

English & Foreign Languages

Rhetoric & Composition MA option

Culminating Portfolio Contents

This portfolio is your opportunity to synthesize material from several courses and to consider your learning in the program as a whole. In it, you will demonstrate how your knowledge and ability have developed over the course of the program and reflect on what you have learned about rhetoric, writing, and pedagogy. You will revisit past work and propose how you might improve it. Your portfolio should provide a thoughtful representation of your writing, research, and teaching abilities (which means that it might be something you could show a potential employer as part of a job search). Your completed portfolio will contain the following:

New work

- 1) A **cover page** (1 single-spaced page) confirming that the contents of the portfolio, which are being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the MA degree in English, also conform to the criteria for the Rhetoric & Composition portfolio option.
- 2) A **reflective essay** (8-10 double-spaced pages) that considers how well you have met the Student Learning Outcomes of the Rhetoric & Composition MA Option (see the Portfolio Assessment section below). Discuss how your knowledge of rhetoric, your interpretive practices, and your teaching strategies have evolved as you worked your way through the program. Throughout this discussion, you might want to make reference to specific sections of your portfolio. You might also want to write about how the knowledge and practices you have learned in the program have influenced your future career goals and plans.
- 3) A **rhetorical analysis** (5-6 double-spaced pages) of a text using appropriate classical, modern, and contemporary rhetorical theories/scholarship. Choose *one* of the prompts that will be provided.

Revisited work

- 4) English 581/5100 paper or project
- 5) English 584/5110 paper or project
- 6) English 587/588/5130 paper or project
- 7) One paper or project from an elective Rhetoric & Composition course
- 8) One paper from your other option (Annotations: If you were going to do this project from a rhetorical perspective, what would you do differently?)

Each paper or project should be prefaced by a **cover essay** (2-3 double-spaced pages). This essay should discuss how you would revise this project after taking into account new perspectives you have gained since writing the piece. (Such “new perspectives” should address gaps, omissions, and alternative possibilities in the paper or project. These perspectives might be from further coursework, but they should be developed through further inquiry into scholarly conversations about the topic in relevant journals, books, blogs, listservs, etc.)

Additionally, **insert annotations throughout each paper or project**, using these annotations to direct readers to where claims made in the cover essay could be developed in the paper or project itself. Whether you suggest new directions that might be taken, other directions that should have been taken,

and/or additional steps to take in the direction already underway, please note that your cover essay commentaries and annotations need to convey increased *depth* and *breadth* of understanding.

To undertake this section of the portfolio, you might first take account of comments from your professor on the paper or project. Then consider what you have learned in courses you have taken since you wrote the paper or project. You should additionally undertake any research that you believe would lead to a productive revision of the paper or project. In the course of this work, it is not a bad idea to discuss professor comments and your ideas for revision with Rhetoric & Composition faculty. If you do not have one of these papers for some reason, it is possible to negotiate a substitution.

Portfolio assessment

The portfolio will be evaluated by two readers according to the following Program Outcomes.

Candidates in the Rhetoric & Composition option will demonstrate...

- 1) **Knowledge of the Field:** Knowledge of the key theorists/practitioners, concepts, and terms in all three areas: History of Rhetoric, Modern Rhetorical Theory, and Pedagogy.
- 2) **Application of Theory:** Ability to apply rhetorical methodologies, principles, and research to salient concerns/problems in all three areas: History of Rhetoric, Modern Rhetorical Theory, and Pedagogy.
- 3) **Development of Ideas:** Ability to develop a detailed, resourceful line of reasoning in response to a question at issue.
- 4) **Academic Style:** A readable, compelling, professional prose style.
- 5) **Pedagogical Insight:** Ability to teach/adapt the body of knowledge and skills listed above to a variety of audiences, in particular fellow teachers and college students.
- 6) **Research:** Ability to conduct and present high-quality, up-to-date research and analysis in Rhetoric & Composition.

Each outcome will be assessed on a four-point scale (see Portfolio Rubric sheet). A perfect score is 24 points. A passing score is 18 points. Scores below 18 points will result in either an oral defense in one or more categories or a request to revise and resubmit the portfolio in a subsequent quarter. The portfolio can only be resubmitted once.

Preparing your portfolio

The process of putting your portfolio together will take a significant amount of time. Start by collecting and annotating your past projects, since that work will lead to insights you will want to discuss in the reflective essay. Here's a recommended timeline for your work:

Before the semester begins – Gather relevant papers and projects

Weeks 1-5 – Annotate papers/projects and draft discussions of possible revisions for each

Week 6-7 – Write rhetorical analysis essay

Weeks 8-9 – Write reflective essay

Week 10 – Write portfolio cover page, review and revise, proofread and edit

Monday of Week 11 – Submit your portfolio

Results will be available in Week 14. We hope that the process of creating this portfolio will allow you to synthesize and reflect on all the knowledge and skills that you gained through your work in the program and will help to prepare you to put this knowledge to work in future teaching, scholarship, and writing.