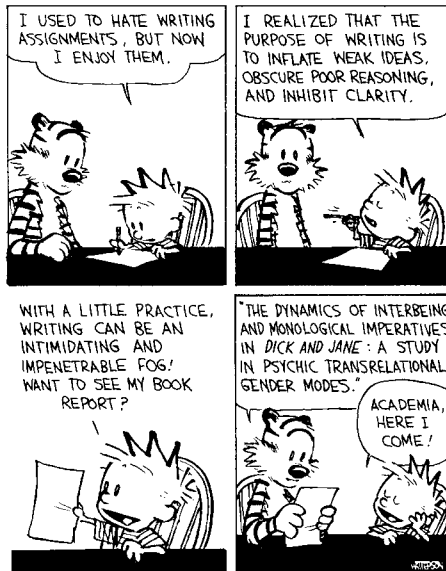


Final Paper 3.4: Prospective Cover Letter

gis 140 / sec. A / early fall quarter 2007-08 / chang



Your Final Portfolio and Prospective Essay are your culminating assignments for the quarter. They are the sum of your work and a testament to the dedication, reading, writing, and critical thinking (not to mention sweat and effort) you have engaged these past weeks. The Prospective Essay is the crowning piece of your metacognitive perspective on writing that you've been developing. To prepare for this assignment, look back at your literacy narrative, think about what you've read and learned in this course, and look ahead to the goals you will set to become a more successful college reader, writer, and thinker. Because our class emphasizes writing as a process aided by metacognitive awareness of one's writing practices, this essay will necessarily draw on your recent experiences, challenges, successes, and reflections.

Goals and Outcomes

Your Prospective Essay should be yet one more example of your ability to make claims, to quote you're your readings, to utilize evidence, to analyze that evidence, and to draw pertinent conclusions. Your essay

functions as a kind of academic, intellectual, and rhetorical self-assessment of what the reading and writing you have selected do (and do not do), and a self-reflection of how you see yourself participating (or not participating) in the class and classroom. A superior essay will incorporate the language of the various readings, the theories on literacy and writing, the course description, the assignment sheets, as well as cite your peers' and my assessments of your work to support your self-assessment. Strategically (and briefly) quoting or paraphrasing passages from your own work (both strong and weak samples) is another way to make your argument concrete.

Your Prospective Essay will take the form of a **cover letter** for your final portfolio. The essay must be 2-4 pages, single-spaced, in business letter format and should selectively include, describe, synthesize, and critique the following:

- makes a claim about your experience, your exploration, and your progress in GIS 140, in reading and writing
- identify, explicate, and demonstrate how you understand the key GIS 140 outcomes, concepts, skills, and strategies
- makes good use of your Strength and Difficulty inventories and Process Journal entries; considers how you have learned about working through reading and writing challenges
- uses the language of the course outcomes, the assessment rubric, and the assignments
- discusses your writing process, engagement with the course texts, and research
- considers how your definition of literacy has changed over the quarter
- assesses your participation in peer review; engages how you participated in the class and in the academic arena
- imagines how you will approach future academic writing assignments; argues for how you will transfer skills and practices and strategies to other classes
- offers a final self-assessment in terms of evaluation and grade

Your essay should be specific and detailed. What you write should ultimately apply to you, not necessarily to any writer. Ultimately, your Prospective Essay is both backward looking and forward looking. You are to respond critically to the perceptions and preconceived notions about reading and writing and learning you entered the class with, how you faced the quarter's assignments, and how you see and understand yourself changing as a writer. You are to consider how you worked through difficulties and challenges, what writing or academic resources have been most helpful to you, and what skills and strategies will you take with you into the future.

Guidelines and Due Dates

- Audience:** The audience for the Prospective Essay is a little different and very specific: your instructor and your class and you. Keep in mind that this essay is in the form of a formal cover letter. You will be making a case for what you have learned, discovered, experienced, and found noteworthy or useful, as well as evaluating your own work and writing process.
- Format:** This assignment is a formal letter and should follow the manuscript guidelines outlined in the course policies:
no title page, business (block) letter format
2-4 pages, typed, single-spaced, with MLA citations (if needed), stapled
bibliography, correct MLA format (if needed)

Grading Rubric & Expectations:

- Sequence:** Short Paper 3.1
Short Paper 3.2
Prospective Cover Letter Draft 3.3

Due: Monday, September 17 (as part of your Final Portfolio)

Cover Letter Tips

- Don't start from scratch here! Utilize my comments, course materials, blog posts, and any previous peer reviews to help frame and enhance your cover letter. The more that you can draw specifically from examples, the more that you will reveal to me your intertextual use of your previous thoughts (e.g. reference your responses to either or both instances here).
- Consider how you built on your specific weak points (mention these and locate them within a specific paper) to become a stronger writer.
- Use a critical and intertextual discussion of any readings, cultural productions, and the sources that you utilized.
- Argue how your writing within the entire portfolio represents the progress that you have made and illustrates the specific changes that you have undergone in your move from high school to college writing.
- Identify general issues regarding how you achieved progress throughout the quarter. You will want to talk critically about how you enacted significant revisions within your paper. Also, be sure to discuss the number of times that you went to the Writing Center (with dates) or any other tutorial help that you received—whether that be extra peer edits in class or other tutorial departments that you received help.
- How what you have learned in this class builds on the knowledge that you came to the class regarding writing and creating a paper (e.g. what you know about organization, claim development, revision, grammar, and so on—you may utilize the rubric here to help frame this part of the portfolio letter)
- How what you have learned in this class acts as a foundation for the type of writing that your degreed field requires once you leave the university and enter the work world.
- When you talk about your portfolio papers, you should directly address what points you decided to incorporate based on the comments that both your peers and I suggested and talk about how you have decided to incorporate or not to incorporate within your final portfolio paper. In addition, you should discuss what attempts you made to help mold your paper closer to the image of the superior portfolio by drawing on the language of the rubric. These papers should represent the progress that you've undergone throughout the quarter and are thus a big part of the weight of the portfolio, so you will want to spend some time on this portion of the letter.
- The cover letter should be in-depth and reflective, rather than a mere description of what your papers are saying.