CHSVMUN '25

Background Guide

INTERNATIONAL PRESS CORPS - PHOTOGRAPHY (IPP)

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dear Delegates,

In this Model United Nations, we embark on a journey that celebrates the power of visual storytelling – a journey where each of us, armed with our cameras and boundless imagination, will delve into the heart of photojournalism.

In the IPP as a photojournalist, we embrace freedom.The freedom to capture moments that speak volumes, and to express our ideas and opinions through the art form is what photography is about. There are no constraints on our creativity, and no limits to the stories we can tell.

Our goals are clear: to educate, to inspire, and to empower. We seek to deepen our understanding of the significance and nuances of photojournalism, to hone our skills in crafting images that resonate with truth and emotion, and to connect with fellow photographers in a shared journey of learning and growth.

Through extensive discussions and feedback sessions, we will share our knowledge, our experiences, and our passion for the craft. Each photograph submitted is not just an image captured, but a story waiting to be told or a message waiting to be heard.

Let us embrace this opportunity with open minds and open hearts, knowing that together, we can achieve greatness. May this simulation be a beacon of light, illuminating our path as we strive to make a difference through the art of photojournalism.

Welcome, fellow photojournalists, to a world of endless possibilities. Let our lenses be our pens, and our images be our voices. Together, let us capture the essence of our surroundings and ignite change through the power of art.

Here's to learning, to creativity, and to the transformative power of photography. Let the journey begin.

Regards,

Sankrushi P S – Head of Photography

Narendran M K – Photographer in chief

Roshan Thangaraj – Director

WHAT IS PHOTOJOURNALISM AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Photojournalism is a form of <u>visual storytelling</u> and reporting. There is more than one way to tell a story through images: a handful of pictures can complement a text, but a single dramatic image can also furnish stand-alone commentary on an individual, world events or culture. No matter how the story is told, photojournalists seek to enlighten audiences by capturing a crystallizing image.

Photographs serve as a visual narrative, offering a unique perspective that complements traditional journalism. While reporters convey stories through words, photojournalists capture the essence of events through their lenses, providing viewers with a compelling visual account.

In our digitally interconnected world, where information spreads rapidly, the demand for powerful and informative images is greater than ever. News outlets and media agencies seek captivating photographs that encapsulate the essence of breaking news, providing viewers with a firsthand glimpse into unfolding events.

Amidst the fast-paced nature of news dissemination, photojournalists play a crucial role in delivering trustworthy and authoritative visual content. By skillfully crafting images that capture the raw emotions and intricacies of events, they enable viewers to comprehend complex narratives without relying solely on words. In essence, photojournalists stand shoulder to shoulder with traditional journalists, each contributing their unique strengths to the storytelling process. Through their artistry and keen eye for detail, they transcend language barriers, creating stories that resonate universally and speak volumes without having to utter a single word.

Since photojournalism is a form of reporting, ethics are central. There is a conscious need to provide factually accurate information, and photojournalists should seek to convey objective truth without altering it in a way that might change the meaning behind the image.

WHAT IS PHOTOJOURNALISM AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Photojournalism has characteristics that make it different from regular photography. The qualities that make photojournalism stand out on its own are:

Photographs Must Be Truthful and Unbiased
On the whole, images in photojournalism are not used to create a false narrative. Images are intended to convey a truthful story about an event, person, or place and will attempt to show all the aspects of a story no matter how difficult, unpleasant, or graphic.

It is a photojournalist's job to be unbiased when presenting their images. They must adopt a clear and objective stance, both in the moment of capture and in post-production, to ensure that their images will not be staged to create an untruthful result. Instead, all images should focus on presenting a snapshot in real time. Every viewer should be positioned to see an honest version of the story being told, and if the image is undermined by questions, omissions, or biases, it has not been properly executed.

The Context of the Photograph Matters
Photojournalism is journalism, and it seeks to convey the truth. Its goal is to depict objective reality and the photojournalists must adhere to guidelines similar to those controlling the work of their counterparts, reporters. A photograph is not merely an image, but a lens into a specific situation or event, As such, they should not be centred on creating a beautiful image alone, but also on illuminating the circumstances surrounding the image.

Photographs Must Be Informative
Photojournalists tell a story that would be difficult to capture with words alone. The images they present can be vehicles for educating the public. A photo should be able to convey an entire story without words.

Photographs Should Tell a Timely Story
Readers want to see news when it happens, as it happens.Therefore, every image needs to be timely. In short, photojournalism needs to feature something or someone that the world is currently talking about. The objective is to tell the story at hand using new images rather than text, and each should illuminate the meaning and message of the story.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF PHOTOJOURNALISM

1. General News Photography

General news photography pertains to any event that is planned ahead of time and is not considered breaking news. Elections, the Olympics, and other scheduled events fall under this category. General news photography allows a journalist to become fully familiar with a story before reporting on the results or the outcome. It is also an opportunity to educate readers and viewers on specific events as they occur.

2. Portrait Photojournalism

This is not typical portraiture. This type of photojournalism generally portrays prominent members of the government or the community assuming a natural pose in their typical environment. A good example of portrait photography might be a picture of the President working in the Oval Office, or a physician performing surgery in a hospital operating room

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3. Obituary Photography

Obituary photography seeks to showcase a life through a series of curated images. Its objective is to recall and commemorate a deceased subject, recognizing their impact on a group, a community, or society at large.

4. Feature Photojournalism

This type of photojournalism runs concurrent with a headline story or photo series to offer more in-depth coverage. Feature photojournalism brings context to the main story and offers supporting details about the people and places involved, or additional perspectives on events and issues the main story has explored.

5. Documentary Photojournalism

This is long-term photography that tells an unfolding story. Photojournalists might be assigned, for instance, to tell the story of the Olympic Games or other sporting events that unfold over days and weeks or a season.
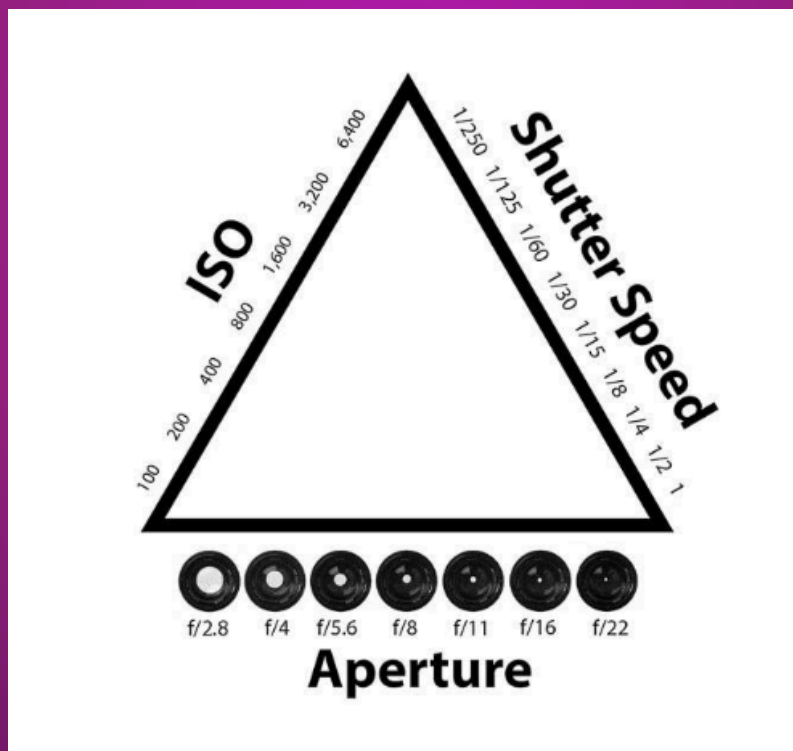
1. EXPOSURE TRIANGLE

For many starting out in photography, the relationship between aperture, shutter speed, and ISO can be confusing. Aperture, shutter speed, and ISO make up the three sides of the exposure triangle. They work together to produce a photo that is properly exposed. If one variable changes, at least one of the others must also change to maintain the correct exposure.
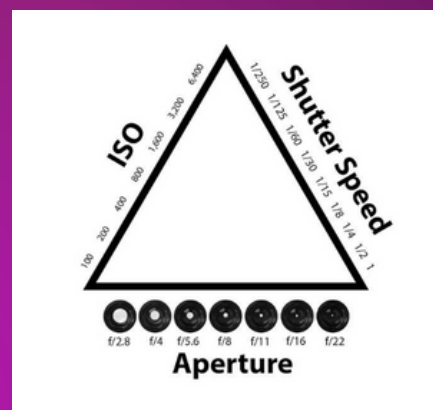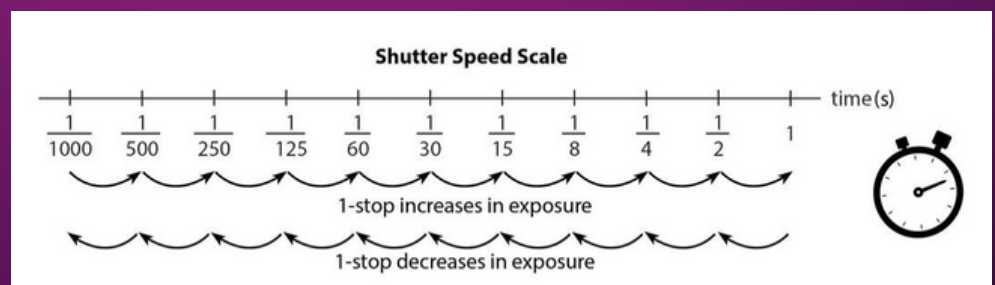
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A) SHUTTER SPEED :

Shutter speed governs the rate at which the camera's shutter opens and closes, determining how motion is captured in a photograph. Fast shutter speeds are instrumental in freezing subjects in motion, and preserving crisp details even in fast-paced scenes. Conversely, slower shutter speeds introduce a sense of fluidity by intentionally blurring movement. These settings are particularly effective for showcasing the dynamic essence of subjects like speeding trains, or the gradual drift of stars across the night sky.
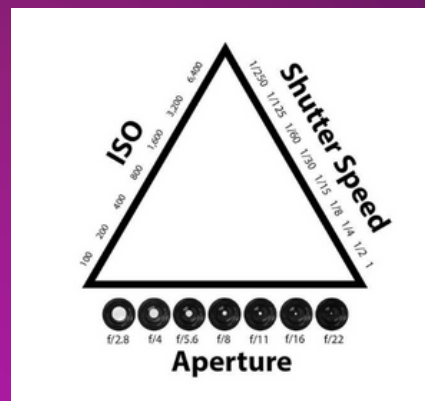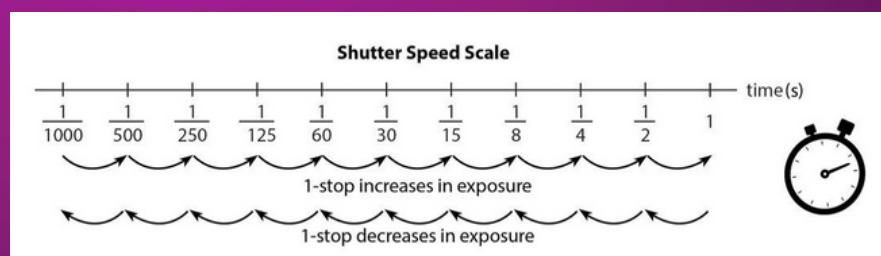
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To maintain sharpness in images, especially when shooting handheld, it is crucial to consider the potential for camera shake. Even slight movements can lead to unwanted blur, necessitating the use of a tripod or stabilizer. This precaution becomes increasingly important when using lenses with longer focal lengths, as they amplify the effects of camera movement. Therefore, understanding the relationship between shutter speed and focal length is essential for achieving consistently sharp photographs across various shooting conditions.
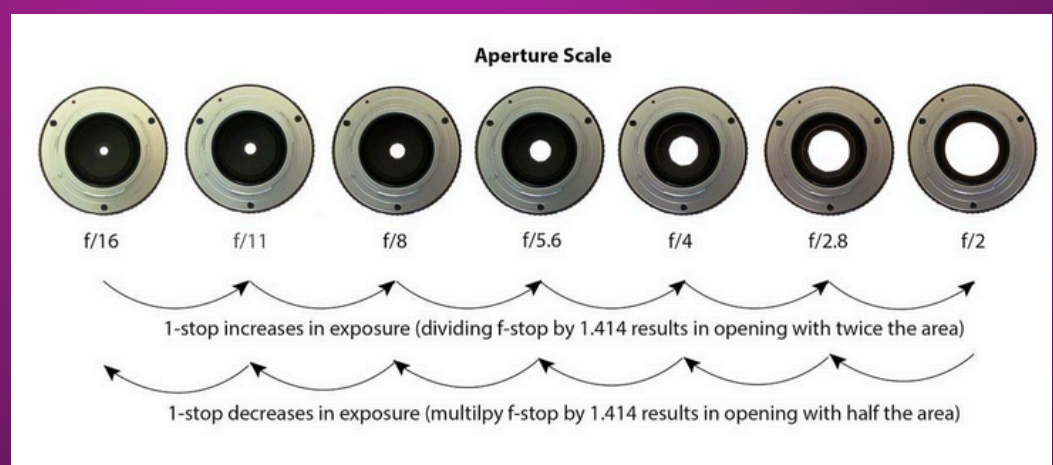
B) APERTURE

Aperture refers to the opening in the lens that regulates the amount of light reaching the camera's sensor. A wider aperture permits more light to enter, while a narrower one restricts light. The aperture size is quantified in focal stops, commonly known as "f-stops," and is determined by the diameter of the opening through which light enters the camera. Higher f-stop numbers correspond to smaller apertures, resulting in darker images.

Beyond its role in adjusting image brightness, aperture also influences depth of field, the extent of the image that appears sharp. A wide aperture, indicated by a low f-stop number, is employed when the intention is to isolate the subject from its surroundings, creating a blurred background effect. This technique is favored in portrait, wildlife, and sports photography to emphasize the subject.

Conversely, a smaller aperture, denoted by a higher f-stop number, expands the depth of field, bringing more of the scene into focus. This approach is beneficial in landscape and nature photography, where capturing intricate details throughout the frame is desired.

Aperture Scale

f/16   f/11   f/8   f/5.6   f/4   f/2.8   f/2

1-stop increases in exposure (dividing f-stop by 1.414 results in opening with twice the area)

1-stop decreases in exposure (multilpy f-stop by 1.414 results in opening with half the area)

C) ISO

When you increase the ISO value, the sensor becomes more sensitive to light, allowing you to capture images in low-light conditions without needing to use slower shutter speeds or wider apertures. However, higher ISO values also introduce more digital noise or graininess into the image, which can degrade image quality.

Conversely, lower ISO values make the sensor less sensitive to light, resulting in cleaner images with less noise. However, this also means that you will need more light to achieve a properly exposed image, which might require longer shutter speeds or wider apertures.

The ISO scale typically starts at around 100 or 200 for most cameras and can go up to several thousand or even higher for professional-grade cameras. As you increase the ISO value, you effectively amplify the signal from the sensor, allowing you to capture images in darker environments.

Understanding how ISO works in conjunction with aperture and shutter speed is crucial for achieving well-exposed photographs in various lighting conditions while managing image quality.
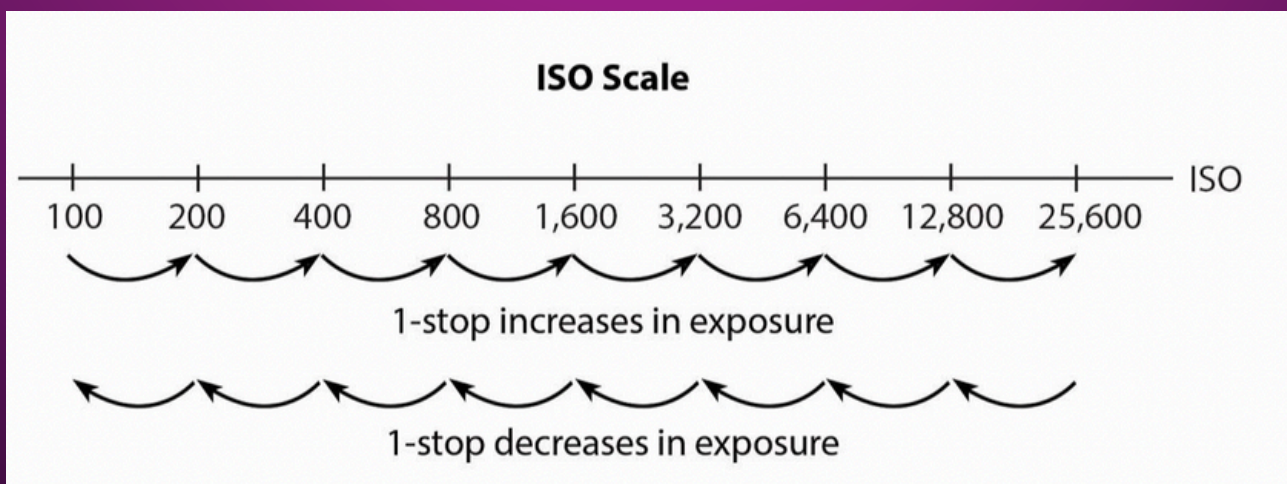
2) RULES OF COMPOSITION:

A)RULE OF THIRDS :

With the rule of thirds, you have to train yourself to split your camera screen into a grid. Keep in mind the key points of intersection, and place important elements along those lines for visual appeal. This asymmetric composition in photography works well for any genre including landscapes, still-life photography, and portraits. In the still-life image below, the photographer has employed the most common use of the rule of thirds by placing the main subject as seen in the picture below. The photographer positioned a tree with a model near the grid intersection at the bottom left angle, drawing the viewer's attention to them and creating a more interesting composition.

B) THE GOLDEN RATIO :

The Golden Ratio differs from the rule of thirds with regards to the balance of the photograph. Here, the focus of the photograph is more towards the center (with more details). The roots of this rule go back centuries and can be found in notable works of art. In essence, it is the perfect balance, with a ratio of 1 to 1.618. Further research on this will enable you to understand the proportions in photography, architecture, and art. Instead of nine equal rectangles, the frame is divided into a sequence of squares that form a Golden Spiral, also known as the Fibonacci Spiral, which resembles a shell. The spiral guides the viewer's eye around the frame and shows how the scene should develop.

C) LEADING LINES :

Take advantage of the structures and lines in landscapes. Use them in proportion to your subjects to lead the eye into the picture. A centered and symmetrical photography composition is the most preferable one in this case as it helps the viewer focus on your subject or object. Everything can serve as leading lines: rivers, dunes, waves, roads, paths, bridges, fences, staircases, hallways, patterns, and more. Furthermore, leading lines do not necessarily have to be straight. In our example, we have utilized glass lines on the buildings to lead the viewer's eye to the point of interest in the frame, creating a more beautiful image composition.

D) DIAGONALS :

One key aspect of diagonal lines that differentiates it from other composition techniques is that the lines help create movement in the photograph, even when your subjects are still. This is a great tip for photographers who want to step outside of perfect compositions, yet still create appealing photography compositions with the help of diagonal lines.

E) FRAME WITHIN A FRAME :

As you plan how to frame your shots, consider that outside structures can serve as natural frames. These can be objectss like windows, doors, or arches, so use them to your advantage! This composition in photography is also called frame within aframe. What makes a photograph like this interesting is that it is soothing to the eye. The photographer has added layers and depth to the scene in the image below by placing the subject in the arch. Note that frames do not necessarily have to be man-made and fully surround your subject. You can also use tree trunks and hanging tree branches for a frame within a frame photo composition technique.

F) CENTER DOMINANT EYE :

When photographing people, make sure to place their dominant eye in the center of the photograph. This makes the picture appear more luring as it appears that the subject's eyes are following the viewer's.

Look at the photo below, and try tilting to the side or scrolling the image up or down. You will notice that the subject's eyes are always following your movement.
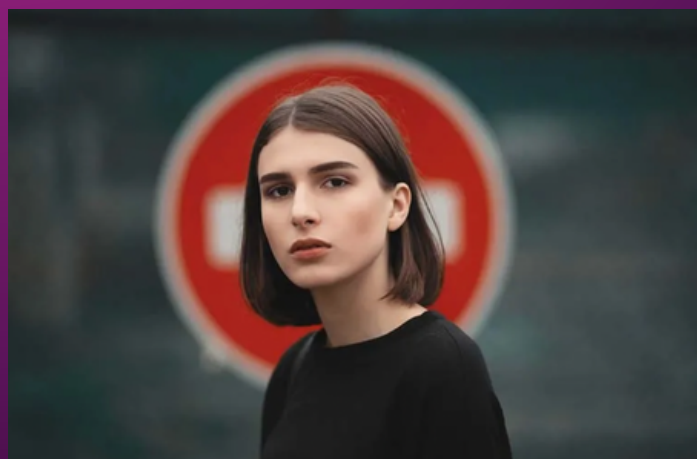
G) PATTERNS AND REPETITION :

There is a reason why we love patterns – they are aesthetically pleasing to the eye. Another aspect worth exploring is to include something in your photograph that interrupts a pattern, adding an element of surprise. In our case, a man-made pattern provides for an attractive composition. However, you can look for repetitions and patterns created by nature, such as an alley of trees, dunes, or waves.
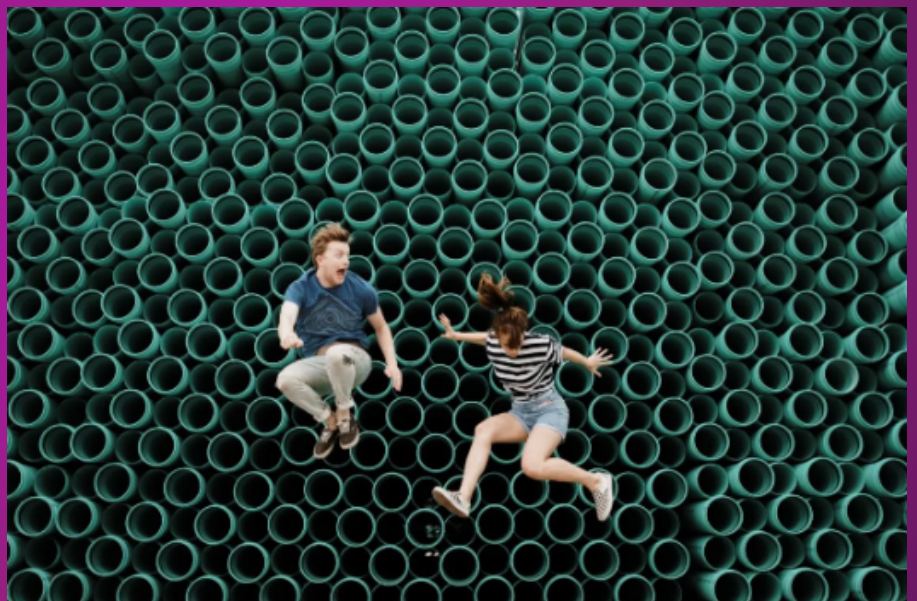
TYPES OF ASSIGNMENT

We have created a dual-purpose photography simulation. One for capturing the essence of committee proceedings in a straightforward manner, and another for allowing more artistic freedom in capturing creative assignments. Here is a breakdown of this simulation:

Committee Photos:

These photos will document committee proceedings throughout the day.
Photographers should focus on capturing the essence of the discussions, interactions, and atmosphere.
Minimal editing is permitted to maintain the authenticity of the photos.
Emphasis should be laid on clarity, composition, and capturing candid moments.
The goal is to provide comprehensive coverage of the committee activities without altering the reality of the events.

Creative Assignments:

The executive board will assign specific creative tasks to photographers.
These assignments will aim to produce innovative and visually compelling photographs.Photographers have the freedom to experiment with different editing techniques and styles.
Focus on producing unique and impactful images that go beyond straightforward documentation.
Examples of creative assignments could include:

1. Portrait series :

Capturing portraits of committee members with a unique perspective or theme and capturing people's emotion while they speak make the picture more meaningful. This includes covering the committee members, chairpersons, and most importantly, the delegates of the committee .

2. Abstract interpretations:

Creating abstract representations of committee topics or themes through photos involves capturing visual elements that symbolize or represent the essence of the subject matter. Look for objects, scenes, or settings that symbolize key aspects of the topics. Use visual metaphors, patterns, textures, and colors to evoke the mood or tone of the themes. Experiment with composition and collaborate with committee members for meaningful and impactful representations.

TYPES OF ASSIGNMENT

3) Environmental storytelling:
Telling a story through a series of images that convey the mood and atmosphere of the committee setting involves capturing moments that reflect the dynamics, focus, and energy of the group. Each image should evoke a different aspect of the committee's work, whether it's intense discussion, collaboration, brainstorming, or decision-making. Through careful composition, lighting, and framing, the series of images should paint a vivid picture of the committee's environment and the emotions involved, guiding viewers through the narrative of their journey.

4) Conceptual photography:
Utilizing symbolism and metaphors in imagery can imbue committee activities with deeper meanings. Each image should represent facets of the committee's work symbolically, conveying its essence metaphorically. For instance, a puzzle piece might signify collaboration, while a compass could represent guidance in decision-making. By strategically incorporating such elements, the images evoke layers of interpretation, enriching the understanding of the committee's purpose and impact.

5) Experimental techniques:
Exploring unconventional photography methods like long exposure, double exposure, or alternative lighting adds depth and creativity to capturing committee activities. These techniques can convey movement, complexity, and ambiance in unique ways, enhancing the visual storytelling of the committee's work.

6) MUN Based:
Creating a visual narrative through a series of images offers a compelling way to depict themes, events within the committee, or a day in the life of an individual. Each picture captures a moment or an aspect, collectively forming a cohesive story that engages viewers and conveys the essence of the subject matter concisely.

7) Collaborative Assignment :
The photojournalist team collaborates to select a theme and craft a visual narrative, leveraging their expertise to capture it effectively. They work closely with reporters, potentially expanding into video assignments for comprehensive coverage. Synergy between these two teams ensures the theme is portrayed with depth and impact across various media formats.

TYPES OF ASSIGNMENT

Equipment Requirements:

Photographers should bring their camera gear, including necessary lenses.

While a prime lens is recommended for indoor shooting conditions due to its wide aperture and low-light performance, it is not mandatory.

Zoom lenses with a versatile focal range can also be suitable.

It is important for photographers to have a camera that allows them to capture high-quality images in various lighting conditions, considering the indoor setting of committee proceedings.

Editing Requirements:

Photographers are expected to have access to an editing device, whether it is a PC or a mobile phone.

They should also have the necessary software or applications installed for editing their photos.

If photographers lack experience with basic editing, the Executive Board will organize a brief session during one of the meetings to provide guidance and training.This ensures that photographers have the tools and skills needed to enhance their photos appropriately, be it for minimal editing of committee photos or for more extensive editing of creative assignments.

Providing this guidance ensures that the photographers are well-prepared to fulfill their roles effectively and produce high-quality photographs throughout the simulation. If there are any other details or clarifications needed, the committee members are always free to assist you.

KEY LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1) Basics of photojournalism:
Participants will gain a fundamental understanding of photojournalism principles, focusing on capturing and conveying news and events through visual storytelling.
The Board places emphasis on documenting committee proceedings with accuracy and integrity.

2) Basics of candid photography:
Participants will learn the art of capturing candid moments, showcasing their ability to capture genuine emotions and unscripted interactions.
Skills such as observation, anticipation, and timing will be honed to create authentic and engaging images.

3) Deadline management:
Participants will develop effective time management skills, meeting submission deadlines for both committee photos and creative assignments.
Experience in working under time constraints to simulate real-world scenarios will be gained.

4) Creative Assignments in Photography and Photojournalism:
Participants will be exposed to various aspects of creative photography and photojournalism, allowing them to experiment with different styles and techniques.
Assignments will cover a range of themes, fostering creativity and expanding participants' photographic skills.

5) On-time feedback:
Participants can expect constructive feedback from the Executive Board after each submission.
This feedback will focus on strengths, areas for improvement, and guidance to enhance both technical and creative aspects of their work.

6) Extensive discussion/mentoring sessions:
Dedicated discussion and mentoring sessions on both days of the conference will provide a platform for participants to share experiences, discuss challenges, and receive guidance.
The interactive sessions aim to foster a collaborative learning environment, allowing participants to learn from each other and from experienced mentors.

By encompassing these learning objectives, the simulation ensures that participants not only gain practical experience in photography but also acquire valuable skills and insights that are applicable to the field of photojournalism.