

**WRT 114 w/ Dr. Jessica Corey**  
**Unit 1 Portfolio: Flash Nonfiction**

**Length:** 10-12 pages of nonfiction AND a 1-2-page critical reflection

**Percentage of Grade:** 20

**Due Date:**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this assignment is to put theory into practice. We've read a lot about the techniques of crafting creative nonfiction (in *WT* and *TIS*) and spent time analyzing works of creative nonfiction according to those techniques. This assignment addresses the following course objectives:

- \*Students will learn about, and put into practice, conventions and characteristics of creative nonfiction.
- \*Students will compose a series of creative nonfiction texts, and take them through the processes of composing.
- \*Students will develop awareness of audience, and work to construct an ethos and voice that responds to audience needs and expectations.
- \*Students will reflect on their writing processes.

**Assignment: Part 1 (creative nonfiction)**

For this assignment, you will choose your own subject matter and figure out the best approach to each piece using the tools of the genre we've read about and discussed so far. Your portfolio may consist of a large number of short pieces, or a smaller number of lengthier pieces. I suggest you set out to write a minimum of 15-18 pages of flash nonfiction during Unit 1, and then work to select your best 10-12 pages for your portfolio.

Please use double-spacing. Feel free to incorporate images or visual aids as you wish, just as long as the total number of pages of *writing* equals 10-12 pages. Give your portfolio a title page. Be as creative as you wish with the cover. I want you to feel that you have the leeway to make creative decisions with the look and feel of the portfolio.

Please display your writing on the page exactly as you hear it in your mind. This means moving beyond proofreading and examining your own choices as a writer and the sounds of your own language. Put aside time to rethink, revise, and polish your work. Don't just type up your freewrites from class and turn them in! Also, arrange your work strategically, according to content, style, or any other artistic considerations in play for you.

Title each piece of writing purposefully and creatively, and also give your portfolio a title. When choosing the title of your portfolio, look for themes, images, or moments in language that you want to draw out in the title. A few possible approaches:

- Consider any overarching concerns or issues that run through your work.
- Adopt the title of one of your works in the portfolio—perhaps the one that speaks most poignantly to your larger concerns as a writer.
- Let the title echo a single powerful image in one of your works.
- Draw an important word or phrase from one of your works and use that as the title.

### Assignment: Part 2 (critical reflection)

Your critical reflection (1-2 pp.) is an opportunity to reflect on the work you've done as a writer and the choices you've made in putting together this portfolio. I want to know how you're thinking about creative nonfiction from both an artistic perspective (the work of crafting your essays), and from the perspective of confronting and managing your subject matter. The following are just a few examples of ideas and questions you could consider in drafting this reflection, but you're not limited to these ideas and questions, and you don't have to respond to all of them. I would like you to try to **respond to the first one** in some way, however:

- Take some time to look over your class notes and blog entries for Unit 1, and reflect on which of our course readings helped to shape your creative choices in composing, revising, and compiling this portfolio.
- Through the process of composing, rethinking, and revising these flash nonfiction pieces, did you discover anything surprising, interesting, or revealing about yourself as a writer or about your writing process?
- Choose one or two pieces of flash nonfiction in your portfolio and describe how you consciously worked to revise and shape the writing into a more finished product.
- Which essays in this portfolio are you most invested in, and why?
- When you read back over your portfolio as a whole, do you notice any patterns or connections across this body of writing? For example, are there themes, images, or concerns that keep emerging in different ways?
- What additional ideas do you have for new essays, or for developing one or more of the short pieces in this portfolio into a longer essay?

### Evaluation Criteria

- Timely completion of the portfolio and obvious care and thoughtfulness in completing both the creative work and the critical reflection
- Attentiveness to the ethics of writing *within the genre* of creative nonfiction (that is, the work may play at the borders of the genre but should not cross the line into fiction or any other genre)
- Skill and poise in handling complex memory challenges, contested truths, issues of self-representation and representation of others, questions of what to reveal and how to reveal it, and the reflective moves needed to complicate your subject matter to increase its interest to the reader
- Clear efforts to push beyond self-expression; efforts to use the tools of craft we discussed during Unit 1 to create a portfolio that is not only *true*, but artful and engaging, including:
  - vivid and compelling scenes, descriptions, and characterization of dialogue that captures people's real voices and feels believable
  - smart, thoughtful, and controlled choices about point of view
  - dynamic and logical movement of ideas and transitions from one thought to the next
  - innovative use of figurative language and imagery (and avoidance of cliché)
  - mature and thoughtful reflective writing
  - control over tone and persona
  - deliberate and precise word choice and punctuation to shape the rhythm and flow of sentences
- Presentation of error-free texts (grammar, punctuation, typos, clean formatting)