

evolutionary portfolio

a story of ideas and how they came to be

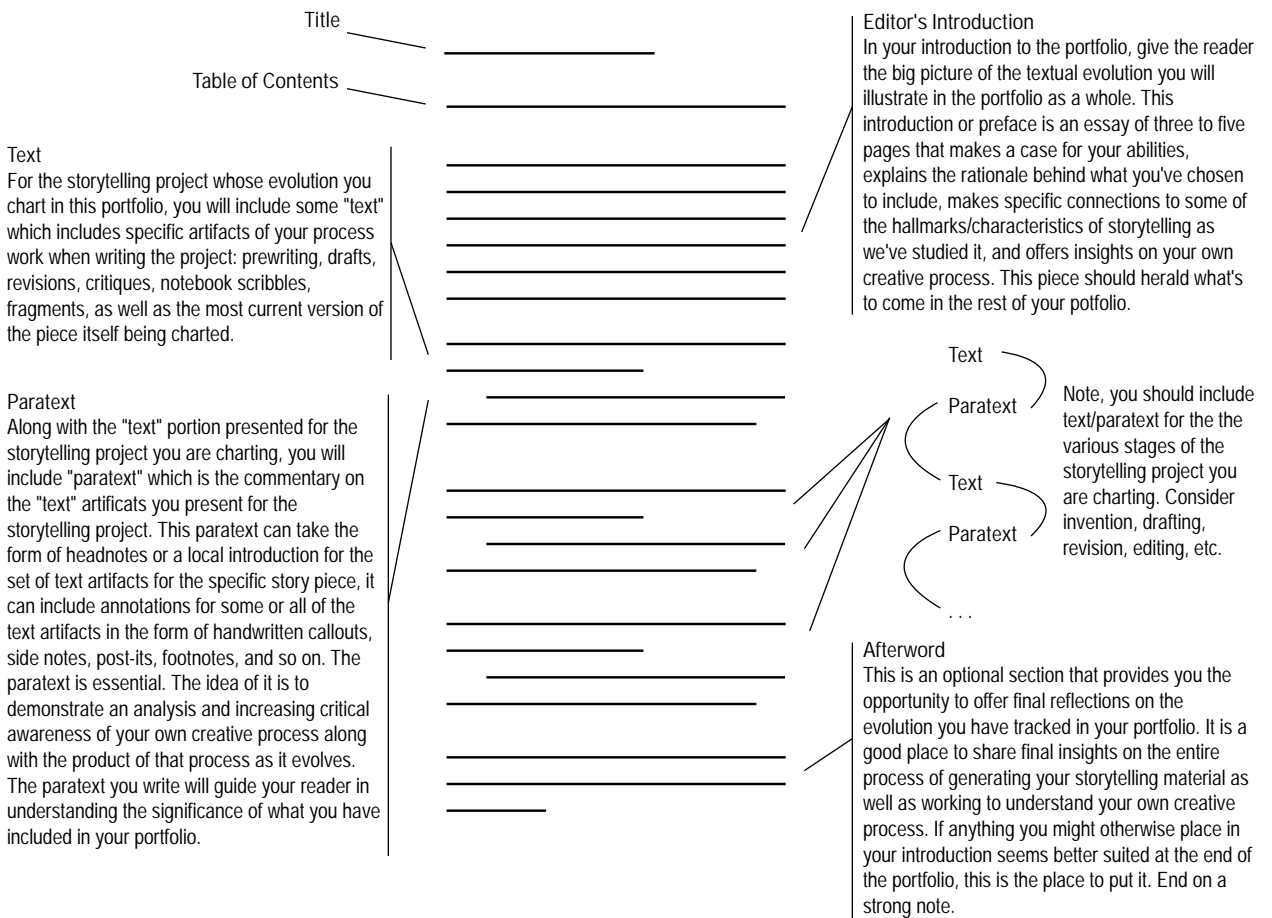
invention ▪ free play ▪ critical inquiry ▪ observing the muse ▪ catching yourself thinking ▪ human capability ▪ wild mind

This course is a creative pursuit, as is storytelling. Some argue that we cannot and should not attempt to understand creativity because it just is. Don't offend the muse with idle questions, as it were, just accept her gifts. I reject this notion and have asked you to do the same, at least for the duration of our time together here. Creativity is not above critical inquiry. If it were, there truly would be no reason for us to assemble here because there would be nothing for us to teach or learn from one another. This major portfolio project is about critical inquiry into your own creative and storytelling processes. It is my hope that, through the work you put into building this portfolio in the weeks ahead, you will become more critically aware of your own creative process—that you will learn something about how you invent ideas and how your stories come to be. With such an awareness of how your creative mind works, you will be able to further harness its powers.

So, you will be telling a story here—a story of how some ideas, story ideas, came to be. This work will take a consistent effort and a kind increasing self-awareness on your part as a writer. It is something you should be working on through the rest of the semester as you work to generate new work and reflect upon previous work of this term. While I welcome creative and hybrid configurations for the portfolio (but please no glitter), the following will offer you a sense of a potential format. Read on.

A basic schematic

The portfolio you create here should highlight and illustrate the evolution of several of your story ideas, showing the path each took from nothing, to an idea, through a process of invention and revision, and to its current form. It will likely appear somewhat “messy” at first glance, as writing and creativity can be very messy. It will present a series of snapshots or artifacts as evidence of your work as it evolved along with your own commentary on those snapshots or artifacts, explaining to your reader the significance of each of these pieces. You may use handwritten annotations, post-it notes, lines and arrows as necessary in combination with your type-written work. Here's a basic organizing principle you might use:



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How this project will be assessed

As I stated at the outset of this course, your grade for what you do here will not be based on your creative work, per se, but rather on your ability to demonstrate insight on your own creative process and choices as a writer. With that in mind, then, the basic expectations that I have for average and acceptable work for this project are as follows.

- The portfolio includes all the required components (e.g. title, table of contents, three to five page editor's introduction, text and paratext for at least one of the major storytelling projects of the course, possibly an afterword, etc.)
- The editor's introduction has the qualities of any strong essay (refer to the COM101/102 evaluation criteria) plus it offers specific and compelling insight into your own creative work and process.
- The editor's note makes specific references to the hallmarks/characteristics of storytelling as we have studied it and discusses how the portfolio collection embodies some of those characteristics.
- The text for the included story project includes artifacts representative of several stages of the writing process—prewriting, drafting, revision, etc.
- The paratext is well developed. The text of the storytelling project (and its textual artifacts) has paratext to go with it; however, some may be more deeply developed than others. A more expansive analysis may be presented for some work where you find your strength, but still a strong portfolio will demonstrate both depth and breadth.
- The entire project is creatively packaged and yet clear enough in its presentation for the reader to fully appreciate its argument. It gives the impression of serious thoughtfulness and care of preparation. This project is the culmination of a semester's worth of writing and considering your own creative process. It should look as such.

Due dates

Consult your syllabus and learning contract for a schedule of due dates.