PREPARING FILES FOR OUTSOURCING

RECAP OF COLOUR MANAGEMENT:

MONITOR CALIBRATION: Computer monitors are backlit. The intensity of the light they project, as well as the way they display colour, shifts over time. You can calibrate your monitor using an external device, or using the built-in tools that come with your computer. Calibration should be done every one to three months.

COLOUR PROFILES: A colour profile is a set of data that characterizes a color input or output device. A profile tells us:
- The darkest and lightest tones/colours the file can hold;
- The gamut, or range of colours, that the file is capable of showing;
- The distribution and relationship between each of those tones and colours.

To check your colour settings in Photoshop, go to *Edit > Colour Settings*. Adobe RGB and sRGB the two most common colour profiles (sRGB is the default colour space for cameras and displays, Adobe RGB offers a greater gamut for printing).

PRINTER PROFILES: Different paper and ink combinations will create different colour variations. A printer profile is a colour profile that deals specifically with these paper and ink combinations.

SOFTPROOFING: Colour intensity and saturation will appear different between a backlit monitor and a print on paper. Soft proofing is a way to simulate a paper print on your computer screen, which can help you avoid making multiple test prints. Soft proofing requires the use of a printer profile.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Screen Resolution is typically set to 72 dpi by default for most monitors, but many monitors have a resolution that exceeds this. If there's a mismatch between what your monitor can display and what Photoshop *thinks* your monitor can display, you won't be able to accurately preview your print size (eg. the 24" screens in AA2 have a screen resolution of 94 dpi, but are set to 72, making the print size preview inaccurate).

HOW TO FIND YOUR MONITOR RESOLUTION:

Apple > About this Mac > More Info… > Displays

You can take the information you find here and plug it into an online calculator like www.dpi.lv to find out the DPI of your display.

HOW TO CHANGE YOUR RESOLUTION IN PHOTOSHOP:

> *Photoshop > Preferences > Units & Rulers* > Plug your new number into *Screen Resolution*

CANVASING YOUR PHOTO:

Print labs generally use standardized paper sizes. If you're printing at a non-standard size, you will need to canvas your image to prevent cropping from happening at the lab (ie. if you want to print an image at 4.5 x 9", you will need to canvas it to 8x10"). *Also important to note:* Digital cameras and 35mm analog produce a file with a 2:3 aspect ratio. Medium format and large format film cameras produce images that are a 4:5 ratio. You should check which ratio your print lab uses and canvas if necessary.

COLOUR BLEED:

Bleed refers to printing that goes beyond the edge of the paper before trimming (ie. the bleed is the area to be trimmed off). It ensures that no unprinted edges are seen in the final print. Bleeds are generally 1/8" from where the cut is to be made. This is essential if you are mounting or framing your print at a specific size.

COMMON SETTINGS FOR OUTSOURCING:

Adobe RGB
8 bit
150 - 300 ppi
JPEG or flattened TIFF
Canvassed to size if necessary

USEFUL LINKS:

http://www.torontoimageworks.com/faq/ (to find printer profiles and general information)
http://www.torontoimageworks.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/TIW-self-serve-guide.pdf (self serve printing guide)
http://colourgenics.com/?category/FAQ#printing (Colourgenics printing FAQ)