Advanced Image Manipulation: Color Correction

Photographs look discolored if the neutral areas (black, white and gray) are not neutral. Measuring the color balance in the those areas allow corrections to be made.
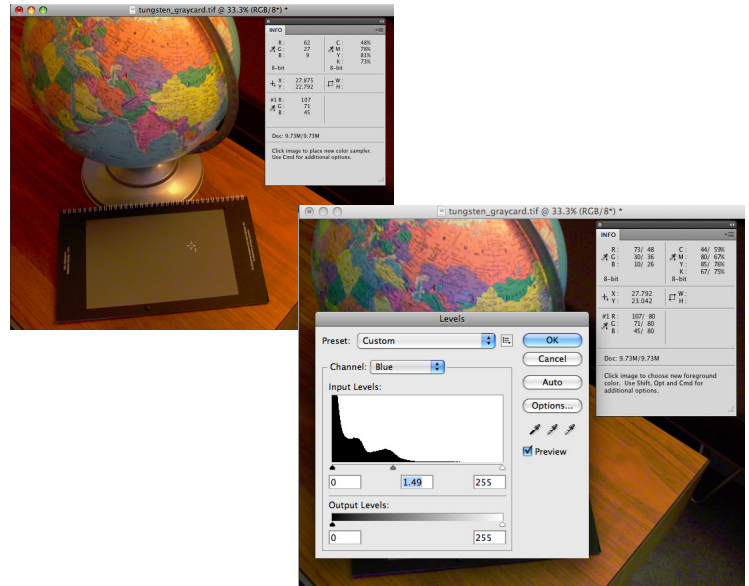
Step One (RGB):

Using Levels or Curves, adjust the values in the image until it contains a full range from black to white.

Using the Color Sampler tool, click on an area in the image that should be neutral.

In an RGB image, the red, green and blue values will be equal in neutral areas. Note which values do not correspond to these percentages.

Using a Curves, Color Balance or Levels adjustment layer, adjust the color channel(s) that will fix this color cast.
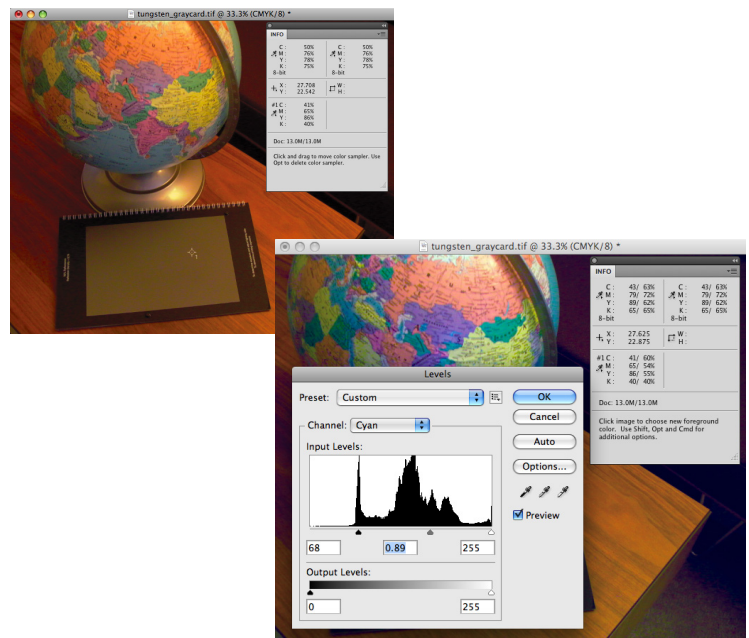

Step Two (CMYK):

Using Levels or Curves, adjust the values in the image until it contains a full range from black to white.

Using the Color Sampler tool, click on an area in the image that should be neutral.

In a color balanced image, a neutral gray or highlight should have equal amounts magenta and yellow, and the cyan should be 3-8% higher. Note which values do not correspond to these percentages.

Using a Curves, Color Balance or Levels adjustment layer, adjust the color channel(s) that will fix this color cast.

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IN-CLASS PROJECT   2 points | due at the end of class

Use the skills and techniques presented in this tutorial to color correct some photos.
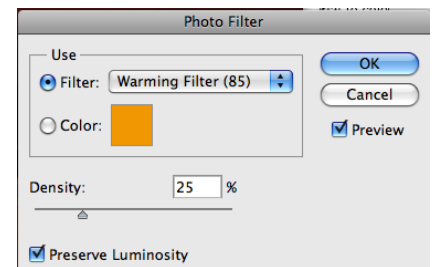
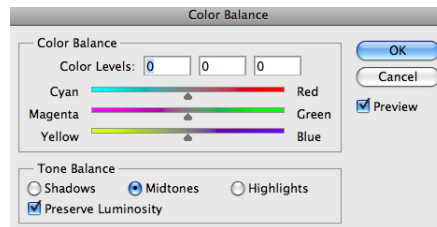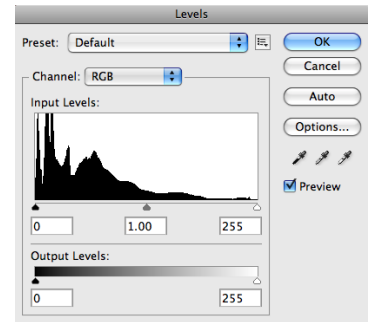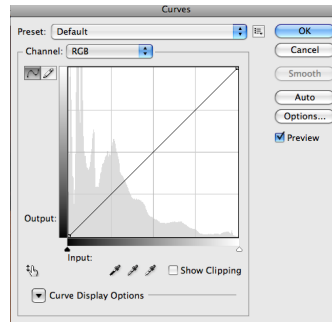Select a photos from the Color Correction folder.

Color correct it as an RGB file.

You may need to correct parts of the photo differently, so create Adjustment Layers and mask out the parts you want changed.

Experiment by correcting using Curves, Levels, Color Balance, Selective Color and Photo Filters.

Open a second photo, convert to CMKY and correct, also using Adjustment Layers.

Save as lastname_colorRGB.psd
and lastname_colorCMKY.psd

examples of color correction palettes.