Freedom School

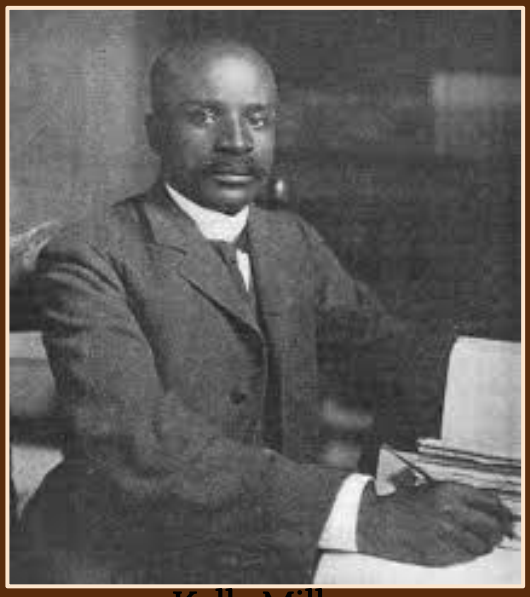
RHETORICS & HISTORIES OF BLACK EDUCATION

https://www.FugitiveLearning.com

created by Dr. Carmen Kynard, Ph.D.

Mary McCleod Bethune

Septima Clark



Kelly Miller

2024 marked the 70th year anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education, et al. This course takes its inspiration from the enduring legacies and contemporary betrayals of Brown, a landmark moment in the history of race in the United States and global anti-blackness in its explicit reversal of Plessy v. Ferguson's state-sanctioned Apartheid. It is worth stating that Brown set its sights on schooling for its radical targeting-- vs another institution--- as it was buoyed by longstanding Black innovations and commitments to democratic education. The course thus situates Black education as a fugitive praxis and rhetoric towards radical equality. Our curriculum will include (but is not limited to): Mississippi Freedom Summer/Freedom Schools; founding of HBCUs; African American literacy and emancipation; Black YAL and children's literature; Black student protest; Black language studies; Black girl literacies; BlackBoyCrit pedagogy; culturally sustaining pedagogy; BlackCrit; histories of Black teachers/Black women teachers; Black feminist/queer pedagogies; segregation/ desegregation/ resegregation.

We draw from the historical entry of rhetoric-composition (RC) studies going all the way back to Harvard in the 1800s. This nesting of whiteness, literacy, and higher education means that RC can never hide from racial-pedagogical truths in ways that other disciplinary categories have seemingly mastered. 19th century Harvard invented "Freshmen English"- the course-child of rhetoric-composition studies. The sole objective was to make sure that white male students at Harvard wrote, talked, and sounded like wealthy, white gentlemen. Anyone in RC knows this as fact because it was overt policy.

Nannie Helen Burroughs

Howard High School Teachers

Carter G. Woodson

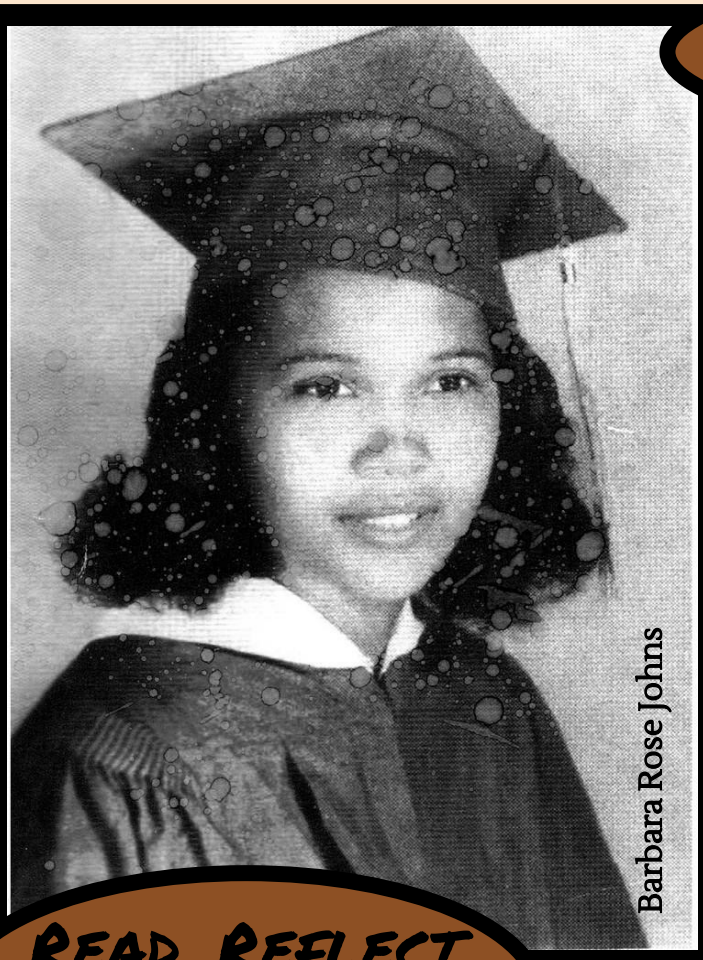
Today “Freshman English” (Comp I, Comp II, First Year Writing, etc) is still a required course in college and the students who “test out of it” via white apparatuses like SATs, AP exams, expensive/private/segregated schooling are, in sum, stamped as the ones who already write, talk, and sound like wealthy, white men too. Not much has changed. Some of us, however, trace our lineage to a different, educational tradition where HBCUs, Black teachers, and legacies of African American literacies flipped it all in reverse. This legacy is the only reason some of us are here in the university; it is also the only reason why some of us stay.

1971 was the first year in the history of U.S. higher education where the number of Black students attending PWIs equaled the numbers of Black students attending HBCUs. Up until that point, white colleges refused to admit Black students. This moment in time was the birth of modern- day rhetoric-composition studies and the battle over what constitutes college literacy. In the aftermath of 1960s Black Freedom Struggles, urban city-centers had universities that saw the first, large influx of Brown and Black college students who made those colleges face a real reckoning about the ways in which college learning/ writing/ literacy was a white assimilationist tool. While many codified white assimilationist pedagogies at this time, Black educators, like always, left us a different ancestral legacy for content and delivery style.

Too many spaces still ignore these alternatives to white assimilationist pedagogies across the k-20 spectrum. Silence and erasure, however, never mean our absence. Welcome to Black Education! ~Carmen Kynard, August 2025

Week 1
(August 20)
Review Course Guide & Course Website

Week 2 (August 27)
"Too Much Schooling, Too Little Education"


Barbara Rose Johns

Our Black Canons/Cannons

Black Teachers on Teaching by Michele Foster

Hello Professor: A Black Principal and Professional Leadership in the Segregated South by Vanessa Siddle Walker

Ready from Within: Septima Clark and the Civil Rights Movement: A First Person Narrative by Septima Clark

Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South by Vanessa Siddle Walker

The Miseducation of the Negro by Carter G. Woodson

Read, Reflect + Journal

Our subtheme for week two is Education, Empire, and Post-Brown regimes. Go to the course website and find the main page called "Too Much Schooling, Too Little Education." There you will find images, videos, music, and more. Watch as many of the videos at the website that you need for historical context. Read "Brown at 70: Commitment or Commemoration" by Gloria Ladson-Billings and any ONE other article. The articles are loaded onto the website.

In writing, draw connections between these writers. How do you understand the legacy of Brown and why? What does Brown have to do with you, your research, your teaching, your life? [For course credit: This is RR#1. Upload your writing to D2L.]

Week 3 (September 3)

"Meta-Fugitive"

Our Black Canons/Cannons

African American Literacies by Elaine Richardson

The Books of the American Negro Spirituals by James Weldon Johnson

Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom by Andrea Heather Williams

Voices of the Self: A Study of Language Competence by Keith Gilyard

Read, Reflect + Journal

Our subtheme for week three is Fugitivity, Education, and Black Re-Invention. Go to the course website and find the main page called "Meta-Fugitive." There you will find images, videos, music, and more context about this week's theme. Feel free to watch as many of the videos loaded at the website that you need for historical context. Read the essays by Heather Andrea Williams and Jarvis Givens and any ONE other article of your own choosing. The articles are loaded onto the website.

In writing, explore: 1) how is Black education a fugitive practice; 2) how is the history of African American literacy a fugitive practice? [For course credit: This is RR#2. Upload your writing to D2L.]

Homecoming

Our Black Canons/Cannons

The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935 by James Anderson

The White Architects of Black Education by William Watkins

Young, Gifted, and Black: Promoting High Achievement among African-American Students by Theresa Perry, Claude Steele, Asa Hilliard

Read, Reflect + Journal

Our subtheme for weeks four and five is HBCUS as Counterspace and Counterpublic. Go to the course website and find the main page called "Homecoming." There you will find images, videos, music, and more context about this week's theme. Feel free to watch as many of the videos loaded at the website that you need for historical context. Articles are also loaded onto the website.

In week 4 (September 10), read any two essays about HBCUs. Karida Brown's chapter, "Roots and Branches" from The Battle for the Black Mind might be a good place to start. In writing, discuss HBCUs as an educational counterspace, both historically (pre-Brown) and contemporaneously (post-Brown). [For course credit: Upload your writing to D2L. This is RR#3.]

In Week 5 (September 17), you have a series of performances from which you can choose: from Beychella to popular movies to documentaries. In writing, connect your viewings to the idea of the HBCUs as a counterpublic, both historically and contemporaneously. [For course credit: Upload your writing to D2L. This is RR#4.]

Weeks 6 (September 24)

Freedom Schools

Our Black Canons/Cannons

Coming of Age in Mississippi by Anne Moody

Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision by Barbara Ransby

In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s by Clayborne Carson

The Making of Black Revolutionaries by James Forman

Radical Equations: Civil Rights from Mississippi to the Algebra Project by Bob Moses

Read, Reflect + Journal

Our subtheme for week six is **From the Mississippi Freedom Schools to the Black Campus Movements.**
Go to the course website and find the main page called "Freedom Schools." There you will find images, videos, music, and more context about this week's theme. Feel free to watch as many of the videos loaded at the website that you need for historical context. Read the excerpted chapters from Rhea Lathan and Ibram Kendi and any ONE other article. The articles are loaded onto the website.

In writing, discuss Black student/community protest as its own form of literacy, fugitivity, and/or education [For course credit: This is RR#5. Upload your writing to D2L.]

"The People Could Fly"

They say the people could fly. Say that long ago in Africa, some of the people knew magic. And they would walk up on the air like climbin up on a gate. And they flew like blackbirds over the fields. Black, shiny wings flappin against the blue up there.

Our subtheme for weeks seven and eight is Black Magical Youth and Their Schooling. The success of the Harry Potter franchise, the activism of Black Lives Matter, and the focus on AfroFuturisms has created the perfect storm for the Renaissance in Black YA novels today. We will explore Black YA fantasy novels that center schools--- either with Black magical children attending white schools or as Black youth attending magical HBCUs. During class, we will examine African American + Black Diasporic folk legends that we will center as the origins and foundations for AfroFuturisms and Black YA novels today. Go to the course website and find the main page called "The People Could Fly." There you will see a choice of 30+ novels. Choose one and D.E.A.R. ("Drop Everything And Read")

In week seven (October 1), read your chosen Black Speculative YA novel from the course's list of 30+ texts. In writing, create a 200-word review, social media-ish, that centers your novel and contextualizes its politics and histories with what we have read so far. [For course credit: Bring this writing to class ready to share.]

In week eight (October 8), be ready for a BOOK EXHIBIT! More details are forthcoming but be ready to get creative wit it!

BlackGirlMagic

Read, Reflect + Journal

Our Black Canons/Cannons

The Games Black Girls Play: Learning the Ropes from Double-Dutch to Hip-Hop by Kyra Gaunt

Hear Our Truths: The Creative Potential of Black Girlhood by Ruth Nicole Brown

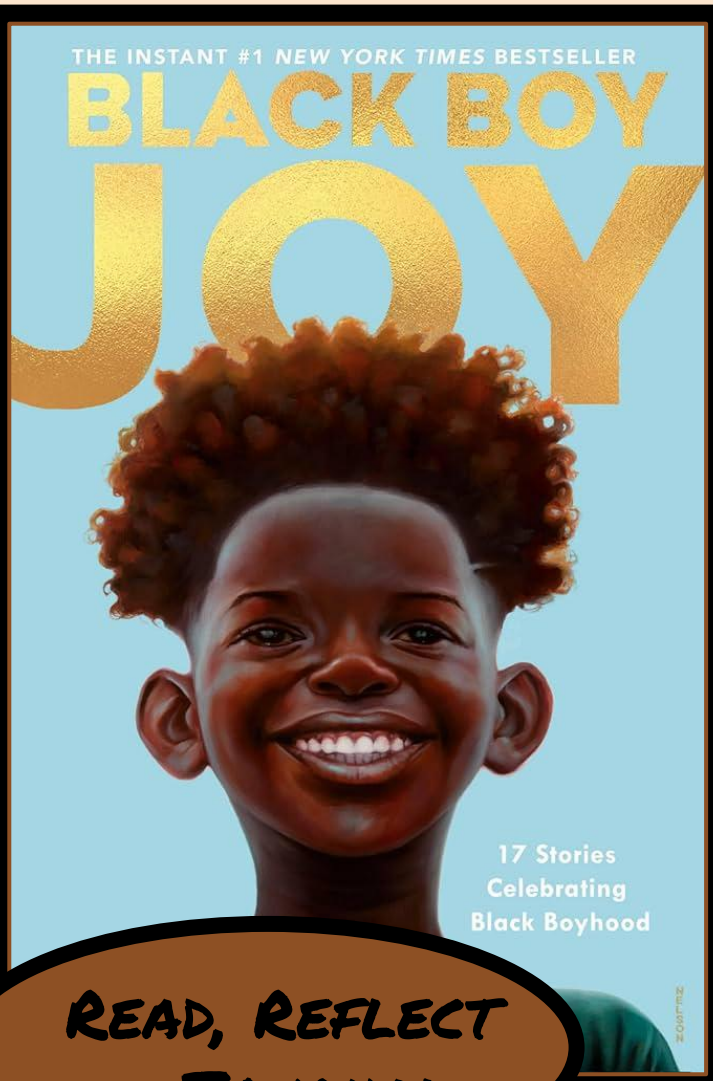
Traces of a Stream: Literacy and Social Change Among African American Women by Jackie Royster

A Voice from the South by Anna Julia Cooper

Our subtheme for week nine is Black Girl Literacies and Black Feminist/ Queer Pedagogies. Go to the course website and find the main page called "BlackGirlMagic." There you will find images, videos, music, and more context about this week's theme. Feel free to watch as many of the videos loaded at the website that you need for historical context. Read any TWO articles of your own choosing. The articles are loaded onto the website.

In writing and in your own words/ design/ image, connect your readings such that Back girl literacies and Black feminist pedagogies are in communication. [For course credit: This is RR#6. Upload your writing to D2L.]

BlackBoyCrit



Read, Reflect + Journal

Our Black Canons/Cannons

Black Male(d): Peril and Promise in the Education of African American Males by Tyrone C. Howard

Reading for Their Life: (Re) building the Textual Lineages of African American Males by Alfred Tatum

A Search Past Silence: The Literacy of Young Black Men by David Kirkland

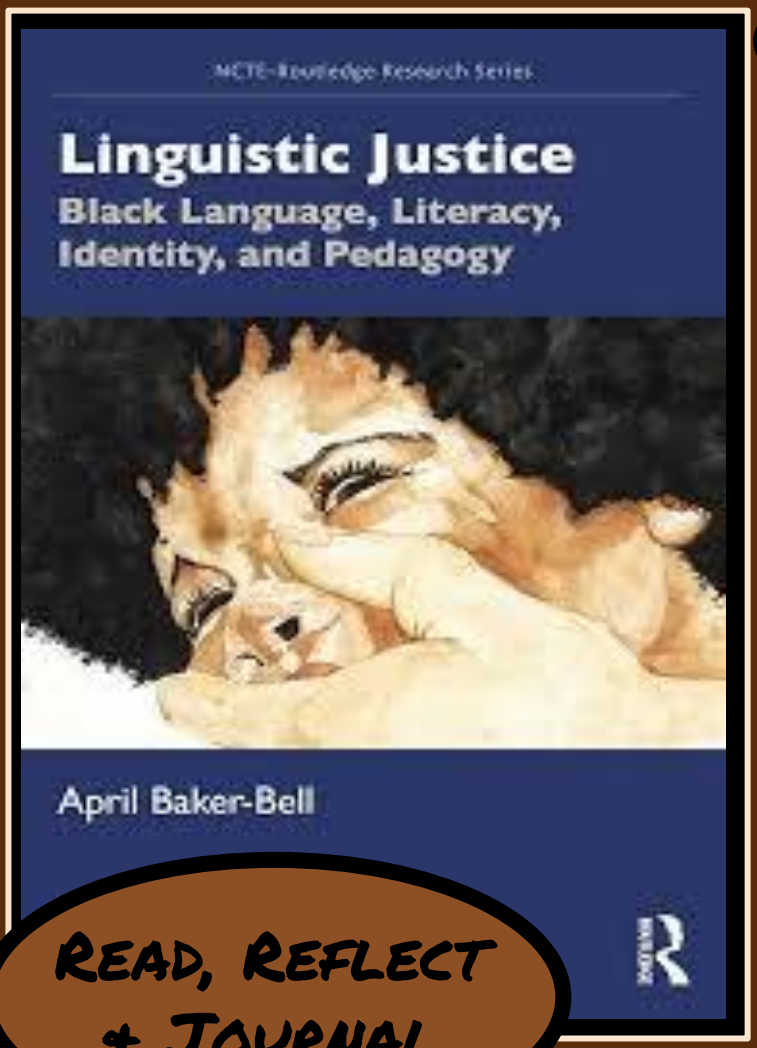
The Trouble With Black Boys: ...And Other Reflections on Race, Equity, and the Future of Public Education by Pedro Noguera

Our subtheme for week ten is **From Black Boy Literacies to Black Boy Joy.** Go to the course website and find the main page called "BlackBoyCrit." There you will find images, videos, music, and more. Watch as many of the videos loaded at the website that you like. Read any TWO articles of your own choosing. The articles are loaded onto the website.

In writing , connect your readings to a reframing of Blackness and gender as an educational justice issue, especially for Black boys. [For course credit: This is RR#7. Upload your writing to D2L.]

Weeks 11 (October 29)

"Linguistic Justice"



Our Black Canons/Cannons

African American Literacies Unleashed: Vernacular English and the Composition Classroom by Arnetha Ball and Ted Lardner

Out of the Mouths of Slaves: African American Language and Educational Malpractice by John Baugh

Spoken Soul: The Story of Black English by John Rickford and Russell Rickford

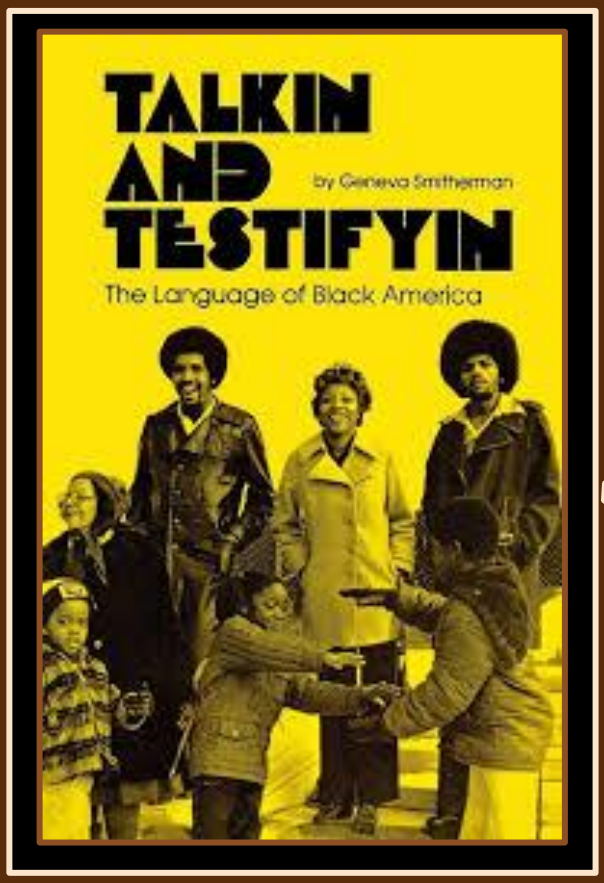
Talkin and Testifyin: The Language of Black America by Geneva Smitherman

Read, Reflect + Journal

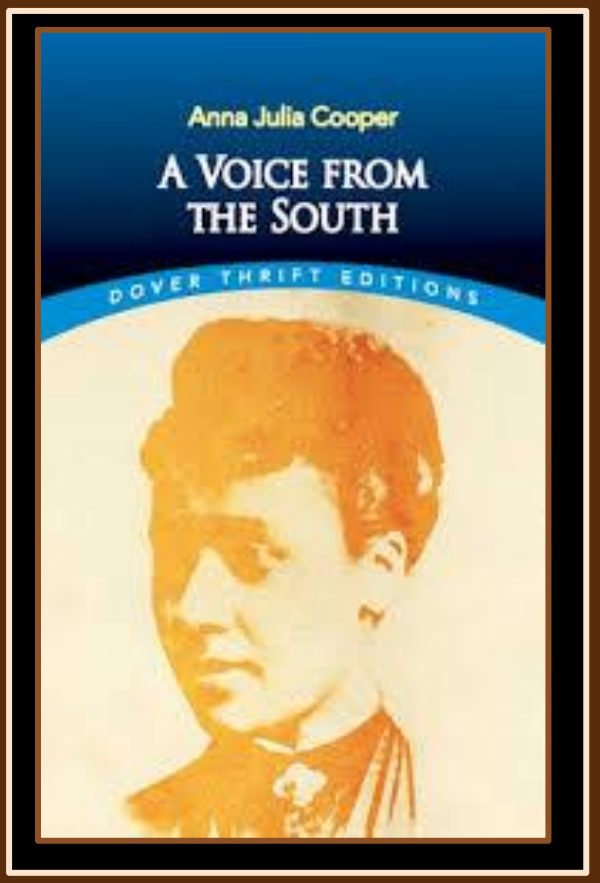
Our subtheme for week eleven is "Whatchu Know About Me" & Black Language? Go to the course website and find the main page called "Linguistic Justice." There you will find images, videos, music, and more context about this week's theme. Feel free to watch as many of the videos loaded at the website that you need for historical context. Read any TWO articles of your own choosing. The articles are loaded onto the website.

In writing, address: what is Black Linguistic justice? What does it do? [For course credit: This is RR#8. Upload your writing to D2L.]

Black Canons/Cannons



Each One Teach One



Many canonical books are listed all across this learning guide and on almost every page of the corresponding website. The course makes the strategic choice to focus on contemporary essays and books. However, the work of current authors all rest on the shoulders on deep historical and theoretical foundations of Black education.

In these two weeks, we pursue a communal focus on Black canonical texts in educational studies. Read any ONE of the canons/cannons listed throughout the course guide or website. With everyone reading something different, we can each one, teach one.

In week 12, create a draft or mock-up of your Black Canon/Cannon Project. [For course credit: This is RR#9. Upload your work to D2L. In week 13, come with the final project. More details are forthcoming but be ready to have some fun wit it!]

Week 14 (November 19)

"Knuck if you Buck"

Our Black Canons/Cannons

Do Not Call Us Negroes: How Multicultural Textbooks Perpetuate Racism
by Sylvia Wynter

Dysconscious Racism, Afrocentric Praxis, and Education for Human Freedom: Through the Years I Keep on Toiling (The Selected Works of Joyce E. King)

Read, Reflect + Journal

Our subtheme for week fourteen is BlackCrit as BookEnd. Go to the course website and find the main page called "Knuck If You Buck." There you will find images, videos, music, and more context about this week's theme. Feel free to watch as many of the videos loaded at the website that you need for historical context. Read the essay by Michael Dumas and any ONE other article of your own choosing. The articles are loaded onto the website. This is our last content theme of the course. We will look at the ways BlackCrit in education has examined and INTERRUPTED schooling as foundationally anti-black.

In writing, connect your readings to the curriculum/instruction in your own specific (sub)discipline. How have racism and whiteness been foundational and how do this week's essays illuminate your discipline's anti-black realities? How do you counter it? [For course credit: This is RR#10. Upload your writing to D2L.]

Last weeks (December 3-10)

"Back Dat Azz Up"

Our last weeks are dedicated to building out portfolios of our learning. For those taking the course for credit, we will digitally share the first draft of our portfolios. This is RR#11. Upload your draft to D2L. You will receive detailed guidelines for the portfolio later. For now, just know that your portfolio must re-present: a selection of RRs, a final conference presentation, revised abstract, reflective letter, and dynamic container. Before class, read one of the articles that explains what portfolios/ portfolio assessments do.

https://bit.ly/kynard-policy-2025

Course policies, classroom rules, and university policies have not been included in this learning guide. Please use the QR code or bitlink at the left for that information.