**WRITING ARTS PORTFOLIO SEMINAR**

**ANALYSIS STATEMENT**

The Writing Arts Portfolio Seminar Analysis Statement is the last major writing assignment for the Writing Arts major. This statement provides an opportunity for you to develop your understanding of the core values of the Writing Arts major using five papers you have written while at Rowan, deepening your understanding of what it means to be a writer through reflecting on your accomplishments and on what you’ve learned—really, on what you’ve become—while writing for your Writing Arts courses.

We believe that all writing is related to these nine core values in some way and that writers address these values--and produce the kinds of outcomes associated with these values--especially when they are working on their craft as writers. When you are writing, it is as if you are swimming in the waters of the core values, which means that whether you intend it or not, any writing you have done can be read as an expression of one or more of the core values.

If you don’t yet see the values present in a given work of your writing, then it is your job with this Analysis Statement to *see* them at work. Your job is to rhetorically adapt to being a writer who can see the core values at work in your own writing and then share that awareness in reflective writing that reveals the writer you are. Indeed, the voice of reflective authority is what those evaluating your statement are reading for: Writing Arts faculty are looking for signs of a voice that isn’t just reporting about what got done, like a list of values you have “achieved.” No. We’re looking for a reflective voice, the voice of a writer thinking their way through understanding the core values and assessing their own work to reveal evidence for what was learned as expressions of having practiced the core values in writing projects.

Now, to value something means to place great importance upon it; it’s something that we are deeply concerned about, have thought about, have devoted hours, days, weeks, months, and even years to create a lasting space in our lives for what we value. So think of ways in which your writing (embodied in your portfolio pieces) shows that you value the practices and the results elaborated in the core values, and you could also show those moments when you failed in this regard, for showing this in your analysis statement reveals something quite powerful: your writing matters. And the courses within the major are designed to provide you with an opportunity to *practice* being the kind of writer that the nine core values set forth and distinguish, and the only way we can know if you’ve successfully practiced that way of being, is if you *demonstrate* having certain learning outcomes, evidenced in your writing.

**What to do?**

Toward the end of providing an extensive written reflection that seeks to reveal your understanding of the core values, and using specific textual evidence from your writing to demonstrate to what degree you accomplished various learning outcomes, you are to select five pieces to include in your portfolio, taken from the following courses:

1) The Writer’s Mind

2) Writing, Research, and Technology

3) Evaluating Writing

4) Any Rowan course (including, if desired, a second piece from the first three)

5) Any Rowan course (including, if desired, a second piece from the first three)

Each of the five pieces you have selected to include in the portfolio ought to provide you with rich opportunities for reflection, and they need not be “perfect.” The goal here has less to do with how you “got it right,” and more to do with how you understand what you did and didn’t accomplish, *now, as you look back on your past efforts*, using the light of the core values and their correlative learning outcomes to reveal what may have been hidden from you previously.

**Overview of three Approaches:**

**Traditional, Inverse, and Novel approaches.**

There are three possible approaches to take in producing this 12 to 20 page document.

Note: *the second and third approaches (the Inverse and Novel approaches) are undergoing trial. You should not pursue them unless you discuss this with Kopp and with your reader/advisor. The Inverse and Novel approaches will call for a little more involvement with your advisor than the first approach.*

For all three approaches, you must introduce the contents of the portfolio.

For the Traditional and Inverse approaches, in your introduction, you will list each project title and the course in which you wrote it. For the Inverse approach, you will also need to share which core values you focus on for each of your five pieces of writing. The traditional approach does not require this because you will organize the statement using the core values themselves.

In this introduction, you must also begin to argue for what you have gained in the process of pursuing a major in Writing Arts--what you have become--perhaps hinting at an overarching theme that connects all the parts, a theme you will explore throughout the statement/project. You may not even begin to grasp this argument until *after* you have reflected sufficiently on your work in light of the core values and their learning outcomes--and once grasped (perhaps during the peer review near the end of the semester), you can then revise the statement to reflect this insight.

**The Traditional approach** asks you to structure your analysis statement deductively around the nine core values, starting with the first, and then proceeding through them in order until you complete the ninth. As a department, we have been practicing this approach since 2008, hence “Traditional.”

**The Inverse approach** asks you to organize your reflection around your five pieces of writing rather than around the core values. This is a more inductive approach, wherein you begin with one piece of writing and then, as you reflect on the work done, you reveal to what degree you accomplished the student outcomes, and then, how you came to understand the core value or values you were practicing in that piece of writing. You will need to strive to make sure all nine core values and their learning outcomes receive sufficient treatment, which will require you to provide an introductory overview in which you explain which core values you ended up discussing for each piece. This approach is more challenging due to its open structure: the writer must really take on reading for the core values in their writing, and in order to “hear” the values in the outcomes (whether present or absent), the writer has to already value what writers value.

**The Novel (“New”) approach** asks you to conceive, propose, and then produce a project that will serve as a demonstration of the learning outcomes correlative with the core values. You will need to provide a reflection that reveals the core values you practiced while writing the piece, as well as key learning outcomes produced, whether or not you were successful. This is the most challenging option, and it is for those who are eager to get their writing out in the world, and to be in substantive conversations about their craft with other writers. A certain number of students taking this approach will create the possibility of having an Undergraduate Symposium.

**A more detailed examination of the three approaches**

**The conventions of the Traditional Approach**

Following your introduction to the Analysis Statement (wherein you present the titles of your five pieces and the courses in which you wrote them, as well as the central argument you are making for what you have learned as a Writing Arts major), you will present each core value, from the first to the ninth, discussing each in order, revealing the development of your understanding of each core value (what it means: making the language of the core value meaningful to you and your audience) through demonstrating your efforts to achieve the learning outcomes associated with each core value.

In order to demonstrate your efforts to achieve learning outcomes, you must provide specific textual evidence from your own writing selected from your portfolio pieces--except for values three and nine. Since there are seven core values that require you to draw from five portfolio pieces for evidence, you will have to decide how to give somewhat equal measure to all the values; you’ve got to do each one justice. One suggestion would be to have each piece “star” in a particular core value section of your Analysis Statement, and two would then “star” a second time in another core value section.

The important move you need to make again and again, is to bring fresh meaning to the core values you discuss, so that you can use the language of the core value to *read* your writing, like it is giving you an evaluative lens to look through at your own writing. When you really own the value, and look at your own writing, you *see* what’s missing, what works and what doesn’t, its promises and virtues, and can even share how you might re-envision your writing. That’s what it means to bring self-critical awareness to your own writing. Ideally, as Core Value five suggests, such moments are moments of freedom, where we look upon the same circumstances and suddenly see something new, though it has been right in front of our faces the whole time.

**The conventions of the Inverse Approach**

Whereas the traditional approach begins with the rule (the core value) and then searches out for a case that follows the rule, this Inverse approach is more inductive, where you begin with the writing and then build out to unveil the learning outcomes embodied in your writing, and then make connections to the core values. It is as if you “grow” the core values out of your five pieces of writing. You have to read your writing with critical awareness, such that you might see whole new ways to evaluate your own writing and then share your discoveries with an audience of fellow writers on similar journeys.

To this end, you could create a character-narrator who takes her audience on an exploratory journey into the various ways of being a writer articulated in the core values, but stumbling upon them only after having reflected on your own writing. You are building reflection from the ground up. The character-narrator could perhaps undergo several moments of learning, stages of becoming the writer you are, all while reflecting on her writing as the window into the values.

Before you can take this approach, as well as the third, Novel approach, you must discuss taking the approach with me and with then with your reader/advisor, and let us help you find the best approach.

**The conventions of the Novel Approach**

This approach calls for you to **propose a project**that you value greatly getting done, and can do so within 15 weeks. So the first several weeks will involve cultivating insights and observations with a writerly eye and ear, and then throwing out a project, whether a short story or stories, or cluster of poems, or a video mashup, or a set of infographics, a play, a screenplay, a scholarly article, a piece of nonfiction, or creative non-fiction, etc.  
   
We welcome those who take this option to project something new (hence “Novel”). However, we also welcome those who wish to take an undeveloped piece from your course work, whether successful or not, bringing self-critical awareness to your writing to see what’s missing, and to re-envision the writing, and then apply your craft to this revised design.  
  
In either case, you are to chronicle the emergence, development, and completion of the project in a journal, where you tell the story of your progress in the light of key core values, those you value the most. This will provide you with material to compose a brief  cover letter that introduces and reflects on your writing in this project, the length of which will be determined by your advisor and you.