an Export preset that you can use not only for this class, but all your PPSOP classes when your images are coming from Aperture. To create this preset, select both the original and the adjusted version (you did enable the creation of a version as suggested earlier right?), and then select File > Export > Versions.
Click on the Export Preset list box
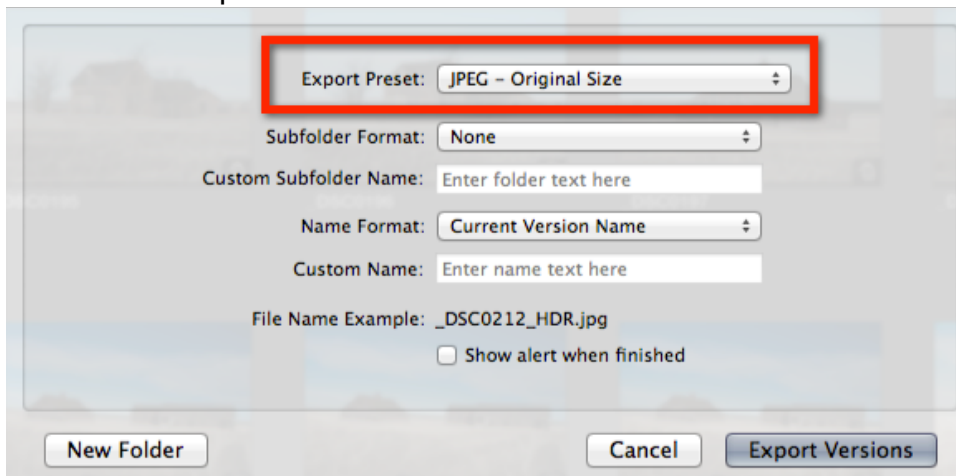
Select Edit from the bottom of the list. Next, click on the + below the list of presets and create a new preset named PPSOP.

In the image format field, make sure JPEG is selected, and leave the Include Metadata checkbox checked. Image Quality should be set between 8 and 10. 10 is higher quality but a larger image size. Change the Size To option to Fit Within (Pixels), and then

change the Width to 800 and the Height to 600. This will automatically change the size of your exported image to fit within the dimensions requested by PPSOP.
Finally, make sure that Color Profile is set to sRGB IEC1966-2.1 for best results: