Assignment 4: Digital Portfolio

Working Texts
- Your body of work this semester

Task
For this assignment, you will select and organize the work you have done this semester and present it as a digital portfolio through a platform such as Wordpress, Wix, Weebly, or Google Sites. You will also reflect on the work and your process of making and organizing it.

Audience
Your class and your instructor, but also potential employers or reviewers for academic/professional opportunities. This work could be imagined as a showcase of the kind of work you are capable of.

Purpose
This assignment is designed for you to practice reflective and metacognitive habits that are essential to learning from the writing we have done. This is also an opportunity for you to persuasively document and present the work you have done for evaluation, so it is to your advantage to think rhetorically about how you will contextualize and characterize your portfolio.

Procedure
Your portfolio may take any form you can design, but must include the following elements:
- at least 2 revised major assignments
- at least 1 revised ungraded short writing assignment
- some “process documentation” -- evidence of your writing process this semester -- which could include marked-up drafts, screenshots of Google image searches you conducted, annotations on research, sketches, freewrites, audio journals, or reflective writing you did throughout the semester
- a “cover letter” or home page that describes and reflects on your work (see “cover page,” below)
- attention to multimodal design elements, including layout, pictures, color/font/style, and embedded multimedia

You may want to select your best work, but you may also want to show places where you struggled, were challenged, or learned most. Think rhetorically about the “message” you want to send by your selection and organization.

Cover Page
The cover page should do the following (although you needn’t organize it in this order or spend an equal amount of time on each point):
- Serve as an introduction to your portfolio. You can explain what themes (if any) “unified” the work you chose to do this semester. You might also (very) briefly provide an inventory of the works you have included in your portfolio.
- Reflect on the process of assembling your portfolio. Describe why you chose to include these particular texts rather than others. How did you make your decisions? What are the
strong qualities of the work you have included that make you feel it deserves a place in this portfolio?

- **Describe one or two main things you learned from the work you did this semester.** Explain why you think the specific things you learned are valuable, and describe how you learned these things through the work you undertook individually or as a class.

- **Show how you might apply at least one of the things you learned to the work you think you will do in the future.** Articulate how the writing you created for this course might exist in the world after this semester. Suggest ways you will transfer what you’ve learned to other contexts.

You may want to be self-reflective in your report as well. You don’t necessarily have to limit your reflection to your work. You may also reflect on yourself and your relationship to your work.

The writing included in “cover page” should be at least 1000 words, but you need not group these all into one essay-like “page.” You may instead choose to distribute this writing across several pages.

**Submission Information**

- first draft [DUE DATE; SUBMISSION DETAILS]
- revised draft [DUE DATE; SUBMISSION DETAILS]
- revised cover page should equal at least 1500 words

**Evaluation**

Your work will be evaluated on 1) the ways you critically reflect on your own work and writing process, 2) the quality of the work in the portfolio, and 3) the rhetorical effectiveness of your presentation (including visual, digital, and multimodal design) of materials in the portfolio.
FOR INSTRUCTORS

Assignment Goals
Students will learn metacognitive practices for reflecting on and learning from work they have completed. Students will also gain digital multimodal skills for presenting their work in rhetorically effective ways.

Examples
The genre for this task is the professional digital portfolio, which is becoming increasingly important in a variety of professions. A couple of examples:
http://www.alanfletcherarchive.com/
http://www.bobgilletc.com/index.html

Students may be attempting such a task for the first time and have a limited time frame, so it is unrealistic to expect results that are quite so polished. But here are some impressive student examples in other disciplines:
https://mattwyatt.org/
http://other00.deviantart.net/f8e5/o/2012/336/3/b/syed_ibrahim_dilawer_portfolio.pdf

Examples such as these may be useful to rhetorically analyze with your students.

Time Frame
This is a significant assignment that should not just be “tacked on” as separate from the “real work” of the semester. It is critically important for students to be able to analyze and present their own work. Also, the technical aspects of a digital project may be new to students and will need time to familiarize themselves with tools. It is a good idea to reserve significant time for students to work on their portfolios (rather than just having them turn them in at the end of the semester with a final paper). It is also a good idea to introduce this project at the beginning of the semester, so that students can think about how their work will fit into their portfolios throughout the drafting process.

Technology
Of course, portfolios don’t have to be digital, and you may want to extend to students the option of creating multimodal analog portfolios. But the digital genre is becoming increasingly common and important. It is recommended that you spend time in class presenting some digital platforms students may choose to work from. This needn’t be a simple “tech competency” lecture -- it can be an exciting opportunity to discuss the rhetorical affordances of various digital tools.

Accessibility
As with any assigned writing, it is important to be aware of accessibility concerns students may encounter with multimodal writing, but there may be a wider variety of access issues as we use more modes of communication. Instructors should be aware of this when they use multimodal texts in class and think of other ways they can help students access these texts (for example, by making sure videos are captioned, transcripts are provided for podcasts, etc.). While this is good modeling, it is also a good idea to ask students to consider these ideas as they compose
multimodal texts. How will their texts be accessible to diverse users of different abilities, backgrounds, and with different technologies? Teaching students to caption, make transcripts, or make audio descriptions of images can be a great way to get students to consider rhetorical dimensions of audience and genre.