Please create a simple CSS file for my portfolio website inspired by a clean and modern professional aesthetic. I'm a student learning CSS basics and need styling for the following sections:

* Navigation bar
* Header/intro section
* About me section
* Education section
* Projects section
* Skills section
* Extracurricular activities section
* Contact form
* Footer

I'd like my website to have a structured and visually balanced look that emphasizes readability and accessibility. Make sure the layout is fully responsive for both mobile and desktop screens. Please add helpful comments that explain what different parts of the CSS do.

Some specific things I'd like:

* A color scheme based on a cohesive and elegant palette (using CSS variables like --secondary-bg, --primary-text, and --accent-color)
* A well-structured font (using "Merriweather", serif) for a professional and refined feel
* Smooth hover effects on navigation links and buttons
* A card-based design for projects with slight elevation effects on hover
* Consistent spacing and padding for a clean and uncluttered layout