

# School of Communication

## **Student Contract for Writing Majors: General Writing Track**

This contract is to be signed during the semester the student declares the major. **A graduation application will not be signed by an advisor unless this contract is on file.**

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Dear Student:

Welcome! You have probably made the choice to major in Writing because you recognize that our department is a place where critical and creative thinking is highly valued and where you are provided an ideal environment to improve and polish your writing skills and hone your talents in a variety of writing situations. You will work with dedicated teachers--scholars who themselves are practicing and published writers—and will be given the opportunity to explore the world of words and writing in ways we know will not only be beneficial but interesting and inspiring as well.

We work hard to ensure that your experience with us is both challenging and enjoyable. In fact, we feel our program is one of the best in the nation, but in order to make that claim, we must assess our program yearly. To that end, this contract spells out what will be required of you so that we can successfully perform assessment.

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All writing majors who have chosen the General Writing track will turn in a final portfolio in the semester in which they graduate. The goal of this portfolio is to allow students to demonstrate their growth and proficiency in writing in three major areas: Creative Writing, Professional Writing, and Linguistics.

The final portfolio must be received by the major advisor by the last day of classes in the graduating semester. The portfolio will be assessed by faculty in the Department of Writing.

Description and explanations of the required portfolio content as well as directions for constructing the final portfolio can be found on the pages that follow

**Note:** Portfolios are required in order for the student to graduate, but graduating is not contingent upon the score of the portfolio.

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# Portfolio Contents and Construction

## Overview of Required Contents

While detailed directions are included below, the following list is an overview of the required contents:

1. An introductory reflective essay
2. Four pieces of Creative Writing
3. Three projects of Professional Writing
4. One project, paper, or problem set from Linguistics

## Directions for the Introductory Reflective Essay

Students will write a 4-6 page introductory reflective essay that tells the story of his/her trajectory as a writer during time in the major. Some questions that this story might answer include: What were the most useful strategies, techniques, theories, and practices you learned to incorporate into your writing repertoire? What was some of the most challenging work? What were the highlights of your development as a writer? In other words, writers should provide a narrative of the development of their craft.

Writers should be sure to address all areas within the General Writing track, including creative writing, linguistics, and professional writing. (Note: professional writing asks that writers specifically address intended outcomes of this track in the reflective essay—see below.)

## Directions for the Professional Writing and Rhetoric Component

First, in the reflective essay that introduces the entire graduation portfolio, include a section that discusses how the professional writing and rhetoric pieces show achievement in each of the four intended outcomes/objectives of the Professional Writing area:

1. Assimilation of Rhetorical Theory and History;
2. Application of Rhetorical Lenses to Practical Communication Problems (application of rhetorical theory into practice);
3. Facility with Multiple Modes of Delivery (various online and print genres);
4. Development of Critical Awareness (understanding of implications of rhetorical choices in writing and design).

Secondly, create a digital portfolio that contains three professional writing projects. (Note: One project = one document + an essay that reflects on the rhetorical choices made in the creation of the document.

Use the following criteria to select the projects you include:

- Projects included in the portfolio must showcase a range of media and genres. Include a minimum of two digital projects of different genres (genre examples: Web site, online presentation, visualization, blog, wiki, narrated tutorial, and more).

- One project should contain a reflective piece that explicitly connects rhetorical theory and history to the choices you made in the document's design AND/OR an essay or exam that demonstrates your knowledge of rhetorical theory and history.
- One project should contain a reflective piece that explicitly discusses the rhetorical choices made in the writing/design of the document and the implications of those choices.

If you did not take a course which allows you to complete these requirements or need further information, consult with Dr. Jen Talbot for what should be included to satisfy the Professional Writing portion of the portfolio.

### Digital Portfolio Format and Submission Information

1. The portfolio should be submitted as a Wordpress blog site (wordpress.com). You should select a theme or design that conveys the ethos you wish to project.
2. A Table of Contents should be posted on the Home page of the site. Be sure to include concise and informative headings that will help readers find information efficiently.
3. The three projects you choose to include in your Wordpress portfolio should be linked from this Table of Contents.
4. The portfolio will not be accepted without all elements included.
5. A link to the portfolio must be emailed to the major advisor by the last day of classes in the graduating semester. If you wish to include a page in your print portfolio that directs reviewers to this link, you may.
6. Portfolios must remain available until the beginning of the subsequent fall semester, unless other arrangements are made with the major advisor.

### **Directions for the Linguistics Component**

Provide a single project, paper or problem set from an upper-division course in linguistics.

### **Directions for the Creative Writing Component**

Select four pieces as outlined below:

1. one piece of original creative writing from any forms course
2. one piece of original creative writing from any other creative writing course in a different genre
3. one critique from a class in which critiques were required
4. one response paper, talking points or review essay from a class in which such work was required

If you did not take a course which allows you to complete these requirements, you should consult Dr. Stephanie Vanderslice for what should be included to satisfy the Creative Writing portion of the portfolio.

### **Directions for Print Portfolio Construction**

Collect your work in a binder. Place the Introductory Reflective Essay at the beginning. Use dividers to separate the Creative Writing material from the Linguistics material. Label the sections.

A cover page and a table of contents are optional but you may include these components if you wish.

## Writing Major: General Writing Track

### Contract

I have read this document and understand its contents. My signature below indicates that I understand I must turn in a complete portfolio in order to graduate, and I have received the requirements of the portfolio. I further agree to complete these requirements to the best of my ability.

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Student Signature

Print Name

Date

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Major Advisor Signature

Print Name

Date