

The Reflective Portfolio, which is your capstone project for English 106, is worth 20% of your final grade. It has two main purposes:

1. It provides an opportunity for you to select 4-5 works that you believe best reflect your abilities as a writer and to polish them up in order to demonstrate your full growth and potential over the course of the term.
2. Because you will be composing a formal, typewritten Reflective Cover Letter to accompany your selected works, the portfolio also provides an opportunity for self-assessment. In the cover letter, you should apply your critical thinking skills to your writing this semester in order to discover more about yourself as well as your writing growth and abilities. The portfolio assignment requires you to build some knowledge about yourself by reflecting on your written work throughout the term.

*As you reflect on the work you've done this term, ask yourself:*

What did I learn about myself in writing these papers that I didn't know before?

How can I describe myself as a writer?

What did I learn about writing that I didn't know before?

What seems the most difficult for me when I write?

What kinds of writing do I enjoy, and why?

What do I dislike about my writing, and why?

How did my journal writing seem different from my papers?

Have I learned any new strategies or approaches that can aid my writing process in the future as far as prewriting, writing, or revision?

When I reflect back on my writing assignments from this term, which are the most meaningful to me, and why?

Which writing assignments provided the greatest challenges for me?

Which writing assignments am I the most proud of?

Which writing assignments did I learn the most from?

How has my writing changed over the term?

What does my writing say about me? My personality? My writing abilities? My thought processes? My potential?

### **Portfolio Requirements Checklist:**

#### **1. Folder**

The portfolio should be submitted in a new pocket folder, with your name and the title of your Reflective Cover Letter placed neatly and legibly on the cover. Although the portfolio folder should have a professional appearance, since this is your portfolio you may choose to personalize the cover by being creative (such as creating a collage, painting, drawing, etc.). Although an artistic approach is not a requirement for the portfolio, your name and the title of your Reflective Cover Letter must appear legibly and neatly/professionally on the cover.

#### **2. Table of Contents**

This page should list the items included (i.e. the Reflective Cover Letter and the titles of your works). Number your writing samples (I, II, III, IV, V, and possibly VI). For each writing sample, maintain standard MLA Style page numbering and have an MLA Style heading (i.e. your name, my name, English 106, and the date that you wrote each writing sample). Additionally, each item in the portfolio should have its own separate, individual pagination (in other words, there is no need to create consecutive page numbering for all the items in the Portfolio).

**3. Cover Letter (2 pages, typed and double spaced)—**

Like everything else in the portfolio, your Reflective Cover Letter should be typed and have a title. For your title, try to be creative. "English 106 Portfolio" or "Reflective Cover Letter," for example, isn't nearly as creative as something like "The Writer Me" or "My Writing Challenges and Growth This Semester," or even "A Little Slice of Hell Twice a Week."

Your Reflective Cover Letter also should exhibit the same qualities of acceptable writing that we have stressed all semester long in peer editing and review: logical organization, clarity, correct grammar / spelling / mechanics / punctuation, good sentence structure, etc.

The purpose of this letter is to *evaluate yourself as a writer* by discussing your various writing samples and the different challenges you faced in completing them. Statements you make about yourself in the Cover Letter should be supported by the items you include in the portfolio. In the Reflective Cover Letter, you should assess yourself and your writing process, but also discuss how and why you have chosen to include each writing sample, reflecting and discussing each one in detail. An excellent place to go for information on your writing process, what challenges you faced, and what you learned are the individual cover letters that you wrote for each of your formal essays.

**4. Writing Samples: TOTAL OF FOUR WORKS--**

A. Your portfolio **MUST** contain a copy of your Research Paper, revised and polished to the best of your ability.

B. You should also include *at least two* of the following works, which should be revised and polished to the best of your ability:

- Summary/Analysis Essay
- Interview Essay
- Media Project Essay
- Topic Outline for the Research Paper

C. You may also choose to include a sample of any other writing that you did this semester for other classes, or creative work outside of English 106. Examples include essays or essay examination responses written for another course, and/or personal writing (poetry, short stories, etc.).

**Formatting Issues:**

1. Make sure that each separate writing sample (even a n essay or essay examination response for another course) has a correct MLA Style heading and page numbering.
2. Remember that **EVERYTHING** in the portfolio must be typed and double spaced, using Times New Roman 12 point font. If you choose to include a writing sample that previously has not been typed (such as the Diagnostic Essay or a journal entry), you must type it for inclusion in the portfolio. Have a clean, dark copy (no grading marks, no Xerox copies, etc.).
3. Any writing sample that is more than one page long should be stapled, but **DO NOT** staple the entire portfolio together. Also, do not bind or fasten your papers into the folder.
4. Place your writing samples in the folder in whatever order logically befits your discussion in the Reflective Cover Letter. Remember that **EVERY** writing sample included in the Portfolio should be discussed in the Cover Letter (one paragraph each, with a minimum of five sentences per writing sample).

## **Criteria for Evaluating Portfolios:**

Since the Portfolio is worth 20% of your final grade, I will award an overall score of 0-5 percentage points in four separate areas:

### **I. Cover Letter Form (5%):**

How well is your Cover Letter written? Is it polished to the best of your ability?

Is there a well-rounded introduction and conclusion?

Does your Reflective Cover Letter discuss your writing samples in the same order that they are listed on your Table of Contents (a chronological order—i.e. the order in which they were written—may or may not be the best order. That will be up to you to determine in the course of compiling your portfolio.

Are your paragraphs of adequate length (a bare minimum of five sentences each)?

How well do you pay attention to details such as grammar, spelling, mechanics, word choice, punctuation, double spacing (etc.)?

Do you have a total length of two pages minimum for the Cover Letter?

### **II. Cover Letter Content (5%):**

Do you have something significant to say about yourself as a writer and your selected works?

Do you have a creative, original title for your cover letter?

Is your Reflective Cover Letter focused on evaluating yourself as a writer (and not “massaging” my ego by telling me what a great instructor I am)?

Do you discuss each writing sample individually during the course of the cover letter?

Does the information you discuss about each writing sample seem genuine, or does it seem “padded” or like you are just trying to “B.S.” your way through your discussion?

Do you have specific details regarding each writing sample to illustrate how it reflects you as a writer (or the challenges you faced, or what you learned)?

### **III. Choice, Pertinence, and Effort put into the Writing Samples Included (5%):**

Do all of the papers and writing samples you choose to include clearly bear out what you say about yourself in the cover letter?

How well do these papers illustrate your identity as a writer, the challenges you faced, your writing process, or what you say that you have learned about yourself as a writer?

Are all of the writing samples polished to the best of your ability and error-free?

Is each writing sample discussed in depth in the cover letter?

(N.B. I will not “re-grade” or make any comments on the cover letter or writing samples themselves in the portfolio—I will read them and assign a holistic score based on my overall impression of the quality of the writing. The more effort you put into revising and polishing the works you include, the better your score for this area of the portfolio will be. If you want advice on how to revise your papers further, talk to me about them, visit the Writing Center, or get together with a classmate to exchange ideas or suggestions).

### **IV. Professional Presentation (5%):**

This is an easy five points if you take the time to make your portfolio look as polished and sharp as you can. Think of it as something that you might submit for professional employment or include with an application to a graduate school.

Items for consideration:

Is your portfolio as “cosmetically” perfect as you can make it? Do you follow directions?

Are your name and the title of your cover letter placed neatly and legibly on the cover of a new folder?

Are all of your items typed and double spaced in Times New Roman 12 point font?

Do you eliminate triple spacing on your cover letter and all of your writing samples?

Does each item feature a correctly-formatted MLA Style heading and its own separate MLA Style page numbering (beginning with page 1)?

Is a Table of Contents included? Does it list the title of the cover letter as item I, followed by a title of the other writing samples with a description of the nature of the assignment and a title? Is it pleasing to the eye (neatly done)?

Does each writing sample have its own separate title?

Is each writing sample stapled separately and placed in the correct order?

Do you have one-inch margins throughout?

Do you have a clean copy on all writing samples with no pen, pencil, or grading marks?

Is each writing sample polished to the very best of your ability? Have you put an effort into making each sample as free of grammatical, mechanical, and formatting errors as possible?