

Final Portfolio Project

Two weeks ago, you explored how students or professionals in your field use portfolios to present their experience and expertise to strangers who they hope will hire them or evaluate them positively. Last week, you imagined what your professional portfolio might look like one day in your own field.

This week, you'll generalize what you learned about portfolios to start to create a mini-portfolio specifically about your time in this class.

This is a multi-week project that will wrap on Sunday, December 7. Remember, this is your final project, and it will be traditionally graded.

Here's what to expect each week of this project:

Week 1: Plan, design, and build the frame for your ENGL 103 Semester Portfolio.

Week 2: Add content to your portfolio and revise it.)

Week 3: Finish and present your portfolio highlights to the class.

Week 1, Steps 1-3: Plan, design, and build the frame for your Semester Portfolio

This week, start with the first step of the writing process--planning.

Step 1: Understand the requirements for your portfolio's intended audience, purpose, and material.

Here's what you need to know to plan your portfolio:

1. Audience: Your intended audience for your ENGL 103 Semester Portfolio should be assessors. These assessors are completely separate from us and our time in this class this semester. They are anonymous readers who have no effects on your grade and no effects on my teaching outcomes. Assessors want to see what your writing says about you after this semester of college. They don't know anything about this class or what you've done in it all semester. All they'll see is your portfolio.

2. Purpose: Your intended purpose for your ENGL 103 Semester Portfolio should be to demonstrate that you've achieved the course outcomes while maintaining your personal voice and integrity.

3. Materials: You may use anything you produced in this class, whether you turned it in or not, to populate your portfolio. You should use work you turned in earlier in Blackboard as evidence to support the claims you make about achieving the course outcomes. You should also write new material that explains your evidence to your intended audience and explains exactly how your evidence supports your claim. You

should cite any sources you use, either to help you create your materials or to serve as evidence.

4. Required elements (instructions for each will follow): Your ENGL 103 Semester Portfolio must include the following elements:

- a new, short cover letter that introduces you, ENGL 103, and the claims you'll make in your portfolio (NOTE: YOU MAY NOT USE AI OF ANY KIND to produce this cover letter, nor may you use AI of any kind to plan, design, or tidy up this cover letter. THIS ONE MUST COME FROM YOU AND YOU ALONE.)
- a new essay that reflects on your experience in ENGL 103 this semester and explains how you have met at least 3 course learning outcomes and at least 1 of your personal learning goals this semester (NOTE: YOU MAY NOT USE AI OF ANY KIND to produce this essay, nor may you use AI of any kind to plan, design, or tidy up this essay. THIS ONE MUST COME FROM YOU AND YOU ALONE.)
- at least 3 essays and additional other writing from your ENGL 103 Journal that highlights your particular skills, interests, and work this semester, with new, short explanations about you believe these pieces show readers about you

Step 2: Design your portfolio

Review the course learning outcomes, FYC program outcomes, NIU Foundational Studies outcomes, and your personal learning goals for this class again. Identify at least one personal goal and three institutional goals that you think you've really, really nailed this semester.

Spend some more time with your ENGL 103 Journal and prior work. Choose which pieces you'll likely include in your portfolio. Why are these the right pieces to include? Which of your pieces shows your learning achievements most clearly? Which are you the proudest of?

Sketch a quick layout for the kind of portfolio you want to create.

Step 3: Create a SharePoint Communication Site to house your portfolio.

We will use SharePoint communication sites in this class to create portfolios. (Click [here](#) to read more about how to create a communication site in SharePoint.)

When you create your communication site, be sure to use this naming convention--NIU-ENGL103-INST-SEM-YOUR-NAME.

We'll create the portfolio site in class together, but play around with templates or other design elements this week to prepare your portfolio on this site.

Week 2, Steps 4-6: Write and Build Your Semester Portfolio

This week, continue building your portfolio. (See last week for Steps 1-3)

Step 4: Write an essay that reflects on your experience in ENGL 103 this semester and explains how you have met at least 3 course learning outcomes and at least 1 of your personal learning goals this semester.

Here are the requirements for the reflective essay.

- This should be a formal essay. That means it should be organized into multiple paragraphs, including an introduction, some body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- The essay should be closely edited. That means you should correct any typos and big or little errors that might make a reader stumble or misunderstand.
- The essay should address the following questions, in any order:
- What are three institutional learning outcomes you met through your writing or work this semester? (Look back at the list of learning outcomes from Week 10 to remind yourself.)
- What is a personal goal you met through your writing or work this semester? (Refer to the personal goals you set for yourself at the start of the semester.)
- What did you learn about yourself as a writer, about your writing process, or about writing this semester?
- Highlight one of your projects (Thing 1, 1.5, 2, or 3) , and explain why it's great.

This essay should include enough evidence that someone who doesn't know you believes your claims (your answers to the questions above). That means you should point out specific ENGL 103 Journal entries and projects, and explain in detail how a reader should understand the evidence you offer. You should cite all of your sources of evidence.

This essay should be reflective of you. That means you should let yourself like the design, and the content should reflect your actual abilities and experiences this semester. You may not use AI in any phase of the writing of this reflective essay.

There is no specific length requirement, but you should write until you've answered the questions to your satisfaction.

Step 5: Write your portfolio's "cover letter." This is a required element for your portfolio.

Write something that serves as a kind of cover letter that introduces you, ENGL 103, and the claims you'll make about yourself or your writing in your portfolio. This cover letter should be very brief, like the introduction or welcome blurbs on the portfolios you saw a few weeks ago online.

There are no formatting or other requirements for this piece, but it should give readers enough context that they'll understand what they'll be seeing in your portfolio. It should make your reader feel welcome, oriented, and ready to trust you.

You may not use AI in any phase of the writing of this piece of your portfolio.

Step 6: Incorporate your cover letter, reflection essay, at least 3 of the four big "things" you made this semester, and at least one additional piece of writing from your ENGL 103 Journal into your portfolio. Using the app or platform of your choosing, build your ENGL 103 portfolio.

You could use the SharePoint site we built together in class last week. Or you could use Google Sites, Canva, or another tool you know about. If you have any questions or need any help with the technical work of building a portfolio, schedule a time to meet with me to work on it together. Just send me an email at mbaerl@niu.edu!

Remember, it needs to speak to an audience of interested strangers about your experience this semester as you worked to achieve some course goals and personal goals.