PAPER #5: OBSERVING YOUR WRITING
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So far this semester, we have addressed the topic of observation in a variety of ways. We have made observations, tried to notice details about different topics, education, society, academic disciplines and self. Now you will want to make observations about your writing and yourself as a writer and maybe some of your observations will even lead to you developing your own theories about the nature of writing.

The purpose of this paper is to look at your writing as the writer you are now, the writer you have become. Look at your writing over the course of the term and try to pin down what is working now and what you want to continue to work on. Use examples from your texts to back up your assertions about your writing. Think about the writing itself and the writing process as well, if you want. Think about how your writing has become more artful--more about the how and the craft of it. In a way, this part of your paper is an extension of the meta-writing or reflective writing we have been doing all term. This is the first part.

Secondly, along with and alongside the above purpose, this essay is to be a preface to your volume of work (the portfolio). You will want to explain how those particular pieces got there, what they are, and why you chose them: they may just be there to illustrate something about your writing process; they may be there because you felt it just didn’t work before and could work now; they may be there because you did some super risk-taking revising; or they may be there because of a personal theme you have developed. You might think about some of the criteria outlined over the course of the semester and how these may fit in.

HINTS:
• This is essay number five. It is to be a 4-5 page essay that appears at the front of your portfolio. THIS ESSAY IS AN ESSAY, NOT A LETTER OR A LIST OR TWO PARAGRAPHS. IT MUST BE CRAFTED AND COHERENT. IT MUST BE ORGANIZED AND STRUCTURED. IT MUST PREFACE AND SET THE TONE FOR WHAT IS TO FOLLOW. IT IS YOUR LAST ESSAY AND IT SHOULD BE GOOD.
• Title it.
• Make sure your essay has a lead that captures the attention of your readers. Think of using an anecdote or an epigraph, even one of the above quotes or a quote of your own.
• Work hard to make it representative of the writer you have become.
• Make sure your essay has an introduction that establishes what your argument is.
• You will to try assert something about your writing and back it up with textual evidence, quotes from your text.
• Organize your essay. You may even want to put sections in it if you need to.
• You will need to explain the organizing principle of your portfolio or if there is some sort of theme that unifies it. You will want to explain this theme, if there is one, carefully. You could use our class theme if you would like.
• This essay needs a conclusion.
• Show off all of your smartness here. Make it smart! Make it good!

THE ENTIRE FINAL PORTFOLIO WITH THIS PAPER AS PREFACE DUE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2

FINAL TIPS:
• Remember to work on significant revisions.
• Remember to clip the drafts (including my letters) together at the back of the portfolio.
• Remember to bind the portfolio together in some fashion.
• Remember to make it visually attractive. Include visual aids if you want.
• Be creative and have fun with it!