



# Department of English and Writing Studies

WRITING 4998F/650 – Distance Studies  
*RE-VISIONING SELF: CREATING YOUR PROFESSIONAL PORTFOLIO*

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**Office hours:** M 1:30-3:30; W 2:30-3:30

**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 Sakai 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 least three separate days** in subsequent weeks. This means at least three separate posts per week (a week is defined as running from Monday to Sunday) during weeks that have graded discussion, **at least one of which must be a reply/response to another student and at least one of which must be a new post**.

Postings on the Discussion Forum must have the following characteristics:

- Must contribute something meaningful;
- 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."

**Note** that attendance as defined in this section is **mandatory** in this course. Failure to meet the minimum posting requirements for **any week in which there is graded discussion** will result in your final grade in this course being reduced by 2.5, cumulative to a maximum reduction of 10%.

## 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 Word (either .doc or .docx extension), to allow comments/editing etc. Pdfs, zipped/compressed files, other formats are not acceptable. Submission links will be provided. Your final complete Portfolio may be in any accessible electronic format (Word, pdf, web-based) you choose.**

Your final grade in Writing 4998F 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 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 project. You'll discuss (see Forums) each others' drafts during Week 7 **\*Peer reviewed. (10%)**

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

**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 *\*peer review – a comparative analysis of the original and revised versions*): **15%** (grade will be based on the piece as included in your final Portfolio).

**Assignment 3** – The Writing Portfolio: **55%** 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 be *\*peer reviewed*.

(\**Peer Review*: Participation in peer review [as instructed] in each assignment for which a peer review component is specified is *mandatory*. Students who do not submit a complete draft for peer review as scheduled **and** participate in peer review **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 ['criticism', in the best sense of that term] to others.)

### **Class Schedule**

**Week 1/Sept 9-13:** 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**.*

**Week 2/Sept 16-20:** 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*

**Week 3/Sept 23-27:** Portfolio Contents, Design, and Structure  
(Portfolio text Chapter 3)

**Proposal for 'New Work' (5% of final grade) due Friday of Week 3 (September 27)**

*Read Chapters 4 and 5 in the Portfolio text*

**Week 4/Sept 30-  
Oct 4** The Electronic Portfolio  
(Portfolio text Chapter 5)

**For Week 5:**

*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 5 Discussion Topic assignment**).*

**Week 5/Oct 7-11:** Revising for Portfolio Quality  
(Portfolio text Chapter 4)

*Read Chapter 6 in the Portfolio text;*

**Week 6/Oct 14-18:** Legal and Ethical Issues Affecting Portfolios  
(Portfolio text Chapter 6)

**INTERIM DRAFT (10% of final grade) OF 'NEW WORK' DUE Friday of WEEK 6 (October 18)**

**For Week 7:**

*Read Chapter 7 in the Portfolio text;*

**Week 7/Oct 21-25:** Getting Feedback: Responding to and Revising Portfolios  
(Portfolio text Chapter 7)

\*Peer-review of Interim Draft New Work (see Forums)

**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.

Week 8/Oct 28-Nov 1: **DISCURSIVE/EXPOSITORY PROSE REVISION (15% of final grade) DUE Friday of WEEK 8 (November 1)**

**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?

Week 9/Nov 11-15: \*Peer Review of [revised Discursive/Expository Prose piece](#)

[Work on portfolios](#)

**For Week 10:**

*Work on Portfolio*

Week 10/Nov 18-22: [Work on portfolios](#)

**For Week 11:**

*Prepare to submit Provisional Complete Portfolio*

Week 11/Nov 25-29: [Work on portfolios](#)

**PROVISIONAL COMPLETE PORTFOLIO DUE Friday of WEEK 11 (November 29)**

Week 12/Dec 2-6: \*Peer Review of [Provisional Complete Portfolio](#) Monday to Thursday.

[Work on Final Portfolio revisions](#)

**[Final Portfolio is due. Deadline for submission is 11:55 p.m. on the last day of classes \(December 6\). Final submission procedure will be communicated through Owl mail.](#)**

## **General Course Policies**

### **Medical Accommodation Policy**

Western has a comprehensive policy covering requests for accommodation by students who are not registered with Student Accessibility Services. All students should review this policy here, under the heading ‘Accommodation for Illness – Undergraduate Students’, noting the procedures, restrictions, and notice requirements:

[http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page\\_12](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12)

In Writing courses, students covered by this policy who are seeking academic consideration must proceed as follows.

**Writing Studies’ Basic Policy:** students seeking academic consideration **on medical or any other grounds** for any missed tests/exams, class attendance/participation components, or late or missed assignments must either initiate a Self-Reported Absence (**for a grade component worth up to 30% of their final grade, but excluding final exams scheduled during the exam period**) or apply in person to the Academic Counselling or Undergraduate office of their home Faculty and provide a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) or other supporting documentation as required in accordance with official Western policy (linked above).

Students seeking academic consideration **must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by either:

- i. A Self-Reported Absence, or
- ii. Academic consideration supported by the Academic Counselling Office.

**Exception:** in Writing Studies courses, a student seeking academic accommodation **on non-medical grounds** for any missed in-class tests/exams, class attendance/participation components, or late or missed assignments **worth less than 10% of a final grade** *may* first consult directly with her or his instructor, who will – in his or her discretion – elect either to make a decision on the request directly or instruct the student to follow the procedures set out in **Writing Studies’ Basic Policy**.

**Please note** that individual instructors will **not under any circumstances** accept or read medical documentation directly offered by a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds or for related 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 or Undergraduate office of a student’s home Faculty.

**Students who are or who feel they should be covered under Student Accessibility Services** should review Western policy here:

[http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page\\_10](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_10)

**Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: (<https://www.uwo.ca/health/>) 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.