Description: In this assignment, you will interview another member of this class to find out more about her and the different identities that she holds. Your goal is to find out about how your partner sees herself as an individual, to which communities/groups she belongs (and why), and which identities are most important for her (and perhaps the conditions under which she feels certain identities most strongly). Taking this information, you will write a brief identity statement in which you introduce your partner and describe those components of her identity and being that she has chosen to share with you. This essay can take many different forms, including biography or autobiography (if you choose to write from the perspective of your partner). Your goal is to produce a piece of writing that helps a reader who does not know your partner gain some insight into the kinds of identities that she believes make her the person that she is and shape her beliefs, values, experiences, etc.

Purpose: This assignment has multiple goals. First, it gets you immediately involved in writing activities even though you lack substantive knowledge about the knowledge areas for this class. Second, it gets you talking, thinking, and writing about identity, its expressions, and its potential impact. Third, it helps you meet other individuals in the class and learn something about them. Finally, you will use this assignment to learn some basic editing and peer reviewing techniques.

Preparation: Prior to sitting down with your partner, spend about 5 minutes thinking about your own identity and the forces/individuals/events that have shaped it. We will do some preparatory exercises to get the creative juices flowing:

1. Brainstorming: who/what/where influences perceptions of identity?
2. Brainstorming: what kinds of questions would you ask to solicit this kind of information? What kinds of questions are off limits?
3. Personal writing: 5 minutes thinking about own identity components
4. Interview: in pairs, interview each other and write down answers

Final comments: This exercise is NOT intended to make anyone feel uncomfortable. If you find yourself in an awkward situation, graciously explain to your interviewer that you would prefer not to talk about a specific issue and suggest a different direction you would feel more comfortable talking about.

Bring THREE copies of your paper to class on Wednesday.