Portfolio 2:
Annotated Bibliography and Review of Literature

Due Thursday, November 1 ~~ 25% of course grade*

Research is the process of going up alleys to see if they are blind.

~ Marston Bates (zoologist)

THE CHALLENGE:

Portfolio 2 begins by choosing a research question related to our course theme (community health and wellness). By Thursday, October 6th, you should have a project proposal posted to your blog. Then you'll engage in some heavy duty research, finding eight to ten sources that help you fully consider an issue, from multiple perspectives. You'll read sources critically as you go, writing an annotated bibliography that will become the basis for a review of literature.

These two documents (plus a reflective overview) comprise portfolio 2, due Thursday, November 1st.

Choose your topic wisely. The research, reading, and writing you do to create portfolio 2 will set you up to join the conversation on your topic in portfolio 3.

DETAILS: THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The proposal is NOT part of portfolio 2, and will be due earlier than the portfolio. This will be graded as complete and thoughtful (full credit), incomplete/undeveloped (half credit), or not done (no credit), and will count as part of your participation grade. That said, this is a necessary, and important, step in your work this term.

Your research proposal must be posted to your blog by class time on October 6th. Your proposal should be at least 500 words in length, and should:
- Identify the topic, and your initial research question.
- Tell us a bit about the topic and research questions, and why it's a problem worth addressing. Your goal here is to create reader interest in your topic, and illustrate how it fits into the course theme (community health and wellness), and why it interests you personally.
- Tell us what you already know about the topic.
- Tell us what you think you need to find out, and where/how you will look for this information.

Draft your proposal offline, in a word-processing program, to give yourself time to think and to polish your writing and your ideas. Publish it to your blog before class time on Thursday, October 6th.

DETAILS: THE ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

An annotated bibliography is a list of bibliographic citations of sources followed up by descriptive and evaluative writing, the annotations. You may arrange citations alphabetically, or alphabetically within categories of information.

Annotations are different from summaries. Summaries recap the source, but annotations go a bit further: "[a]nnotations are descriptive and critical; they expose the author's point of view, clarity and appropriateness of expression, and authority" (Engle et al).

The purpose of creating an annotated bibliography is to learn about your topic (although people often publish annotated bibliographies for assisting other authors and researchers). The process of annotating requires that you read more critically than you might otherwise, and helps you capture ideas that will facilitate writing based on your research. This process, therefore, is a time-consuming one. Do not put this project off until the week it's due, or (worse yet) the night before it's due. The annotated bibliography must be complete before you can create a meaningful draft of the review of literature.

Your annotated bib must consist of a minimum of eight to ten sources, each cited in the academic citation system of your choice. These sources should represent a variety of perspectives on your research question, as well as a variety of source types (popular and academic, print and online, primary and secondary). This means that the sources you choose to annotate are not likely to be simply the first eight to ten that you find: instead, you will carefully cull your initial "hits," carefully selecting those most appropriate to your information needs, as well as to your ultimate purpose and audience. (This also means that your annotated bibliography may *not* wind up including the source you have chosen as the subject of your in-class presentation.)

I am unable to give you a specific length requirement for this document: the length of each annotation will depend upon the length and complexity of each source you choose, as well as its relationship to other sources in your collection. In general, however, good annotations cannot be created in a single paragraph. Aim for approximately one page for each source.

Resources: The Annotated Bibliography

Bisignani , Dana and Allen Brizee. "Annotated Biblographies." Purdue OWL. Purdue Writing Lab, n.d. Web. 02 March 2010.
      *Direct link: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/

Engle, Michael, Amy Blumenthal, and Tony Cosgrave. "How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography." Cornell University Library. Cornell University, 12 Feb. 2010. Web. 02 March 2010.
      *Direct link: http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm

DETAILS: THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this document (a minimum of five pages in length, typewritten and double-spaced) you will share what you've learned about your research question with an academic audience, and begin making plans for what you'd like to do with this information/about this topic as the semester progresses. You must make use of at least eight relevant sources. All sources must be used ethically: you are expected to provide both in-text and bibliographic citations using the academic citation system of your choice.

There are three "moves" you'll need to make in this document:

1) Your essay will begin with a review of literature, a process that provides your reader with some background information relevant to, as well as a report of multiple perspectives on, your research question. The literature review is not a way of making your own argument, but a way of uncovering and thinking through what others have said about the topic. You might think of this as a "some people say" paper—one that eavesdrops on those who are participating in discussions of your research question, and shares what they had to say with your audience in a thoughtful, unbiased way.

A lot of good arguments are spoiled by some fool who knows what he is talking about.
~ Miguel de Unamuno (author)

The review of literature is an academic genre with a specific form and pattern of its own. We'll look at some samples of this kind of writing, and discuss it frequently as you progress.

2) Following your literature review, you will move into a second section in which you express YOUR informed opinion on your research question. (Think of this as a "so what" section. Now that you've shared all this information, what do you think about it? How do you think your readers should respond to it?)

3) Finally, you will make plans for what you'd like to DO with what you've learned as we continue our research and writing. (Who would your ideal oral history interviewee be? Where/how will you make contact with this person? What further research do you need/want to do? How might you use writing—in your third portfolio-- to address the problem you've been exploring?

Your essay must include academic style in-text citations, and must conclude with a full bibliography of all sources used. (MLA style is the default in this class; however, you may choose to use the citation system that will be used in your major field of study if you so choose.)
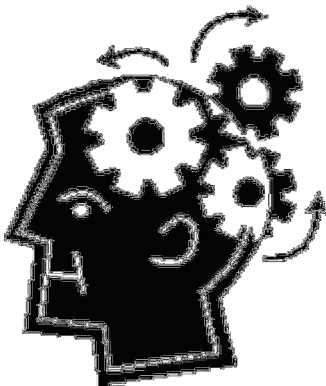
DETAILS: THE REFLECTIVE OVERVIEW
The third and final piece of your portfolio is a reflective overview, a place to think about your own thinking, and learning, as you researched, read, and wrote. Consider this document a sort of cover letter in which you unpack the "invisible" work and learning processes that helped you complete the written products presented.

Report on and evaluate the different processes you used in various parts/stages of each assignment, explore what and how you learned, and evaluate whether what you've done/learned will be (or not be) useful to you (for this class and others, and in your day-to-day life).

Remember to be more than descriptive about your work—be reflective and analytical. Explain the text(s) you've created. How? Why? What works? What doesn't? Self-assess: based on the expectations for the project/the course, what grade do you think it should earn, and why? Please list concrete reasons (from the critical thinking and information literacy skills rubrics, which we'll be working with this term; the goals of the course; and/or from the rubric for the current writing project) explaining why this grade is appropriate.

Because it is such an important piece of writing, this reflective overview will be the result of multiple drafts and peer review. It will represent careful, college level writing. It is more than a description. It is also an analysis and an evaluation. One way to think of the purpose of your overview is to persuade readers that your performance for the period of the project should be evaluated in a certain way, earning a certain grade, with ample reasons to support your claims. Obviously, with this much to accomplish, the overview is important. Effective overviews will be several pages long, well organized, clear.