

How Do I Develop a Directed Portfolio?

Steps involved in completing a Directed Portfolio for students pursuing Literary Studies, Popular Culture/ Cultural Studies, or the Open Plan include:

- Select an English graduate faculty member to serve as the Director. You should talk to a professor about potentially serving as your director the semester before you plan to register for the Directed Portfolio so that you have time to set up the class.
- In consultation with your director, select three seminar papers to include in the portfolio. Selections should reflect a student's strongest work as well as the breadth of a student's knowledge so papers might cover different genres/ periods/ or subfields in English studies. **You must have copies of the original, graded essays to share with your director and include in your final portfolio.**
- Consult with the assigning professors for the other papers you want to include to discuss using those papers as part of the portfolio. Check in about how and how much they want to be involved in the process. Would they be willing to provide any advice you need to get started on revisions? Do you need any clarification on their feedback from your original essay? Do you need advice about appropriate target journals or conferences? Would they be willing to comment on a revised draft?
- In consultation with your director, determine revision goals and target audiences for each paper that will influence these goals. For instance, selecting a target journal can help determine length requirements and audience expectations/ familiarity with material to guide decisions about how to expand or tighten the argument and what issues might need more or less context/explanation. A target audience might be a specific journal in the field and/or it might be that you want to imagine one of the papers as a writing sample for a Ph.D. application and/or you might want to tailor a paper for a particular conference.
- Complete the Portfolio Approvals Form that lists the papers you will include and indicates your director's participation. Write a short description (approximately one page) that identifies the papers you will include and the reasons for your selections and explains the goals of your portfolio. Your director sends those documents to the graduate program director and graduate program secretary. Once the graduate director approves the proposal, the secretary sets up the course for you, and you can register.
- During your portfolio semester, develop a work schedule and stay in communication with your director, submitting revised drafts to your director and seeking additional feedback as necessary.

- Submit the final portfolio to your director with the original, graded essays, the revised final drafts, and the reflection essay. The reflection essay (1500 words minimum) discusses the rationale for selecting the essays included, identifies the target audiences and revision goals for each paper, explains the process that went into revising and any discoveries, challenges, insights along the way, and it might evaluate the outcomes.
- Since portfolios don't require defense and don't need to go on to CGS for additional processes, there are not the same deadlines as for thesis students. Students completing portfolios decide on a deadline with their supervising professor so that the professor can submit a grade of satisfactory or unsatisfactory with other final grades.
- Many students complete a portfolio during one semester while they are taking another graduate course. If you are not able to complete your portfolio during the semester, you can repeat the course one time. You would need to finish during your second semester. If you have federal loans, remember they only cover minimum required hours.
- Portfolios are graded as Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory. If you do not finish your portfolio in the first semester but you work consistently with the supervising professor, you can still earn a grade of satisfactory.