

Portfolios

Students majoring in English are strongly encouraged to produce portfolios of their work in the Mississippi State English Department. These portfolios can be used by students as evidence of their abilities and accomplishments as they apply for employment or for placement in graduate programs. The department also uses the portfolios to assess its own program. Individual students are **not** graded on the portfolio. Their participation is highly desirable and advantageous to the student, but not required.

Contents of Portfolio

- A reflective essay that explains the context of each writing sample, discusses the rhetorical strategies employed in each piece, and comments on the growth in understanding of the themes or genres of English and American literature, as demonstrated in each piece.
- One selection from English Composition I or II (if taken at MSU)
- One selection from English 2213, English Literature Survey I; 2223, English Literature Survey II; 3363, American Literary History; 2243, American Literature Survey I; or 2253, American Literature Survey II
- One selection from a junior- or senior-level writing course: English 3413, Advanced Composition; 4203, Advanced Technical Writing; 4303, Craft of Poetry; or 4313, Craft of Fiction. Students may also substitute here a writing sample from a discipline outside of English, from a service learning project, or from a workplace experience.
- Two selections from 4000-level electives. Students who do not include a selection from Composition should provide three selections from 4000-level electives in English.

Criteria for Rating Portfolios

- Reflective Essay: Does the student provide rhetorical analysis of the five selections, explaining why he/she chose the piece, how it shows growth as a writer, where it shows in-depth understanding of the literature, where it documents effectively?
- Organization/Purpose: Does each piece employ a design appropriate to readers' needs and to the writer's purpose?
- Effective Editing: Has each piece been appropriately copy edited for a professional audience?
- Rhetorical Analysis: Does each piece demonstrate understanding of the choices writers make to achieve rhetorical and aesthetic purposes?
- Content Development: Does each piece show understanding of the genre, theme, or critical/historical context of each work discussed?
- Documentation: Does each piece quote primary and secondary sources correctly and document research correctly and ethically?

Procedures

- For each portfolio, each criterion will be rated 6-1 on a Likert scale (6 is superior, 5 is excellent, 4 is good, 3 is average, 2 is weak, 1 is failing).
- Though faculty rate individual portfolios, the cumulative data will assess the success of the program in achieving its objectives.
- Advisors will provide information on the assessment process at the beginning of each student's work in the English major.
- In the third week of each semester, faculty will provide a portfolio workshop of graduating seniors.
- Portfolios will be submitted at midterm and rated by the twelfth week. One-hour Exit Interviews will follow in the thirteenth-fourteenth weeks, with 3-4 students at a time meeting with Senior Exit Portfolio Committee. The Exit Surveys will be administered after each Interview.