

**Final Essay: Politics of Location: Self-Study**  
**ENWR105 College Writing I**  
**Professor Sharon Lewis**

“Self-revelation is risky business” (Lindsay Pentolfe Aegerter)

This assignment seeks to help you locate yourself within various contexts and communities – your home, academia, the United States, the world. Basically, you will think critically, in writing, about who/what you are. You might begin by listing, then freewriting/brainstorming about what we call today your “politics of location” – your identity (not your personality!), your subject positions, thus:

Social Class  
Spirituality  
Nationality  
Gender  
Race  
Sexuality  
Geographic or Region  
Physical and Mental Health  
Age

More specifically, engage in an analysis of the ways in which your subject positions give you power or privilege; disempower, alienate, or oppress you in the world. As you write, be alert to the ways in which your subject positions intersect with and/or contradict each other.

Try to prioritize the positions. Does one take precedence over the other? Is one more important than another? How does your ethnicity fit with ideas of race, for example? To what extent does your social class impact on your sexuality? What is the relationship between your gender and your nationality?

While you’re at it (!) identify and wrestle with your previously unexamined assumptions and the conventions and practices by which you passively live. It is important that you are constantly interrogating your own conflicting and contradictory positions (locations) of power.

You are not allowed to be complacent. This assignment intends to frustrate and destabilize you. As you write, you should be confused and disoriented. When you encounter questions, do research – go on the Internet, to the library, ASK, ask your family, friends, teachers. When you get lost in the writing, go to the Writing Center. If you need to write memories, anecdotes, dreams, your desires and anxieties, to help you along, to know yourself, do so. **LATER, I’LL ASK YOU TO RETURN TO AN ARTICLE IN WAYS WHICH FACILITIATES YOUR WORK HERE.** Meanwhile, though, when you become unsettled or angry, remind yourself that you are on a journey of self-discovery and self-definition.