Final Project Proposal

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FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

We are slowly inching to the half-way point of this semester. So far we we have had the chance to read (at least, according to the syllabus) well over fifty stories that fall under the "Weird" category. One of the major "Course Objectives" for ENGL200 courses is to have students "relate to, enjoy, analyze, discuss, and write about imaginative literature, including poetry, fiction, and drama or film …" I would like us to try to start discussing how exactly we would like to go about demonstrating that this objective has been achieved when the final week of the semester rolls around.

So, to get the blood flowing: What have you been thinking about so far as we've read the stories we have so far? (I know that the weekly discussion boards give one a pretty good sense of what many of you have been thinking so far, but they do not require you to speak to the "Course Objective" cited above.) Have you found any of the stories particularly interesting? Have you often found yourself drawing connections or threads between different stories? Each week in the discussion boards I think we do a pretty good job of trying to treat the individual stories as thoroughly as we can. We often talk about ways of interpreting a particular story (e.g. "What does this detail mean?"); we often talk about *how* the story works, how the story functions; we sometimes talk about and evaluate the stories: which ones are good, which ones are not so good, etc.; and more often than not we (or perhaps often I) try to complicate our answers, to increase the number of different ways one can interpret or respond to these stories. Many of you would seem to *absolutely love* to make connections between the stories from our anthologies and other stories you've read before, other movies you've seen, TV shows, other books, etc.

This is the moment in time where I would like everyone to start pondering how you think it is best to "represent" your learning, your knowledge, etc., in this course—what would the best way be? Is the best representation a straight-up "analytical essay" of some kind —the kind that you have no doubt probably written countless times already over the course of your academic careers so far? Is the best representation a sit-down "oral exam" or conversation with me? Is the best representation some kind of "self-reflection" paper where you list your new knowledge (but, of course, one would wonder why such a "list" would be a good representation of what you have learned or what you can now do …)? Would the best representation be some kind of actual exam, with multiple choice questions, ID questions, essay questions, etc. Is the best representation not done in words and sentences, but perhaps in terms of something more visual? in terms of something more **"digital"** ▢→ **(https://depaul.digication.com/laurens_eportfolio6/Guidelines_for_Multimodal_Essay)** or **"multimodal** ▢→ **(https://kcwritingcenter.weebly.com/multimodal-projects.html)** ?" (If you need a crash course in multimodel projects, what they could look like, etc., have a look at this chapter from Cheryl E. Ball's text, *Writer/Designer: A Guide To Making Multimodal Projects* **here (https://learn.stfrancis.edu/courses/1174984/files/62481273/download?wrap=1)** ⤓ **(https://learn.stfrancis.edu/courses/1174984/files/62481273/download?download_frd=1)** .) All of us come from very different disciplinary backgrounds—it goes without saying that the Marketing major brings a different skill set, along with no doubt a really different set of priorities, than a Math major. Ideally what we end up taking away from this course is perhaps something that one can use in other situations, other contexts, other scenarios, than just the small number of situations we can create in a "literature classroom." Many of you are Nursing majors—could we figure out some way to have what you've learned here connect to your future in that major? Or is that just absolutely silly?

Once we all have a sense of what we would like to make or build or create through taking this course, assessment starts to become a little bit easier. If one would like to take what we're doing here and then build *X*—whatever *X* might be—there are all kinds of forms of assessment that won't end up measuring anything germane or useful. Back in Week 1, it was no doubt way too early to ask everyone: "What do you want out of this course?" Somewhere around the half-way point might be a better time to begin asking that question. So, let's ask and see what we can do in terms of answers.

Feel free to take some time brainstorming, some time to think about how the semester is going so far. Also spend some time thinking about what exactly you might like to produce for the "Final Project" that will demonstrate what you've learned. In this dropbox for the proposal we want something that describes your project: what is it; how do you envision it demonstrating your new knowledge, new skills, new whatever; how one might best go about evaluating your final project, how you would like to use the capacities or "affordances" of the medium your project is in (so, if it's a video or a potential episode for some kind of "Weird Podcast" or what have you, how does that medium allow you to do certain things that other media don't), etc. Are you allowed to pitch a proposal but then change it quite a bit by the time the end of the semester comes around, absolutely.

I am sure that many of you might feel that all of this is vague and rather amorphous—there's no doubt that's partially by design. I am sure that many of you will like some help brainstorming. If you would like to brainstorm with me IRL, as it were, don't hesitate to e-mail and we'll find some time when we can pile into an empty classroom and draw pictures, talk your ideas through, etc. If you like to brainstorm through the computer, that's fine too, I have created a **"Page" (https://learn.stfrancis.edu/courses/1174984/pages/final-project-ideas-brainstorming-page-with-sample-projects-done-in-the-past)** where we might all together do some brainstorming about possible projects that could potentially work. As project ideas come into my head I'll throw them up there and you can feel free to do likewise. (This page also has a bunch of examples from previous students who have taken this course in the past.)

Obviously, designing this "Final Project" will require some time and thought. What exactly did you learn to do in this course? Did you learn to look at some of these "weird stories" "more deeply" than perhaps you did in the past—what exactly does it mean to look at or know a text "deeply" or "more deeply"? Were you absolutely, totally new to this genre of literature and thus you perhaps did not quite learn how to read more "deeply" at all, but you learned how to do something that is not best described using this metaphor of "depth" (which, presumably, is opposed to "surface"—but what exactly does it mean to read a text or story's "surface")? By the end of the semester, we will no doubt have talked about *a ton* of things this semester. My hope is that over the course of this semester we/I managed to give you a sense of the richness of all these texts, these stories, even this genre—"richness" in the sense of providing enough "stuff" for you to be able to find something that fascinated you enough to want to sink your teeth into it.

As a couple of you have asked for just a little bit more guidance in terms of the actual project proposal assignment itself, I thought I would add a few more guidelines/suggestions. I am in many ways following the suggestions that again come from Cheryl Ball's fantastic *Writer/Designer* text (the linked **Chapter 4 (https://learn.stfrancis.edu/courses/1174984/files/62481299/download?wrap=1)** ↓ **(https://learn.stfrancis.edu/courses/1174984/files/62481299/download?download_frd=1)** is also something everyone could look at if they so desired as it sets out rather nicely what I think we want to do with this "proposal"). Ball, et. al. suggest there are a couple of steps for designing projects (and this advice would seem to apply to all kinds of different projects); every good proposal is going to need to have a couple of things (and you can feel free to structure your own proposals this way if you like):

1. The proposal needs some kind of "pitch":
    1. what do you want to do for your project;
    2. how do you want to do it (ideally, the *how* and the *what* will be rather intimately connected). (The pitch can be a little vague and somewhat tentative, especially since no one will have done a ton of research/work on the actual projects by this point in time.)
2. Thinking more about how you design the "pitch" itself:
    1. what are you trying/wanting to do with this project;
    2. what modes or genres are you going to use to do it (will you be working with film, with music, with audio, will you just be working with good ol' black and white characters on a white piece of paper, etc., sky's the limit);
    3. how does the pitch manage to illustrate what you want it to illustrate: i.e. why do this kind of project in the first place with the goal of demonstrating your knowledge and your learning over the course of the semester?
3. How do you think it would be best for your audience to evaluate your project? What criteria would you like your audience to use when it thinks about this project, how well it achieves its own goals, etc.? What would make this kind of project a successful one? What would make it a failure?

After everyone puts forward a proposal, I will respond and provide feedback so that we can get into the following "feedback loop," as it were (image courtesy of Ball, et. al.'s text):

Figure 4.5 The Feedback Loop
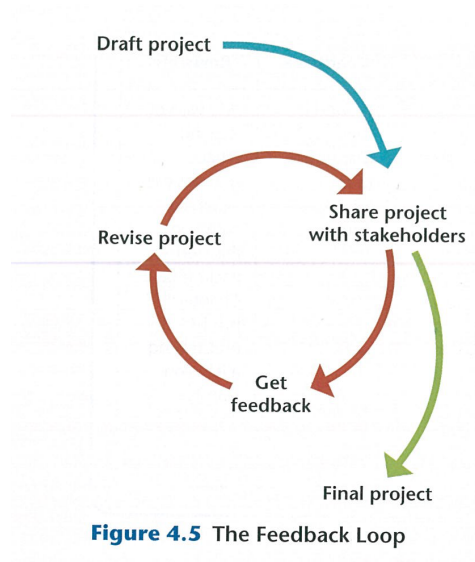
Points	50
Submitting	a text entry box or a file upload

Due	For	Available from	Until
Mar 12	Everyone	-	-

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Criteria	Ratings								Pts
1.) The Pitch	**10 pts** **Excellent** The pitch is clear and the path going forward is clear as well.	**9 pts** **Very Good**	**8 pts** **Good**	**7 pts** **Average** Project is somewhat clear--the number of ideas that could be clearer is greater than those that are clear.			**6 pts** **Needs Work**	**0 pts** **Failing**	10 pts
2.) Design of the Pitch	**10 pts** **Excellent** The proposal makes very clear the media that will be involved with this project.	**9 pts** **Very Good**	**8 pts** **Good**	**7 pts** **Average** Proposal is somewhat clear on the "how" of the project, but it could be further refined quite a bit.			**6 pts** **Needs Work**	**0 pts** **Failing**	10 pts
3.) Audience	**10 pts** **Excellent** The audience is clear and the proposal's form and content have been thought about in relation to the imagined audience.			**9 pts** **Very Good**	**8 pts** **Good**	**7 pts** **Average** Audience is fairly clear.	**6 pts** **Needs Work**	**0 pts** **Failing**	10 pts
4.) Evaluation	**10 pts** **Excellent** Proposal makes very clear how the author would like to see the project evaluated and judged.	**9 pts** **Very Good**	**8 pts** **Good**	**7 pts** **Average** The proposal could be much clearer and extensive in terms of how the author would like the project to be evaluated.			**6 pts** **Needs Work**	**0 pts** **Failing**	10 pts
5.) Cosmetics, Mechanics, Polish	**10 pts** **Excellent** Proposal is polished without errors.	**9 pts** **Very Good**	**8 pts** **Good**	**7 pts** **Average** The proposal has a number of misspellings, could stand to have been proofread a bit more.			**6 pts** **Needs Work**	**0 pts** **Failing**	10 pts
								Total Points: 50	