

## Portfolio Assignment

### WHAT DO WE PUT IN OUR PORTFOLIOS?

A table of contents

An essay on your writing self (2 pages)

A revised version of paper 4 (Music and Cultural Identity)

A revised version one of your 2-3 page papers (What Is Difference? or Critical Autobiography)

5 pages of your favorite journal entries

Optional:

Conclusion (1 paragraph – 1 page)

Addenda

Portfolios are due on exam day. (December 17)

**Objective:** The point of this portfolio is to demonstrate your process as a writer. I will grade this portfolio as a whole, so every aspect must be strong. Your journal entries should be as scrappy and scattered as they were when you first wrote them. These should not be edited. Your point in presenting the journals is to show your exploration as a writer. In the 3 formal essays, however, you should collect your best work. Your Ts should be crossed and your Is should be dotted. You should not have grammar or punctuation errors. When you think you are done, print out your drafts and read them aloud with a pen in hand. Do this until you can't find any errors (no matter what the signs in the computer lab say). Give your papers titles. The title of the assignment may be "Music and Cultural Identity", but that doesn't have to be your title. Your title should be poetic and engaging. Your title could be "'Lean Back': Remembering Early Puerto Rican Hip-Hop" (for example). Go back and look at the titles of the essays we have read. What entices you to read the essay? What bores you? Titles are writing, too; they should be well crafted. Ideally, the process of putting together the portfolio should be fun. It might be stressful because it is work, but this is a chance to shine, so get to polishing!

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

A list of items included (and page numbers if you're that fancy)

### ESSAY ON YOUR WRITING SELF (2 pages, 4 max)

Write an essay about your writing self. Who are you as a writer? Who do you want to be? What can your ideal writing self do that you can't do now? What can you do now that you could not do before? What have you learned this semester about writing, what you like in other people's writing, your difficulties as a writer, your hopes as a writer? This is an introduction to the revised work you are presenting in your portfolio, so it is a serious assignment, but feel free to make this essay fun and creative.

You don't have to use outside sources in this essay, but if you do, you need to use MLA format correctly. That means you need to know how to document sources correctly in your paper and make a correct works cited page. We'll talk about this more in class, but you should also consult your handbooks.

**Ideas for getting started:**

Σ Look back through old journal entries and star all the portions where you talk about yourself as a writer or what you like about things other people have written. Can any of these ideas be expanded and shaped into a formal essay?

Σ Look at your old drafts next to the final copies. What got better in moving from early versions of your papers to the later versions? Did you ever feel worse about the revision than the draft? If so, what do you think happened? Can you write an essay about what you learn from looking at your drafts?

Σ Look at the work you plan to present in your portfolio. If you were to narrate the choices you have made, what would you say about why you have included what you have included in the portfolio? Can your answer be made into an essay?

**REVISED VERSION OF PAPER FOUR (MUSIC AND CULTURAL IDENTITY)**

We are going to be workshopping paper four in class. This paper asks you to present your own ideas and support them with other people's ideas. Far too many of you shoved yourselves down between the cracks. Try to bring yourselves back to the surface in your revisions. We will talk a little about style, the structure of your argument, and content. What is most important to me in your presentation of this paper, however, is that you know how to document your paper correctly according to MLA format.

You DO have to use outside sources in this essay. You need at least 4. In your essay you should include at least one quote, one paraphrase, and one summary of someone else's essay. You need to use MLA format correctly. That means you need to know how to document sources correctly in your paper and make a correct works cited page. (Note: If you are citing a webpage, don't think you can just include the URL. There is a way to do this; consult your handbooks.)

**REVISED VERSION OF A SHORTER PAPER**

Choose one of the shorter papers to revise. You should make a choice based on the one that will allow you to show the most about your growth and strength as a writer. If one was easier to write than the other, you may find that revising the easier paper will allow you to show yourself as a strong writer. However, you may find that going back to the tougher paper will allow you to show how much you have grown. Your essay on your writing self may help contextualize your choice. I don't have to know whether you chose the tougher assignment or the easier one. I'm not particularly invested in your going for the harder paper. I am just trying to make clear that I am looking for you to document your process of writing in this portfolio as much as the product of your writing.

You don't have to use outside sources in this essay, but you probably will use at least one source. If you do, you need to use MLA format correctly. That means you need to know how to document sources correctly in your paper and make a correct works cited page.

**FIVE PAGES OF YOUR FAVORITE JOURNAL ENTRIES (5 pages. 7 max)**

Choose five pages of journal writing to include. These should be in their original form. They

should not be edited for grammar, structure, or content. Include journal writing that is interesting to you. I don't care how you approach this choice, but if I were you I might organize the work in some way. I'm looking for five pages. Don't go under five pages. You can go over, but don't go over seven pages. If you have a bunch of things you want me to see, you can excerpt portions of journal entries, but I don't want it to feel (or be) edited. It's probably better if you give me journals exactly as you wrote them unless you have something specific that you just can't show in five pages.

Ideas for selections:

- \*journal entries that led to paper ideas
- \*journal entries you discuss in your "My Writing Self" essay
- \*journal entries that were the most fun to write
- \*journal entries where you talk about issues you are encountering in writing
- \*journal entries that show a part of you (and your process) that the rest of the portfolio does not allow you to demonstrate
- \*journal entries that cover thoughts that were especially interesting to you, even if you never got the chance to include them in a paper

### **OPTIONAL CONCLUSION**

You may have said everything you want to say in your "My Writing Self" essay. If you feel the desire to wrap up the work you have presented in your portfolio, however, you may add a brief conclusion. Note the word brief in the previous sentence. This conclusion could be as short as a paragraph. It should not go over one page. It could, however, have a title. I once read a nice one called something like: "In Place of A Conclusion, Someone Reading". In any case, use this conclusion if you have something to say, but don't include one for my benefit.

### **OPTIONAL ADDENDA**

An "addendum" is an addition to your document. ("Addenda" is the plural form of the word.) If you have additional materials you would like to include, you may include them here. These should be documents that can inform my reading of your portfolio. They may include drafts of papers, student responses to your papers, your responses to other papers, brief essays you reference if we didn't read them in class. Just remember they should be relevant to the rest of the work in your portfolio and I should know how they relate. Don't put poems in your addendum area just because you are a poet, but if you write about how your prose writing is different from your poetry in your "My Writing Self" essay, your poems instantly become relevant to your portfolio. Each item should have another letter: Addendum A, Addendum B, and so on. Again, don't give me an addendum for the sake of giving me an addendum. Just know you have a place to include things I didn't ask you to include.

Good luck! Email me if you have any questions or need to talk about this assignment.