

## CHAPTER 6: ELECTRONIC PORTFOLIOS

### First-Year Writing Electronic Portfolio Instructions

Every student who takes a First-Year Writing course at the University of Georgia will compose an electronic portfolio over the course of the semester. The ePortfolio gives students an opportunity to revise and polish their work—even after it has been evaluated for a grade during the semester—to reflect on their writing processes, and to showcase their work in a personalized context. The use of an electronic portfolio for all FYW classes means that students have an opportunity to raise their grades through steady work and revision; it also means that students need to schedule adequate time to do their very best work in the portfolio, as it counts for 30% of their final grade.

Students develop portfolios throughout the semester using their instructors' directions to update and revise their work, uploading their final products to eLW. Students will also find that using feedback from their classmates in peer review sessions will make the portfolio development a much more rewarding process, as will calling on the Writing Center and Digital Learning Lab.

Individual instructors will make specific assignments for various parts of the portfolio. However, all ePortfolios must be submitted to eLW. In broad outline, the essential seven components of our ePortfolios are consistent in every FYW course and are described briefly below.

*NOTE: You cannot re-use or recycle any exhibit from your English 1101 portfolio, including the Biography or Introductory Reflective Essay, for your English 1102 portfolio. This would be Academic Dishonesty and handled under the Academic Honesty policy and procedures.*

### Elements of the Portfolio

#### **Biography**

The biography is a short introduction to you, the author of the portfolio. Your teacher may specify particular information to include in your bio, but, in general, the bio should act as an author's note.

Images on your biography page are optional, but readers like them, so you should try to include some image that is relevant. You can select a representative image (a windmill, a horse, or anything you can find on the Web—just remember to include a citation), or you can select an image of yourself. Think of it as a dust jacket image on the back of a book—how do you want to represent yourself? The goal of your Biography should be to establish a credible ethos.

#### **Introductory Reflective Essay (IRE)**

The most important element in your ePortfolio, the Introductory Reflective Essay provides a

reader with an introduction and guide to the rest of your work. A strong IRE ties together all the exhibits in your portfolio; it helps you describe and reflect on your writing processes, with your exhibits providing the supporting evidence. The IRE is also the first item your instructor will read after they open your Biography page. Your teacher may provide you with a specific prompt or direct you to some specific portion of the FYW program sample prompt to help you get started. In your IRE, you might discuss how the various exhibits you have chosen for your portfolio reveal the way you have engaged with the goals of the course listed earlier in this *FYW Guide*. Some very successful portfolios have re-organized the author's work for the semester around a common theme that the writer sees in their own work. In fact, the goal of the IRE should be to organize the portfolio in a meaningful way; it is the most active portion of the portfolio.

750-1500 words is the average length for an IRE, although some of the Moran Award winners have written longer IRE's.

## **Two Revised Essays from the Course**

You will include in your Electronic Portfolio two of the three graded papers you have written for the class, revised and polished and posted to the portfolio. They should be substantive and well-argued, carefully edited, error free, and completely, thoroughly, and correctly documented in MLA format.

*Note about the Revised Essays: We recommend a thorough revision for the Revised Essays exhibits in your Portfolio—not just a quick proofreading for surface errors. Could more evidence be developed, a new perspective raised, a change in tone attempted, or a firmer line of reasoning followed?*

*When choosing essays to put in your ePortfolio, think about how they will work together to help make the portfolio a unified whole. Some students choose the essays that received the highest grades, but this is only one criterion. You may want to choose the essays you like the best, the ones you can improve the most, or the ones that fit best with your chosen theme.*

## **Exhibit of Composing/Revision Process**

This exhibit demonstrates your composing and revision process. Typically, students construct this document by copying and pasting the same or similar sections of a selected essay into a single document. You can then add commentary explaining the significance of the different versions, pointing out and explaining the changes you made through successive drafts. The Revision Exhibit gives you a chance to demonstrate not so much your best products for the semester, but the skill set that you have built up over the course of the semester. The trick is to make it easy for a reader to follow the process; the explanation is just as important as, or

perhaps more important than, your chosen examples. This exhibit gives you a chance to reflect on your progress throughout the semester and to perform a self-assessment.

### **Exhibit of Peer Review Process**

One of the goals for all FYW courses states that students will “demonstrate an ability to critique the writing of themselves and others.” For this exhibit, which speaks directly to that goal, you will select and post to your portfolio one of the peer reviews that you have written during the semester, including commentary to help the reader understand your peer review process. One option is to choose a review you completed for one of your classmate’s papers. Try to choose one that you believe was helpful and focused; you might want to ask your classmates about which ones were helpful to them. You may also copy and paste together several brief examples of peer reviews you have completed and construct a new document with inserted commentary. Explanations about the assigned peer review are often helpful here, too. As in the previous case, the Peer Review Exhibit gives you a chance to demonstrate not so much your best products for the semester, but the skill set that you have built up over the course of the semester. As with the Composing/Revision Process Exhibit, the Peer Review Exhibit gives you a chance to reflect on your progress throughout the semester and to perform a self-assessment.

### **Wild Card**

This exhibit is up to you. The only limitations are that your Wild Card 1) must be an electronic file or link that “fits” (digitally speaking) in your portfolio; and 2) must include some of *your* writing, which may appear as captions, short descriptions, or introductory commentary. In the past, students have submitted journals, papers, photos with captions, short stories, poems, letters, song lyrics, scans of drawings with comments, news articles, podcasts, and music files. Some students create new exhibits especially to fit with their portfolio theme. In thinking about selecting or creating a Wild Card, consider how it fits into your overall portfolio rationale and how its inclusion will impact ethos and pathos.

### **Special Note on Presentation and Publication of your ePortfolio**

**Importance:** The electronic portfolio, as the capstone project that showcases your achievements and learning, is very important; it counts for 30% of your final grade.

**Digital Publication:** The ePortfolio must be uploaded to eLC as an Assignment. • Most artifacts in your portfolio will be .doc or pdf files. Your instructor will let you know if they

prefer one file type over the other. Your instructor will also let you know if they prefer your portfolio submission to be one big file or several files. Regardless, keep in mind that the ePortfolio is not merely a loose collection of word-processed documents, but a **unified digital artifact** whose parts fit together in a rational and harmonious manner, much like the different paragraphs of an essay fit together to communicate one thesis. If you do not complete the ePortfolio properly, you may receive a grade of zero for this important project. For technical help, see the documents or videos under Content → FYW Resources and Info in your eLC class.

**Presentation and Design:** Just as the Grading Rubric considers Presentation and Document Design as important to the rhetorical success of your essays, so too does the ePortfolio. Your portfolio therefore must meet the highest standards for presentation and document design; failure to do so will seriously hurt your grade for the ePortfolio.

**Readability and Access:** It is very important that your instructor can access and read your portfolio without complications. It is your responsibility to make sure that:

- the ePortfolio and all its exhibits display properly without significant formatting issues;
- all exhibits are in one of the acceptable file formats (see below);
- the ePortfolio can be navigated easily and efficiently by your readers.

Check your portfolio on several different computers and open all the exhibits to make sure that the portfolio is reader-friendly.

### **Technical Note: Acceptable File Formats for ePortfolio Exhibits**

To ensure that instructor will be able to open and read your ePortfolio, the FYW Program accepts only the following file formats for ePortfolio Exhibits that are primarily text documents:

.DOC

.PDF

**DOC files:** These documents can be composed in word processing software available through the University of Georgia's Office apps or through other word processing packages. However, note that the formatting and design of your documents may display differently on your instructor's computer. This option is recommended for documents that are primarily text, without complicated design elements.

**PDF documents:** Students who include a large number of images in their documents or have special design and formatting needs often choose to upload the documents in their portfolios as PDF documents. This is the only format in which you can be absolutely sure that the document appears exactly the same in your word processor and the web display.

### How Are FYW ePortfolios Evaluated?

At the end of the semester, student portfolios are graded by the course instructor. In order to evaluate them, teachers read portfolios holistically. This means that the teachers “norm” themselves, getting a sense of what “constitutes” an A, B, C, etc. among the group of portfolios that they are reading, then judge each portfolio as a whole, assigning it a single grade. As teachers read through students’ portfolios, they particularly gauge how well a student’s Introductory Reflective Essay (IRE) describes the content found in the other exhibits and whether or not the student has been able to use writing to express his or her own encounter with the goals and evaluative criteria of the course. In other words, expect FYW teachers to use the IRE as a guide for reading your other documents, in order to get a sense of how well they match the expectations you set up in your Introduction. Of course, teachers always look for evidence of care, originality, hard work, and excellent writing, but in the portfolio we are also interested in students’ ability to write reflectively and accurately about their own writing.

In addition, teachers often use the Rubric below, based on the standard FYW rubric and using the same or similar terminology, to help them get started when they are beginning to evaluate portfolios each semester. They may also point you towards this rubric to help you evaluate your own or your classmates’ portfolio during a workshop.

#### ELECTRONIC PORTFOLIO RUBRIC

##### BIOGRAPHY

- Is present and complete;
- Is carefully proofread and edited, with very few errors of a grammatical, mechanical, or typographic nature.

[CCC] \_\_\_\_\_

- Shows clear and appropriate awareness of audience;
- Gives a coherent picture of the writer.

[SP] \_\_\_\_\_

Is distinctive for its:

- imaginative quality;
- extraordinary and effective care in craftsmanship and presentation;
- prose style;
- compelling authorial voice;
- persuasive argumentation.

[DIST] \_\_\_\_\_

##### INTRODUCTORY REFLECTIVE ESSAY

- Is present and complete;

- Makes a clear and complete statement about the writer's ethos, development, and/or skill set that is more than an autobiographical narrative or list of exhibits (unity-thesis);
- Offers a clear rationale for the choice of exhibits and their order (unity-organization);
- Explains the role of each exhibit in the overall portfolio and in supporting the thesis (evidence);
- Is carefully proofread and edited, with very few errors of a grammatical, mechanical, or typographic nature.

[CCC] \_\_\_\_\_

- Offers a strong, and vivid understanding of the writer and writing (audience awareness);
- Is particularly persuasive about how exhibits contribute to the whole portfolio (coherence).

[SP] \_\_\_\_\_

Is distinctive for its:

- imaginative quality;
- extraordinary and effective care in craftsmanship and presentation;
- prose style;
- compelling authorial voice;
- persuasive argumentation.

[DIST] \_\_\_\_\_

#### TWO REVISED CLASS ESSAYS

- Are present and complete;
- At a minimum, meet the FYW Rubric qualifications for CCC;
- Are carefully proofread and edited, with very few errors of a grammatical, mechanical, or typographic nature.

[CCC] \_\_\_\_\_

- At a minimum, meet the FYW Rubric qualifications for SP.

[SP] \_\_\_\_\_

- At a minimum, meet the FYW Rubric qualifications for a DIST or a "high" SP that shows extraordinary thoughtfulness and care.

[DIST] \_\_\_\_\_

#### EXHIBIT OF COMPOSING AND/OR REVISION PROCESS

- present and complete;
  - Offers a clear and complete statement about and/or example of the composing and/or revision process (unity);
  - Supports that thesis with specific examples (evidence);
  - Presents the examples in a logical manner (unity-organization);
- 
- Is carefully written, edited, and proofread, with essentially no distracting errors of a grammatical, mechanical, or typographic nature.

[CCC] \_\_\_\_\_

- Offers strong and vivid examples of the writer and writing (audience awareness);
- Is particularly persuasive about how the examples support the thesis (coherence);

[SP] \_\_\_\_\_

Is distinctive for its:

- imaginative quality;
- extraordinary and effective care in craftsmanship and presentation;
- prose style;
- compelling authorial voice;
- persuasive argumentation.

[DIST] \_\_\_\_\_

#### EXHIBIT OF PEER REVIEW PROCESS

- Is present and complete;
- Offers a clear exhibit of a peer review (unity);
- Arranges one or more examples of peer review in a logical manner (unity-organization);
- Is carefully presented so that both the original and comments are easily seen. Errors in grammar or spelling don't interfere with conveying comments (presentation & design).

[CCC] \_\_\_\_\_

- Shows a strong, and vivid understanding of the writer and commentary (audience awareness);
- Is persuasive because comments show a clear understanding and response to the work (coherence).

[SP] \_\_\_\_\_

Is distinctive for its:

- imaginative quality;
- extraordinary and effective care in craftsmanship and presentation;
- prose style;
- compelling authorial voice;
- persuasive argumentation.

[DIST] \_\_\_\_\_

#### WILD CARD

- Is present and complete;
- Fits into the portfolio as a whole in a logical way that is described in the introductory reflective essay;
- Is carefully written, edited, and proofread, with few errors of a grammatical, mechanical, or typographic nature that distract from the purpose of the exhibit.

[CCC] \_\_\_\_\_

- Offers a strong and vivid understanding of the writer and writing (audience awareness).

[SP] \_\_\_\_\_

Is distinctive for its:

- imaginative quality;
- extraordinary and effective care in craftsmanship and presentation;
- prose style;
- compelling authorial voice;
- persuasive argumentation.

[DIST] \_\_\_\_\_