

Unit 2 Assignment: Reflective Action Portfolio

How can civic writing make a difference?



In Unit 1, we read about various definitions and examples of civic writing, community literacy, community engagement, and service-learning. We discussed models for this work and saw how many theoretical frameworks there are to describe what we mean when we talk about active engagement with communities through writing. In this next unit, we will see specific examples of how civic discourses were developed, received, and how they have been historicized. In many cases, we will also see how some histories have been “pushed to the margins,” as scholar Susan Kates describes. Our goal within this Unit is to explore these alternative histories and see how valuable discussions of our past might affect our future.

The first part of this assignment provides you the chance to situate yourself within the conversations of our readings. To “situate” yourself does not mean that you must agree. Instead, maybe you will find some definitions or examples you agree with and some you want to challenge. Either way, this assignment asks you to interact with the readings—to really grapple with them—in order to articulate your own understanding of civic writing within these histories. To do this, you will write a weekly 2-3page reflection on our readings, class discussion, etc. You can do this at any time throughout the week, but they are due on each Tuesday (Feb 17, 24, and March 3).



The second layer of this portfolio involves you choosing a Civic Issue that you would like to pursue further. After choosing a topic, you will collect *artifacts* –images, articles, blogs, social media examples, videos, etc—that help you think about your issue in multiple (maybe even contradictory ways). Here, you’re looking for a range of stakeholders and trying to understand multiple sides of a topic. As you collect your artifacts, you should also be drafting a proposal to me. This

proposal should explain your issue, discuss the stakeholders involved, and then describe how you might want to be involved in this issue. In other words, you're entering a conversation about a civic issue and using this space to try and articulate a plan for your involvement.

Specifics: (This portfolio is collectively worth 35% of your grade)

- Reflective work on Histories: You will hand in **3 reflections**, each 2-3 pages. These reflections are your chance to point to specific moments in the text that are interesting, troubling, confusing, thought-provoking, etc.
- Civic Issue Writing:
 - A collection of artifacts. The number is up to you, but you should show a range of sources and be able to show that you've thought about this issue from multiple sides.
 - A proposal (4-6 pages) providing the following:
 - A well-researched description of the issue
 - An analysis of who is involved in this issue (who are the stakeholders?)
 - A description and reflection on your sources (why you chose them)
 - A proposal explaining what you could do next to get involved with this issue. Here, you should think about how civic writing can help you develop an entry point into this topic.