ENG 6910: Master's Portfolio

Department of English, Bowling Green State University
Spring 2018

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Important Information

Course Canvas site: https://bgsu.instructure.com/courses/1202510 .

Deadlines: Please see the Canvas site for all suggested and hard deadlines for the portfolio.

Graduating: If you plan to graduate in Spring 2018, you must **apply to graduate** immediately. The deadline is **February 5, 2018** and the Graduate College takes that deadline seriously. See: http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/graduation.html.

Graduate Coordinator: The English Department Graduate Coordinator is mentioned in many steps below. That person is Dr. Bill Albertini woalber@bgsu.edu or 419-372-7541.

What is the Master's Portfolio?

Master or Arts degrees at BGSU are divided into different "plans":
- Plan I involves writing a Master's thesis.
- Plan II involves creating a Master's portfolio.

The Master's Portfolio serves as the capstone project for these English Department programs:
- Master of Arts in English with a specialization in English Teaching (offered online);
- Master of Arts in English with a specialization in Professional Writing and Rhetoric (offered online);
- Master of Arts in English, Individualized Track (no specialization) (offered online or blended);
- Master of Arts in English with a specialization in Literary and Textual Studies: Plan II (portfolio).

Candidates for the above Master of Arts degree programs must sign up for 1 hour of ENG 6910, generally taken during the semester in which the student plans to complete the degree. The MA candidate must submit a portfolio with a minimum of four revised seminar essays/projects along with an introductory analytical narrative explaining the scope of the portfolio.
The portfolio is evaluated by two faculty readers:

- The **first reader** functions as the **portfolio advisor** (much as a thesis or dissertation advisor would function). The first reader/portfolio advisor is chosen by the student and bears the primary responsibility for working with the student to evaluate and revise papers/projects for the portfolio.

- The English Department Graduate Coordinator serves as the **second reader**, and it is the Graduate Coordinator who signs the Master's Plan II Results Form and submits it to BGSU's Graduate College. The form must be signed and submitted in order for the student to graduate with the Master of Arts degree.

Completing your MA Portfolio in Twelve Steps

1. Do you plan to graduate this semester? If so, apply to graduate on or before the Graduate College deadline. See http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/graduation.html for details.

2. Select a first reader.
Early in the semester in which you wish to graduate (earlier is OK as well!), select a first reader. This will be the person with whom you work closely on the portfolio; the first reader acts as your **advisor** for the portfolio.

Your first reader should fit these criteria:
- Someone with whom you've taken a class (or more) during the MA program;
- Full-time Graduate faculty in the Department of English at BGSU;
- Someone with whom you think you can work well as you revise and write.

Current full-time English Graduate Faculty (in alphabetical order) are listed below.

Bill Albertini (Literature)	woalber@bgsu.edu*
Dan Bommarito (Rhetoric and Writing)	dbommar@bgsu.edu
Khani Begum (Literature)	khani@bgsu.edu
Kimberly Coates (Literature)	kimbec@bgsu.edu
Lawrence Coates (Creative Writing)	coatesl@bgsu.edu
Jude Edminster (Professional/Technical Writing)	jrhoades@bgsu.edu
Stephannie Gearhart (Literature)	stephsg@bgsu.edu
Gary Heba (Professional/Technical Writing)	gheba@bgsu.edu
Erin Labbie (Literature)	labbie@bgsu.edu
Piya Pal Lapinski (Literature)	piyapl@bgsu.edu
Wendell Mayo (Creative Writing)	wmayo@bgsu.edu
Sharona Muir (Creative Writing)	smuir@bgsu.edu

Lee Nickoson (Rhetoric and Writing)	leenick@bgsu.edu
Jolie Sheffer (Literature)	jsheffe@bgsu.edu
Larissa Szporluk (Creative Writing)	slariss@bgsu.edu
Sheri Wells-Jensen (TESOL)**	swellsj@bgsu.edu
Sue Carter Wood (Rhetoric and Writing)	carters@bgsu.edu

* This faculty member serves as Graduate Coordinator and as the automatic second reader for each portfolio. The Graduate Coordinator **cannot serve as first reader** for a portfolio project.

** Sheri Wells-Jensen is on Faculty Improvement Leave (research sabbatical) for Fall 2017 and an Institute for the Study of Culture and Society fellowship for Spring 2018. She is not available to serve as a first reader during those semesters.

You have every right to ask a full-time faculty member to serve as your first reader and should always do so; serving as an occasional first reader is part of the faculty member's job. However, any given faculty member could be on a research sabbatical, already serving as a reader to another portfolio, or busy with other advising, teaching, or research obligations for the semester in which you are undertaking the MA Portfolio. The faculty member has the right to refuse. However, you cannot know in advance whether someone is available or not, so simply ask and let the faculty member respond.

You're probably best served by picking a couple names and ranking them. Then contact the first person on the list and see if that person can serve as your first reader. If a professor does not respond after a few days, write again! If the first person is unavailable or does not respond after a couple emails, move down your list.

If you've not heard back from someone (or multiple someones) after a bit of time and a few tries, the Graduate Coordinator can help. Please contact the Graduate Coordinator, providing all information about who you have contacted, in what order, each person's response, and who remains on your "possible" list.

If you have questions about a faculty member who does not appear on the list above, please contact the Graduate Coordinator.

When you contact a potential first reader, send these guidelines along with your request so that the reader can understand the process involved. You have the right to make the request, but the request should be clear, professional, and provide the faculty member with all the relevant information.

3. Inform the Graduate Coordinator of your first reader.
Preferably, forward to the Graduate Coordinator the email in which the faculty member has agreed to serve as first reader.

4. In consultation with your first reader, select projects for your portfolio.
Think about the courses you've taken and projects you've completed during your MA degree. Gather together and read over projects and papers for those courses, along with comments you've received.

As you select potential essays, think about how you would explain your choice of essays in the narrative you will write as part of your portfolio (see above for details).

Please note: You are required to show your first reader the feedback you received on these papers, whether it was good or bad (faculty have seen it all before!). If you do not have feedback (or those files were lost), email the professor from the course for which you wrote the project and ask if the professor still has the comments. CC your first reader on that email so that your first reader is included in the conversation. If the first professor no longer has those comments (as might well be the case), you should simply proceed with revision as best you can.

5. Set up a revision schedule with the first reader of your portfolio.
Create a work schedule so that your portfolio will be completely done (that means revised, edited, and approved by first reader) and delivered to the Graduate Coordinator by the English Department deadline. See the course Canvas site for the deadline.

6. With your first reader, work out the specific plan for revising each piece in the portfolio.
This plan can be set up according to the wishes of the first reader and student, in whatever manner works best for them both.

7. Revise and compile the portfolio.
- Revise the **four pieces** according to your plan with the first reader, incorporating your first reader's feedback and suggested revisions.
- Write the **analytical narrative** explaining your selection of pieces (see below for details), in consultation with your first reader.

8. Get your first reader's approval for the final version of the portfolio.
After working through revisions with your first reader, including letting your first reader comment on draft(s) of your narrative and revising according to those comments, get the approval from your first reader that the Portfolio is complete.

The first reader should be using the criteria listed on page 7 of this document. Approval from your first reader will come when the portfolio (including narrative and individual pieces) are in their final, revised form, including final copy-edits completed (all typos and errors corrected and all formatting finalized).

9. First confirms approval of portfolio with the Graduate Coordinator.
When your first reader approves the final version of the portfolio, the first reader emails the Graduate Coordinator to confirm approval of the portfolio. At this point the first reader's work is done. (Well done and thank you, first reader!)

10. Student sends final, clean, fully edited and approved version of portfolio to Graduate Coordinator. Student cc's first reader.
Remember that the final, approved, edited, complete, clean copy of the portfolio (including analytical narrative, original versions of projects essays, and final revised versions of essays) must be in the hands of the Graduate Coordinator by the deadline listed on the course Canvas page.

11. Student submits the archival version of the MA Portfolio to ScholarWorks@BGSU.
The archival version of the portfolio is described below on the course Canvas site and below. Please see that information for archival copy requirements. Please submit by the deadline listed on the course Canvas site.

12. Student initiates Plan II Results (Master's) Form.
The form can be found here: https://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/documents-and-forms.html . This form must be initiated by the student and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator by the deadline listed on the course Canvas page.

Directions for the MA candidate: Portfolio Expectations

Working with your first reader (who acts as your portfolio advisor), select four substantial course projects with a cumulative length range of roughly 40-70 double spaced pages for revision and submission. These works should best exemplify the strengths of your writing, researching, and critical thinking abilities.

1. At least one of these projects must demonstrate evidence of **substantive research and analysis** on a focused topic. In a given portfolio, many or even all projects might involve substantive research and analysis of a topic. Among the projects included in your portfolio, select as your substantive research and analysis project the one that best exemplifies your research and analytical skill. In the table of contents, label which piece serves as your exemplary work of substantive research and analysis.

2. For those students in the specialization in English Teaching, the portfolio must include **at least one teaching-based project**. If you are in another specialization or track, you may choose to include a teaching-based project if you wish, but are not required to do so.

3. The course projects in your portfolio need not all relate to a single topic/issue. Some or all of them can, but only if those pieces represent your strongest work. Rather than fixate on thematic coherence, the pieces should be examples of your **best work** and representative of the **intellectual exploration** and the **research** that characterized your MA degree.

4. Each piece must be substantially revised (described below as "fresh, revised" versions of the original projects) and expanded if they would be improved by some additional research, analysis, or explanation. You should base your revisions first and foremost on feedback you received from the instructor when you took the course from which the project arose. See below for more details on feedback and revisions.

5. The portfolio submitted for review and approval by your first reader and by the Graduate Coordinator (the second reader) should contain both (a) the original, graded manuscripts with comments, as well as (b) the substantially revised copies of the original works.

Composing the Analytical Narrative

The portfolio should be introduced by a 4-10 page, double-spaced critical analytical narrative that defines the rationale for (a) the student's course of study in the degree program and the methodologies pursued in that course of study, and (b) the revision choices made by the student in consultation with the first reader. Think of this narrative not as an autobiography of your time in the program, but as an opportunity to explain the set of projects in the portfolio, why they matter, and how they reflect your ideas, the academic problems that interest you, how your thinking has changed over your time in the MA program, the reasons for your revisions and what you think you accomplished in revising as you did.

The narrative should explain:
1. Why these works were selected;
2. How each work originated in the candidate's course work;
3. The revision strategies applied to each work and the reasons for those revisions and their strategies;
4. How the experience of creating, researching and revising the work increased the candidate's learning, or otherwise reflects his/her growth and development as a scholar and/or teacher in English studies.
5. Which project or projects serve as evidence of "substantive research" (at least one must do so) and should specify which project or projects is a pedagogy or teaching-based project (at least one must do so).

The following questions might help you as you go about generating ideas for your personal narrative:
- What were your goals/objectives in pursuing an MA?
- What new theories or methods that you learned about in classes had the most impact on you?
- How did those theories or methods inform the work you did in the MA program?
- How do your portfolio papers reflect your own incorporation of those theories or methods in your academic work?
- Is there a thread or theme that runs through all of the portfolio papers? If, so describe the common theme and its importance to your objectives.
- How will you use what you have learned in the MA program that will apply to your current/future academic, job or career goals?

Sample Completed Portfolios

The online MA in English website has a page about the MA Portfolio (http://www.bgsu.edu/arts-and-sciences/english/graduate-programs/ma-english-online/portfolio.html). At the bottom of that page are links to sample portfolios. Consult these for examples of finished portfolio projects.

To see sample archival MA Portfolios (without original copies of projects), see http://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ms_english/ .

Portfolio Process and Evaluation

You will revise the portfolio in consultation with your first reader. That reader will work with you to set a timeline to complete the project, will read drafts, suggest revisions, etc. Your job is to get your portfolio into its final, clean form, prepared for its final submission. At that point the portfolio should be complete, copy-edited, with all final changes made. At that point and only at that point will your first reader approve the project and give you permission to forward the project to the Graduate Coordinator/second reader for final approval. The Graduate Coordinator will read the final version and submit the signed approval form to BGSU's Graduate College, but will not provide further edits—the project should be complete when it reaches the Graduate Coordinator.

The completed portfolio, approved by the first reader and with absolutely all corrections and edits made, must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator (the second reader) by the deadline listed in the course Canvas page. Failure to comply with the deadline may result in a delay of graduation. Portfolios may be submitted earlier than the deadline, during the semester in which graduation is anticipated.

The portfolio will be judged "adequate" or "inadequate" according to **five main criteria**:

1. Evidence of substantive research;
2. Coherence of arguments/conclusions;
3. Effective use of critical vocabulary and analysis in chosen areas of concentration;
4. Overall clarity of expression;
5. Compliance with scholarly conventions of research writing and citation.

Portfolio Format and Submission

What to include in the portfolio:
Your portfolio should include the following: the title page, a table of contents, the analytical narrative, and each of the four revised projects along with the original versions of each of the four project, with the comments you received from the course professor, if those are available. If the original copy of a project with comments is not available, and if you've undertaken the due diligence described above and are unable to get those comments, please include the original version of that project without comments.

How to organize the portfolio:
The items in the portfolio should be arranged in this order:

1. **Title page** (see Title Page Template, below).

2. **Table of Contents** (see Essays/Projects below for suggested arrangement of revisions and originals). Keep in mind these details:

   A. You should have chosen one project as your representative "substantive research and analysis" project, even though you might have done substantive research and analysis for more than one project. **In your table of contents, add "(Research and analysis)" after the title of that project**. That project can occupy any position (1 through 4) in the Table of Contents.

   B. If you are in the English Teaching specialization, you should have one pedagogy or teaching-based project. **In your table of contents, add "(Teaching)" or "(Pedagogy)" after the title of that project**. That project can occupy any position (1 through 4) in the Table of Contents.

3. **Analytical Narrative**

4. **Essays/Projects**.
You can order the essays/projects as you see fit (chronologically, by their importance with respect to your thinking, by their place in your analytical narrative, etc.). However, group them so that the revised version is followed immediately by the original version, along these lines:

> Essay/project 1 revised
> Essay/project 1 original with comments
>
> Essay/project 2 revised
> Essay/project 2 original with comments
>
> Essay/project 3 revised
> Essay/project 3 original with comments
>
> Essay/project 4 revised
> Essay/project 4 original with comments

Page formatting for portfolio:
If possible, number your pages as a single entire document (e.g., from 1-80 or whatever is the final page count) and submit your portfolio as a single document/file. However, if a single file is not possible, or if your portfolio includes different formats (for example, PowerPoint as well as essays), then more than one file is perfectly acceptable. If page numbers organized as a single entire document are not possible, that is acceptable.

See Sample Completed Portfolios in this document for examples of portfolios that can help you in envisioning your own.

When to submit the portfolio to the Graduate Coordinator:
The final portfolio should be submitted to Graduate Coordinator only when you have received final approval from your first reader and only when ALL final revisions, edits, clarifications, corrections of errors and typos, etc. have been made. The version submitted to the Graduate Coordinator should be the absolute final, clean, edited version, so please go over the portfolio with a fine-toothed comb before submitting it.

You will not receive feedback on the final version sent to the Grad Coordinator who will read over and give final approval of the document as long as it meets the criteria described in the Portfolio Guidelines.

How to submit the portfolio:
You can submit the final portfolio via email attachment to the English Department Graduate Coordinator or by uploading to the ENG 6910 Master's Portfolio Canvas site. Files can be submitted in various formats, depending on the nature of the original projects: MS Word, PDF, PowerPoint, etc. If you would like to use other formats, please contact the Graduate Coordinator well in advance and explain your questions or what formats you would like to utilize.

Title Page Template

Use the template below for the title page of your portfolio. Add extra blank lines between the information in the template so that the finished title page covers a full page.

[TITLE OF PORTFOLIO*]

[Your Name]
[Your Email Address]

A Final Portfolio

Submitted to the English Department of Bowling Green
State University in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in the field of English
[If applicable:] with a specialization in
[If applicable:] [Name of your specialization if applicable; see page 1]

[Date of Final submission to the Graduate Coordinator/Second Reader]

[Dr./Prof./Ms./Mr./etc. First reader name], First Reader
[Dr./Prof./etc. Grad Coordinator name], Second Reader

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* Give your portfolio a title if you wish. If prefer no title, simply type FINAL MASTER'S PORTFOLIO in the place of the portfolio title.

Archival version of your MA Portfolio

The archival version of your portfolio includes only the revised versions of the scholarship you undertook during your MA program at BGSU. It will be stored on ScholarWorks@BGSU, an online repository for hosting, preserving and providing access to scholarly work created at Bowling Green State University; the repository was created and is managed by the Bowling Green State University Libraries. You can see copies of previous archival portfolios at https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ms_english/ or can explore the entire ScholarWorks@BGSU project at http://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/.

Creating your archival MA Portfolio:
There are **important differences** between the final approved version of your MA Portfolio (approved by your first reader and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator for final check and approval) and the archival MA Portfolio to be submitted to ScholarWorks@BGSU.

The key difference is that the **archival MA Portfolio** does not include the original versions (with comments) of the four projects that make up your MA portfolio.

The **archival MA Portfolio** consists of the following items:
- Cover page
- Table of contents (revised from the full portfolio version)
- Introductory analytical narrative essay
- Revised project #1
- Revised project #2
- Revised project #3
- Revised project #4

To **create your archival MA Portfolio**, take these steps:
1. Remove the original versions of your four projects.
2. Repaginate the archival MA Portfolio with the original versions removed
3. Revise the table of contents to match the new page numbers.

Submitting your archival MA Portfolio:
If possible, the archival MA Portfolio should be submitted as one file/document. If that is not possible because of the format of your portfolio, contact the archivist at the ScholarWorks@BGSU site.

To **submit your archival MA Portfolio**, take these steps:
1. Go to the Master of Arts in English Plan II Graduate Projects section of ScholarWorks@BGSU: https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ms_english/ .
2. Click on **Submit Portfolio** in the gray panel at the left of the screen.
3. Sign in using your BGSU username and password.
4. Follow the directions to upload your archival MA Portfolio.