

Portfolio Assignment

For this assignment, you will need to prepare a portfolio that consists of a reading journal and responses to various group questions. This portfolio will be turned in near the end of the semester and will be graded as an entirety. All journal entries and question responses can be entered into the same notebook and/or collected in the same folder. They do not need to be typed and will not be graded on grammar or spelling. These are expected to be quick, stream-of-conscious writings that “prime” your mind for class discussion, so **do not** spend considerable time on them.

Journal

For the reading journal component of your portfolio assignment, you will need to keep a reading journal in which you write an entry for each class period that had assigned readings. I suggest you do so in a notebook dedicated to this assignment, because you will need to be continually updating it and you should bring it to class. There is no special format for what these reading entries look like. However, you should provide both of the following:

- **1. A short summary of what the readings were generally about.**
 - Rather than summarizing each of the individual reading selections within the day’s readings, you should summarize the significance of all of the day’s readings when read together as a whole. To do so, you should consider how all the reading selections are related to each other or to a particular topic or question.
 - For instance, if the readings featured a number of heavily symbolic poems, a good summary would be a brief explanation of symbolism while using examples from the readings.
 - Alternatively, you may want to consider how the readings relate to a shared question, such as this: what is the point of literature? You could then discuss a few examples from the readings as part of an attempt to answer that question.
 - As another option, you might want to summarize how the readings all relate to each other, such as if one selection can be read as a response to another.
- **2. A general account of what your personal reactions were to the readings.**
 - What was your first response? Were you interested? Angry? Sad? Bored? Why?
 - No need to get too in-depth here. I just want to know what your first gut reaction is.

A sufficient entry for a reading journal entry would be a half page to a full page. For instance, you could write one paragraph summarizing the readings and one paragraph summarizing your reaction.

You will need to be prepared to read your reading entries aloud in class. At the start of discussing the readings, I will be asking for volunteers or randomly calling on people to share what they wrote, so you will always need to bring your journal to class so you can share.

Group Questions

I will frequently ask you to do short writing responses to questions I pose to different groups of you. These questions will all be posted on the course calendar. For example, prior to class you may be tasked with responding to one of four questions listed on the calendar, depending on which group I assigned you to at the end of the last class. I will constantly be changing the groups, so if you miss class, you should just answer whichever group question seems most interesting to you. In class, if time and space permits, I may have each group discuss their responses together. During our discussions of the readings, I will also be asking for people to share what they wrote with the rest of the class.

A sufficient response will be a half page to a full page. Therefore, a given class period may altogether entail one to two pages of quick and dirty writing (a half to a full page for the reading journal plus a half to a full page for the question response).

Grading

Both the journal and the group question assignments are designed to improve classroom participation. Hence, if you do not have a journal entry when I call on you or you are unable to contribute to a group discussion because you did not respond to your assigned question, your classroom participation grade for that day will be reduced.

The journal entries and the question responses themselves, however, are generally ungraded. If they both show a good faith effort to do the assigned work and complete the readings on time, you will receive an A (100%) on them. Failing to do so will result in a lower grade depending on my judgment of how much of the semester coursework was completed: either a B (85%), a C (75%), a D (60%) or an E (0%). In other words, you are free to write what you want in your journals and in your assignments without needing to hit any particular standard of quality other than that **you are doing them**.

Your portfolio will be collected near the end of the semester and will comprise 15% of your course grade.