

# The Portfolio

## Overview

Portfolios work in different ways in different classes. Sometimes they are used to simply collect the work a student has done over a period of time. Sometimes they are used to mark progress via revision. And sometimes they are used as a way to assess student work—not simply just writing but also progress and effort in class.

The Portfolios you will turn in for this class will do all of these things. As you develop these portfolios each of you will engage in three activities: collection, selection, and reflection. This will give you the opportunity to review your work, revise your writing, and think about what you have learned throughout the semester. You will showcase your progress throughout the semester through revision of your previous work. Another way you will show the knowledge you have developed about your writing is in a reflection cover letter for your portfolio.

Finally, I will use the portfolios as a way of assessing your effort, progress as a writer and as a student, and the quality of your written work. I will assess the portfolios and include a letter to you when I return them. The letter will detail your work in the class to that point. I will give you feedback on the quality of your work to help you understand your strengths and weaknesses as a writer in a variety of rhetorical situations. I will also include a letter grade to mark your progress.

**Note:** I can offer you two pieces of advice about portfolios: 1. Take the cover letter seriously. If you don't, I will know. You can't scam a scammer. I was a student in your position not so long ago. I know the tricks. It will only frustrate me if you waste my time with fluff that you don't mean. So take the cover letter analysis of your portfolio, and work this semester, seriously. Be honest and useful in it. 2. I value revision. I value students that have taken the time to attempt to grow as a person and a writer. If you have attempted good revisions, then you will be rewarded for it. If you say you've attempted revision but haven't, you'll be penalized. I could not be anymore straightforward here about what I will look for when assessing your portfolios (revision and a strong cover letter).

## Midterm Portfolio

The mid-term portfolio is your first chance at revision and first opportunity to showcase your development as a writer thus far. It is worth 15% of your final grade.

What to include:

1. **2 journal entries.** You may choose any two entries here. Try and select entries that showcase your careful reading and analysis skills. THESE DO NOT NEED TO BE REVISED. JUST INCLUDE THEM.
2. **2 in-class writings.** You may choose any two writings here. Try and select two that show your understanding and development of your writing and reading skills. THESE DO NOT NEED TO BE REVISED. JUST INCLUDE THEM.
3. **Your revised literacy narrative.** In addition to your revised paper, include the

- workshop draft of your literacy narrative and the second draft with my comments on it.
4. **Your completed definition essay.** In addition to your revised paper include the conference draft of your definition essay.
  5. **Your cover letter.** This is an in class writing. It should be at least two pages, double spaced. You can write it in letter form. You can write it in essay form. You can write it in memo form. You can write it in question and answer form. How you write it is up to you, just be sure to include the following:

- What did you choose the journal entries you included?
- Why did you choose the in-class writings you included?
- What revision did you do in your two papers?
- How did those revisions improve or not improve these essays?
- How has your writing improved or not improved so far this semester?
- What do you want to say about yourself as a reader/writer so far this semester?

Your cover letter and portfolio must be turned in at the end of the class period. See schedule for due dates. Place all items in a folder with your reflective introduction on top before turning in. Please put your name and course/section number on the front. No three ring binders please (they are heavy and I have to carry these around).

## Final Portfolio

Your final portfolio is your last opportunity to demonstrate to me everything you have learned throughout the semester. This portfolio should reflect development in your writing skills and critical thinking skills. In addition, it should be well polished. This is the time to worry about typos and editing and small details. This should be the best writing I have seen from you.

What to include:

1. **2 journal entries.** You may choose any two entries here. Try and select entries that showcase your careful reading and analysis skills. THESE DO NOT NEED TO BE REVISED. JUST INCLUDE THEM.
2. **in-class writings.** You may choose any two writings here. Try and select two that show your understanding and development of your writing and reading skills. THESE DO NOT NEED TO BE REVISED. JUST INCLUDE THEM.
3. **Your revised Meaning Essay.** In addition, include your workshop draft and draft with my comments on it.
4. **Your revised Definition Essay or your revised Review Essay.** Which essay you revise here is your choice. Be sure to include the workshop draft or conference draft, as well as the draft with my comments on it for which every essay you choose.
5. **Final Portfolio Cover Letter.** This is an in-class writing. It should be at least two pages long, double-spaced. As with your mid-term portfolio, you can write this cover letter in any form that you wish. Your cover letter should answer the following questions:
  - Why are these your best journal entries?

- Why are these your best in class writings?
- What revision did you do in your formal writing? How has it improved or not improved your writing?
- What have you learned about your reading and writing skills this semester?
- What do you still need to work on in future writing assignments?

You will have the entire period to complete your cover letter.

Portfolios are due at the end of our final class meeting. Place all items in a folder with your reflective introduction on top before turning in. Please put your name and course/section number on the front. No three ring binders please (they are heavy and I have to carry these around).

Your portfolios will be returned to you during our final exam scheduled time with final grade letters. During the final exam you will each briefly share your favorite piece of writing from the semester with the class. Your final exam is mandatory and failure to attend will result in your final grade being docked by half a letter grade.

