Setting Up Your Portfolio

Choose a portfolio that has several pockets or a ringed binder in which you can put pockets. Everything you do in the class should be kept in this portfolio, so plan for it to get thick. (Also plan to photocopy the most vital parts occasionally and put the copies in a safe place, the same way you would back up important computer files.) Date every entry and keep them in chronological order for quick reference across sections, as follows:

Action Items

Just as an executive would jot reminders about important to-do’s or an artist would schedule goals for the next work session, so should you. Don’t limit yourself to formal assignments; take control of your learning and set yourself your own short- and long-term goals based on what happens in class. (You might want to sub-divide this section into short- and long-term goals.)

Class Notes

Like a fieldworker who has witnessed an event, here you will include all notes taken in class in double-entry style. (Take five minutes at the end of class or after class to add commentary in the left-hand margin.) Be sure to scribble any and all ideas for developing your strategies and style!

Fieldnotes

Include all your fieldnotes, including observations, interviews, and artifacts.

Writing Exercises/Homework

Use this section for short exercises from class or homework. Often you will return to this writing, revise it, and build upon it.

Drafts and Revisions

Include all of your drafts and revisions of longer writing projects here. Some of these projects will grow out of your shorter writing assignments.

Editing Checklist and Handbook Exercises

You will compile a personalized editing checklist during the term, based on our handbook exercises and on shortcomings pointed out to you. Include this checklist at the front of the section, followed by the handbook exercises and all extra work you do on grammar and usage. Some of your Action Items will surely show up here.

Strategies!

This section is possibly the most important of all. As the semester progresses and you complete homework assignments, conduct research--in the field, in the library, and on line, post to our web forum, and participate in classroom discussions, you should be making notes to yourself about specific strategies you can use for specific writing situations. Include these strategies here to help you in all your future writing.