# Writers’ Studio: Digital Portfolio Assignment

## Assignment Overview

### Rationale: Process over Product

The Writers’ Studio first-year composition courses aim to help you develop a sense of yourself as a writer and a composer.  To accomplish this, we will teach you to identify and practice the skills and habits you will need to be a successful writer and composer in college, in your profession, in your community, and in your personal life.  We want to help you realize that successful writers have developed a clear writing process made up of multiple steps and habits. As a student in our classes, you will develop your own process that you can draw on every time you are faced with a new communication situation.   We will also help you to learn which of your own writing habits are strengths that you can continue to hone, and which you must work on improving.

In other writing classes or assignments, you might have been focused on completing a strong final draft.  Although this is an important way to practice cultivating strong writing skills, research has shown that students’ cognitive (or mental) awareness of **how** they develop strong writing skills and habits is far more important than any “final” draft of a writing project you'll produce.  Undertaking reflective self-assessments throughout the class will give you an opportunity to think back on the writing, composing, and reading you have completed during this course, and to explain how you have achieved the learning outcomes of the course (specifically, the WPA Outcomes and the Habits of Mind).  While individual writing projects give you an opportunity to practice the rhetorical skills you learn, no piece of writing is ever perfect or complete.  The reflective writing you will complete in your Digital Portfolio gives you the opportunity to evaluate the writing you’ve done, explain how it demonstrates your achievement of the course learning outcomes, and support your claims about your learning with specific examples from your work done **within the course, in your writing for other courses, and in your composing in other areas of your life**.

### Digication

One of the ways we will help you to develop a strong writing process and effective writerly habits is by asking you to reflect on your learning throughout the course in your Digital Portfolio.  You will create your digital portfolio in Digication, which can be accessed through the “Access Your Digital Portfolio” link in the course Blackboard shell.  **Although you can also access Digication from your MYASU Home page, you should create your portfolio for this class by going through the link in the Blackboard course.  This gives you access to the template we will use in the class.**You will create your Portfolio at the beginning of the class, by following the instructions we provide.  Although the final Portfolio is not due until the end of the course**, you need to work on this project weekly throughout the semester** to ensure a strong final version**.**

### Evidence and Transfer

The Digital Portfolio is a capstone course project in which you **critically reflect** on what you have learned throughout the course, make clear claims about your learning, and **provide evidence** from your work in the course to support your reflections’ claims.  Although you will draw much of the evidence of your learning from your work in this class, rhetorical writing requires skills you will use in many areas of your life both in and beyond college. Reflecting on your learning in this class will help you apply the learning you do in our class to writing you do in other areas of your life.  We call this “transfer” in writing studies:  our ultimate goal is to help you to **transfer the knowledge and skills** you learn in this course to other writing and composing contexts.  For this reason, we ask you to consider in your Portfolio reflections how you have drawn on your learning in this course for writing assignments in other classes and for the writing and composing you do in the professional, personal, and civic areas of your life.  This, we hope, will help you make connections between the way you write in our class and the way you write outside of class, and help you learn how to adapt the skills and practices you develop with us in other writing you do beyond our class.

In sum, this class is about helping you recognize and practice your own writing and thinking habits so that you can purposefully **transfer** these habits to all future writing situations.   Thus, the many reflections you'll complete in your Digital Portfolio are the most important writings you will do in this course.   Take them seriously, and work on them early and often.

## Assignment Requirements

### Step 1: Create your Portfolio (15 pts)

We have provided you with a Writers’ Studio template to use when you create your Digital Portfolio.  The template is titled “WS Master Template 2017.” You can add to and change the template to fit your own style and personality.  When you first create the Portfolio, you should compose the following elements:

#### “Home” page

On the “Home” page of your Digital Portfolio, you should write a brief description of the purpose of your Portfolio.  Imagine you are writing this for an audience outside of your class.  How would you explain why you are composing this Portfolio?   We recommend you address the following on your Home page:

* What course the Portfolio is for
* What the WPA Outcomes and Habits of Mind are and how you will use them in the course
* What your writing and composing goals for the course are

Remember to keep in mind the context or rhetorical situation for your project. Specifically,

* Who might read your Portfolio beyond your instructors and classmates?
* How might you use the Portfolio in the future?

#### “About Me” page

In this biographical section, you should introduce yourself to your readers and discuss your:

* background and family
* academic and professional interests, experiences, and goals
* personal interests

You should also add a picture.  Again, think about prospective audiences and how you might craft this section to best connect with and appeal to future readers.

#### Design Elements

Part of designing a Portfolio involves logically and clearly organizing the content.  It is important to be consistent with surface features like font, headers, and type face.  You can draw on your own creativity to design and personalize your Digital Portfolio by

* adding a banner image
* adding a background color or design
* personalizing the font

This is an opportunity to personalize your Portfolio, be innovative, and have fun with this project while still appropriately and rhetorically targeting external readers.

### Step 2: Complete Reflections Throughout the Course

In the Digital Portfolio, you will complete **four** substantial holistic reflections related to the course learning outcomes: a pre-course reflection, two post-project reflections, and a final (post-course) reflection in which you articulate your own personalized theory of writing.

#### Pre-Course Reflection (50 pts)

When you first begin your Portfolio, you will complete the following reflection:

1. Review the course learning outcomes (the WPA Outcomes and the Habits of Mind) and think about what you know about them already.  Then address the following in your written reflection.
2. Discuss which terms and concepts are familiar, which are new, and which you might find confusing.  Describe how you have used any of these ideas, practices, and skills in your writing previously, either in other classes or in other contexts, **providing specific examples**.  For instance, examples or evidence from other classes or other contexts can come from the following sources:

* written or multimedia work in other courses
* written or multimedia work you compose for a professional situation (e.g., emails to supervisors or coworkers, PowerPoint presentations, reports)
* written communication with family members, including on social media sites, texts, and emails
* writing you do for fun or as a creative outlet
* composing you do in your community, for instance, a letter to the editor or a comment on a political blog.

1. Choose **1-2 bullet points under each section** in the WPA Outcomes (specifically Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes; and Knowledge of Conventions) that you feel most confident in and **1-2 bullet points under each section** you feel you will need to work on the most.  Briefly discuss the outcomes you feel strong in and explain why, providing one or two examples from other writing situations where you excelled in these areas (see above for examples).  Then, discuss the outcomes you most want to improve during the class and explain why.  Think about and discuss what specific Habits of Mind you will most need to draw on in order to improve in the WPA Outcome areas you have identified as needing the most work.
2. Choose 2-3 Habits of Mind (HoM) that you feel most confident in. Drawing on specific previous writing situations and experiences, explain why you identify these HoM as strength areas for you. Next choose 2-3 HoM that you feel most challenged by (or that you think you need the most practice in). Drawing again on previous writing situations, explain why you identify these HoM as writing challenge areas for you.
3. Finally, describe how you view yourself as a writer and how you feel about writing, including examples from previous composing you have done.  What are your goals for improving or expanding as a writer?  Discuss any other activities, practices or skills you will you need to reach that goal.

#### Post-Project 1 Reflection (50 pts)

You will also complete a post-project reflection after you complete and submit each major multimodal project.  The description of the reflection assignment is below.  **(Note the prompt is the same for both post-project reflections, but the examples, evidence, and outcomes you discuss should be substantially different for each.)**

1. Reflect on all the thinking and writing you have done to complete your multimodal project.  Review your invention work, the peer reviews you completed, and the feedback you received. Then, review your Pre-Course Reflection as well as the WPA Outcomes and the Habits of Mind.
2. Discuss which of the outcomes you drew on to successfully complete your project. You should address **1-2 bullet points under each section** in the WPA Outcomes (Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes; and Knowledge of Conventions)**.**
3. Explain how you successfully achieved each of the bulleted sections of the learning outcomes (the WPA Outcomes) you discuss. Which of these were outcomes you identified as needing to strengthen in your pre-course reflection?  How has the process of composing this project helped you to strengthen or improve in these areas? **Provide specific examples from your written work completed in this class to date as evidence to support your learning claims, for instance, from**:

* excerpts from your rough and final drafts of projects
* examples from your invention work and discussion board posts
* feedback from your instructor, writing mentor, and/or peers

1. Next, explain how the Habits of Mind impacted your writerly growth during the Project 1 process.  Which Habits helped you?  Which Habits hindered your growth and success?  Make sure to discuss **2-3 Habits of Mind** for each part here. **Again, provide specific examples from your written work done in the class to provide evidence to support your claims**.
2. Finally, how have you applied or **transferred** your learning in these areas to writing or composing you have done in other classes and/or in your professional, civic, or personal life?  Try to provide specific examples of skill **transfer** from at least 2-3 Outcomes and at least 2-3 Habits.  Examples or evidence from other classes or other contexts can come from the following sources:

* written or multimedia work in other courses
* written or multimedia work you compose for a professional situation (e.g., emails to supervisors or coworkers, PowerPoint presentations, reports)
* written communication with family members, including on social media sites, texts, and emails
* writing you do for fun or as a creative outlet
* composing you do in your community, for instance, a letter to the editor or a comment on a political blog.

#### Post-Project 2 Reflection (50 pts)

1. For this reflection, reflect on all the thinking and writing you have done to complete your multimodal project.  Review your invention work, the peer reviews you completed, and the feedback you received. Then, review your Pre-Course Reflection as well as the WPA Outcomes and the Habits of Mind.

1. Discuss which of the outcomes you drew on to successfully complete your project. You should address **1-2 bullet points under each section** in the WPA Outcomes (Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes; and Knowledge of Conventions)**.**
2. Explain how you successfully achieved each of the bulleted sections of the learning outcomes (the WPA Outcomes) you discuss. Which of these were outcomes you identified as needing to strengthen in your pre-course reflection?  How has the process of composing this project helped you to strengthen or improve in these areas? **Provide specific examples from your written work completed in this class to date as evidence to support your learning claims, for instance, from**:

* excerpts from your rough and final drafts of projects
* examples from your invention work and discussion board posts
* feedback from your instructor, writing mentor, and/or peers

1. Next, explain how the Habits of Mind impacted your writerly growth during the Project 2 process.  Which Habits helped you?  Which Habits hindered your growth and success?  Make sure to discuss **2-3 Habits of Mind** for each part here. **Again, provide specific examples from your written work done in this class during the Project 2 writing process as evidence to support your claims.**
2. Finally, how have you applied or **transferred** your learning in these areas to writing or composing you have done in other classes and/or in your professional, civic, or personal life?  Try to provide specific examples of skill **transfer** from at least 2-3 Outcomes and at least 2-3 Habits.  Examples or evidence from other classes or other contexts can come from the following sources:

* written or multimedia work in other courses
* written or multimedia work you compose for a professional situation (e.g., emails to supervisors or coworkers, PowerPoint presentations, reports)
* written communication with family members, including on social media sites, texts, and emails
* writing you do for fun or as a creative outlet
* composing you do in your community, for instance, a letter to the editor or a comment on a political blog.

#### Post-Course Reflection: Writing for Life (100 pts)

At the end of the course, you will complete a final reflection in which you will evaluate the progress you have made to achieve your goals as a writer.  Once you have completed this reflection, you will ensure your Portfolio contains all other required elements, and then your portfolio will be ready for peer review.

1. Review the course learning outcomes (the WPA Outcomes and the Habits of Mind).  Also return to and re-read your Pre-Course Reflection, paying close attention to your discussion of which Outcomes you intended to work on throughout the course. Reread also your Post-Project 1 and Post-Project 2 Reflections.
2. Discuss how your writing changed during the class.  What did you learn about writing this semester?  How has your view of writing and yourself as a writer changed?   How have you achieved the goals you outlined at the beginning of the course?  How have you strengthened your understanding of the 1-2 bullet points under each section (of the WPA Outcomes and the Habits of Mind) that you identified at the beginning of the class?  Finally, how has your understanding of these outcomes changed?  In what ways do you understand the outcomes differently now, and how has that changed the way you view your own writing as well as the process of writing in general?

**Provide specific examples from the course as evidence to support the learning claims you make.** Such evidence might include:

* + excerpts from your rough and final drafts of projects
  + examples from your invention work and discussion board posts
  + feedback from your instructor, writing mentor, and/or peers
  + the aesthetic design and arrangement of the portfolio itself

1. Discuss how you have used (**transferred**) the writing skills and practices you have learned in this class in other contexts.  Provide at least two examples from writing you have done in other classes or in your personal, professional or civic life and explain how you have drawn on your learning in this class to compose in these other contexts. Then, reflect on and discuss how you plan to build on the learning in this class and continue to practice, adapt, and transfer your knowledge of writing to new communication situations in the future.
2. How has the process of reflection in this course helped you grow as a writer? How has composing a multimodal digital portfolio impacted your learning? What new skills and perspectives have you gained from designing and organizing a portfolio, and how have you applied the WPA Outcomes and Habits of Mind to this project?

### Step 3: Archive Your Coursework

In your Portfolio, you should archive (embed) the following work in their corresponding sections:

1. All drafts of both major multimodal projects.  This means all rough and final drafts of both textual and multimodal components.
2. Six (6) invention assignments of your choice. You should include 3 invention assignments for Project 1 and 3 invention assignments for Project 2.
3. Four (4) reflections: pre-course, post-Project 1, post-Project 2, and post-course reflections.

Finally, make sure you have embedded all coursework projects **inside** the Portfolio (rather than providing links to texts **outside** the Portfolio).  There are content areas within the Portfolio template designed specifically for each draft of Projects 1 and 2.  You can add sub-sections within these content areas for the other invention assignments you decide to include.