



# Department of English and Writing Studies

WRITING 4998F – Distance Studies  
*RE-VISIONING SELF: CREATING YOUR PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO*  
Fall Term, 2018

**Instructor:** Dr. Michael Arntfield ([marntfie@uwo.ca](mailto:marntfie@uwo.ca))  
University College 2428. Ext. 88432  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 1:30-2:30pm & 5:30-6:30pm

**Required Text:** Smith, Herb and Kim Haines-Korn. *Portfolios for Technical and Professional Communicators*. New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007.

## Course Objectives and Description

In this course you will create a ‘**Professional Writing Portfolio**,’ which will include both revised and polished versions of work you have previously done in Writing and other courses, and at least one piece of new work written specifically during and for this course. We will spend considerable time on the principles of good writing generally, and of revision in particular, and you will apply these principles to your work.

Your aim is to create a Portfolio which, suitably modified to target specific audiences, will effectively represent, and potentially ‘market’, your abilities as a writer.

## Attendance/Participation

Obviously, we do not meet formally as a ‘class’ in a Distance Studies course. Therefore, ‘attendance’ and participation on the Discussion Forum are intertwined. While Distance Studies classes are generally asynchronous, they are not correspondence or self-paced. You must ‘attend’ class (defined as logging into our OWL course section) and participate by introducing yourself, and posting questions and thoughts during the first week, and by posting (by participating in a given week’s set discussion topic) **on at two separate occasions; one of these must be a reply/response to another student and one must be a ‘new’ post on an original topic that you yourself initiated.**

Postings on the Discussion Forum must have the following characteristics:

- Must contribute something meaningful to the Board;
- Must support your opinion with sufficient reasons or evidence;
- Must display good grammar and organization.

Postings should not:

- Contain disrespectful, insulting, or offensive language;
- Be excessively long or excessively short;
- Be unrelated to the week's topic;
- Say things that do not contribute anything, e.g. "I agree with you" or "nice comment".

I will track your postings to the Discussion Forum, and assess each week's contribution (both as to quantity and quality) on a 10-point scale, ultimately arriving at a cumulative grade out of 100 that will constitute your 10% 'Discussion Forum Participation' mark.

**Note** that 'attendance' as defined in this section is mandatory in this course. Failure to meet the minimum posting requirements for **three weeks or more** may result in your final grade in the course being reduced by 10% in addition to penalties incurred with respect to the attendance/participation mark.

### **Evaluation**

**NOTE: In this course all assignments will be in, and submitted in, electronic format. 'Working' documents (i.e. everything below other than your final, complete Portfolio) must be in .pdf (preferred) or Word (either .doc or .docx extension), to allow comments/editing etc. Zipped/compressed files, other formats are not acceptable. Submission links will be provided via OWL. Your final complete Portfolio may be in any accessible electronic format (Word, pdf, web-based) you choose.**

Your final grade in Writing 4998F/G will be arrived at as follows.

**Assignment 1 – New Material: 30%** of your final grade will be based on an evaluation of a new essay (or equivalent project), approximately 2000 words that you will write during the term and submit (final version) as part of your Portfolio.

This portion of your grade will be allocated as follows:

**New Work -- Proposal:** write a brief (around 300-500 words) proposal in which you propose the general subject, specific topic, and thesis/plan of research (if applicable) for your new project. **(5%)**

**New Work -- Interim Draft:** write a provisional but complete draft of your new ~2000 word project and circulate this both to other members of the class and to me. **(10%)**

**New Work -- Final:** submit the final version of your project in your Portfolio, at the end of the term. The project will be graded both on its own merits **(15%)**, and as part of the overall portfolio evaluation.

**Assignment 2** – Revised piece of Discursive/Expository Prose (e.g. academic essay): select one of your academic essays, or some other piece of discursive (i.e. expository, not ‘creative writing’) writing, and revise/improve it for inclusion in your final Portfolio (this exercise will incorporate. **10% (grade will be based on the piece as included in your final Portfolio).**

**Assignment 3** – **The Writing Portfolio:** 50% of your final grade will be based on an evaluation of this set of materials. That evaluation will take into account the overall effectiveness of the portfolio (given its intended purpose), the design and presentation of the portfolio, and improvements made to specific items of content throughout the term as a result of revision. Your provisional complete portfolio will, like all other assignments, be peer reviewed.

#### **4. Attendance/Participation in graded Discussion Topics: 10%**

**\*Peer Review:** Participation in peer review is *mandatory* in this course. Students who do not submit a *complete* draft for peer review as scheduled ***or*** do not participate in peer review by providing timely feedback ***will lose 10%*** from the earned grade for that assignment or assignment component. ‘**Completeness**’ here means that the draft you submit is complete enough to allow meaningful comment by other students. By participating in peer review you gain other readers’ comments and have an opportunity to offer comments and constructive criticism (in the best sense of that term) to others.

#### **5. Assignment Deadlines**

Assignments are due in-class on the date specified on the schedule. Late papers will be penalized at the rate of 5% per day, including weekends, unless I’ve granted an extension at least 72 hours in advance ***and*** in writing. You must apply for extensions ahead of that 72 hour window; they are not automatic and are granted selectively. I don’t like to penalize late assignments; however, since the purpose of this course is to prepare you for a career in writing, you need to know that deadlines are not a matter of negotiation. For these reasons, all assignments will be due on the date specified barring some catastrophic event. Following any other policy would be an injustice to you as a future writer.

**N.B.: NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THE TERM ENDS. NO EXCEPTIONS. BECAUSE THIS IS A CLASS WITHOUT A FINAL EXAM, THAT MEANS THE LAST DAY OF CLASSES – DECEMBER 7, 2018.**

## Class Schedule

(Note: a 'week' in this course runs Monday to Friday; thus, this term Week 1 is Monday, September 10 to Friday, September 14, 2018)

**Unit/Week 1:** General Introduction; Creating a 'Working Portfolio'

*Begin to collect a broad selection of your writing and other artefacts.*

**For Week 2:**

*Read Chapters 1 and 2 of the Portfolio text, and take a look at some of the sample student portfolios on the 'Student Portfolio' page. Review a few of them, making brief notes on type, design, and content. These notes will be the basis for your **Week Two Discussion Topic contributions.***

**Unit/Week 2:** Introduction to the 'Professional Writing Portfolio'; Creating a Portfolio Identity  
(Portfolio text Chapters 1 and 2)

**For Week 3:**

***Week 3 Discussion Topic assignment:** Do Assignment 1 on page 29 of the Portfolio text (Skills Inventory), creating one or two paragraphs about your skills; these notes will be the basis for your Week 3 Discussion contributions. Note that the Assignments themselves are not formal, nor are they graded (other than in relation to your participation in this Discussion).*

*Read Chapter 3 in the Portfolio text*

**Unit/Week 3:** Portfolio Contents, Design, and Structure  
(Portfolio text Chapter 3)

**PROPOSAL FOR "NEW WORK" (5% of final grade) DUE by 5:00 p.m. on Friday of Week 3 (September 28, 2018)**

*Read Chapters 4 and 5 in the Portfolio text*

Unit/Week 4: The Electronic Portfolio  
(Portfolio text Chapter 5)

**For Week 6:**

*Using Assignments 1 and 2 (Portfolios, pages 48-49) as a guide, post up your (still preliminary!) thoughts on the design, and (especially) the theme/metaphor for your portfolio, and a (provisional) table of contents (Week 6 Discussion Topic assignment).*

Unit/Week 5: **Reading Week – No Forum Postings or Lecture Notes**  
*Read Chapter 6 in the Portfolio text;*

Unit/Week 6: Legal and Ethical Issues Affecting Portfolios  
(Portfolio text Chapter 6)

**INTERIM DRAFT (10% of final grade) OF 'NEW WORK'  
DUE by 5:00 p.m. on Friday of WEEK 6 (October 19, 2018)**

**For Week 7:**

*Read Chapter 7 in the Portfolio text;*

Unit/Week 7: Getting Feedback: Responding to and Revising Portfolios  
(Portfolio text Chapter 7)  
\*Peer Review of [Interim Draft New Work](#)

**For Week 8:**

***Week 8 Discussion Topic assignment: Do Assignment 1 on page 79 of the Portfolio Text: Design Considerations and Contextualization for Discussion in Week 8.***

Unit/Week 8: **DISCURSIVE/EXPOSITORY PROSE REVISION (10% of final grade) DUE by 5:00 p.m. on Friday of WEEK 8 (November 2, 2018)**

**For Units/Weeks 9/10:**

***(Weeks 9 and 10 Discussion) Post up your thoughts (and respond to those of others) on the question of the "main audience" (or audiences) for your Portfolio: i) who are you imagining will be reading/viewing your Portfolio, and ii) how is that definition of 'audience' influencing the appearance, structure, and contents?***

Unit/Week 9: Work on portfolios

**For Week 10:**

*Work on Portfolios*

Unit/Week 10: Work on portfolios

**For Week 11:**

*Prepare to submit Provisional Complete Portfolio*

Unit/Week 11: Work on portfolios

Peer Review of [Provisional Complete Portfolio](#)

**PROVISIONAL COMPLETE PORTFOLIO (link to site)**  
**DUE by Midnight on Friday of WEEK 11 (November 23, 2018)**

Unit/Week 12: **Final Portfolio & all supporting materials due. Deadline for submission is 5:00 p.m. on November 30, 2018. See “Assignment” portal for detailed instructions.**

## **Course Policies**

### **Medical Accommodation Policy**

For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

(downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading)

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical or other grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds cannot be granted by the instructor or the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication, and the Program requires students in these circumstances to follow the same procedure when seeking academic accommodation on non-medical (i.e. non-medical compassionate or other) grounds.

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth less than 10% of their final grade** must also apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Where in these circumstances the accommodation is being sought on **non-medical grounds**, students should consult in the first instance with their instructor, who may elect to make a decision on the request directly, or refer the student to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an 'Attendance' policy in the course). **All** medical documentation **must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's home Faculty.

**Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.**

### **Scholastic Offences**

"Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholoff.pdf>."

"Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence."

"All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)."

### **Prerequisites**

The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines:

"Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites."

The prerequisite for registration in this course is successful completion of at least two (2) half-courses in Writing at the 2200-level or above, or Special Permission of the department.