

Interviewer: My name is ***. I'm here with ***. Did I pronounce that correctly?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: It is April 29, 2015. We're doing a Sweetland Writing Development Study exit interview. [...]

[...]

Again, we were saying you're done. Congratulations. It sounds like you had a pretty rigorous curriculum. In addition to the writing line, what were your two majors?

Interviewee: History and political science.

Interviewer: Okay, nice. Was there much overlap in the courses that you took?

Interviewee: I think I took two or three—I think two classes that were crosses between the two departments so found for both. In terms of subject matter, there were definitely things that I drew from one and used in the other and vice versa.

Interviewer: Okay, cool. [...]. We'll talk a little bit more about transfer here as we work.

I've started every interview by asking people how you would describe yourself as a writer.

Interviewee: This trick was on the other Sweetland exit interview, the online survey. I would describe myself as a head-in-the-clouds writer.

Interviewer: Interesting.

Interviewee: I have all these ideas. I need to see the line through all of them to bring me back down and focus myself, if that is helpful.

Interviewer: Yeah. Can you find that line on your own?

Interviewee: Yeah. Sometimes everyone needs help at some point. Typically if I have a lot of ideas, I can usually weave something.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah, but you're always—more of a big picture kind of thinker, and you need something to pull yourself through, is what I'm hearing here.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. How would you describe yourself as a writer when you started four years ago?

Interviewee: When I started it was just a sit down, go and see what happens. I think that wasn't the best way to approach some of the papers I was writing.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Okay. At what point did you decide to join the minor?

Interviewee: I was in—freshman year I was in the Lloyd Hall Scholars Program which is very close with Sweetland. I was on the writing side of it. At the end of freshman year there was an email or something that went out that was like, "Join the minor." I was like, "Well, okay." I looked it up, and it was—cuz I was looking at the Creative Writing minor through the English Department. Then I saw this other minor in writing. I looked it up, and it felt more like it would help me with what I wanted to do in life rather than the Creative Writing minor. I applied and then was accepted. I took the Gateway first semester of sophomore year.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I think. I'm pretty sure.

Interviewer: It's been awhile ago. [...].

[...]

Interviewer: Okay. Without a professional—clear professional thing to tag onto—which again I totally get that 'cause I was in your boat, too. What is your sense of how you'd like to develop as a writer going forward?

Interviewee: One thing that I've noticed—I would like to be able to tell more of my own story in my writing. Last summer I was also in Ann Arbor, and I got the opportunity to hear [instructor] at a reading at Literati. That was really great. It was very inspiring. It inspired me to start journaling 'cause he talked about how he just journaled. I started that, and it was really interesting to see myself writing about myself. I think that would be something I would like to develop further.

Interviewer: Yeah, excellent. Do you journal regularly now?

Interviewee: Yeah. Definitely it was easier in the summer without classes.

Interviewer: Yep [laughter].

Interviewee: I didn't have that feeling of guilt when I was taking time away from classes to journal.

Interviewer: Right. Right, absolutely. As you think about your experiences at U of M, I would guess this question was probably also in that survey. What do you think it means to be a good writer?

Interviewee: I think what it means to be a good writer is that you know you could be better.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah. You know that there's more revisions you could do. There's more editing you could do. You could bring in a counterclaim or something like that. There's always more you could do. I think realization, knowing that you're not at the pinnacle of perfection.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. What upper level writing courses did you take?

Interviewee: I took [title of course]. That was in Poli-Sci [Political Science]. That one was awhile ago as well. It was a class—I don't know, the title's very long but essentially it was in the History Department. They call 'em colloquiums, senior seminars. It was on how culture and memory changed in Germany after the two world wars, how what had happened affected culture and how they reflected on the wars in the memory of the society.

Interviewer: Wow, that sounds really interesting.

Interviewee: Yeah, it was.

Interviewer: Yeah, very cool. What effect do you think those experiences had on you as a writer?

Interviewee: Both of them definitely and even the writing minor as a whole. Like I said earlier, when I was a writer I would just sit down and go. I would sit down and go and then be done. Now the revision—if there's one thing that I have learned in college is that you have to keep revising and reflecting and editing. Editing's a big one 'cause I like the passive voice. Yeah, those classes really taught me—gave me the forced opportunities to edit and revise.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah, okay. Interesting. One quick question. You said that the History class was a colloquium, a sort of senior seminar. Did you take that this year?

Interviewee: No, I took that second semester last—

Interviewer: Last year.

Interviewee: Yes, I think—yeah. They all blend together. I'm pretty sure, yes. It was second semester junior year.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. Were you one of the few—were most of the people in the class juniors or were they—

Interviewee: The reason I say it was called a senior seminar is because you have to take one before you graduate. It wasn't—there were definitely more juniors. I took it with a friend who was also a junior, but I think the large majority—I'm a very proactive student. I came in knowing I wanted to do history and poli-sci, so I was at the point where it was appropriate for me to take the class second semester of junior year.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah, okay. Did those two classes—the poli-sci class and the history class—did they help you with your writing in other concentration courses going forward?

Interviewee: Yeah, a lot of it because the upper level writing requirement, to be considered in a class you have to have a page number of writing. It definitely helps me with the marathon of other classes. I can knock out a paper in a weekend or something like that. That helped. Then, like I said, the revising definitely helped. Yeah.

Interviewer: Absolutely. What other writing courses have you taken?

Interviewee: I took the Gateway and the Capstone. Then my LHSP—my two LHSP classes. The first one was my first year writing requirement on madness and writing, like we read *The Bell Jar*, stuff like that. Second semester I took children's literature. We read children's book, and then the project of the whole class was to create one.

Interviewer: Fun.

Interviewee: Yeah. We went to Hollander's and found it ourselves. LHSP's great. Then I took academic argumentation with [instructor] who's just *[fading voice 0:13:04]*.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: I think that's all. Every class I took had writing in it. I'm not a science major. But those were the specific writing ones.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah, yeah. When you think about those writing courses, did those affect your writing in any way?

Interviewee: Definitely at least the first year writing requirement. It really did what it was intended to do which was—the class broadly titled is [title of course]. I definitely learned how—the five paragraph essay that I had done high school with was a little too constrictive. College will be beneficial to explore new formats and new—things were gonna be longer anyway than five paragraphs. That definitely helped. Trying to think of any other classes. The children's book literature class—it was definitely fun.

Interviewer: Yeah, sounds fun.

Interviewee: It did actually help me, not consciously at least but now reflecting—when it came time to—for the Capstone project in Sweetland—

Interviewer: Interesting.

Interviewee: - one part of what we talked about in that class was we read a book on how shapes and colors and size can contribute to meaning. When I was making my Capstone—my website—I feel like those things came through. When I was choosing a color palette, how to position things, I think that definitely affected it.

Interviewer: Very cool. We'll look at that in just a few minutes. That's very cool. I wouldn't have thought about that, but that makes a lot of sense. You mentioned that you do a lot of writing across both of your concentrations. How would you characterize the difference between writing in poli-sci and writing in history? Or is there a difference?

Interviewee: I think that there's not as big of a difference as between other concentrations. I feel like history and poli-sci—doing a dual concentration is fairly common with those two. I think at the most basic level perhaps, historical papers are more historical whereas poli-sci papers are more theoretical.

Interviewer: Okay, can you give me an example of that?

Interviewee: I took a class on race in politics. It was a poli-sci class. The papers were on theories of how white America has—well, I wrote on how white America has subconsciously attempted to subjugate non-white identities in America. Whereas a history paper on the same subject would be—in poli-sci they write focused on policies that have done that or that are doing that, and—well, I'm backing myself into a corner because there is a historical aspect to that as well, but I feel like a history paper on the subject wouldn't go into the future as much as the poli-sci paper would.

Interviewer: Yeah, interesting.

Interviewee: That was very confusing. I'm sorry.

Interviewer: No, that's okay. I hear what you're saying, that it's almost—if I'm hearing you correctly, and if I'm not push back on me. It's almost a difference in you have both the history and the theory present in both, but it's a matter of where the emphasis lies in one versus the other.

Interviewee: That's a very good way of saying what I was trying to say.

Interviewer: Okay. Okay, yeah. I would not have thought about that I think, in part, because I think of political science as more statistical almost in nature.

Interviewee: I'm not a math person. There is—

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I did take a models course which nearly killed me. I'm not a math person so I didn't focus on the science side of political science. In my attempt to—when I was taking classes I actually focused on the history side of political science.

Interviewer: That makes perfect sense. That makes perfect sense. How confident do you feel now as you graduate about your writing in these fields?

Interviewee: I feel confident. I think my grades reflect my confidence and boost it as well. Yeah, I love the writing upon reflection. As with most college students, when you're in the thick of writing, it's like a love/hate relationship with writing because I'm—I wish I was one of those people that could work ahead of time and just get it and leave it for two days and then go back to it. I work on tighter deadlines, self-imposed of course.

Interviewer: I understand that.

Interviewee: I've liked all the writing I've done—now *[laughter]*.

Interviewer: Yeah *[laughter]*. I totally am trackin' with ya on that. I love it.

You mentioned that sometimes concepts—and given what we've just talked about with how closely linked those two majors are for you that sometimes concepts will transfer. Are there any skills that you learned in one writing class that you've carried forward into another class?

Interviewer: Definitely research skills, knowing where to go for what, like articles plus on Merlin, Google Scholar, things like that definitely will lead back and forth. In terms of actually writing—

[Pause 0:20:05-0:20:14]

I don't know, the use of quotes. I've always been good at weaving quotes into the narrative. At times I rely a little too much on block quotes as being blockish, but as we'll see on my portfolio. Yeah, I definitely think that there's been—for me a lot of the times when I was taking these classes that were based—I was taking history classes and I was taking political science classes that there was a lot of history too. I didn't really see much—I didn't separate them in my mind. I was taking classes. When I took the models class in political science, that was not related to history at all, but most of the poli-sci classes I took were. My upper level writing requirement on American constitutional politics, that—we read the Federalist Papers which is something I would have read if I took a history of America—of the United States class. I didn't really part them.

Interviewer: That makes sense. They were all courses in your major in a way. Yeah, okay. Great. Let's talk a little bit about the Capstone.

Interviewee: I loved it.

Interviewer: Oh, good.

Interviewee: I definitely had a lot of extracurriculars this semester that, again, pushed it towards the deadline. [...].

[...]

Interviewer: [...]. Do you think that the minor had an impact on your writing?

Interviewee: Yes, absolutely.

Interviewer: Say more about that.

Interviewee: I learned to think. I don't know who well you know [instructor]?

Interviewer: I've met him but—

Interviewee: Okay. The way he takes attendance—I had him for both Capstone and Gateway.

[...]

Interviewer: That's very cool. That's very cool. Did the course have any kind of impact on your writing process?

Interviewee: Yeah, it did because part of what—what I was saying with the deadline that I was very short window—because I was also having to work on a

website to host my writing, I had to finish the writing even earlier and then focus on the website and make tweaks. My process just—I learned to speed it up.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. I hear some of this in your—in this idea that the Capstone helped you think, but did the Capstone have an impact on your sense of yourself as a writer?

Interviewee: Yeah, especially because of the [title of essay] that we have to do, that really forced me to reflect and look at myself outside of myself. Yeah, even picking a project topic forced me to think about what I would be interested in writing about, why I would be interested in writing about it, what benefit I would gain from writing about it, even what benefit others would gain from it—made me think about who’s gonna be reading it and things like that.

Interviewer: What did you choose to write about?

Interviewee: I wrote about political power.

Interviewer: Okay.

[...]

Interviewee: This is it. I did a project based on case studies. [...]. There’s being a big discussion in the Capstone about how things in your project that aren’t writing such as this new media, it can either supplement or replace. You don’t want your images or anything to replace your words. You want it to add to it.

Interviewer: Add to it.

Interviewee: Yeah, mm-hmm.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: This one was about polarization [...].

Interviewer: Whoa, look at that. That’s crazy.

Interviewee: This was also fun because this—I think for me as a political science major and someone who cares about politics, this was something that I knew was happening but it wasn’t until writing this that I was able to know for sure, like to get the facts.

Interviewer: Right. I was commenting here on this graph which is showing the extremes of polarization. That’s really interesting. It’s these four pieces—the hub, the money, the influence—these four pieces that you wrote in that April window.

Interviewee: Yeah, mm-hmm.

Interviewer: Wow. Were you drawing on things that you had learned, concepts that you'd learned in both of those other classes or—?

Interviewee: In the upper level writing?

Interviewer: Yeah. In the upper—or sorry, I should have—Let me rephrase that. Were you drawing on concepts that you've learned in classes in your majors?

Interviewee: Oh. Yes and no. Definitely yes because in the hub I bring in the Federalist Papers, like I was talking about I read them in one of those classes. It's interesting to think about it and to answer because I'm passionate about political power and making people aware of who really has power. Whether or not that comes from my poly-sci major or I'm a poly-sci major because I have these interests, I'm not sure, but they complement each other.

Interviewer: Sure.

Interviewee: It's much like writing and new media.

Interviewer: Do you see new media as being a valuable tool for writing in each of your majors?

Interviewee: I think so. I think more so in political science because, as you were saying earlier, a lot in political science is statistics. While I don't know much statistics, I know that graphs can convey meaning. Anybody who reads this, they don't have—you don't have to know stats or anything to read a graph and see a cause and effect without—here I'm talking about Citizens United and money after it. I think that, especially with more academic majors—I don't wanna criticize my majors but graphs, and I have a political cartoon, they can break up the monotony of text.

Interviewer: Yeah, fair enough.

Interviewee: People who like, "Oh, that's a funny cartoon that applies so I'll keep reading."

Interviewer: Yeah, it gives you a little bit of a break from the really hard thought.

Interviewer: It's like when as you go from elementary school to high school or even to college, the pictures get smaller in textbooks until they're nonexistent. I'm trying to bring it back.

Interviewer: Yeah, absolutely. You mentioned elementary school, you said that that class—the book that you read in your children’s lit class had some impact on the choices that you were making here.

Interviewee: Yeah, I think subconsciously, definitely. I definitely—these are on the side, and they’re relatively small as to complement the writing, not take over it. In terms of color choice, I didn’t want to overpower anything so I opted to go black and white for the photo, then just a very pastel-type blue.

Interviewer: Blues and greens, yeah.

Interviewee: I’ll say part of it is I like the color blue, but I think choosing these blues was affective by it. Yeah.

Interviewer: We’ve been just talking about this, and I haven’t actually looked at the questions that I’m supposed to be asking you. What was the most memorable aspect of putting this together?

Interviewee: Definitely coming up with this page right here, my project page. I had this idea that was this, and I was very worried that I wasn’t going to be able to accomplish this because I don’t code. I don’t know website design. Then using Wix [website creator], I was able to do it. I remember sitting in class and I was like—‘cause we had some work days in class, and that was one of the days I figured out how to do this. It was a feeling of, “Okay, I can do this.” I figured out how to do the one thing—the visual representation of what I wanted to do is set. Now I just have to write it.

That was the design part. The writing part definitely I really enjoyed the polarization part just because this is something that has frustrated me as someone who pays attention to politics. Even this one as well, it’s similar to the graph above. It’s kind of no wonder nothing gets done in this country is because before there was compromise and now there’s two separate. I think this is a great way to represent my frustrations with what I see in this country.

Interviewer: Yeah, absolutely. We’re on the money page—

Interviewee: Polarization.

Interviewer: Or polarization page, sorry. The polarization page and talking about some of the graphs on the side here. What was the story that you wanted to tell with this portfolio?

Interviewee: I wanted to tell—it’s political power broadly, but more specifically it’s that there is a disconnect between those who have political power and those who have given them that political power—those in Congress versus those who elected them to Congress. The whole point of this was to educate people on what

is really happening. I know that sounds conspiracy theorist. For instance in the money one, I talk about how big business and corporations can influence Congress men and women. That's how I bring in Citizens United because of the whole corporations are people. I disagree with it. It's educating people that—or just calling out the fact that the people's voice is being silenced without money to back it up. I'm just trying to educate people and make them aware of what's really happening.

Interviewee: Absolutely. Absolutely. As you were thinking about the design of this—and we were talking a little bit about the satisfaction of that hub page where you can navigate to those things. Do you envision the whole thing, including the writing portion—'cause I don't think we've talked about that much. Did you envision all of this as having any kind of directed experience for your readers?

Interviewee: Not really. One of the goals that was expressed to us was to in some way have the [title of essay] connect with your project. When I wrote the [title of essay], I hadn't chosen my project topic yet. With all my extracurriculars, one of the things that fell by the wayside was being able to revise my [title of essay]. But when I was doing my annotated bibliography for the [title of essay], it's basically just my writing that I reflect on. I found that as far back as second semester freshman year I was writing about political power.

Interviewer: Interesting.

Interviewee: I just wish I had had the time to—honestly preferably I would have written an entire new [title of essay] that more so reflected my journey with political power and writing.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Because I found that throughout here, I was writing about political power.

Interviewer: Right, okay. What is the [title of essay] at this point?

Interviewee: It's all about depth and right—so my metaphor that I was helped along with slash given by [instructor]—

Interviewer: [Laughter]. Sometimes you need to be—

Interviewee: Much like you've done, I've word vomited and then he said, "Okay, this is what I think you're trying to say." Of course it's much better than anything I could have come up with. His quote was that, "Writing is the act of failing to drown but being a writer means knowing how to swim."

Interviewer: Wow, that's interesting.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: [Laughter].

Interviewee: It's kinda like knowing how to swim is writing but are you in water? How deep is the water? Are you in molasses? How deep is the molasses? And that is how—my journey as a writer has been learning the techniques, the how to swim so that it doesn't matter if it's water that's shallow or deep or if it's molasses. It's confusing.

Interviewer: That's all right. In your ideal world you would've gone back and revised this, but it sounds like there's value in this as it is as well even though it doesn't feel like maybe the most coherent fit with the rest of the project?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: We're talking about the reflective writing portion. I will ask you just to sort of in a nutshell, what do you think you've learned from the reflective portion of the project?

Interviewee: Like I was saying with the bibliography, I definitely was able to see that I had those interests a lot earlier than I thought. I told a friend of mine who was in the Capstone with me, I was like, "This blew my mind that I was writing about it since second semester freshman year." That was fun, interesting to discover. With this paper—it's been awhile since I read it. This one definitely talked about the journey, the DSP, the Directed Self Placement.

Interviewer: Oh, wow. Yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah, I brought that in.

Interviewer: Nice.

Interviewee: That was terrible.

Interviewer: Which one did you do?

Interviewee: The Turing test?

Interviewer: Oh, yeah, I remember that one.

Interviewee: There were a lot of people from my high school that came to [inaudible 0:41:32] doing this. We were sitting there, like, "How do we write this?" This was one of the instances where I just down, and whatever came out came out, and that's what it was. It worked.

Interviewer: I was gonna say, probably not a bad way to go about it actually.

Interviewee: I definitely learned in that introduction to college writing. I definitely learned—I've been talking about how I stepped out of myself and viewed myself for all of those. It was great, just reflecting—especially taking this second semester senior year, it was this reflection on me in the academic sense was a complement to the reflection I was doing as someone who's about to graduate.

Interviewer: Sure, yeah. Can we talk a little bit about the artifacts that you chose to put on here.

Interviewee: I'm also proud of this—

Interviewer: Yeah?

Interviewee: -'cause I just think it looks cool.

Interviewer: Oh, that does look cool. I like that. Was there any strategy to the artifacts that you chose?

Interviewee: Yes. Well, kind of. The artifacts page was last. This was the last thing I did. Here's the title on my book, [*title of book*].

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: That's intense.

Interviewee: It was taught by the chair of the History Department so it was cool.

Interviewer: [English course], and then your upper level—

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: - courses.

Interviewee: No. [English course], upper level, and then that second semester freshman year where I wrote about the [*fading voice 0:43:46*].

Interviewer: Got it, okay.

Interviewee: Basically I just copied the annotations that I'd written for this introduction to each piece. When I wanted to choose, I did choose based on that

sense of political power being something that I wrote about early on. In [English course] I wrote [an open letter to a political figure]. This was about how Germany moved on. Yeah, it was about the myth of the war experience that the government was pushing to classify World War I and say “sacred” event. This one was all about electoral fraud in—I think it was in Germany as well. It was about electoral fraud broadly.

Interviewer: Would you want your readers to see linkages between these?

Interviewee: Yeah, I definitely think that there would be linkages. We’re talking about how to direct them through this. I think if this was—the artifacts was the last thing you read, I feel like you would be able to see sort of my journey as a writer throughout college even though it’s not ever gonna be used that way. This was first, one of these two was next, yeah. I think that because it’s on the website, it’s the last thing. If you’re going this way—

Interviewer: Yeah, from left to right.

Interviewee: Yeah. It’s the last thing. I think there are linkages. I’m making awful long answers.

Interviewer: No, that’s great. This is what interviews are for. We’ll let somebody else sort through it later.

If you wanted the people who are in charge of the writing minor to learn something about writing development from this page—

Interviewee: This page.

Interviewer: Well, from the whole project, right? What do you like people to take away?

Interviewee: That’s an interesting question ‘cause there’s definitely things I want them to take away about political power, but in terms of writing the bill—I definitely see things I could have done better which is organizing these chronologically. I feel like I got a good grade on this paper. I don’t know if it’s good.

Interviewer: Okay. Those are two different things.

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Whereas, I think with these other two coming later in my college career, I also got good grades on them, but I think they’re better. I think I could of

positioned that more as a journey through. I think with my [title of essay] I do capture a bit of the journey because I start with my DSP and then go on through—in here I actually talk a lot about the revision process, so much so that some of what I quote, some of my own pieces that I quote, are feedback that I gave others and then connecting that with feedback that I gave myself. I definitely think there is something to be learned. What that is—

Interviewer: It's interesting to me. If I'm playing this game, if I sort of extract myself from this moment where I'm interviewer and put myself in the role of analyst, what I think is interesting is you have been talking about revision. It's a huge part of your development. Even the way you were looking at that artifacts page was through a revision lens, right?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm.

Interviewer: If I'm an analyst, that's one of the things that I would probably be like, "Ew, look what he's doing." That's really interesting. Has feedback been a major part of your journey?

Interviewee: Yes, it definitely has. I will say as I have—from freshman year to senior year—this is gonna come off terrible.

Interviewer: No. Go for it. No judgments.

Interviewee: I used to really look for discussion sections because I didn't want to be intimidated by the professor leading a small group. I felt like I would be more comfortable with a GSI than the professor. As I went on it was like, "I want the professor to be in the room." I wanna make that connection.

Interviewer: Good for you.

Interviewee: I started opting for the smaller classes that were just taught by the professor.

Interviewer: As a liberal arts college grad, I think that was a very smart move on your part. Let's change gears and go way back to the Capstone—or not to the Capstone. The Gateway.

Interviewee: That was the Gateway. I was totally—

Interviewer: To the Gateway. How'd your experience in the Capstone compare to your experience in the Gateway. You had rank for both of them which is interesting.

Interviewee: That was intentional.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: It was helpful, I think—sorry, can you repeat the question, please.

Interviewer: I'm wondering how the two experiences compare with each other.

Interviewee: The Capstone was a little bit—I'm not gonna say easier. I was able to jump right in. I didn't have to worry about getting to know a new professor because I knew [instructor] already. I had friends in that class, some personal friends and some that I'd had in Gateway with me. That was also fun and interesting.

Interviewer: You came full circle.

Interviewee: Yeah. I loved the Gateway. I liked the Capstone, too, but I think in terms of the work, there was more at stake in the Capstone than there was in the Gateway. In the Gateway it was just—my class at least I think had a big part of it. We all got to know each other really well partly because of [instructor] and the questions that I was talking at the beginning. It was also the way the classroom was situated, like I was talking about with a seminar with the professor. We were all at a conference room table. I looked around and there was all my classmates.

In the Capstone it was small tables which were fine, but it was a different sense. It's always surprising that things like that affect it, but it does. My Gateway course we went to one of [instructor's] readings as a class. That was fun.

In terms of the work and the actual class, there's definite similarities. I feel like the [title of essay] has the equivalent of the [title of essay] in the Gateway. There's two portfolio-type pieces at the end of each. I feel like the Capstone ramps it up.

Interviewer: Get to the next level.

Interviewee: Yeah, like puppy kid gloves are off. It's like they know—like you don't take the Capstone before you take the Gateway. Regardless of what other classes you've taken at this University, if you're in the Capstone they know that you did the Gateway. Definitely like stairs, like first is the Gateway, and then you can get to the Capstone. Another very long-winded answer.

Interviewer: No, that's all right. It's interesting that you brought up the portfolios in each. Do you feel like this has any relationship to your Gateway portfolio?

Interviewee: Not really.

Interviewer: Okay. Did you look at your Gateway portfolio though?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: [Laughter]. Have you looked at it since?

Interviewee: No. Well, yes. Yes, but no. It's on WordPress [content management system], that's where it's always saved. I've looked at it when I've created other WordPress websites. It's like, "Oh, what's this thing that's still here?"

Interviewer: Right [laughter].

Interviewee: I was definitely proud of my portfolio—or my Gateway project, but—I think going back to what I was talking about with the artifacts, I took the Gateway first semester sophomore year. Other people have taken it even first semester junior year, and that's a whole nother year of learning. I feel like that might have affected it. I also can't stand what I named it. I named it [title of project] 'cause I thought it was punny.

Interviewer: [Laughter]. Oh, the things we do. I love it. You were talking about the good experience that you had with your classmates. What has your experience been working with other writers throughout the minor?

Interviewee: It's been great. I definitely have gotten a lot of feedback. We were talking about feedback. The workshops that [instructor] has put—like we were put in small workshop groups. They changed once. Sometimes it was whatever table you were sitting at just work with that. It's been great to hear from other writers, my colleagues, my friends.

I will say a tiny part of me—and this goes back to what I was talking about with not wanting discussion sections with GSIs and instead wanting the professors. That does come back a little bit in getting this feedback from my peers. It's like, "Okay, I appreciate your feedback, but I feel like you're also looking at it at where you are in your life." That's gonna be beneficial for the basic stuff, but I'm also going to want [instructor] to look at it and get his feedback. I feel like, again, new media in writing, complementary with feedback from my peers as well as from my educators.

Interviewer: Yes, absolutely. Let's talk a little bit about your educators. The minor program is pretty new. Anything you want the folks running it to know?

Interviewee: Like give [instructor] a raise. Or ten.

Interviewer: [Laughter]. I love it, I love it.

Interviewee: He's amazing. He uses big words a lot, and you've gotta slow him down sometimes. He's funny. He knows what he's doing. I don't know if I would of gotten through it without him because I feel like it's important to have. I don't

know any of the other people who are teaching the minor, but it's important to have that balance of, "Okay, you're doin' a lot of work but here's a joke. We're gonna laugh together." I think that was very important. He makes himself very available. He would have hours upon hours of office hours, both at Sweetland and at Sweetwaters downtown. I think if Sweetland could jump on [instructor] to get him into Sweetland, he's great too. [instructor] 0:58:35, [English course].

I've always felt very close with Sweetland because of LHSP. All the instructors for LHSP are Sweetland instructors. I had [instructor] for both semesters [...]. Sweetland, I just—

Interviewer: I love it. Is there anything that you would want them to know about the structure of the program?

Interviewee: I don't know how feasible this is. I also don't know if this is actually something that would be helpful. The way I see the portfolios that it comes off as like a thesis almost that is just shoved in one semester. Broadening it maybe to a two-semester process I think maybe could be beneficial, but that's also coming from me as someone who had to pause my work on it in favor of other things this semester.

Interviewer: What would be the value of spreading it over two semesters?

Interviewee: I think time. I will say I was only taking two classes this semester. Other people were taking full loads. I don't know how they did it. Other people were writing their actual theses while doing this. I don't know how they did. I barely did it taking only two classes. I just think something to potentially be explored.

Interviewer: Generally what do you think professors should know about teaching writing to undergraduates?

[*Extraneous noise 1:00:35- 1:00:46*]

Interviewee: I think that a lot of I would say they do, like meeting people where they're at in terms of skill level—anything that I could suggest is already being done.

Interviewer: Okay, cool. Any thoughts about this process has helped you think about your own writing?

Interviewee: It has. I've been talking about it the whole time—revision, stepping out of yourself, knowing it's possible. I wouldn't have guessed that this was possible at the beginning. Dum da dum, there it is. I loved minor. It was great.

Interviewer: Good. I'm glad you had a good experience. Thanks for sharing about some of that with us.

Interviewee: My pleasure.

Interviewer: We appreciate it. [...].

[End of Audio]