

# The Human Condition

## Photography

Mr. Weisbrod

Your objective for this project is to photograph 2 elements of the “human condition”. The human condition is the characteristics, key events, and situations which compose the essentials of human existence, such as birth, growth, emotionality, aspiration, conflict, and mortality. This is a very broad topic which has been and continues to be pondered and analyzed from many perspectives, including those of religion, philosophy, history, art, literature, anthropology, psychology, and biology. How this is manifested in this assignment is entirely up to you. However, your photographs must signify something about the human existence that can be universally understood.

Typically, the idea of showing “The Human Condition” in photography is usually referring to photojournalism. However, we are going to do something a bit different with this assignment: We are going to communicate The Human Condition in a more fine art and constructed narrative.

For instance, you could photograph a model with wings attached to his back, and entitle it “Freedom.” The use of a prop such as artificial wings supports the idea that the image is meant to symbolically represent something that is intangible. To give another example, you could try and illustrate the condition of “Struggle,” using a prop such as chains or some kind of object that would symbolize how our culture tries to keep people in their place. (*Just a slightly cheesy example*)

You must also take into account lighting and how it portrays the subject as well. Diffuse lighting is very attractive and soft, and would not do well for a photograph that was trying to illustrate “Anger.” Think about the direction of the light, too. For the photograph of “Freedom,” mentioned above, it would be good to have the light coming from above the subject, instead of directly from the side. It is this kind of concern for small touches that will make these photographs extraordinary.

Finally, you will be required to put the two images together in an 11x17” *diptych*. Since they will be displayed together, so each image must have something to do with the other. So, for instance, you could photograph “Depression” and “Sorrow” and put them together. Or you could photograph something like “Joy” and “Anger” together. Notice that, basically, the two photographs you chose will either be “*synonyms*” or “*antonims*” of each other. The other possibility is that you could photograph the same idea from different perspectives. For example, what does “play” mean to an adult vs. a child?

The other part of the images is that they should tie together visually. They will be displayed together, so how you link the two of them together in your display will be very important. We will talk more about this in class.

This assignment will require a lot of thought. Please take into account every part of the image, from foreground to background. You will be required to shoot 110 images, minimum, and you may photograph up to 4 different sets of meanings, but no more. I want you to explore your ideas with depth, so I don’t want you to flit around from idea to idea without actually producing anything of any depth.

That being said, you should have a fun time with this assignment – Think about it, and chose ideas that are close to your own experiences and interests, and I think you’ll do well.