Module 3

Shooka Rafizadeh – PW Interview

-What was the inspiration for your PW portfolio?

I looked at previous portfolios made by PW alums. I also looked at random blogs and websites that I liked and took some ideas from there.

-Why did you choose the pieces you did for your portfolio?

I adjust my portfolio depending on the job I'm going after, so it totally depends on what job I'm trying to get at the moment. I'm a full-time freelancer, so if I'm going after a technical writing job, I'll adjust my portfolio to match the criteria of that job, just like you would with a resume.

-Do you have any tips that you wish you would have known when you were starting that I should know about?

Don't worry about having a perfect portfolio right after college. It takes time to polish a portfolio, and you won't have that many samples until you get into the work field. So basically, be patient with it, and continue to add/take things out. If you're going into writing, start contributing to journals, magazines, etc and collect as many writing samples as you can so you have options.

-How did you practice presenting your portfolio?

More often than not you don't have to physically present your portfolio, at least not the whole thing. Usually you send your portfolio digitally, and then maybe print a few pieces for the in-person interview.

-What did you struggle with the most when making your portfolio?

I'm not great with web design, but I learned how to use Wordpress, which changed everything. I definitely recommend using Wordpress if you want a fully editable portfolio that's not super hard to comprehend.

After communicating with Shookah, I realized that a portfolio isn't something you can just throw together. I knew this before, but not to the extent that I do now – I didn't put enough emphasis on the patience factor that Shookah discussed. Like most things, we figure out we have to do them and we want to get them done as quickly as possible. I like how she made her portfolio seem like an evolving piece of artwork. I appreciate how she mentioned that she isn't great with web design because even though I'm just getting started, I'm not that great with it either. It's easy to feel as an Undergraduate that you need to be good at all things or you'll fail, so it was refreshing and helpful to hear that she struggled as well. I found it to be really interesting how she edits her portfolio based on the job she's going for, fully knowing how requirements and people change from job to job. This is an interesting point that I've never really heard discussed before and something I definitely find to be useful. Overall, my encounter with Shookah was beneficial: she helped me relax, she explained to me what demonstrates a good portfolio, and what it's like to be a real person in the professional world.