Using the Elements and Principles of Design in Photography
Think About Composition!

• Composition refers to the arrangement and relationship to the different parts that make up the whole image

• Elements of Art: composition’s individual parts

• Principles of Design: composition’s organizing ideas
Line

- The most fundamental of the art elements
- A moving point in space
- A real line can be—trees in a forest or implied—somebody looking at something
Shape and Form

• A shape is created when a line meets itself—2-dimensional or flat
• A form is similar to shape, but it has volume and is 3-dimensional. It gives the illusion of occupying space.
• Shapes and forms can be either geometric (square, circle, triangle) or organic (leaf, shell, tree).
Color

• Hue: The name of a color
• Saturation: The intensity or purity of a color
• Value: The lightness or darkness of a color
• In photography value is created by the amount of light and the range of tones, or light and dark areas, in a scene
Value

• The quality of light and dark, both in terms of color and shades of gray in a composition
• Light and dark values give you visual clues about the shapes and forms of objects
Space

• Space is the two-dimensional arrangement of objects in a photograph
• Space also refers to the three-dimensional illusion of depth in the image
Texture

- Appealing to the sense of touch
- In photography, a sense of texture can help to make a photograph look more realistic or to enhance a 3-dimensional feel
Balance

• The appearance of equal visual weight within a composition
• Symmetrical—Mirror-image composition, similar on either side
• Asymmetrical—still looks balanced by objects are not centered in the frame (Rule of Thirds)
• Radial—Circular style composition, all objects radiate from a central point
Proportion

• The relationship between the sizes of objects or components in an image
• Helps to indicate an object’s size, distance, and location
Repetition

• Repetition of elements helps to create a sense of rhythm or movement in a photograph
Contrast

• Creates a focal point by using differences in the elements
Variety

- Variety is all the different elements in the photograph
- Variety helps to add interest to the work and keeps the viewer’s eyes moving around the piece
Movement and Rhythm

- In a photograph, movement is real or implied motion (think action photography).
- Movement can also refer to how a viewer’s eye travels through a picture.
- Rhythm can be created by the organized repetition of art elements or objects.
Emphasis

- Emphasis refers to the focal point of the work
- One of the most important decisions!
Unity

• Unity occurs when all of the individual parts of the photograph come together and support each other to make one unified image

• Your goal when creating work!