

# OUTLINE OF PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS FOR ENGLISH AND CREATIVE WRITING MAJORS

**The Portfolio is required of all English and Creative Writing Majors.**

Students are required to develop a portfolio of written work that represents significant successes in their career as English or Creative Writing majors at Berry College. This should be completed during the term just prior to your graduation. The Department must confirm that the portfolio you submit has passed the minimum criteria outlined in this document before you can be cleared by the registrar for graduation.

## **What is the Portfolio?**

The portfolio is a collection of documents relating to your work and educational experiences during your college career, particularly as an English or Creative Writing major. The portfolio will begin with a Reflection Essay which allows you to consider how you have developed over the course of three or four years in the major and to discuss how your work within the English or Creative Writing major relates to your future academic and professional goals. The supporting materials you include will show how courses that you have taken in the major demonstrate how you have developed—as a literary critic or literary historian, a teacher of literature and writing, and/or as a writer of creative work.

## **What is the Portfolio for?**

The portfolio is not simply a record of what you have done well in your major courses; it is also

- a potential resource for you when you apply for jobs or to graduate and professional programs. As an adjunct to these goals, the portfolio will provide useful materials for your faculty mentors to review when writing letters of recommendation.
- From the Department's perspective, student portfolios provide a means of assessing whether its curriculum and courses are preparing students for meeting professional and academic standards crucial to our students' future success.
- Finally, the portfolio process allows English faculty and students to share in the successes of their collective efforts.

## **What should be included in the Portfolio?**

Each piece chosen for the portfolio should represent the *best work* for the particular course, event, or program it was originally written for. All students must include the following written work in their portfolio:

## Part I. Reflection Essay

You must include a “Reflection Essay” of at least 1250 words that traces analytically your development as a reader and writer, referencing and discussing specific items included in your portfolio (including those in the optional Appendix). You must discuss how you have grown as a reader and writer, to what extent course work has influenced those changes, and in what ways you perceive the major as coherent as well as relevant to your own intentions. If you are completing a double major, you should also include a brief reflection upon the intersection of those majors. You may use a narrative frame, but the depiction of your growth should be developed as process analysis. Please keep in mind that your retrospective essay is not meant to be an evaluation of individual faculty or an assessment of the courses you have taken. Rather, it should present an analytical narrative focused on your development as a reader and writer. Be sure to incorporate specific discussions about particular projects or papers. You may wish to discuss how assignments that might be regarded as “process oriented” (journals, group work, class presentations, reaction essays and so forth) have aided your growth as a reader and writer. Also important to your development may be work that you have done either as a writer on staff at a Berry sponsored publication or as a Writing Center tutor, some of the material which may be included in the optional Appendix. Finally, you must address how you have come to see your future goals, both professional and academic. What do you plan to do with these skills, and how do you believe they have helped you meet your future challenges as a professional? There are sample Reflection Essays from past students on the departmental website.

## Part II. Coursework and Extracurricular Work

A. Pieces from coursework, as follows:

### FOR THE BA IN ENGLISH:

1. An essay from a 200-level literature course
2. An essay from a 300-level literature course
3. An essay from a 400-level literature course

Each of the following elements must be included in at least one of the above submissions. It is possible that one submission could serve two or more of these larger aims. **Each submission should be marked as satisfying (at least) one of the following elements on the table of contents.**

- an extended analysis/close reading of a literary work (*required* in all ENG 240 classes but also an assignment in some other ENG courses)
- a research-oriented investigation or argument utilizing primary and secondary sources
- a paper which must utilize a specific identifiable theoretical methodology

Note: Each essay must be *at least* five pages in length; one must be *at least* ten pages in length.

## FOR THE BA IN CREATIVE WRITING

1. An essay from a 200-level literature course
2. One creative work from ENG 250: Introduction to Creative Writing
3. Multi-genre work from 300-level writing courses including at least two poems and one short story (5-15 pages, total)
4. Six poems or 10-20 pp. of prose from a 400-level writing course
5. A research-oriented investigation or argument utilizing primary and secondary sources from a 300- or 400-level literature course

Each of the following elements must be included **in at least one of the above** submissions. It is possible that one submission could serve two or more of these larger aims. **Each submission should be marked as satisfying (at least) one of the following elements on the table of contents.**

- an extended analysis/close reading of a literary work (*required* in all ENG 240 classes but also an assignment in some other ENG courses)
- poetry and creative prose which demonstrate awareness and proficiency regarding basic elements of craft
- poetry or creative prose which demonstrates a sophisticated engagement with elements of craft particular to that genre
- a research-oriented investigation or argument utilizing primary and secondary sources

Note: Each essay must be *at least* five pages in length.

**For students double majoring in English and Creative Writing:** your portfolio should follow the guidelines/contents for the Creative Writing major.

**B.** Additionally, students will document aspects of their particular focus within their major by including work from *one* of the six options below.

- A symposium presentation, conference paper, or creative presentation (distinct from other work presented in the portfolio). If the symposium presentation is a paper, it should be at least eight double-spaced pages in length and include an abstract and Works Cited page as well as the power-point presentation or poster-presentation that accompanied the paper, if any. You must include a copy of the symposium program with your presentation clearly marked.
- A completed Honor's Thesis that has been accepted by the student's thesis committee and received a final grade. Those submitting a thesis must have their work completed by 11/1 or by 4/1 or substitute other written work as described here. (See "Due Dates," below.)
- A Directed Studies Project that totals at least twenty pages of finished work (e.g., journals and reaction essays and other "pre-writing" assignments are not appropriate for this selection.)

- One essay or project relevant to work in the student's major, at least five pages in length. For English majors, this material may come from any literature course; for Creative Writing majors, this material may come from ENG 475, ENG 495, or any literature course.
- Written work totaling 5000–6000 words for academic internships at magazines or newspapers where you were the only contributor to specific articles or essays (work on Berry-related publications cannot be included). This work can be submitted either as Word documents or as PDFs of tear sheets from magazines/newspapers.

**C. OPTIONAL:** You **may** include an Appendix where you may incorporate materials not otherwise represented by your portfolio. You may find this option desirable to give us a more complete picture of your development in the major than the above requirements will allow. You might consider including:

- Non-traditional writing assignments (e.g., creative scholarship, translations, editions, statistical studies).
- Reading or reflection journals.
- Brief reaction essays.
- Work done for internships that are not easily classifiable as formal writing.
- Performed responses to literary works—musical arrangements, dance improvisations, poetry or fiction readings.
- Annotated bibliographies or edited/collated texts.
- Digitized poster presentations or power-point presentations (exceptions are those accompanying Symposium presentations).
- Essays and columns that appear in Berry-sponsored publications (e.g., *Viking Fusion*, *Valkyrie*, *Campus Carrier*, or alumni newsletters and magazines).
- Writing Center documents (including tutorial reports with personal information excised).
- Support from outside of class that further documents your work. This might include the director's final report of an Honor's Thesis or an Internship report (if available to you), a conference or symposium program, printed magazine/newspaper tear sheets, or other material.

The Appendix is strictly limited in length to no more than twenty double-spaced or pre-printed pages. Recorded performances should be limited to no more than fifteen minutes.

### **How should the Portfolio be arranged?**

All materials should be placed in a three-ring binder in the following order:

1. **A COMPLETED checklist.** You should get a blank checklist from the department secretary. Please be sure you complete it carefully in order to be sure you have included all intended material in the portfolio and in the correct order.
2. **Title page** with your name, graduation date, and major.

3. **A table of contents** that
  - a) lists the titles for each work submitted as well as a notation indicating which portfolio criteria each submission is meant to illustrate.
  - b) states the course it was submitted for.
  - c) includes the name of the instructor who taught the course.
  - d) indicates the work's original grade. (If the submitted work is an honor's thesis, a conference or symposium essay, or published work related to an internship, please include the names of your faculty mentors as well as the original dates of presentation or publication.)
4. **The Reflection Essay.** (See Part I above.)
5. **For English majors:** Three works representing work from your 200-, 300- and 400- level classes. **For Creative Writing majors:** two essays, one from a 200-level class, and one from a 300- or 400-level class. (See Part II.A above.)
6. An additional piece or project representing your best finished work for the focus you've chosen as an English or Creative Writing Major. (See Part II.B above.)
7. **OPTIONAL** appendix of supporting materials. (See Part II.C above.)

**Technical Requirements:** All represented work must conform to MLA standards for formatting pages and for documentation. Typographical and mechanical errors in your original final drafts should be corrected as you prepare them for your portfolio. You are allowed to make additional revisions as well if you wish.

#### **When is the portfolio due and where is it handed in?**

- Turn in both **an electronic copy** burned to a DVD or CD, or a thumb drive, **and a printed copy** of your finished Portfolio in a three-ring binder to our department secretary, Kathy Wilson, in Evans 102, either by October 1<sup>st</sup> or March 1<sup>st</sup>, depending upon the term you are to graduate.
- The English Department faculty will then determine whether your Portfolio is acceptable.
- You will be informed by November 1<sup>st</sup> for fall graduates or April 1<sup>st</sup> for spring graduates whether or not your Reflection Essay has been passed by the department faculty. If the Reflection Essay does not pass the initial review, you must resubmit by November 15<sup>th</sup> or April 15<sup>th</sup>.
- If you are including an Honor's Thesis, you should submit all other materials except the thesis by the October 1<sup>st</sup>/March 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. State on the Table of Contents page your intention of handing in the completed Honor's Thesis, along with its Title and Thesis Advisor's name. If your portfolio is judged acceptable, you will receive a provisional approval. A *completed and graded* Honor's Thesis must be attached to your portfolio no later than November 21<sup>st</sup>/April 21<sup>st</sup> after which the Department will entertain final approval of your portfolio.

#### **Unclear about the process? Need help?**

Remember that your advisor is here to help. Consult with him or her, the department chair, or any other department faculty member about the Portfolio at any time.

## **I. Portfolio Evaluation**

### **Part I.**

1) A “Reflection Essay” (at least 1250 words) that analyzes the student’s development as a reader and writer, referencing and discussing specific items in the portfolio. **PASS or FAIL**

**Students will be informed whether the portfolio passed or not on the basis of Part I; the results of Part II are for department assessment purposes and are not shared with students.**

**Students who fail Part I will receive feedback from the reader(s) as to how to address the weaknesses of the “reflection essay” and revise it accordingly.**

**All full-time members of the English department may participate in the review of the portfolios. Two faculty members will evaluate each portfolio. Any portfolio that fails to receive two pass votes will be assessed by a third reader.**

### **Part II: BA in English.**

At least **one** of the papers submitted as part of the portfolio displays mastery of

1) close reading skills (analysis of literary passages)

- a. does not meet minimum standards
- b. meets minimum standards

2) research skills (appropriate use of primary and secondary sources)

- a. does not meet minimum standards
- b. meets minimum standards

3) critical method (utilization of a critical theory/method for interpretative purposes)

- a. does not meet minimum standards
- b. meets minimum standards

4) academic essay as a genre (including thesis, organization, rules of documentation, styles of academic discourse, and voice)

- a. does not meet minimum standards
- b. meets minimum standards

5) discipline-specific knowledge (i.e. literature, writing)

- a. does not meet minimum standards
- b. meets minimum standards

## **Part II: BA in Creative Writing.**

1) At least **one** of the papers submitted as part of the portfolio displays mastery of close reading skills (analysis of literary passages)

- a. does not meet minimum standards
- b. meets minimum standards

2) At least **one** of the papers submitted as part of the portfolio displays mastery of an academic essay as a genre (including thesis, organization, rules of documentation, styles of academic discourse, and voice)

- a. does not meet minimum standards
- b. meets minimum standards

3) At least one creative submission of poetry indicates an understanding of the genre's elements of craft

- a. does not meet minimum standards
- b. meets minimum standards

4) At least one submission of creative prose indicates an understanding of the genre's elements of craft

- a. does not meet minimum standards
- b. meets minimum standards

5) At least one creative submission demonstrates a sophisticated engagement with elements of craft and voice relevant to the genre

- a. does not meet minimum standards
- b. meets minimum standards

## PORTFOLIO FOR ENGLISH MAJORS CHECKLIST

Does the portfolio contain **the following items in this order**? Please **check** where appropriate.

- 1. An identification page with your name, graduation date, and major.
- 2. A table of contents.
- 3. A reflection essay of at least 1250 words.
- 4. An essay from a 200-level class.
- 5. An essay from a 300-level class.
- 6. An essay from a 400-level class.
- 7. An additional work representing a chosen area of focus in the major.
- 8. An appendix of supporting materials (optional).
- 9. A CD, DVD, or thumb drive featuring an electronic copy of the above.

Please **answer the following**, based on the numbered list above:

- a) Of numbers 4-6, are all essays over five pages in length? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_ Which essay is over ten pages in length? \_\_\_\_
- b) Of numbers 4-6, which essay is an extended analysis/close reading of a literary work? \_\_\_\_
- c) Of numbers 4-6, which essay is a research-oriented investigation or argument utilizing primary and secondary sources? \_\_\_\_
- d) Of numbers 4-6, which essay utilizes a specific identifiable theoretical methodology? \_\_\_\_
- e) Regarding the additional work (#7), under which category does it fall?
  - A symposium presentation, conference paper, or creative presentation.
  - A completed and graded Honor's thesis.
  - A directed studies project of over 20 pages.
  - One essay or project, at least five pages in length, from a literature course.
  - 5000-6000 words of written work for a publication with you as the sole author.
- f) If you submitted Appendix material, is it under 20 pages in length (under 15 minutes for recorded material)? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_
- g) Does all the material conform to MLA standards for formatting pages and for documentation? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_

## PORTFOLIO FOR CREATIVE WRITING MAJORS CHECKLIST

Does the portfolio contain **the following items in this order**? Please **check** where appropriate.

- 1. An identification page with your name, graduation date, and major.
- 2. A table of contents.
- 3. A reflection essay of at least 1250 words.
- 4. An essay from a 200-level literature course.
- 5. One creative work from ENG 250: Introduction to Creative Writing.
- 6. Multi-genre works, 5-15 pages total, from 300-level writing courses; include two poems and one short story.
- 7. Six poems or 10-20 pp. of prose from a 400-level class.
- 8. An additional work representing a chosen area of focus in the major.
- 9. A research-oriented investigation or argument utilizing primary and secondary sources from a 300- or 400-level literature course
- 10. An appendix of supporting materials (optional).
- 11. A CD, DVD, or thumb drive featuring an electronic copy of the above.

**Please answer the following, based on the numbered list above:**

- a) Of numbers 4, 8, and 9, are all essays submitted over five pages in length? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_
- b) Of numbers 4 and 9, which contribution is an extended analysis/close reading of a literary work? \_\_\_\_
- c) Regarding the additional work (#8), under which category does it fall?
  - A symposium presentation, conference paper, or creative presentation.
  - A completed and graded Honor's thesis.
  - A directed studies project of over 20 pages.
  - An essay or project at least five pages in length from a literature course or from ENG 475 or ENG 495.
  - 5000-6000 words of written work for a publication with you as the sole author.
- d) If you submitted Appendix material, is it under 20 pages in length (under 15 minutes for recorded material)? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_
- e) Does all the material conform to MLA standards for formatting pages and for documentation? (Y/N) \_\_\_\_