

This Progression has two options: you will write a proposal, essay, think piece, or editorial devoted to civic rhetoric (an argument about some problem in the world), or a significant piece of Creative Nonfiction. As we will see in class, civic rhetoric is simply rhetoric—argument—that attempts to address a problem in the real world. There are two options for a civic rhetoric essay (one essentially brings your previous essay to a different audience, while of course improving on that essay; the other is a new essay or editorial). See the prompts below the Schedule for more guidance.

Students wishing to take the Creative Nonfiction option must meet with me or post a convincing argument during the first week of the progression to make sure you have done well enough at the previous research essay, and to discuss the kind of writing you would like to do. *The workload, difficulty, and grading standards for creative work will be as difficult—but no more so—as for the essay option. No previous experience at Creative Nonfiction is necessary, and as usual, very hard work at something a student wants to learn—yet may not have had much experience in—is rewarded in the overall “Progression through the Semester” grade.*

For all options, students are encouraged to seek publication of their final revision, where the success of that revision merits it. Office hours would be the best way for me to help with this, but I can also simply give quick advice on where and how to submit your writing for publication.

Civic Options Project Requirements

Written Projects:

Choose **one** option for a written project:

- 1) Write a **“Think Piece” Article**. For this piece, you should imagine you are a reporter who has been given more space to address a particular problem than you would get in the regular part of a newspaper. You will use at least four—though likely several more—sources of textual evidence, but these will be embedded in your writing for a general audience. Your stance should attempt objectivity. For examples, see the Sunday magazines in newspapers of record (*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Los Angeles Times*) and longer articles in magazines such as those mentioned in option 2. This option allows you to spread out and make a clear argument without avoiding complexities, with room to acknowledge complications and several points of view. After reading this article, your readers might have several different points of view, but they will be much more informed about your topic.
- 2) Write an **Editorial**. For this option, you need to be clear about the *size* of your audience: where, exactly, would you submit this editorial? *The Daily Camera* has a smaller readership and would of course be more likely to concern itself with local issues. The editorial page of *The Washington Post*, by contrast, concerns itself with more national issues. Editorials are counted by words, rather than pages, and the difficulty in writing a good one is in staying within, rather than going beyond, the form. Go online to a reputable newspaper in which you would want to publish the piece, and copy and paste an editorial there into Word. Do a word count, and that gives you your word limit. Also read through several editorial pages, and note the differences between editorials without bylines and those with. You may write a “letter to the editor,” but we would prefer a longer editorial, such as those written by regular writers for that page, or those written by guest editorial writers.

Creative Nonfiction Option Project Requirements

Creative Nonfiction encompasses many genres within its own “Fourth Genre,” (a name assuming that fiction, poetry, and drama represent all other forms of creative writing). Indeed, creative nonfiction arguably includes all other genres of writing—including scholarship within academia (if creatively expressed), and certainly well-research “serious nonfiction” (as editors call it) intended for a wider audience outside academia. Writers choosing this option should speak with me about readings and exercises to help with particular projects. Please see the folder “CNF” in “Readings” within our course folder, as well as the document “Creative Nonfiction” in “Notes on Composition.” Then begin what you will do quite a lot of: creative searching on the web and in bookstores and libraries for more on, and in, the “Fourth Genre.”

Note: process is all-important in doing well with this option. You cannot hope to complete your best effort if you start late, fail to write regularly, etc. I will provide some guidance on the writing process, and will then expect you to stick to the schedule on which we agree. The word “creative” does not allow for missing deadlines.