

Project 1: introduction

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Rationale

Project 1 gives us an entry point into the class and the work we will be doing: reading, generating ideas, doing research, analyzing work rhetorically, writing, and revising. This project examines portrayals of ourselves and others. In our lives, we must present ourselves in various ways. For example, we present ourselves differently to a potential employer than we do on a personal website. We also change how we present a text depending on the intended effect and audience.

In this assignment, we are going to combine print and graphics to create texts that explore the representation of people for different purposes. This is called a **portrait**.

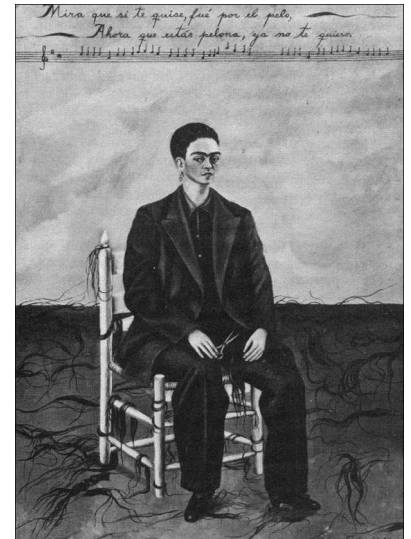
As we have discussed in class, portraits are not neutral. Every representation of a person (and his or her associated contexts) makes a judgement; we know that people have many “sides,” but a portrait only shows certain aspects of a person to create a specific effect.

Assignment

To explore how portraits function, you are responsible to turn in **3 sections of work**:

1. An annotated bibliography of 5 other portraits (**due Sept. 21**)
2. The portrait you create (**due Oct. 5**)
3. A reflective paper of approximately 4 pages (**due Oct. 5**)

These three sections will be covered in greater detail on the accompanying sheets.



Project 1: annotated bibliography

The annotated bibliography is due on Sept. 21

To create your annotated bibliography, you will find 5 portraits in a variety of media (you can use magazines, newspapers, flyers, the internet, and anything else



except your *Picturing Texts* textbook). From our discussions, you know that a portrait is a representation of a person that communicates a specific message. A portrait is not only the posed photographs you took in high school; a portrait is any representation of a person. All representations make choices about what information to transmit and what to withhold. Indeed, a portrait need not be graphic; there are many portraits that are constructed solely of written words (such as biographies).

Once you have your 5 portraits, you will create an alphabetized list of bibliographic entries. Each entry will include:

1. Documentation of the portrait (in MLA format)
2. A descriptive summary of the portrait
3. Your critical response describing the message the portrait communicates and how it transmits this message (**you should make use of the terms we have covered in class, such as immediate context, broader context, intertextuality, balance, narration, and so on**)

Each entry should be a few paragraphs in length. You will include printed copies of all 5 of your portraits. These can be photocopied, scanned and reproduced, printed, etc.

Project 1: *portrait*

The portrait is due on Oct. 5

After researching other portraits, you will create your own. Remember that a portrait need not be a self-portrait; you may be able to treat a subject other than yourself with greater objectivity. To create your portrait, you may opt to use



photography, drawing, image manipulation software, or other graphic tools. Do not feel pressured to use a piece of technology simply because it is available; the technologies you use should emerge from an understanding of your message, medium, and audience. Remember that the DLC in the library has a wealth of technology products that are available for you:

- digital cameras
- image manipulation software
- computer workstations
- scanners

If you have any questions about using technology, feel free to ask me or the staff in the DLC or the library.

It is your responsibly to determine what message your portrait will communicate and its intended audience. A more specific audience may help you shape your portrait accordingly. Take into consideration our class discussions on contexts, intertextuality, and design elements.

Project 1: *cumulative essay*

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Both a print and electronic version of the cumulative essay are due on Oct. 5

This component of Project 1 asks you to reflect on the work you have done. The form this reflection will take is an essay of approximately 4 pages that explores both your products and your processes. There are 2 main areas the essay should cover:

1. The essay should contain a description of your portrait in words. This description should communicate how you see what you have composed. Avoid using a list of observations. A clear descriptive passage is preferable
2. The bulk of your essay should explain **what your portrait communicates and how it does so**. You also should position your work in relationship to the portraits covered in your annotated bibliography and other images we have discussed in class, if possible. How does your work compare and contrast to the other portraits? How did the portraits in your annotated bibliography affect and inform what you chose to do? In this portion of your essay, you should make use of the terms and concepts we have discussed in class, such as the different kinds of contexts and the elements of design (balance, metaphor, narration, etc.).

This essay should be in MLA format, which we have discussed in class. As in all professional work, correct grammar and mechanics are necessary. Good ideas are only a component of good writing, and they do not supersede grammar and mechanics. Ideas are worthless without effective expression. Grammar and mechanics are the very substance of visual communication and they allow you to transmit your message in a clear and coherent way.

Remember that both a print and electronic version of the essay are due on Oct. 5. Both versions are required; I will not accept electronic versions alone. Bring the printed version to class. You may email me the electronic version at jtirrell@purdue.edu in any digital format. If you do not compose your essay with a computer, let me know before Oct. 5 and we will work something out.

Grading

The 3 sections of Project 1 are assessed separately, but the project is assigned a cumulative grade. This means that you must be certain to give adequate attention to all 3 parts of the project. Specific guidelines for each section follow:

1. **Annotated bibliography**—Excellent annotated bibliographies will ensure that all of the entries conform to MLA bibliographic standards. Also, they will show insight into the rhetorical elements a source employs and connect that insight to the concepts and terms we use in class.
2. **Portrait**—Excellent portraits will demonstrate attention to the elements of design discussed in class. Artistic ability is inconsequential; portraits are assessed on the author's ability to incorporate the rhetorical devices discussed in class into his or her work in a way that is appropriate to the message, medium, and audience.
3. **Cumulative essay**—Excellent cumulative essays will demonstrate the author's understanding of the concepts discussed in class and the author's sophistication in utilizing those concepts in his or her work. Excellent essays also will be clear, coherent, and prove a specific point. The essay should outline what it will prove about the portrait and then prove it. Correct grammar and mechanics are necessary in excellent essays, as without these elements the author's message will not be communicated in an effective way.

Be aware that artistic ability is not necessary to produce excellent work for Project 1. What is necessary is a thorough comprehension of the concepts covered



in class and the ability to apply those concepts to your own work. If you have questions about any facet of Project 1, I encourage you to discuss your work with me during conferences and visit me during office hours. I also can be reached through jtirrell@purdue.edu.

Project 1: *finding a topic*

Finding a Topic

There are exploratory questions you can ask yourself to help you determine the **subject** of your portrait and **what specific comment** you want your work to offer. A series of questions such as the one that follows is called an *heuristic*, and it is one way (but certainly not the only way) to discover your subject. Once you have a subject, you can investigate what comment you would like to make about it.

1. Think of your participation in different groups. For example, you are a student, you have a gender and a race, you have political inclinations, you participate in social communities, and so forth. Write down five of the groups to which you belong.
2. Select one of your five groups and think of the people inside of that group. Then think of the people outside of the group. What determines if a person is or is not a member of your group?
3. Investigate if there is a specific person who represents being in the group, or another who represents being outside of it.
4. Repeat this procedure with your other four groups.

Or

1. Go to a website that covers a wide range of topics, such as Yahoo! or MSN.
2. Look over the page briefly and record what catches your eye. Do you find particular headlines interesting? Are you drawn to certain images, or a particular category, such as news, entertainment, business, etc.
3. Explore some of your items in greater detail. Read the stories that accompany interesting headlines, examine images, and wander through the site.
4. Walk away from the computer and do something else for a few minutes (watch TV, get a snack, etc.). Then, write down what you remember about the stories and images you saw on the website.
5. Your list will solidify the kinds of issues you are interested in and those you deem memorable.
6. Determine if there is a person or group of people you can associate with the issues you find interesting or memorable.

Once you have an idea of what subject you would like to investigate, you can examine that subject in greater detail. Go to the “links” section of our website (<http://web.ics.purdue.edu/~jtirrell/links.htm>) and make use of the “invention guides” links. These websites will cover different ways to examine your subject and determine what comment you want make about it.