Assignment Sheet: Final Projects & Portfolio

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1. Purpose & Goals

Your final project will wrap up the semester by helping you demonstrate your accomplishments for the class in several formats. Your first task is to revise your research proposal. The semester began with a research proposal that explained what you wanted to learn more about. Now that you have been studying that topic for several weeks, you know far more than you did when you initially created the proposal. It's time to put that new knowledge to good use and create an informed research proposal that more confidently argues your position and suggests the kind of research that would be appropriate and successful to follow the line of inquiry you began in this course. Revise or re-create your original research proposal to include a better sense of the research that already exist on the subject and insights you gathered from your own primary research. Did you learn that different primary research needs to be done? Should the conversation you found in your primary research go in a different direction? Knowing what you know now, what is the next project that needs to be done to continue the research on your issue? That's what you propose in this final project.

To accompany your research proposal and present your ideas in a different and more easily digestible format, you will also create a "pitch" for your research plan. For this pitch, you will be using the Pecha Kucha format, which restricts presentations to twenty images (notably *without* bulleted lists) displayed for twenty seconds each. Your job is to condense the necessity and importance of your research into only six minutes and forty seconds. Your mini presentation will be posted online, and everyone will post a link to their talks in the Research Pitches discussion board so you can see what your peers have created.

That leaves us with the final portfolio and course audit. You've been focusing on the course outcomes after each assignment; now your goal is to package the work you've done in a way that showcases your accomplishments and highlights those course outcomes. Your traditional portfolio will include evidence of the course outcomes to show you've learned what you were supposed to learn in this course. Because we operate exclusively online, your portfolio will be, too. Using Google Docs simplifies the process, but you can use other options, as well. Just be sure the content is open-access and linked together. After assembling your portfolio, you'll create a Course Audit that explicitly states how and when you achieved the course outcomes, highlighting the parts of the portfolio that show evidence of your achievement. The Course Audit has its own assignment sheet, so be sure you review it before you start writing.

2. Procedure

This assignment sheet covers several final activities, so be sure you understand each component before you start working. You may decide that the order presented below won't work for you. That said, I recommend completing tasks in this order:

Revise Proposal: Revise the portfolio you wrote at the beginning of the semester. (This may feel more like rewriting it, considering you now know more than you thought you would back then.) Consider scheduling a conference to discuss your revision plans or progress with your instructor.

Build Pitch: Now, shift gears. After explaining why your research needs to be done using academic terms and an academic genre, now you need to do the same thing that for a different audience and with a different genre.

Given 6½ minutes and exactly twenty slides, how would you justify the need for your proposed research project using only images and your voice, rather than text? Create a twenty-slide, Pecha Kucha-format presentation using presentation software of your choice. Set the slides to advance automatically every 20 seconds, and record a video of the slides with your narration on top. Upload your video to a service like YouTube or Vimeo, then post a link on the Research Pitches discussion board so your classmates can see what you've created.

Assemble Portfolio: This is actually the easy part. Now that your proposal is finalized, all you need to do is compile all of the documents you've created this semester into one manageable package. How you present that package is up to you: but I recommend sticking with what is simple and familiar to you.

- Using Google Docs?
  (1) Open Friend's portfolio template.
  (2) Choose "Make a copy..." from the File menu; save your portfolio to your own Google account.
  (3) Below the placeholder for your Course Audit, add links to your other documents, and link to or embed your Research Pitch.
  (4) Write your Course Audit. (Details on separate assignment sheet.)
  (5) **Make absolutely certain Sharing settings allow Anyone with the Link to Edit.**
  (6) Submit your document's link to the Final Projects assignment in Webcourses.
- Using Microsoft Word?
  (1) Consider using Google Docs, instead. (Seriously. It's *so* much easier.)
  (2) Compile all documents into one, which can be done with a Master Document. I made a screencast to help my 1101 students create Master Documents for their portfolios; the same process can be used in this class, too.
  (3) Export your portfolio to a PDF. This step is required if you build a Master Document, but it's a good idea in any case.
  (4) Upload your document to the Final Projects assignment in Webcourses.
- Have another idea for presenting your portfolio, like GitHub, Google Sites, etc.? Check with your instructor. The format of this document is very flexible, so your ideas will probably work fine.

Write Course Audit: Now that you have collected all of your documents from the semester, you need to write a cover letter that articulates how those documents demonstrate that you have achieved the intended outcomes of the course. Write a letter to your instructor that helps guide him through a review of your portfolio,

TABLE 1. Goals of Final Portfolio Components

COMPONENT	AUDIENCE	GOALS	APP OR SITE TO USE
Proposal	Future teacher or funding source	Convince people who support research that your project is well thought-out and ready to be approved/funded.	Word processor or Google Docs
Pitch	Your classmates	Explain your issue, justify additional research, and show that your question is worth answering.	Presentation software + Pecha Kucha + YouTube or Vimeo
Course Audit	Friend & DWR	Explain that you know what was expected of you and how you've met the expectations.	Word processor or Google Docs
Portfolio	Friend & DWR	Provide and highlight evidence that you've achieved the course outcomes.	Word processor, Google Docs, GitHub, blog, etc.

pointing out where you achieved each outcome listed on syllabus. Remember: the goal here is to demonstrate that you achieve the outcomes. Do not write a letter that emphasizes flattery or informs the instructor that this course has been your most breathtakingly life-changing experience to date, that you don't know what you would do without the amazing assistance or instructor gave the semester, etc. Although any of these situations may be true, pointing them out sounds more like kissing up and less like completing the assignment. Resist the urge.

Add your course audit to your portfolio, preferably before the table of contents. This becomes your cover sheet.

Publish & Submit Everything: Inside Webcourses, submit your work to the Final Projects assignment so that your instructor knows it is ready to be graded. For any work that is published elsewhere on the web (such as on YouTube or Google Docs), all you need do is submit a link that your instructor can follow. For documents that do not already live online (such as a portfolio created in a word processor), you will need to upload the document into Webcourses. **For any work published online, make absolutely certain access is open to anyone with a link.**

Relax: Enjoy the feeling of being finished with the course!

3. Evaluation

Your performance on these final projects determines your score on the "products" portion of your final grade. Specific details for grading criteria appear in Table 2, but be sure to review all feedback you received from your instructor and your peers throughout the semester to ensure your final draft is as effective as possible.

Table 2. Evaluation of Final Products

	Demonstration of Course Outcomes
A	Clearly demonstrates exceptional achievement of course outcomes and provides easily identifiable evidence of those outcomes across all submitted materials.
B	Demonstrates strong mastery of course outcomes, made obvious through the content of all submitted materials.
C	Shows attainment of course outcomes and provides documentation of those accomplishments through satisfactory attached documents.
D	Provides evidence of an unsuccessful attempt to achieve the course outcomes. Supporting documents likely haphazard, of poor quality, or incomplete.
F	Fails to demonstrate achievement of course outcomes or to submit a complete portfolio. Work is of unacceptably bad quality.