TRU The Lens

A Photo Essay Contest

Theme: **Unfiltered Realities: Critical Minds, Authentic Voices**

Main Question: **What needs to be seen?**

Entries may respond to at least one of the following guide questions:

- What realities in our communities are often overlooked, ignored, or misunderstood?
- How does misinformation or misleading content affect the way people see and understand the world around them?
- What do our everyday online interactions reveal about respect, privacy, and how we treat others?
- How do people experience unequal access to technology, the internet, and reliable information?
- Who is helping others become more informed, responsible, and critical of the information they encounter?
- What genuine moments or stories show the importance of truth in a world where images and information can easily be manipulated?

Submission Structure and Requirements

Each entry must combine visual documentation with an accompanying reflective essay.

Element	Specification
Eligibility	Open to all MSU-IIT students.
Important Dates	Guidelines will be posted on **October 29, 2026 at 12:00 PM** All entries must be submitted on or before **November 4, 2026 at 11:59 PM** Voting period for the People's Choice Award will be set from **November 5, 2026 (9:00 AM) until November 7, 2026 (9:00 AM)**.
Number of Photos	2 to 5 images forming an interconnected narrative sequence.
Written Essay	200 to 500 words (excluding the title) in English or Filipino.

Required Information	Each photo must have an individual 1-sentence descriptor noting who captured the picture, and its date and location.

Strict Authenticity and No-AI Policy

- **Complete Ban on AI Generation**
  - No text-to-image synthesis (Midjourney, DALL-E, Stable Diffusion, Firefly, etc.).
  - No generative fill, inpainting, outpainting, or AI-powered object insertion/deletion (Photoshop Generative Fill, Magic Eraser).
  - No AI-generated or AI-assisted essay writing (ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, etc.).
  - Submissions must represent the participant's original piece.

- **Acceptable Digital Adjustments:** Minor tonal adjustments are limited to global exposure, contrast, color balance, cropping, and black-and-white conversion.

- **Verification:** Entrants must send the original raw files or unedited camera files (with full EXIF metadata intact). The committee reserves the right to audit metadata to verify origin, camera hardware, and capture timestamps. Entries with synthetic or stripped metadata will be disqualified.

- **Human Dignity & Consent:** Entrants must obtain verbal or written consent from identifiable individuals before photographing them.

Technical Specifications

- **Photo Format:** Submit high-resolution JPEG or PNG files for all original and final photographs. Each entry must contain 2–5 photographs. Rename all the photos in these formats:

  For the final/edited version: [ParticipantLastName_FirstName_FinalPhoto#0]
  For the raw version: [ParticipantLastName_FirstName_RawPhoto#0]

- **Document Compilation:** Participants must use the official template provided by MIDSA to write their photo descriptions and 200–500-word essay. The completed template must be exported as a single PDF file named:

  [ParticipantLastName_FirstName_TRUTheLens.pdf]

  Kindly access the template here: Template.

- **Required Files:** Participants must prepare the following for submission:

a. Completed photo essay template in PDF format, containing the photo essay and individual photo descriptions.
b. Original, unedited photographs for verification.
c. Final photographs used in the photo essay.

- **Submission:** All entries must be submitted through the official Google Form provided by MIDSA. The form will collect participants' required information, including their full name and other necessary details, as well as the completed PDF, original photographs, and final photographs. Incomplete submission is subject to disqualification.

Evaluation Rubric

Criteria	Weight	Focus Areas
Thematic relevance and alignment with the theme	35%	Connection to the theme and guide questions; meaningful exploration of media and information literacy; relevance of the chosen issue.
Photographic Cohesion and Storytelling	30%	Visual progression across 2–5 photographs; connection between images; effective composition, framing, and storytelling.
Essay Clarity & Critical Insight	30%	Clear explanation of context and motivation; depth of reflection; critical understanding of the issue; connection between the essay and photographs.
Online Engagement	5%	Engagement with the official publication of the entry, based on the number of qualifying Facebook reactions received during the designated voting period.
Total	100%	

Winners

Winners will receive an exclusive MIDSA merchandise.
1st Place : Shirt (Black or White), Tote Bag, Keychain
2nd Place: Tote Bag, Keychain
3rd Place: Keychain, 1 set of Stickers
People's Choice Award: 1 Pin and 1 set of Stickers

Intellectual Property and Usage Rights

- **Copyright:** Entrants retain full intellectual property and copyright ownership over their work.
- **Institutional License:** By entering, participants grant MIDSA a non-exclusive, royalty-free license to exhibit, feature, and publish the photos and text across official portals, exhibits, and non-commercial educational materials related to Dapat TRU campaigns, with creator attribution guaranteed.
- **Publicity**: All entries will be posted on MIDSA's social media account. The People's Choice Award will be given to the entry with the highest total number of Facebook reactions on its official publication during the designated voting period. All standard Facebook reactions will count equally. Reactions on shared posts will not be included.

Reference Links and Benchmark:
https://www.unesco-school.mext.go.jp/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Submission-Giudelines.pdf#:~:text=relevant%20UNESCO%20Associated%20School%20should%20collect%20all,of%20each%20photo%20must%20not%20exceed%2010MB)
https://unevoc.unesco.org/home/Submission+process+and+entry+criteria
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