

Interviewer: Do you have any questions?

Interviewee: Nope.

Interviewer: All right, so the first question is how did you describe yourself as a writer when you first began at Michigan.

Interviewee: I was always pretty good at writing in high school. My AP Euro teacher, US teacher we wrote a paper every single week. I did mostly professional writing like formal essays. I guess in general it would be just like very, very academic based, just very formal. Nothing that was every very informal, I never took a creative writing class or anything like that. All my essays were always based off of history stuff or me talking about pieces of literature, but never making a short story or anything like that.

Interviewer: Okay, so it was all for school mainly?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: How would you describe yourself now as a writer?

Interviewee: I would say probably the same. The majority of my writing particularly this semester was all on history and political science and stuff that kinda went along with it. I would say I'm probably more daring I guess in integrating more of my personal opinion into stuff.

In high school it was very based off of very specific facts and the exact textual information and not very much personal information. This year I've been able to kind of develop that a little bit, coming up with my own political theories and that kind of a thing and making arguments like that. I guess that would be the big difference.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, okay have you developed any language to talk about yourself as a writer or how you learned to write since you've been at Michigan?

Interviewee: What does that mean? Can you clarify that?

Interviewer: That just means if you've learned any different ways to sort of maybe talk about what happens when you write or I guess language just means terms or yeah.

Interviewee: Terms, yes and no. The majority of where I learned to write was definitely high school and here it's only been kind of expanding on things that I've already kind of done. I don't know if that makes sense. I guess I didn't do a bunch of analytic writing so much. It was more report based, if that makes sense. I guess that would be kind of I guess the big difference at this point.

Interviewer: Okay, so to what extent would you say that you've grown as a writer?

Interviewee: I'm definitely much better at integrating different sources together to make an opinion. Throughout a whole paper taking different clips from different articles and compiling them in a way that supports an argument rather than just saying this person said this and this person said this and this is why they're different.

I guess the big difference would be able to take information and interpret it in a way to use towards formulating an argument rather than just regurgitating an argument.

Interviewer: Where do you think that growth can you attribute that to is it—

Interviewee: I think it's just more experience in writing and having more access to more resources. In high school it's normally assigned, you're going to use these four articles and that's what you do. You kind of lose a little bit of that creativity.

Definitely just—I learn a lot through my English classes, what kind of research the libraries have and how the libraries can help you use and look for things. I guess I think that would be that, I guess makes a big difference in how.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, what are your goals for yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: Definitely work on my clarity. I tend to drift off into nowhere sometimes. The big goal for most of my papers is to make sure I'm staying concise. I have the opposite problem as most people; I normally go way past the actual page limit. Keeping it concise and keeping arguments constrained without drifting off into la-la land is what I normally do.

Interviewer: Okay, has that goal changed or evolved since you entered the minor?

Interviewee: I'm trying to think. I definitely say it would be consistent. We didn't have in Range Word 4:24 so much as a page limit to things. It was a little bit more expansive, but definitely something I had to work on was making sure. I did an article for my final project, I did two formats of a newspaper article based on two different opinions. I saw being concise and very clear was definitely more important in those two because taken next to each other they needed to be on the same information, but based on two different opinions. That I think would be the big way that being concise definitely played into that.

I guess kinda as well on the portfolio because I could easily ramble on forever talking about a little biography about myself or an introduction. Trying to keep things clear and simple as opposed to super complex and really confusing.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, so the assignments in the class really helped you do that?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm, yeah they were definitely a good way to focus that goal within the specific assignments rather than just kind of a broad, try to hit six page roughly topic, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, was that a goal that you had when you were writing in high school or did you think about that then?

Interviewee: Not as much. In high school it was definitely more okay I have to write a six page paper and I have five, how many ridiculous words and adjectives can I add in there. I definitely would say it was the opposite. That just might be more experience in knowing what to analyze or having better prompts and expectations here than I did in high school.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, so if you think across all of the writing experiences you've had here at Michigan, what do you think it means to write well?

Interviewee: I think again I'd focus on that clarity. It needs to be something that people can first understand, because you can have a really great point and a really great argument. If you make it too complex to understand just with words alone, it's not gonna be that easy to figure out.

I'm trying to think, can you repeat the question again?

Interviewer: If you think across all the writing you've done here, what does it mean to write well?

Interviewee: Okay, yeah definitely the clarity and I definitely would say something that people are interested in reading. That being able to develop some type of argument is across all the different genre's that I've written in. Making something that people want to read and not just regurgitating what other people have said.

Writing well involves making sure that you've taken time to analyze the counterarguments and the different points, factors that go into making an argument. To develop your own kind of clear and concise description of how you perceive a certain issue.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, and you said people want to read it, who are those people?

Interviewee: Even if it's just your professor who wants to read it, hopefully they would rather be engaged in reading rather than just seeing a list of things that they said in lecture. For the portfolio and stuff, that's useful as well to try to get some of my writing out there, kind of in general. Just whoever the audience is going to be for that specific assignment.

If you're going to make it a group presentation that involves a writing component, making sure that the group itself is also going to be engaged in how you presented it. Tailoring it to your audience to make sure that that is something that pertains to them and fashioning it in a way that'll be interesting.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, okay. What do you think is the most important when you're learning to write?

Interviewee: I would say learning how to do research. I learned how to do research in kind of what would be perceived in a archaic way with index cards and you have the source card, that's one. You label 1.1, 1.2 for all the rest of the sources, I still stand by it to this day. I tell people how to do it all the time, because I think that's something that a lot of people didn't necessarily learn.

They just said okay you're gonna do research, here are your sources and some people highlight and some people write notes down, everything stays really, really messy. A way to formally organize your research I think helps guide everything. I sit with my index cards and take up the floor of a library sometimes and just spread 'em out everywhere and throw things at people who walk too close.

I think research was definitely is the key way to kinda form your ideas. Even if it's just you're developing points on your own, formulating it into an organized system so that you can make sure that you have everything in front of you. You're not scrambling to see who the source came from or if it's something you can't find 08:49 on your own. I think is the key difference in good writers.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. What first year writing requirement did you take?

Interviewee: I'm taking [English course].

Interviewer: Okay, can you tell me a little bit about that class?

Interviewee: We did writing, was it, analytic writing I think was the topic of it. We did some really cool assignments actually. One of my favorites we had to take an ad and write what was persuasive about the ad and how the different components of the ad reflected the impact of it.

I'm trying to think of the other assignments we did in it. We did kind of broad—every paper was very different. Obviously all was still in the analytic sense so it was never submit, your personally generating. You had to—I think I analyzed a film, the ad, there were two more assignments that I can't think of off the top of my head anymore.

I really liked it. It was a good way to transition into college writing in a small environment while still focus—it didn't take me too far out of my comfort zone. It wasn't poetry or something that I would have been totally uncomfortable with.

I really liked the professor too, or the instructor I guess for it, I guess technically. He was very good with giving constructive feedback that explained not just only kind of what the issue was but why it is that way and how exactly you could fix it. Which was nice rather than just a circle that said vague. I think it really did improve my writing a lot.

It made me a lot more comfortable with writing in college because that was kind of a big hesitation for me. It got me involved in writing in a very—I don't want to say safe environment but it was definitely very supportive kind of group setting.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, so what did you learn in that class that you continue to use in your writing now?

Interviewee: I think it was we did a lot of the analyzing of things, that was kind of important. That I've used, pretty much just analyzing people's opinions or documents and not just regurgitating exact quotes what they say. Looking at how a specific article you're reading impacts everyone else or that quote could impact your essay that you're writing. I think was the key thing that I learned in that class for sure.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, so you said one of the ways that you had grown was learning not to just regurgitate?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you think the [English course] class had something to do with that?

Interviewee: I'd say so, definitely. We had a lot of opportunity to come up with thoughts on our own and integrate them into a paper, which was definitely not something that I had ever had experience in. It was a good way to kinda see what works, what doesn't work, how much support you need for certain things that you say.

Obviously in a history class you need much more support for coming up with a statement than you would if you were just writing, depending on the topic. Definitely kind of testing out where you can push your own opinion and your own argument into it versus where you need to kinda stay constrained within facts or a thought or something like that.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, okay. In that [English course] class, did you use any terms or develop any language to talk about writing?

Interviewee: We did and I cannot remember any of them specifically. I'm sure I used them and don't even realize I use them. I'm trying to think, we did a lot of stuff with arguments, causal arguments, and that type of thing. I'm trying to think I'll think of something mid-interview.

Interviewer: Do you think you don't remember those because they weren't useful or do you think something else is happening?

Interviewee: I think they were useful and I just don't remember that I learned them there, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: I think they've become so intrinsic to the writing process for me in the different classes that I hear them come up all the time. It's not just the one guy said that for me one time.

Interviewer: Right, okay. Did you take [Writing course]?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: No, okay. What's your concentration?

Interviewee: Political science.

Interviewer: Do you do writing in political science?

Interviewee: All the time.

Interviewer: Okay, can you tell me about that?

Interviewee: I write for every assignment, every essay, every midterm, every final. I've never had a non-writing final exam or midterm exam in any of my political science classes. I am one with the Blue Book [examination booklet]. I think I took seven or eight this semester, I hate them. Yeah, that's all I do is really write. It kind of depends on what exact course it is.

This semester I had a lot of stuff that had to do with Supreme Court documents and opinions in those and the Constitution. That was kind of the big focus in integrating those arguments while still formulating my own theory on it, I guess.

Both professors that I had for those classes were very receptive to seeing what you could do with the information that you already had from the class, so that was kind of cool. Kind of let you test out where you could push your own theories.

For my—it was upper level writing for [Political Science course] with [instructor] 13:51 we did a cool revision process. We submitted the entire paper and they gave us a ton of comments. When you open up the Word doc the entire column was full of things that you could say and opportunity to revise it and re-turn it in. Which was cool, because the first paper that we wrote was really based on our own argument.

For a lot of us that was the first time we totally had to come up with our own theory and it wasn't just kind of followed this prompt and answered the questions that he's asking. That was cool.

I'm trying to think for other classes that I've written in. I've done formal research papers for my poly sci [Political Science] class, did a research on Tibet for my [Chinese class]. Written on everything from European financial matters to Somalia pirates, there's been a big range of topics but they've all been pretty much research based.

I don't think I've written a creative political science. We blogged a little bit in one of my classes but it was just blogging on a specific paragraph from one of the texts.

It was never blogging about how you feel about X, Y, and Z. It was always very you follow the prompt or you make your own prompt, but you're gonna write to the prompt for a formal essay.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, so that thing you talked about where they gave you comments and you could rewrite. Would you say that's typical for a poly sci writing?

Interviewee: I wouldn't say so. You only receive comments on side of your paper, this was good, this was bad, this would have been nice if you would of expanded on it. That's normally it, but I had specific comments to an article. It would say look at these four authors that we also read and maybe check out this section of the reading and see how that could work as a counterargument to what you're saying or if you can integrate into the same argument. It definitely I don't think would be common between all the political science classes.

I think it might have been because it was a upper level writing class as well that there was that focus on it. A lot of times it's just—particularly when I have just mid-term final poly sci classes, you just get a grade on your Blue Book and you never even seen your final normally.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, okay what effect has writing in poly sci had on you as a writer do you think?

Interviewee: Attaining research really fast, I've gotten good at. The whole research process I'm still improving on. Just pretty much the speed of doing it and knowing where exactly to look on the internet to find these sources. Forgetting Google as a potential search engine and using the different ones—what are those called? The big online research guides that the university has through with the library.

That would I think be a big way that the poly sci writing has improved my writing. In general, just because it's a lot of times you have really short deadlines. I have a lot of time where the turnaround is five or six days which is kind of hard to balance sometimes. Definitely just figuring out how to do it really fast, which kind of helps that organization again.

Making sure the first draft of the paper was concise enough that I knew where I was going the first time, rather than kinda just throw something together then have to proof it really fast. Definitely research I think would be—and research on the fly would be pretty good.

Interviewer: You said drafts, do you do drafts of your papers?

Interviewee: I normally do drafts through an outline which I don't know when I started that but it's become particularly useful. I will normally do an outline of general points just kind of like a standard outline. Instead of writing a paper in paragraphs I write it in the outline.

Full sentences, introductions to quotes and that type of thing, but I do it all in an outline. I can see if there's reasonable support for anything or how many points I'm actually covering in each paragraph.

I don't know who taught me how to do that or if I just did it on accident one day, but that is pretty much always the way that I kind of draft if you will, is just try to follow a pretty strict outline.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, did you do that in [English course]?

Interviewee: I don't think so. I think I—I know we did outlines in [English course] but for some reason I remember doing it in one of my classes my sophomore year, for one of my poly sci papers. I think I just kept putting it—it was a 12 page research paper that was when I went to bed 18:32.

It was so long that I think I just started plugging in quotes and information and all of the sudden I realized it was super-efficient and made sure your paper was concise and we weren't off in la-la land, which is normally where I end. I think that really helped.

Interviewer: Good, how confident do you feel about writing in your concentration in poly sci?

Interviewee: It kinda totally depends on the day. Normally I feel pretty well, it's normally A's, A-'s on papers. My upper level writing class threw me for a curve, I got a C+, I've never received C+ ever in my life on a paper. Never, not in high school, not in a English class here, nothing.

I had the paper grade not come out and so towards the end of the semester I would of totally went and fought it I just did not have time to do it. Normally I feel pretty great about it and I'm not too stressed out. With that class I was freaking out all the time because I never knew what direction that grade was gonna go.

Interviewer: Was that the class you got all the feedback on?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: Can you talk more about why you think there was the disconnect?

Interviewee: They were very picky about thesis statements and I really liked my thesis statement. I think the GSI [Graduate Student Instructor] wrote on there this is a very poor thesis statement, I don't like it. Yeah, he was not a nice man. The professor was great, his



commentary I don't know if he didn't take his Prozac that day or what was going on but he would write mean comments on the side.

Interviewer: The GSI?

Interviewee: The GSI, yeah, it was unanimous across the board, everyone I had spoken to was like he wrote just—he just tried to be sarcastic. You can't be sarcastic in a comment on a paper because it just comes off as really rude.

Yeah, he was not making nice comments on my thesis statement. I liked it. I thought it covered what it needed to cover but they did not think it covered what it needed to cover. They were definitely the paragraph thesis statement kind of people. I took two takes to feel that out, kind of what the professor wants. If they want a more vague thesis statement that's explored in the paper and you conclude it in the conclusion and you totally integrate how it's all connected.

That was not them, they wanted to know exactly what you were talking about in the paper in that first paragraph. It took a little while to figure out what that expectation was.

Interviewer: Okay, so let's talk about the writing minor gateway course, [higher level Writing course].

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: What impact has that class had overall in your writing do you think?

Interviewee: I would say definitely integrating personal opinion into writing. I wrote my first ever personal narrative kind of paper on the [title of piece]. I'd never once ever written anything with a personal pronoun in it. I got to write about my opinion and why I felt the way I did about certain things. Then from there I kinda got to apply how I could integrate my own opinion in what worked and what didn't work just from feedback into the class.

Two later assignments like the—around the smoking ban. I did two—that was two newspaper articles. One was written in more of a standard format where it was just kind of explaining both sides, explaining the bill. Then the other one was written from the perspective of someone who does not like the smoking ban.

It kind of over the duration of the course was how I apply my opinion about myself as a writer into a more constrained format. Without being rude or being offensive or bringing up the wrong connotation for what I'm trying to say.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, who taught you never to use personal pronouns or was that something you just did?

Interviewee: That was just—I think that was something I always learned in grade school and because of this I've always done such structured writing where I wasn't really formulating an opinion. It was just explain the three components of the French Revolution. These three components were defined already for you in the prompt that you didn't really have a purpose to say I in any of the papers. It was just regurgitating fact.

I never really had ever used them and I managed to evade using them in any analytic writing I ever did, as I also stuck to the five paragraph essay format somehow. I love the five paragraph essay format and I don't know how I managed to pull it off always.

I had a comment in one of the papers for my first year writing class. This was the most effective use of the five paragraph essay for an analytic paper that you could do, I don't know why. I like what is safe.

I think it connected back to the minor, they kinda pushed me into a less safe direction doing things that you couldn't write a newspaper article and a five paragraph essay for and that kind of thing.

I think just exploring how you can write other than just kinda the prescribed standard high school English do's and don't's of writing I guess would be the big thing the minor did.

Interviewer: Do you think you'd be more likely now to incorporate personal into analytic writing that you're doing?

Interviewee: I think so. I definitely saw it coming through the semester in my [Politics course]. Where the prompts were very vague, they expected eight to ten pages on a sentence of a topic. It gave me a lot of opportunities to kind of formulate my own thoughts using these documents. I could put my opinion into the document through an argument, rather than just saying this author said this and this author said this and this why they agree and that's why this is going to be my argument.

I think that that was the key thing with being able to put my own opinion and my own voice into things. Where I was always kind of hesitant and didn't know how to necessarily do it without discrediting my argument if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, it does. Okay, what impact did [higher level Writing course] have on your sense of self as a writer, if any?

Interviewee: I think it confirmed that I really like more structured writing and that I like writing more research based papers then a personal narrative or a story. That was definitely my thought that I had when I entered the class was that I like more academic writing because that's the only one I'm familiar with.

I think I managed to make the assignments as academic as possible. I would definitely say that they—that it definitely made sure—it reminded me that I do like to do things with research. It just taught me how to do it differently.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, so what were your experiences working with other writers in [higher level Writing course]?

Interviewee: I liked it a lot. We had a—it was really nice to get the feedback from a couple different people and know that a lot of times in our group work you had to submit it twice to your group or something. We would end up submitting it back and forth to each other way more than that.

It was nice to just kinda get their impact on things and things that I write that don't seem useful to me. It's not super important as a statement in the writing that comes across as very different to other people. I think has been the most important.

I guess again dealing with perceptions of my argument that I don't necessarily see myself, but they might point out was kind of important. I also learned how to use really long sentence structures all the time. Which I guess I knew that but I didn't realize how many semicolons I use in writing all the time, which is an obscene amount of semicolons for such a random piece of punctuation.

I guess pointing out things that you don't necessarily notice when a professor writes them because you don't really read that in depth. A lot of times when you just got a grade back, you're like okay that's the grade nothing I can do about it now. Just look at it really fast and toss it.

Through the revision process it was nice to kind of use those critiques and integrate them in your paper to make something better in the end.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, is that sort of group process something you've done in other places?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm, I did it in both of my—I took [English course] and [higher level English course] and we did that in both of those classes. We also did it in the poly sci class, the constitutional politics class. Where we had to submit—I think there were three or four of us in a group and well did kinda swap papers and write a response to their paper as well. Then they wrote a response to our papers and integrating those comments into how our paper was perceived as well.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, do you ever use feedback in that sense outside of a class?

Interviewee: Outside of a formal class, like mandated kind of thing?

Interviewer: Yeah, like if they don't tell you to do it?

Interviewee: Yeah, I luck out and I'm in a seniority and there's a girl who loves to facilitate these types of things. A lot of times if you just e-mail her and say hey I got a paper I need kind of revised 27:09, she'll send you one from someone else that needs a revision on it.

It was a nice resource to be able to kinda scope that out. My best friend, [name], loves to read my papers. She was in D.C. this semester and so I sent her I think every single one. She would read it and she'd give it to her roommate and her roommate would read it. It definitely has been a good process I think to learning that I didn't do in high school at all.

I think it was very scary for me when I first came, like uh-oh someone else is gonna read my writing, this is not going to be good. Overall I've had really good experiences with all of it and definitely think it's always improved my writing. Pointing out things that have been reoccurring themes in my writing that have been problems, that have been easier to fix with that much more feedback.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, good. The minor gateway course emphasized reflective writing in lots of different forms. How would you describe your experience with all that reflection?

Interviewee: It was first—it was really uncomfortable for me at first and I didn't really know why I was doing it. In the end I ended up liking it particularly the reflective comments on the side of a paper because it gave you a chance to look at the revisions that your classmates have did and saw what they thought you should change. Still explain why you chose not to change it, sometimes and why critiquing something else later in the paragraph mattered more to that statement than actually changing the statement itself.

I put a lot—I guess I did a lot of disclaimers in my reflective writing and then explaining how they thought that this thesis statement needed to be changed. Actually I just needed to change my arguments in the paper to reflect the thesis statements so it went more central to my argument.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, do you still use reflection in your current writing?

Interviewee: A little bit, not to the extent that I did in the class. Definitely when I go reread my paper, kinda write why I thought that way really quick on the outline. Then if it doesn't quite matchup to how the paper actually came out, kind of bouncing back and forth from what should of happened and then making sure that that matches my actual argument.

Interviewer: You actually write down some reflections?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you think that started because of the minor course?

Interviewee: Definitely, yep that was definitely not something I necessarily did. I'd write some general ideas down for the whole paper but never specifically tailored thoughts that should go into the paper but couldn't be written in that way, if that makes sense.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm.

Interviewee: Integrating how I think the paper should be perceived and how the paper's actually perceived. I think was a big part of that reflective writing process.

Interviewer: How would you describe your experiences using new media writing and that can be blogs or the remediation project or—

Interviewee: It was a big change. It was the first time I'd ever blogged. I'm still not sold over on the blog concept yet. I did like—when I did my remediation I started off in a video format and I realized I cannot edit video at all.

Interviewer: Have you ever done that before?

Interviewee: Nope, I gave it a try, but it's not my calling that's for sure. I moved into Prezi, that online presentation generator. I actually use it for a couple classes now. I wouldn't even have known that it existed. It was something that one of the girls in our class had used for her remediation. I ended up looking at it and saying nope I gotta scrap my really bad video and put it into a Prezi format and it seemed to work out a lot better.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, so talk more about the hesitancy towards the blog.

Interviewee: I just don't always have anything to say about it. I could do the structured assignments that were read this article and write a paragraph or two on the article and kind of what you thought about I could do. The ones that were just blog about something that you're writing about in another class, that was hard of me because I don't always see the point in it.

I couldn't ever figure out why exactly I had to write about other classes blogging stuff. Then I blogged another class too this semester and didn't really like those blogs either. Those were pretty structured blogs, just because it seems—I don't know I just, I don't, I don't get blogs in academia.

I do not understand them and I don't think a lot of my friends understand it either because I think my biggest experience with it, it just turns into your drop box receipt tools 31:43 and you just start putting your assignments on the blog instead of your blog—instead of emailing the paper in. You just put it in the blog format.

That's my kind of—that's my gripe with the blogs.

Interviewer: Yeah, it's like co-opting the genre, kind of? Not doing the right thing with it?

Interviewee: Yeah, it just turns into a public forum for essay posting I think a lot of times. Towards the end of the new media writing class, the blogs started becoming more interactive kind of. People kind of—you wrote a lot kind of in reaction to what other people were writing, which is I think much more the purpose of a blog than just regurgitating what you thought about something conveniently so the professor can scroll through one page and not click through your drop box.

Which is definitely an experience I've had in other classes. Where's like oh this is really convenient and I can search for your name and see exactly your assignment without having to sign in into anything. Toward the end of the class the reaction between everyone else feeding off of each other kind of started to happen, which I think is more so the purpose of the blog.

It's an interactive community writing style even if it's a personal blog and people's comments are something. There's still an interaction there and a lot of times in the classes there was no interaction other than just—you didn't even read other people blogs you are just annoyed that you have to submit a blog at 10:00 a.m. before your class. Yeah.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, okay so the next couple questions are about the portfolio.

[...]

Interviewer: You just want to tell me about and walk me through it a little bit.

Interviewee: Sure, I wanted a more professional look to it, I foresee it as something I put on a resume. I want to go to law school so I think it could be useful for them to be able to see some type of writing sample of mine other than just a personal statement, if they'd like to see more.

I kept it kind of neat and clean. Pink's my favorite color but I don't want to use florescent pink or something. I put my bibliography in here, kept it kinda short, just two kinda things about myself that are relevant to why I am the way I am. The first one which is things I liked, the second paragraph would be kind of reasons why I like political science so much and why it's something that's interesting to me.

The third paragraph are things I do at Michigan and then I attached my resume. I don't know who reads—who will find this one day but if maybe they're interested in hiring me or something like that. Then I did my writing and I broke it up into three sections just pertaining to the [English] course.

Just added links to things, so if people wanted to download it, they could download it and just kind of—let me see what I wrote here. Yeah, so this first paragraph or the second paragraph would be how—just explaining why this was different from what I normally did.

Then the smoking ban was where I did a bulk of work. There it goes, so just I kind of said here and explained how with the same topic all of these things are different. This was the editorial with more opinion and the newspaper article with less opinion.

That presi link 35:28 which I hope still works. I should probably check and see if that works, it does. Okay, cool. Then from the scrapbook tab I thought it would be cool to—oh I put my blogs in here too because we had to put the blog assignments in there.

Then I put kind of a scrapbook of pictures because it's still—even though I'm using it for more professional purposes it's still not just a standard resume. Sometimes it's nice to kinda put a face and see why I was—like what was important to me in my life other than just what I had kind of listed.

Then a contact blurb, which no one's ever used but one day someone might contact me based on what I put on my e-portfolio.

Interviewer: Nice. Okay, so separate from all the other new media writing you did in the [higher level Writing course] course, how would you describe your experiences creating this e-portfolio?

Interviewee: I liked it. I have a really boring job and so it was the ultimate form of procrastination. I was like oh I could read for another assignment but I could play around on the blog. I have seven from various sites and most of them are just unpublished because I couldn't figure out what medium I wanted to do. I really liked it.

It took me back to the old MySpace days when you got to format your page but you could be really cool and ten years old and format the code kind of. You didn't really know what it was but you knew here it said pink if you wanted it green, you could write that. It was kind of fun for me. I enjoyed doing it.

I even thought about how I would change it in the future already and kinda played around and—that's why I thought I changed it, but I apparently did not. I think I might of just—

Interviewer: Did you build it from scratch?

Interviewee: No, I used a form or a template but so it was the same shape but I changed a lot of the colors. Around the outside of it and there was some weird Ferris wheel over here, so just I altered it a little bit not super a lot, because I'm not super good at it. Made it my own, changed the fonts and played around a little bit.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, okay what were your aims for the portfolio when you were making it?

Interviewee: To make it my first big goal was to make it look like it wasn't necessarily just a standard form website. A lot of people have just sites for—even if they're just for a

personal blog that they do recipes on. That look definitely like they just said oop I'm going to use this template and that's it.

Making it look neat and concise I really liked that it was in this—that everything was held in this box. Because I don't know why but I think it makes it look better and less standard. Trying to make it look as least new beginning as possible, if that makes sense.

I'm trying to think of other goals I had when designing it. Making it pretty easy to follow too. Some people decided to do different pictures you'd have to click. I think it's sometimes kinda confusing because people don't think they can click them, just trying to make it as easy as possible. There's not very many bells and whistles on it, because I didn't want to integrate them and then have them not work because that would not be good.

Keeping it simple and within my constraints of how capable I am in actually building a website and not getting too lofty of ideas out there. Is a big part of it.

Interviewer: What impact would you say creating that portfolio has had on your writing, if any?

Interviewee: I definitely have thought about how I would classify writing within this kind of thing. Ohh if I was doing this, if I was going to put it in a folder on here for the future portfolio that we do. Thinking about kind of what direction it would go in, particularly now because I have personal writing on here. With the writing I've done this semester and probably will do next semester it's going to go more and more towards formal academic writing again.

Kinda just visualizing the way the direction of it's gonna go. Which is probably not gonna be as—the scrapbook tab will probably stay but the stuff about how I write would probably not be there anymore.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, so thinking more about the different kinds of writing you do you would say?

Interviewee: Yeah, thinking is this more of a research paper, is this something I formulated my opinion on and had to create more of an argument for. Exactly what the intent for the paper was, whether if it was just a term paper using—trying to summarize a general topic and something narrow or if it was a opinion paper where I had to really formulate something and take a lot of sources and develop something. I think kind of classifying it that way and then maybe thinking about how I could classify writing.

I wanted to do English writing as one section or political science writing as one section and why that does or doesn't necessarily always work with those specific assignments and that type of thing.

Interviewer: I see that you use Weebly [website creator] 40:30.



Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: How come you use that one and not something else?

Interviewee: I ended up picking Weebly, I really liked Wix [online website creator] 40:37, which was flash based and I was told that it's very unreliable. My heart was broken because I really, really liked, really liked the Wix flash based.

Interviewer: Who told you that?

Interviewee: I don't remember who told me that, it might have just been someone in the class but then—oh yeah it was a girl in our class who had a project for another course that she did in Wix and it got deleted. I was like nope, not doing that, don't want it to be deleted.

Really liked Wix, would of much—liked the way it looked in Wix more, significantly more. Because it was flash based, I'm trying to think what other one I did. This was the one that we looked the least like template to me. A lot of the other ones people did 'em through, oh God, what sites did other people do them through?

Interviewer: WordPress [content management system].

Interviewee: WordPress and ready to blog sites, they looked like blogs to me and I didn't want mine to look like a blog. I was having a hard time in WordPress figuring out how to make it look like a website and not something I'm posting to. That's why I guess I ended up picking the Weebly other the other ones. Some of them are just too complicated for me to figure out.

I was just like nope, that looks like way too much work to figure out how to code that. This was pretty user friendly, you could just kinda drag and drop a lot of stuff into where you wanted it. It would fix the code for you.

That was—I think that's why I ended up picking this one. It was kind of safe, they had really good support. I called them a couple times and they helped you figure out exactly what was going on pretty fast.

Interviewer: Wow, that is cool. Okay, so what was the impact on you of all the reflective writing that you had to do for the portfolio?

Interviewee: I think would definitely just be all the writing assignments I did a little blurb about the piece before it. Particularly for this one that's—I wrote as a political science and pre-law student my writing gives me an opportunity to convey my opinions primarily in a non-fiction formal academic style.

It's kind of like reflecting how it's different from what I did before in these two essays. They're all kind of in—I discuss the intent for what I'm writing in all of the introductions for all different pieces if it wants to go. Everywhere I made sure I explored strong personal voice with less formal dialog or let me see, talking about tone and direction.

I definitely made sure I reflected on the pieces with some type of introduction so it's not just here are some articles. I tried to explain how they were all different and what the intent for each piece would be.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, maybe making those small reflections helped you think more critically about the piece itself?

Interviewee: Yeah, definitely reading it and looking at what the impact is and for the final project and how that could be different from what I normally would do or what my goals for the writing would be. I know for this first one, one of the goals was to put a strong personal voice in it with opinions and points.

I wanted to make sure that that was an emphasis in the introduction so people could see that that would be a piece I was adding a lot of personal voice into. As opposed to the next one down, which would be the non-biased newspaper article.

Where I wanted to—like I wrote after writing my op-ed there's a significant change in tone and direction and challenged me to take an issue that I have a large opinion on and consider both arguments. Just pointing out directly how each piece was different and reflecting on what it took to make that happen. I think was the big part of how it integrated into the portfolio.

Interviewer: Okay, all right so let's talk about the future a little bit. What kinds of writing do you think will be most valuable for your career?

Interviewee: Probably the stuff I did in my poly sci classes this year. I read an obscene amount of political science, Supreme Court cases, probably ten a week, so learning how precedent works.

I want to be a lawyer so figuring out how these court cases integrate with each other and the succession of ideas through the different court cases that build on each other, was a big thing that's really important. Then being able to explain why that is through an essay, because I'll have legal briefs and formal writing I'm gonna have to do for every court case that I do.

Definitely knowing how to access these resources was really important for me. Being able to look at how these—what the law is in comparison to the Supreme Court cases was a big thing.

Interviewer: Uh-huh, so the kinds of writing you envision doing as a lawyer, would you say that's on the more structured end?

Interviewee: Definitely.

Interviewer: Analytical?

Interviewee: They're definitely particularly more analytical, sometimes writing as lawyers ventures out into a less formal style but it would be reasons why I think that—originalist mindset of the constitution is better than a living document mindset.

It would still be primarily research based, but that would be where you integrate kind of your own personal voice into it. If that makes sense?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, okay so if you could tell your teachers one thing about writing or how to teach writing, what would you tell them?

Interviewee: Be direct with the prompt. Even if you make it kind of a more vague question, if you have a lot of very specific qualifications for what needs to be discussed in that essay it makes it a lot easier to fulfill them rather than just get a sentence and just go. Even if you have short prompts that are very vague, you can go 100 different directions in.

Knowing what you want to see in that paper. Whether it's I want to see you use these sources in forming your own argument or I want to see you take as many resources as you can and summarize them and make a concise summary of what happened. That is most, I think most useful for me.

I don't like not knowing what I'm supposed to be doing and what you're looking for. I think that's—you can definitely qualify the essay without telling exactly what has to be in it.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm, okay. This summer they're developing the minor capstone course.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: That you'll be taking and in that course you're gonna create another portfolio. What suggestions do you have for the people that are developing it?

Interviewee: The course in general or the course in regards to the final portfolio?

Interviewer: Either one.

Interviewee: I'm trying to think. I liked the flexibility of last year's course. If the whole class was pretty much like you know what we are not anywhere near where we should be in it. We had an opportunity to kind of adjust deadlines a little bit which I liked.

Particularly in a new course it was a nice way to kind of see how much time it really takes to do something.

Particularly with that, the remediation because you have no idea how—oh the videos going to take six hours. It takes a lot more than six hours. Your estimates of time are way different.

I liked that it was flexible. Let's see, I think it would be nice to do one formal assignment, whether it's a research paper or formulating an opinion in an essay format. Other than just kind of a why write thing I think would be useful. Because we didn't focus much on research I guess, and I think research is really important.

I think making sure we can focus on—at least a little bit of academic writing even if it's looking at what your major is and picking something in your major that you would write kind of a research paper on. That way it's not just a prescribed assignment and it's still something you're exploring your own options with.

I think that would be useful.

Interviewer: By formal assignment you mean formal written essays?

Interviewee: Like an essay, even it doesn't have to be long but just some place where you can formulate an argument based off of research. We didn't really do too much of that, a little bit in the remediation's and stuff and we took old assignments and integrated with new sources.

I think starting from scratch on a scratch on a new assignment might be a nice way to kind of see how other people in the class do their research. Particularly because we're in such an open dialog format, because I really like my index card format but someone else might have ideas ten times better. I think that is a good way to kinda integrate how research works while still keeping that community class kind of vibe.

I think that's it. I think that's all I can think of at this time.

Interviewer: Okay, great thanks.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: That was the last question, do you have anything else you want to say about the minor or your writing or anything.

Interviewee: I don't think so. I was trying to think of things on my way over and I couldn't come up with anything that wasn't covered in the questions already.

Interviewer: Yeah, all right well thanks.

Interviewee: Yeah, no problem.

[...]

[End of Audio]