Clown Around!

Your assignment: Become a clown.

Due Date: Please email me your photo and write up by 11.59 pm on Sunday. This assignment will be 5% of your grade.

The Details: Humor is only meaningful if it is culturally situated (e.g. we no longer find clowns who parody African Americans or immigrants funny, although people in 19th and 20th century America did). Your task is to consider how you can ‘update’ the clown in a way that is both meaningful and funny within the context of your own lives.

STEP 1

Clown Creation Strategies: Think about how you could create a caricature of yourself--your personality, your likes and dislikes, your fears, your physical abilities and limitations. Now exaggerate. Or create a completely new identity that allows you to create humor by drawing upon cultural norms or tropes. If you are able to capture the essence of your clown in costume, great. Snap a photo. You’re done. But you may also consider staging a scenario and snapping a photo (situational comedy).

YOU DO NOT NEED TO BUY MAKE UP OR CLOTHING. In fact, I encourage you to use what you already have or share.

STEP 2

Then go for a walk. Anywhere. Alone. With a partner. In a group. Whatever you’re most comfortable with will work.

STEP 3

Please respond to the following questions. Each response should be no more than 200 words.

1) What is the inspiration for your clown? How is your clown funny? How is the funniness of your clown culturally situated?

2) Describe how you felt in your walk. Where did you go? Did you walk alone or with someone else? Were you aware of your clownish persona? How do you think others perceived you? Did you feel awkward, shy, or did you revel in clownery?