

‘Selfie’ - Noun (plural selfies) - informal

“A photograph that one has taken of oneself,
typically one taken with a smartphone and uploaded to a social media site”

1). “Student-Portrait” Essay (two pages)

Oxford Dictionary selected ‘selfie’ as the word of the year for 2013. According to the people at Oxford, the use of this word increased by 17,000 percent during that year, and as most of you have either taken, received, or seen one of these pictures recently, you were probably already aware of how common this practice has become of late. However, self portraiture is far from a recent phenomenon, and the contexts, considerations, and criticisms that currently surround its digital practitioners are also nothing new. Consider the following seemingly contradictory questions that seem to surround this rapidly accelerating trend:

- Why must people portray themselves in such an artificial manner on the internet?
- Why must people document their everyday, ordinary lives on the internet?
- What makes people believe that their portraits are unique and worthy of our attention?
- What compels people to express themselves in ways that are highly typical?

In light of this new focus on self portraiture, I would like you to write a two page, self-portrait essay, focusing on your current identity *as a student*. While crafting your portrait, please keep the following in mind:

1. You will need to spend some time thinking about how best to gather and document data objectively in your self portrait, and how the ***content*** of your essay will consist of ‘facts’ of various kinds.
2. In order to guarantee that your self portrait is a proper representation of the personal content that will be included in your finished portrait, you will need to make aesthetic choices to properly ***form*** your given data to that end.
3. You will need to balance and blend the form and content of your self portrait in a ***novel way***.
4. You will need to balance and blend the form and content of your self portrait in a way that will have ***universal appeal*** to your reader.

2.) “Gathering-Focus” Essay (two pages)

“The World in a Cup,” one of the most interesting map essays in Rebecca Solnit’s book *Infinite City*, is a wonderful example of how the rhetorical modes of ‘definition’ and ‘causality’ can be mutually beneficial for expository writing. In order to inform the reader about what a café culture *is*, here Solnit provides us with an imaginative account of the various causal ingredients of a cup of coffee, all of which are responsible for its coming to be what it is (for better or worse).

In a two page essay, please ***define*** something UML related (a place, building, object, activity, or idea), by providing me with an explanation of its various ***causes***. You may want to play with the word ‘because’ as you are creating your potential list of these ‘ingredients.’

Suggestions

(who? what? where? when? how?)

I). When working on your **self-portrait essay**, ask yourself at least the following questions in preparation for your final composition:

- How have past experiences lead me to where I am as a student today?
- What am I most proud of as a college student?
- How would I most like to improve as a student in the near future?
- What are the most important choices that I have made to be where I am academically?
- Which of my character traits do I most want to portray to my reader?
- Which of my character traits do I need to portray to be most honest with my reader?
- How can I effectively balance my responses to the last two questions?

II). When working on your **UML definition essay**, ask the following question in preparation for your final composition:

- Are the causes of my subject of choice primarily related to its purpose?
- Are some of the causes of my subject more essential than others?
- Are some of the causes of my subject unnecessary for the purposes of this essay?

III). As you did so wonderfully in your last portfolio assignment, please use the writing rubric below as a guide for your writing.

Composition Rubric

Ideas - Choose a focused and manageable approach to your topic, with accurate and precise details, and give your ideas life through dynamic use of strong, active verbs. Use specific, concrete details to support your ideas throughout. Remember that highly conceptual language tends to imply a great deal, without delivering enough "punch." Fully articulated ideas tend to appear more modest, yet offer far more "content" to readers. This is crucially important to keep in mind when crafting a thesis.

Organization - Choose an appropriate, and original lead, make good use of sequence and transitional words, and conclude your essay with a natural, and thoughtful ending.

Word choice - In order to convey your purpose clearly, use expressive diction, and a compelling tone throughout your entire essay. Avoid lame, vague words, such as "like," "so," "very," and "stuff." Please remember that vague terms suggest (and often indicate) vague thoughts.

Sentence Fluency - Keep in mind that a powerful blend of well-crafted, creative sentences, results in a smooth, rhythmic flow of ideas, and a pleasant reading experience. Remember that commas allow your ideas to breathe.

Conventions - Adhere to grammar and usage rules consistently and correctly (I know this "sounds" strange, but read aloud as you compose your essay and proofread your work). Do not use second person (and this means **YOU**)!

Presentation - Make use of pleasing, easy to read font styles and sizes, featuring seamless, appropriate text features throughout.

IV). Assignment Checklist

- Please include both essays, at least two pages in length each, double spaced, and in a portfolio folder
- Feel free to include a copy of your preliminary writing (optional)
- Do not email your assignments to me, but feel free to ask any questions as they develop

Have fun!