

39. Description of Journal Purposes and Expectations

All students are required to keep a journal

But why? Why keep a journal? Essentially, journals serve two purposes:

1. A personal tool for reflection on your experiences and how they relate to both the themes/concepts of the class and the specific content that we're discussing. The journals provide you with an opportunity to connect theory and practice and relate what you are seeing and experiencing. You can (and should) write anything you think and feel about the class, the readings and your placement.

2. A form of documentation for us. Since there is no final exam, the journal will become a very real and tangible exhibition of the work that you are doing at your placement. Reading your thoughts, understanding your experience, and following your reactions to the work that you're doing will provide us with an opportunity to see how you are engaging yourself in your placement and that you are thinking and learning about how your experiences relate to the course. It is important to note that you should write this journal primarily for you and not feel like you have to write it a certain way for us.

Journal Expectations:

1. Please type all your journal entries
2. Place all entries in a binder or folder
3. Bring your journals to section – we'll be using them and reading from them on occasion
4. When handing in your journal, hand in the binder with all previous entries
5. Hand in your journal on time

Reminder: Journals are 30% of your grade

What makes a “good” journal?

Beyond anything else, journals are personal – they tell the story of the work that you’re doing and in many ways, they tell a story about you. A “good” journal is one that tells the story and then asks questions about it. A “good” journal does more than just make a list of events. Instead, it connects the list and applies the list and tries to understand what is going on. A journal is also about the process of coming to know and understand – it should document growth, change, and any “epiphanies” that happen along the way.

Below are a few ways to tackle journaling:

Describe: What did you see? What did you hear? Describe the space – conversations – travel.
What did you do?

Interpret: What were your reactions? How did your observations make you feel? What were your emotions? What does it mean? Why is it important?

Connect: Do your observations, feelings, and emotions connect with anything you’ve read or discussed in class? Are there connections with work others are doing? Are there connections to your life – to your experience?

Apply: So what is your reaction really about? What is the underlying issue? What are you trying to get at? What would you change? Suggestions? Comments? Critiques? Why did something work so well? What was the inspiration?

So, for tomorrow what are your expectations going into your placement? Fears? Hopes? What do you think the place will look like? What do you think you’ll see? What do you want to see?