

# PHAR 101

Photo Arts I  
Josh Meltzer

## DUE DATES\*

Written Proposals:

**Friday, November 11  
NOON**

Final Edit:

**Monday, November 21  
5pm**

## TURN IN

1 – Ten (10) images saved into the server.

**lastname\_community\_01.jpg**

2 – All of your jpg outtakes from all shoots. Please put these in a folder called

**lastname\_community\_  
outtakes**

*Feel free to come see me to get help with ideas if you're feeling stuck. I'm happy to help. Above all else, be interested in your chosen subject. Your passion and interest in their life will show in the images you make.*

# ASSIGNMENT 4 COMMUNITY PHOTOJOURNALISM

## ASSIGNMENT

This assignment will challenge you to research, contact and connect with a group and then individual(s) in the community whom you would like to photograph to tell their story visually. You are studying and living in a visually and culturally rich community, both on and off campus. Your goal is to connect with a small sector of this community that you find interesting and would like to share with a broad audience. Dream big, but be realistic. Think about what you could realistically do in the amount of time given for the assignment. How much time would you need to get access to a subject? Do you need any special permission to get access that might take longer than you have time for?

Think carefully about the visual possibilities of your self-assigned subject(s). Community photojournalism is about listening and connecting with your subjects as much as you can in a relatively short amount of time. Will you be given access to as intimate a situation as possible? Can you return multiple times to your subject and spend lots of time with them in different situations?

## WHO SHOULD YOU PHOTOGRAPH

Begin by brainstorming. Think realistically about whether you should work close to RIT or if you can get off campus. Plan to spend 2-5 times with your subject during the assignment period, so who makes the best sense for you to work with. You'll want to narrow your choice to focus on 1-2 individuals only.

Think about people and situations that you're both familiar with and those that you have a keen interest in, but don't know much about that community yet. You may be a rower, and want to tell the story of a rower, because you know it intimately, or you may want to tell the story of a special education teacher, purely because you want to share their story, but don't know yet much about that person.

Consider how you will connect with this community. Begin researching online for organizations, clubs, businesses, and news stories. Talk with students and teachers who live locally to get contacts for people you're looking to find. Reach out to the places and communities where you're interested to document, and explain what you're doing and why you're interested in finding a subject to document. Spend the start of the first meeting (either in phone or in person) getting to know your subject and asking lots of questions so that you can learn as much as you can about them. Ask about what they'll be doing over the next week(s) and whether you can tag along to photograph different moments in their lives.

Show the story in many ways. Let's take the rower, for example. She rows, she trains and she competes. But, she's also a student, also has friends and also has other things going on in her life. Figure out what is important to her and then make images with together help to tell her story. Go beyond the obvious (but don't miss the obvious moments).

TURN OVER ->



## SUBJECT SUGGESTIONS

*This is not meant to be a complete list. Consider who you know and whom they might know. Make sure they're DOING something VISUAL that you can photograph.*

- Student Athlete
- Teacher
- Parent
- Care Giver
- Parent
- Religious Leader
- Artist
- Military recruiter
- Healthcare Provider
- Security Worker
- Construction Worker
- Sanitation Worker
- Restaurant/Bar wait-staff
- Fire fighter
- Police officer
- Street Vendor
- Bus Driver
- Musician
- Coach
- Hair stylist
- Barber
- ..... and so on.

## PROPOSALS - FIRST DEADLINE

Develop and write out three ideas of potential or real subjects. Each should be different enough, so that I can help you figure out the best route to take. Each should be a paragraph explaining why you think this potential subject would be a good choice and what you intend to photograph. How will you find and get permission from the subject(s), and what potential problems do you see arising that will need to be overcome or dealt with. What images to foresee making of this person or persons. If it's a larger group, explain how you will narrow your choices down to 1-2 people. For example, if it's a football team, how will you decide whom to choose? Put these into the server and I'll give feedback through the weekend, though you're welcome to start shooting your first choice, ASAP.

## HOW TO WORK

Documentary images for this assignment should be taken without directing your subjects at all. Don't ask them to do anything, redo anything, pose for you or recreate a moment that you missed. Work as an observer of life, and use your camera to document moments that you feel help to tell their story the best they can. Be a keen observer and listener. How will you communicate what you learn about your subject visually?

Think about how images will work together in an edit. What images together will tell a better more complete story than just one image.

Think about how you can tell the story in as intimate a way as possible. Ask for access to different parts of their lives, be persistent but be respectful for your subjects' request for privacy. That said, people love to have someone show a keen interest in their life and their story, so you'd be surprised that just by asking you can begin to make images that show more depth in the visual reporting. Don't assume they'll say 'no.'

Community visual storytelling is often about *relationships*, so look for your subjects' relationships with family, teammates, friends, spouses and/or themselves when making images.

## VISUAL VARIETY

You'll spend a lot of time with your subject(s), so think creatively about how you can tell their story. Use a variety of lenses, vary the distance from which you photograph them and look for a variety of storytelling moments. As always, use light, color and composition to your advantage to communicate what you observe. Look at detail images which help to tell the story. Your subject does not need to be in every photo (most, but not all).

When choosing your final images, edit with purpose. Make an argument for why each image is included in the final edit. How does it advance the story, show something new, add something to the report? Make sure that each image isn't redundant of another.