**THE PORTFOLIO = WP 4 + 5 + COVER LETTER**

**Writing Projects 4 and 5: The Unlearning Project**

Due: Sun. April 30 by noon

**Purpose:**

This is the chance for you to apply and synthesize all of the skills we have been working on all semester. This project serves not only as the culmination of a semester’s worth of writing and critical reasoning instruction, but also as the end product of you thinking about this particular topic – or, as we’ve been clunkily calling it, “thing to be unlearned” – for a long time. As such, the main goal is for you to take ownership of the project and make strategic and effective choices about your writing in order to best communicate with, and ultimately convince, readers.

**Premise:**

Oftentimes we think of education as being additive: you go to school so you can learn more and more and more, and then perhaps specialize and learn a lot more about a really specific thing. But this additive model of education ignores that sometimes what we learn, in school, outside of it, or both, is not necessary right or good or useful, and as such needs to be *unlearned.*

The premise of this project is simple: you believe something needs to be unlearned at some level. You’ve explored what that thing is, why it’s necessary to unlearn it, and, at least to some extent, how it might be unlearned. Now, you will synthesize these various strands into a proposal geared toward a general audience. The reader should leave convinced that the unlearning both *should* and *can* happen.

**Prompt:**

In an 8-10 page essay, excluding the appendix (see below), respond to the following prompt:

**Write a proposal for why we should and how we can begin to unlearn your thing.**

**aPpendix:**

All proposals must include an appendix that illustrates, supports, or extends one of the claims of your argument. In most cases this will likely be a creative piece: some sort of practical element of your how or a version of your argument for unlearning that serves as a model of how the argument could be made to a set of ideal unlearners.

Potential examples include: a sample textbook section, a lesson plan/set of standards or goals for a curriculum you are arguing should exist, some sample Instagram posts that illustrate the way a social media campaign might look, a video or podcast segment or op-ed that serves as an example of exposure you are arguing needs to happen, a precis of a piece of pop culture that illustrates the kind of pop culture you are arguing needs to exist to assist in unlearning, but the possibilities are endless.

Appendices are generally used for information that is necessary to the argument being made in the paper but is clunky/difficult to integrate. So, when deciding on an appendix choose something that will enhance the argument for unlearning and *feel* necessary to the reader. When you write (see appendix) in the paper at the appropriate point, the reader should be excited and interested to explore what you are offering.

**The Reflective Cover Letter**

Due: Sun. May 7 by noon

(but I highly recommend you submit it around the same time as the portfolio/unlearning project)

**Purpose:**

The research on teaching writing strongly supports the effectiveness of purposeful, written reflection. In particular, it suggests that reflection can help with *transfer*, which is the goal of any writing class: that students take the skills they’ve learned with them to other writing situations and scenarios, especially, in the case of 150, to their other classes.

**Prompt:**

Address the cover letter to me. In addition to reflecting generally about your development as a writer and thinker this semester if you’d like, make sure to answer the following questions:

* What does your final project about your strengths and weaknesses as a writer?
* What aspects of your writing or thinking have improved the most this semester? Why?
* What components of the course contributed most to this improvement or development? How/why?
* What specific writing strategies from the course do you think you will continue to use in the future?
* If there were ways that you used critical thinking in the process of planning, writing, or revising your writing projects that might be invisible in the final product, please share them with me. (*Optional*)
* If you have strong feelings (positive or negative) about the unlearning focus of the course, especially how you chose a single topic and stuck with it all semester, please share them with me, since this was a new approach to the course for me and I’m considering how to revise it for future semesters. (*Optional*)

Make sure to support your claims with specific evidence from the final project and/or previous papers. You should look back at your earlier papers, pre-writing work, ancillary journal, class notes, etc., and draw examples from those for support. Around two double-spaced pages should be a sufficient amount of space to fully answer these questions.

**Notes/Tips for Writing:**

I suspect the biggest challenge with this paper will derive from synthesizing your three previous papers and adding any necessary content, while still remaining within the length requirements for this one. They key to making decisions about **ratio and scope** is to know the conversation about your topic and be able to answer the following questions.

* How clear/obvious is it that your thing is a thing/actually exists? The less obvious it is, the more what your paper will need.
* How controversial is the point that your thing needs to be unlearned? The more controversial it is, the more what/why your paper will need.
* What do other people say about why your thing needs to be unlearned and how it should be unlearned? Utilizing strategic summarizing can allow you to reference these ideas relatively quickly and focus the paper on your unique contributions to the discourse.
* What will be the most interesting aspect of your argument to people who have already thought about the topic? Highlight that.