

The Writing Major

STUDENT CONTRACT: PROFESSIONAL WRITING TRACK

Welcome to the School of Communication and the Professional Writing Track! In order to keep our program strong and growing, and to ensure students are getting the training they need to meet the challenges of the workforce, the Professional Writing faculty conducts a yearly assessment of our program.

This contract spells out what will be required of you so that we can successfully perform assessment. Please note: The contract should be signed the semester you declare the Writing major, and **must be on file** with your major advisor in order for him or her to sign your graduation application.

Purpose of the Professional Writing Track

The Professional Writing track, situated in the Writing major, is designed for students interested in the various ways people communicate, compose, and persuade in the twenty-first century. The Professional Writing track is designed to give students theoretical and practical experience in developing writing that makes things happen: white papers, training materials, reports, proposals, social media campaigns – information that people use to make decisions in the world. The track also provides substantive opportunities to work with community partners in designing and creating written products.

Three principles guide the selection and design of required courses:

1. Writers make decisions about a text's content, design, and delivery based on the rhetorical situation, or through consideration of the text's audience, purpose, and context.
2. Being an effective writer is not only about having particular skills, but also about imagining innovative strategies for communication.
3. Most writing, even when delivered in print, is generated using digital tools. The capabilities of these tools have expanded the ways in which we define writing.

The Writing major prepares students for jobs involving editing and publishing, professional and technical writing, grant writing, developing training materials, coordinating social media presences, creating online content, speechwriting, magazine writing, and advertising. Students will also have a good foundation for graduate study in professional writing, rhetoric, composition studies, law, journalism, business, and education.

Assessment Criteria: Program Goals and Outcomes

Knowledge of rhetorical theory and history

- Knowledge of key texts
- Awareness of conversations in the field
- Awareness of dominant perspectives in the field

An ability to solve practical communication problems in both print and digital environments

- Effective use of multimedia
- Understanding of linear/nonlinear texts
- Recognition of genre conventions

An ability to make rhetorically-based design and delivery choices

- Informed choices for document delivery

Understanding of elements and principles of visual design
Effective shaping of texts to fit audience and purpose

Development of critical awareness

Ability to offer insight into rhetorical choices
Understanding of implications of rhetorical choices

Facility with standard writing conventions

Appropriate grammar, punctuation, and diction

Portfolio Contents

Students should **retain** and **back up** all major projects from courses in the Professional Writing track, with particular emphasis on projects submitted in core courses.

Keeping in mind the assessment criteria above, students should curate a selection of projects that demonstrates all of the goals and outcomes of the Professional Writing track. This selection process is, itself, a rhetorical endeavor and therefore a demonstration of what you have learned. The following elements **must** be included, though a single document might fulfill more than one criterion:

1. **Five complete projects**, in which a “project” is defined as a document (in any medium) and a corresponding reflection that describes the rhetorical choices that shaped that document. Projects must showcase a range of media and genre.
 - a. Three of the five documents must be **intended for digital delivery**.
 - b. One project must demonstrate knowledge of **rhetorical theory and history**. Acceptable projects would be an essay or exam on theory and/or history, or a document in which the reflection explicitly addresses how historical rhetorical concepts have shaped the document.
 - c. One project must include a reflection that explicitly addresses **rhetorical situation and how it shaped the document**.
 - d. One project must include a reflection that explicitly addresses principles of **document design and how they shaped the document**.
2. **Reflective introduction** (roughly 1000 words) that explains how the included documents demonstrate the program goals and outcomes listed above.

Portfolio Format and Submission

1. The portfolio should be submitted as a **Wordpress blog site** (wordpress.com), and select a theme or design that conveys the ethos you wish to project.
2. The **Reflective Introduction 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 five projects you choose to include in your Wordpress portfolio should **be linked within the Reflective Introduction**, at the points at which they are introduced and discussed.
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**.
6. Portfolios must remain available until **the beginning of the subsequent fall semester**, unless other arrangements are made with the major advisor.

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

Student Signature

Print Name

Date

Major Advisor Signature

Print Name

Date