

The Independent Work Component of Your Chapbook

15 pts.

Before reading this assignment, please read the Chapbook assignment linked in our Bb menu.

About

The independent part of your chapbook is basically anything you want to write. We do a number of mandatory assignments for this class which are designed to help you with specific skills, but I want you to be free to write according to your own genre interests as well. You do want this material to fit the rest of your book as well as possible in terms of theme, subject matter, style, etc., but that is the only constraint, and freedom to explore is a greater priority than unity.

This work should comprise roughly 15% of your book. In other words, about 3-4 more poems, or one more normal-length story, or several more flash stories, or one more short memoir or creative essay—or a combination of these items. You will be working closely with your instructor throughout the term and at the end to find out what will be an appropriate amount of writing.

Purpose

- To help fill out your chapbook and make it more complete and as unified as possible.
- To explore any kind of creative writing that interests you and have fun doing it.

Suggestions

You may notice that your work for our various projects happens to have a common theme, subject, or approach. You can seize on this if you like and write your independent items to help fill out that theme or to provide more material around your focus.

Your independent work will not be scored ahead of time or, in most cases, receive much feedback from me or the class. It is primarily a way for you to write freely and without fear of evaluation or judgment. You are, of course, always free to submit it for workshop, conference, or private discussions with me.

Grading

A = 14-15 pts.

An “A” grade means that you’ve included an appropriate or greater amount of extra writing in your chapbook. This material is very suitable for a well-read adult audience interested in good and original work. It is engaging, imaginative, well-crafted, and bold. It avoids sentimentality and triteness. Your writing is very well-edited for clarity, concision, and readability, as well as surface errors and mechanics, including punctuation and spelling. Formatting is excellent and the work helps to noticeably fill out the focus and theme of the book.

B = 12-13

A “B” means that you’ve included enough material for this component, if possibly a bit under. The material would mostly satisfy a discerning, adult reader, though a few lapses into sentimentality or cliché may occur. The writing is nearly free of stylistic awkwardness or incorrect mechanics such as spelling and punctuation. The material does not seem super out of place in the book.

C = 10-11

A “C” means that there may be less than an appropriate amount of work included. It would satisfy a discerning adult reader in places, and probably disappoint in others, with lapses into such beginner weaknesses as triteness, sentimentality, and/or cliché. Problems with style and mechanics are likely noticeable and distracting. The material doesn’t really seem to fit the rest of the book very well, and may look somewhat out of place or worse.

D = 8-9

A “D” means that there is almost certainly less than an appropriate amount of work included. It would mostly not satisfy a discerning adult, showing beginner errors quite conspicuously (lapses into triteness, sentimentality, and/or cliché). Problems with style and mechanics are very likely and distracting, with poor editing and proofreading. The material may not fit the rest of the book at all, and likely looks markedly out of place. This is independent work which is saved from an “F” because it shows at least some attention to at least one criterion mentioned above.