

# professional writing

WORKING ON YOUR PORTFOLIO (an example timeline)

ACTIVITY	YEAR IN PROGRAM
Develop initial structure for portfolio (ideally in WRA 210).	1 2
Take core PW courses: WRA 202, 210, 260, 360.	1 2 3
Attend PW professional development workshops (in spring).	2 3
Take track-specific PW courses.	2 3 4
Gather possible portfolio contents—SAVE EVERYTHING!; revise, refine, edit, and polish these pieces.	1 2 3 4
Update resume and add new activities, skills, etc.	1 2 3 4
Deeply review portfolio; identify holes in work, skills, etc.; develop set of goals for internship and senior year.	3
Complete PW internship or portfolio seminar (WRA 455).	4
Present portfolio to PW faculty and Community and Industry Board; submit portfolio with cover document to PW program office (at end of spring).	4

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## THINKING ABOUT YOUR PORTFOLIO

### Our hopes are that your portfolio will:

- allow you to organize and present your work throughout your degree program and across your classes;
- allow you to organize and present your skills and competencies, drawing across your degree program, coursework, and activities;
- be a tool for self-reflection, degree program and career planning, and goal setting;
- demonstrate your success in “key performances” and articulation of skills; and
- serve as an important asset in getting a job.

### Our expectations:

Just prior to graduation, you will present your portfolio to approximately four members of our Community and Industry Advisory Board and to faculty in the Professional Writing program. You will present a 1–2 page memo that introduces your portfolio, gives us cues as to how to read and understand it, and reflects on your overall experiences—academic, intellectual, and professional.

You will also submit (within one week following the presentation) your entire portfolio, burned to a CD, for archiving purposes. You may also submit your portfolio URL if you would like it linked from the Professional Writing program web site.

This presentation is NOT part of your grade or graduation requirements, but instead fulfills two key purposes: 1) acts as a space for you to receive thoughtful, constructive feedback and congratulations at this key moment in your academic career, and 2) serves as a key assessment tool for the program—that is, we use the portfolio assessments to grade ourselves, and to see if we’re doing what we say we’re doing, and to see if we’re offering students the opportunities we say we will. This is thus not an evaluation of you, but rather of the program, our courses, and the faculty.

### A few tips for working on your portfolio:

Reflect on your work while preparing it; pause upon the completion of a paper or project and write a quick summary of what you did, what you accomplished, and what you learned during the process. This way, you’ll have this material ready to go when you choose to integrate the work into your portfolio.

**Create a robust but flexible framework for your portfolio very early on (ideally in WRA 210: Introduction to Web Authoring) in the Professional Writing program.**

**Know that the pieces you include in your portfolio will likely have to be edited and polished before you include them in your portfolio; don’t just plunk coursework into the portfolio without polishing it.**

**Save EVERYTHING**—all your drafts, all your projects, all your work for EVERY class. Not all of this material will make it into your portfolio, but keeping track of your work and saving all of your work is important for selecting which work to present in your portfolio, and at what stage.

**Know that the pieces you include in your portfolio will likely require a preface or abstract before you include them in your portfolio—some sort of brief situating statement so readers/viewers can understand what you produced, in what context, for what audience, articulating what skills or competencies.**