Compiling Your (E-)Portfolio

1. **Take Stock.** Assemble all of your writing, including the three finished pieces, previous drafts, notes from peer review, your writing journal, and your meta-commentaries.

2. **Introduce Individual Pieces.** Compose an Introduction to each piece. In this introduction, retrace the evolution of the piece from its very beginning, recounting major changes and reasons for the change. Include your purpose(s) and perceived audience(s) as you drafted, input from peers and the instructor, tenets from Goldsberry that you were attempting to enact, and any other influences. Cite from your Writer's Journal occasionally. If your three pieces evolved into one big piece, you can still talk about how they initially evolved individually, then how you made them part of one coherent project—and what that entailed.

3. **Introduce the Entire Portfolio.** Now step back and compose a cover page introduction to the entire portfolio. Imagine an audience that might not include anyone who has ever seriously undertaken nonfiction writing, explaining in detail some of the skills and knowledge you nurtured during the course. Refer (and/or link) to individual pieces to demonstrate exactly what you are talking about. (For example, if you believe you honed your expertise in developing an engaging voice, link to moments in the pieces where this voice rings clearest. You might also include earlier versions of that voice that you improved upon.) Helpful strategies:
   a. Imagine an employer or a graduate school applications panel as your audience.
   b. Exploit your Writer's Journal. Your writer's journal can help you remember how each piece evolved. You might even cite dates, if you have them, to show the significant revisions you made and what completing these revisions entailed.
   c. Don't be afraid to "teach" your reader about what sustained development of writing nonfiction entails. Goldsberry can come in handy here, too. You can cite him to explain how fiction writers approach certain challenges, then explain how the tenets he suggests either translate directly into nonfiction tenets or require some adjusting.
   d. Sell yourself. Not literally, of course ☺️, nor even in the metaphorical sense of "selling out." But DO stress how the work reflected in this portfolio represents achievement that those who have never attempted such writing might not be able to claim. If you have investigated publication venues and/or drafted a query letter, include commentary on that, too. (If you have drafted a query letter, bring it to our conference next week!)