Overview. This self-study project is designed to facilitate your understanding of the Unit 1 threshold concepts: (1) Language and writing are resources we use to do, make, and be things in the world, and (2) Effective or meaningful writing is achieved through sustained engagement in literate practices and through revision. You will research and analyze your writing practices with the goal of reaching several critical insights about how you use language and writing resourcefully in your life. The project asks you to use field research to collect information, or data, that you will examine to discover interesting ideas about your writing practices in a particular writing situation. Through the various processes of collecting and analyzing data, drafting, revising, and reflecting, you will encounter the foundational idea that “effective or meaningful writing is achieved through sustained engagement in literate practices and through revision.”

Purpose. The main purpose of the project is to raise awareness of and think critically about the work your writing does for you and for your intended audiences. For the next several weeks, you’ll look closely at how you use or have used writing in order to communicate, think, and act. To meet your purpose, you will use auto-ethnographic research methods (studying yourself) in order to analyze a writing situation in which you regularly participate or have participated in the past. Then, you will write a 1000-1200 word portrait of yourself as a writer in a particular writing situation. Your portrait should discuss key insights about how you use, or have used, writing as a resource in your life. To study yourself as a resourceful writer, you may choose one of the three research focuses to guide your self-study:

- What has been my process in this writing situation? Why does this process work to meet my purpose with my audience? What is it about my process that could be strengthened in this writing situation? What have I learned about myself as a writer by studying my process in this writing situation?
- How do I portray my identity in this writing situation? Why? What purpose does this portrayal serve with my audience? What characteristics of the writing work to develop my persona? What have I learned about myself as a writer by studying how I’ve portrayed myself in this writing situation?
- What are the features, strategies, or moves I make in this writing situation? How do they help me meet my purpose with my audience? What have I learned about myself as a writer by studying the features, strategies, and moves I make in this particular writing situation?

You must use three auto-ethnographic data collection methods in your study. Everyone will be required to use the first method: gathering textual artifacts. For this method, you will collect at least three related texts that you’ve produced (e.g., notes to friends, emails/letters to family members, academic writing, Facebook updates, work-related writing, personal blog posts, lists, creative writing, visual essays, etc.). While these textual artifacts don’t have to be from the same genre (although they can be), there does need to be some kind of
commonality among them (e.g., a common function, audience, or context of use). After you’ve collected your textual artifacts, you’ll collect data using two other methods. Other methods will be covered on a content page later in this unit, and you’ll choose the methods that make sense for your project. All of your data must be submitted with your final portrait.

Along with your portrait, you'll submit a 250-300 word essay that reflects on your process for completing the self study. In this brief essay, reflect on 1) how the project challenged you as a writer, 2) how you responded to the challenge, and 3) how you can use what you've learned while completing this project in future writing situations?

**Audience.** Your instructor and peers will read the portrait. You should think about how you can “frame” your portrait in ways that will be interesting to your classmates.

**Other Details.** If you’d like to develop your understanding of the portrait genre, please use the following links to help you:
- Wikipedia definitions
- Excerpt on writing as portraiture
- Example of a famous artistic self-portrait
- Example of a literary portrait
- We will also look at some student examples from previous semesters!

You must integrate direct quotes from your research and textual artifacts into the body of your portrait. Including direct references from your data will help orient your reader and will make your portrait more impactful because it will include research-based evidence that grounds your discussion and helps readers see the ideas and passages you reference.

**Rhetorical Analysis of Another Writer’s Text**

**Overview.** For this essay, you will write a rhetorical analysis comparing the following two texts:

“Blue-Collar Brilliance”

“Shop Class as Soulcraft”

A rhetorical analysis is an essay that breaks apart a text and makes the parts meaningful by looking at the text rhetorically. To look at a text rhetorically means that you do not focus on what the author writes, but instead you focus on how the author writes. To complete your rhetorical analysis, you will analyze the strategies, choices, and moves the writers use to engage their audiences and achieve their purposes.

Though you likely won’t write a rhetorical analysis outside of this course, you will probably have to do some form of “textual response” in which you use writing to respond to an assigned text. The work you do while writing your rhetorical analysis will be work that is applicable to many textual response assignments in other courses. And, we know from “Rhetoric and its Characteristics” [link to the page] that *rhetorical thinking* is transferable across all writing and
communication situations. Hopefully, you can already see how thinking rhetorically about these situations can prepare you to be a more effective communicator, whether you’re writing your own texts or reading others’ texts, both in and out of school.

**Purpose and Audience.** For this essay, you will write a rhetorical analysis comparing the two texts, “Blue-Collar Brilliance” and “Shop Class as Soulcraft.” Your purpose is to compare how the two authors use 1 or 2 rhetorical strategies to meet their purposes with their intended audiences. Rhetorical strategies you might analyze include the following:

- Arrangement of ideas
- Claims of fact, value, definition, or policy
- Description and imagery
- Diction and tone
- Story-telling
- Use of evidence and sources

Read the content page “Rhetorical Strategies, Defined” to become more familiar with each of these strategies.

Your intended audience for this essay is your instructor, who will expect that you write a formal academic essay with a thesis statement, clear analytical claims, and textual evidence that supports your claims. Remember: Evidence-driven writing is the gold standard in academic writing. Your instructor will also expect that you write multiple drafts of your essay and that you edit it to the best of your ability.

**Additional details.** This will be the most academic-oriented essay you write in this class, so we will follow some general rules for academic essay writing in school. Your essay should be at least 1000 words and should include the following:

- an introduction paragraph that:
  - eases readers into the rhetorical analysis by setting an appropriate context
  - summarizes the purpose and main argument of each text (in no more than a few sentences)
  - identifies an intended audience for each text (in no more than a few sentences)
  - ends with a thesis statement that makes a claim comparing the two texts’ use of one or two rhetorical strategies.

- body paragraphs that:
  - begin with topic sentences that make claims about the author’s/authors’ use of a strategy,
  - incorporate textual evidence, and
  - interpret the evidence

- a conclusion paragraph that
  - summarizes your thesis and key ideas.
A Learning Society:
Teaching Others About Writing Through Multiple Modes

Overview. A society that values and sets goals in lifelong learning, community membership, and social well-being is regarded a learning society. Composition scholar and educational philosopher Mike Rose has suggested that all people living and working in America deserve an education that honors not only our economic motives for learning, but also our intellectual, social, civic, moral, and aesthetic motives as well. So too, our course this semester has worked to honor the countless reasons we value learning to write: to be creative, to send a message, to get a job, and to make a difference, among many other things.

This semester, you’ve had opportunities to make sense of what writing is, how it works, and why it matters through the research and readings you’ve engaged in and through the texts you’ve produced. You’ve encountered threshold concepts that explain writing in ways that you probably didn’t think much about before this course. Now you will teach others something about writing that they may have not had the opportunity to learn. In this way, you’ll take part in building the learning society for which Mike Rose and others have advocated.

Purpose and audience. You’ll choose an audience (for example, entering college freshmen, older adults, elementary school teachers, high school students, adults interested in writing, your coworkers, stay-at-home parents, college students in a particular major, etc.) and you’ll teach your audience an idea about writing that they might not have had the opportunity to consider before.

Along with this goal to teach, you’ll also aim to cultivate within your audience a richer or more complex understanding of what writing is and to inspire your audience to write, or—at the very least—to appreciate others’ writing.

Genre. The genre of this project is entirely up to you. Be sure your decision is based on your purpose, audience, and context for composing, and make these choices clear in your statement of goals. Some examples of genres include podcasts, screencasts, children’s books, Public Service Announcements, student or employee guides, game boards, videos, or photo essays.

The potential topics are endless. Here are a few example project ideas:

- A student chooses to create a screencast, write to engineering students who may not see a value in writing, and write about how writing will shape their future work as engineers.
- A student chooses to create a podcast, write to high school students, and write about the importance of sustained engagement in writing for school.
- A student chooses to create a photo essay, write to creative adults who are interested in writing, and write about rhetorical persuasion found in the writing on bathroom stalls all over Salt Lake City.
• A student chooses to create an employee writing guide, write to her colleagues at work, and write about how to use language resourcefully in a variety of genres on the job, using work-related examples as evidence.
• A student chooses to create a video, write to working adults in Salt Lake City, and write about the value of making one’s voice heard in the public square through writing. The student interviews an SLC activist who is working on projects in air quality as an example for the project.

**Statement of Goals and Choices.** Additionally, you will write a 350-400 word Statement of Goals and Choices that accounts for the goals you made for this project and the choices you made to meet your goals. You should discuss the following:

• *What, exactly, is the piece trying to accomplish—beyond simply teaching your audience about writing.* What work are you doing here? To this end, you will discuss all of the major goals/purposes you have imagined for this piece.
• *The specific rhetorical choices you made in service of your goals.* Here, you’ll discuss strategies, moves, and choices you made to accomplish your work. Strong reflections will also address how these choices are tied to audience.
• *An explanation of why you ended up pursuing the plan you described in the first two prompts as opposed to others you have thought of.* Refer here to any/all ideas you came up in the beginning of the project up to your final editing.

Please note that the Statement of Goals and Choices is important because it will influence my interaction with your work. I will look favorably on statements that are developed and detailed because they will show me that you thought long and hard about your goals and choices for completing this project.

**Grading Criteria**

• The purpose and focus of the project and Statement of Goals are clear to the reader and demonstrate understanding of the assignment’s goals. Overall, the student’s texts show high-level engagement with the threshold concepts of the course.
• The project reveals critical insight(s) about writing with elaboration and depth and these insights are clearly relevant to a specific audience. The Statement of Goals includes all required discussions, which are listed in the assignment sheet, and illustrates that the student thought critically about goals and choices.
• The organization overall is logical, appropriate to the purpose, and sophisticated. It’s easy for the audience to move with the speaker/presenter from one idea to the next.
• The use of aural/visual elements memorably enriches the project. The project is not just words on a page. The Statement of Goals explains aural/visual goals and choices.
• Careful editing is evident throughout the project. Editing choices of both content and form clearly have been made to improve the overall effect.
E-Portfolio Update. Along with completing your final project, you’ll need to update your e-portfolio for this course. To update your e-portfolio, submit your final project (including the Statement of Goals) and write a 250-300 word response to the following Summative Reflection:

- Reflect on how you thought about writing before you took this course and how you think about it now that the course is over. Have any of your assumptions or understandings changed? Why? What assignments, activities, or readings in this course were influential in your learning? Reference at least one of the threshold concepts to help you, and provide evidence to support your discussion.

- Language and writing are resources we use to do things, be things, and make things in the world.
- Effective or meaningful writing is achieved through sustained engagement in literate practices (e.g., thinking, researching, reading, interpreting, and even procrastinating!) and through revision.
- Rhetoric provides a method for studying the work that language and writing do.
- Writing is a process of deliberation. It involves identifying and enacting choices, strategies, and moves.
- Writing is a form of action. Through writing we respond to problems and can create change in the world.
- The meanings and the effects of writing are contingent on situation, on readers, and on a text’s purposes/uses.