This document shows an example of a process portfolio for a writing project. Page 1 provides an overview of the portfolio assignment. Page 2 shows the instructions for the last assignment in the portfolio. After completing this portfolio, students continue on through a series of scaffolded assignments as they work toward writing a fully developed analysis paper, page 3-4 shows a sample.

L59 113-09: College Writing: Dreams and Nightmares
Assignment: Writing Process Portfolio
Components Overview (see Canvas for assignments)
Final Due Date: 23 September 2021

For the Writing Process Portfolio, you'll submit a series of *informal* and *low-stakes* assignments designed to help heighten your awareness of some key aspects of writing and develop core skills that we'll revisit throughout the semester:

- **Words matter**: attention to language, keywords, concise description/summary
- **Audience matters**: how and what you write is largely determined your readers
- **Context matters**: the circumstances of a text's production illuminate its meanings
- **Writing is recursive**: good writing and clear thinking seldom emerge fully formed
- **Writing is a process of discovery**: write to think, think to write
- **Analysis is a method**: notice patterns, binaries, and anomalies in a text; ask so what? to explain what's so interesting, revealing, or strange about it.

The prompts for these assignments can be found in Canvas under "assignments" and are proceeded with "WPP" (Writing Process Portfolio). There are five Writing Process Portfolio assignments:

Assignment	Due	Description	Points
Dream Narrative	9/2	Narrate a recent or recurring dream/experience	2
Dream Lens	9/7	Define a keyword & apply it as a lens to your dream	2
Visual Analysis	9/9	Analyze a piece of art from the Kemper collection	3
Uncanny Spaces	9/14	Describe an eerily (un)familiar place	3
Evidence & Initial Claim	9/23	Catalog evidence, write initial claim for Analysis essay	5

PLEASE NOTE:
These are informal exercises, most of which needn't be longer than a page. They needn't be polished or perfect. They are creative and can be personal. DO NOT STRESS ABOUT THEM. They are simply designed to get you writing habitually and recursively.

GRADING:
To further emphasize that you need not stress, you'll be given full points for completing each of the first four assignments on time, so long as it meets the expectations outlined in the prompt. Because the fifth assignment has important bearing on your Analysis Essay and because you have much more time to complete it, I will more carefully consider its quality and will not automatically assign full points for completion.

Writing Process Portfolio
Assignment #5: Analysis Bridge

In this assignment you'll use the skills we've been practicing in the Writing Process Portfolio to build a foundation for the Analysis Essay. I've called it a "bridge" because it links the "informal" work of narration, description, definition, & reflection with the "formal" work of analytical argument, all of which is part of the same *process*, of course.

As we've discussed, good writing doesn't spring forth fully formed from brain to page. It evolves gradually and requires you to look closely, catalog details, label patterns, ask questions, share idea, find anomalies, revise thinking, look closely again...and through it all you engage in the act of ***writing to discover***. Let this assignment serve as a place to gather evidence, test ideas, ask questions, and build scaffolding around which you'll later compose your Analysis Essay.

Subject: Select ONLY ONE of two texts: Le Fanu's *Carmilla* or Herrera's *Signs Preceding the End of the World*.

Goal: To gather evidence you'll use in your Analysis Essay and develop an initial idea about the meaning or relevance of patterns that you find in that evidence.

Components: After reading your chosen text carefully and annotating as you go, complete the following steps in whatever format or order works best for you:

1. **Summarize** the story briefly in one paragraph. Your description should be objective but also informed by the interpretive lens you're applying in your argument. So a summary of *Carmilla* for a paper that examines "illness" in the novella will look slightly different than one that explores "gendered authority," even if they cover the same basic plot.
2. **Label a pattern or binary (or two, as appropriate)** that you've discovered in the text and want to explore further.
3. **Catalog** the pieces of evidence that relate to that label in a big old list. You can use direct quotes or paraphrase or summary, but be sure to transcribe carefully and keep track of where in the text the evidence appears (page #s, but also context).
4. **Ask questions** that might help you discover meaning or expose what's so interesting, revealing, or strange about what you've found. You can start with the generic "so what?" or "why does this matter?" but the more specific your questions get, the more nuanced your ideas will become.
5. **Write an initial claim** related to your pattern/binary and perhaps in response to one of your questions. Don't think of this claim as a thesis so much as a first idea that you expect will evolve. You're just trying to move from description & summary to an interpretation that makes meaning from the evidence or exposes something implicit in the text that a reader may not pick up on.

We'll workshop this collection of materials on Thursday, 2/18, and it's perfectly fine to be messy and unsure of where it's all leading. You'll have time to work that out as you compose the Analysis Essay.

Thesis Development

5-paragraph-essay-style thesis statements (Author A uses x, y, and z to show B or convince readers C) are problematic because they tend to

  a) encourage cataloging or listing ideas rather than seeing elements in relation to each other
  b) generalize
  c) lock you into a structure (first I'll talk about a, then b, then c)
  d) limit a complex idea to a single sentence

Non-5-paragraph-essay-style thesis statements can be tough to write, but they can liberate your thinking and approach. One stylistic approach I've found successful involves subordination or qualification. *Writing Analytically* recommends the following template:

> Seems to be about X but is really (or also) about Y.

So, taking *Signs* as an example:

> The preponderance of water imagery in the novel seems to be about border crossing/transgressing but it's really about subject-fluidity…or liminal transformation…or blood…or baptism…or whatever…

You can see how such a paper would *evolve* rather than just run through a catalog of un- or semi-related ideas. First you'd need to demonstrate how water imagery shows up when Makina's crossing borders…then why that seems transgressive…but then you'd pivot to demonstrating that what seems initially like a simple binary (you're this on this side of the border, that on the other side) gets destabilized once we consider new evidence or revisit the same evidence you presented earlier from a new perspective.

But there are other templates & phrasing by which to introduce subordination and qualification into your thesis. Try recasting your initial idea by beginning with one of these words/phrases:
    While…   Although…   Because…   Despite…   Even though…

Qualifying Thesis	

You'll find it difficult to write a 5-paragraph thesis like this, and you'll be forced to see at least two elements in relation to each other. Such an approach encourages deeper thinking and a tiered structure. *Writing Analytically* is again helpful in suggesting that at thesis makes the *implicit explicit*. Try recasting your initial idea by showing your reader layers:
    At first glance…   On the surface…   On one level…
    …in fact…   … but implicitly…   …but on another, deeper level…

Implicit/Explicit Thesis	

Of course, your claim needn't be only two-tiered. You can keep going along the path of qualification, subordination, reconsideration, etc. and build the structure of your paper around it as your idea evolves.

Connecting and Subordinating Evidence

Revisit your catalog of evidence and start making connections between pieces within the catalog that are related more closely to each other. By clustering evidence, you may discover something interesting about subtle differences, or recognize a sub-pattern within your pattern that pushes your idea further. On the next page, cut & paste evidence from your catalog into new subcategories. It's okay to use the same evidence twice if you wish to return to & reconsider it later in the paper.

OR

Revisit your catalog of evidence and rank these pieces in order of importance (or in order of which ones seem the most interesting or revealing). Ask yourself why you ranked them as you did and start imagining where in a paper these pieces of evidence might land. Do you lead with the most important piece? Or do you build up to it by first analyzing some less important pieces that only reveal so much? Or maybe you imagine an essay in which you first discuss the less important pieces, then introduce the most important piece, which subtly changes our understanding, then you backtrack to those earlier less important pieces and revise how you frame them. This is an exercise in projecting an outline for your paper, but one that follows a logical and organic flow as you unfold your discoveries for the reader. On the next page, cut & paste ranked evidence from your catalog.

Pattern Subgroup	Evidence
1.	•
2.	•
3.	•
4.	•
5.	•

OR

Rank	Evidence
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
Justify or Explain Your Ranking	