

Department of Writing

Student Contract for Writing Majors: Professional Writing Track

Note: 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.**

Welcome! The Department of Writing wants to make sure your experience with us is both challenging and enjoyable. 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.

Purpose of the Professional Writing Track

The Professional Writing track, situated within the Writing major, is designed for students interested in the multi-modal communication of contemporary society. Two ideologies guide the selection and design of the required courses of this track:

- 1) Rhetorical concepts provide a framework for determining a text's design, content, and delivery.
- 2) While traditional printed text continues to remain useful, digital technology has enlarged and altered the means by which we communicate.

Students graduating with this degree emphasis not only will bring valuable—and necessary—skills to today's workplace but will also be capable of imagining innovations in communication.

The Professional Writing track is designed to give students theoretical and practical experience in developing writing that works, that is to say, writing people *use* (to make decisions, to get work done, to get information, etc.) such as social media, Web sites, green papers, training materials, reports, and proposals for a 21st century audience. Specifically, the Writing major prepares students for jobs in editing and publishing, professional and technical writing, grant writing, developing training materials, coordinating social media, designing and writing content for Web sites, speechwriting, magazine writing and advertising. Students will also be prepared for graduate study in professional writing, rhetoric, composition studies, law, journalism, business and education.

This part of our program provides substantive and numerous opportunities to work with community partners in designing and creating written products for print and digital delivery using the latest tools. As a result, students leave this track with a solid record of experience as

writers and designers evidenced by important connections in the community and a portfolio of work.

Intended Outcomes/Objectives for the Professional Writing Track

Assimilation of Rhetorical Theory and History. Students will become rhetorically aware through historical and theoretical readings in the field.

Application of Rhetorical Lenses to Practical Communication Problems. Students will deepen their rhetorical awareness through practice in developing multi-modal texts in keeping with rhetorical perspectives. Each class will provide students with 1) an opportunity to learn some aspect of rhetorical theory, 2) put that rhetorical theory into practice, 3) reflect on both the connection between theory and practice and the particular rhetorical choices made in the development of that document, and 4) discuss the implications of those choices.

Facility with Multiple Modes of Delivery. Students will become adept at creating digital and paper-based texts that integrate words, images, and sounds in rhetorically effective ways and take a variety of shapes through choosing media for delivery that best fits the target audience and purpose.

Development of Critical Awareness. As students advance their understanding of rhetorical theory and history and expand their arenas of practice, they will develop critical awareness that can be applied to invention and revision processes.

Assessment Procedures and Criteria for the Professional Writing Track

Portfolio. Students will begin developing an electronic portfolio with items from courses in the Professional Writing Track beginning in their freshman year.

Quick List of Portfolio Contents and Criteria:

- 3-5 page introductory reflective essay that explains how the documents included in the portfolio show achievement in each of the 4 intended outcomes/objectives of the Professional Writing track.
- 5 complete projects. One project = document + essay that reflects on that document.
- Projects included in the portfolio must showcase a range of media and genres. Include a minimum of three digital projects of various genres.
- Choose at least one project that contains 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.

- Choose at least one project that contains a reflective piece that explicitly discusses the rhetorical choices made in the writing/design of the document and the implications of those choices.

Instructions for Turning in the Portfolio:

- The portfolio must be received by the major advisor by the last day of classes in the graduating semester.
- All required pieces of the portfolio must be included before the portfolio may be accepted.

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.

Student Signature

Print Name

Date

Major Advisor Signature

Print Name

Date