

Sample Essay Assignment from WRRH 100 / Salibrici :

Analysis and Reflection / Final Course Reflection

The end of any course should bring with it a sense of cumulative experience, the idea that several months worth of work have produced something you can take with you, that you have engaged in a process of thought and activities that adds up to something, that you have learned something about writing and about yourself as a writer.

For your final essay, which will use techniques of analysis and reflection, I ask that you write a retrospective analysis about what you have learned and how you have learned it. You have several resources for this endeavor, including (but not limited to): the course syllabus, the course readings, notebook entries, drafts of your essays, rhetorical analyses of your essays, and feedback from professor and peers on your writing.

Your essay will be first person in voice and self-reflective in tone. It will use your own writing in any of its forms as evidence backing up your final analysis of the semester's work. Each of your essays before this used textual material from our shared readings. Now the textual material is your own writing. You definitely should make specific references to your own writing, even quoting from it, as part of your essay content. You should also make use of any of the reading and writing strategies we have tried as a way to prepare for this essay. Here are further steps/questions to consider:

1. Reread the syllabus. It makes specific references to principles of writing that will govern our work for the course and specific goals for the semester. Ask yourself if these principles and goals mean something to you now that it is enhanced or deepened compared to several months ago.
2. Reread your opening day survey. Would your responses be the same as they were that day? Have you learned anything that changes your thinking?

3. Reread your notebook entries. Are any patterns revealed in terms of your responses, handling of the textual material, and/or connections to formal essay assignments? Can you describe those patterns?
4. Reread your drafts, final essays, and rhetorical analyses. Are there any patterns in terms of changes and improvements in your writing? Were some assignments more difficult/more rewarding/more reflective of your writing strengths? Were some elements of writing stronger in some places than in others?
5. Consider all the reading and writing strategies that we tried this semester. Are there patterns in terms of your responses to such strategies or your ability to use them effectively?

These questions are not meant to be responded to in order, resulting in a final essay that seems to be nothing more than rote responses to each question. Instead, try freewriting to each question; try thinking of your own questions; try imagining the shape and content of your essay by making use of your strongest and most interesting responses. Let these questions help you get started. See where they take you.