

ENG 6910: MA Portfolio
Department of English, BGSU
Guidelines for MA Candidates, Spring 2016

Note: If you plan to graduate in Spring 2016 and you have not yet done so, you must **apply to graduate** immediately. The deadline is **Tuesday, January 26, 2016**, and the Graduate College takes that deadline very seriously.

See <http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/graduation.html> for details and directions about how to apply to graduate.

What is the MA Portfolio?

Master or Arts degrees at BGSU are divided into three plans:

- Plan I involves writing an Master's thesis.
- Plan II involves an Master's portfolio.
- Plan III involves a qualifying examination of some sort.

BGSU's Department of English offers Master of Arts with the following plans:

- MA in English, specialization in Literary and Textual Studies: Plan I (thesis) or Plan II (portfolio);
- MA in English, specialization in English Teaching (offered online): Plan II (portfolio);
- MA in English, specialization in Professional Writing and Rhetoric (offered online): Plan II (portfolio);
- MA in English, individualized track/no specialization (offered online): Plan II (portfolio).

BGSU's Department of English has no Plan III programs.

Candidates completing a Plan II Master of Arts degree program must sign up for 1 hour of ENG 6910, generally taken during the semester in which the student plans to finish 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 faculty reader** 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 first reader for the portfolio is akin to the faculty director/advisor for an MA thesis.
- The Graduate Coordinator for the Department of English 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.

Compiling the Portfolio: Directions for the MA candidate

Working with the first reader, should 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. 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**. (In another specialization, you can choose a to include a teaching-based project or not, at your own discretion.)
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:

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) between two and three weeks in advance of the Graduate College deadline for reporting the MA Plan II Results (see below for deadlines). Failure to comply with the deadline may result in the delay of graduation. Portfolios may be submitted earlier than the above deadline during the semester in which graduation is anticipated.

The portfolio will be judged as either “adequate” or “inadequate,” using **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.

COMPLETING YOUR PORTFOLIO IN TEN STEPS

1. Do you plan to graduate this semester? If so, apply to graduate on or before Tuesday, January 26, 2015.

See <http://www.bgsu.edu/graduate/graduation.html> for details.

2. Select a first reader first thing in the semester in which you wish to graduate; or earlier if you have done so. The first reader will be the person with whom you work closely on the portfolio; **essentially, the first reader is your advisor for the process.**

The potential first reader should fit these criteria:

- Someone with whom you’ve taken a class in your 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:

Bill Albertini (Literature)	woalber@bgsu.edu*
Khani Begum (Literature)	khani@bgsu.edu
Kris Blair (Rhetoric and Writing)	kblair@bgsu.edu
Kimberly Coates (Literature)	kimbec@bgsu.edu
Lawrence Coates (Creative Writing)	coatesl@bgsu.edu
Jude Edminster (Int’l Scientific & Technical Comm.)	jedmins@bgsu.edu
Stephannie Gearhart (Literature)	stephsg@bgsu.edu
Gary Heba (Int’l Scientific & Technical Comm.)	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
Andrea Riley-Mukavetz (Rhetoric and Writing)	arileym@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

* As Graduate Coordinator, Bill Albertini is the automatic second reader for each portfolio and thus **cannot serve as first reader**.

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, let the Graduate Coordinator know and give the Grad Coordinator all the background about who you have contacted, in what order, and who remains on your "possible" list. The Graduate Coordinator can help at that stage.

When you contact a potential first reader, send these guidelines along with your request so that the reader can best understand the process involved. As mentioned above, 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, including this set of guidelines.

3. Inform the graduate coordinator who has agreed to be your first reader.

The student should forward the email in which the faculty member agrees to serve as first reader to Grad Coordinator Bill Albertini: woalber@bgsu.edu .

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 you lost those files), 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.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH DEADLINE FOR SPRING 2016: Your fully completed, final, edited, clean portfolio, approved by your First Reader, must be sent to the Graduate Coordinator by **Friday April 8** at the latest. That is two weeks before the final approval is due at the Graduate College. Keep in mind this is the deadline by which your portfolio must be revised, edited, and completely approved by the first reader. You will need a schedule with your first reader such that your revisions will be completed well in advance of the Department of English Deadline in order to get feedback from the first reader and make final changes or edits.

6. In consultation with your first reader, work out a plan for revising the pieces.

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, in two parts:

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

8. After working through revisions with your first reader, including letting your first reader comment on draft(s) of your narrative (and then 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 4 of this document. Approval from your first reader will come when the portfolio (including narrative and individual pieces) are in their final, revised form, but also fully edited, with all typos and errors corrected and all formatting finalized.

9. First reader should email the Graduate Coordinator Bill Albertini (woalber@bgsu.edu) and confirm that the first reader approves of the portfolio. At this point the first reader's work is completed. (Well done, first reader!)

10. Student sends final, clean, fully edited version of Portfolio, approved by first reader, to Grad Coordinator (who serves as second reader). Student cc's first reader.

Remember that the final, approved, edited, complete, clean copy of the portfolio (including originals of essays, final revised versions of essays, and narrative) must be in the hands of the Graduate Coordinator by Friday, April 8, 2016.

PORTFOLIO FORMAT AND SUBMISSION

When to submit final portfolio:

The final portfolio should be submitted to the second reader (Graduate Coordinator Bill Albertini, at woalber@bgsu.edu) 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; I will read over and give final approval of the document as long as it meets the criteria described in the Portfolio Guidelines.

What to include in the final portfolio:

Your portfolio should include a cove page as described below, your analytical narrative, and both the revised and original versions of each of four projects you completed during your MA degree at BGSU.

How to organize the final portfolio:

Following is a *suggested* format and order for the items in the portfolio. If you already have your files in a certain order, just stick with that order, as long as you have the essential parts: the personal information from the title page, the narrative, each of the four revised projects along with each of the originals of the papers (with the comments you received from the course professor, if those are available).

1. **Title page** (see below for the format for the title page).
2. **Table of Contents** you devise (see below for more on the Table of Contents).
3. **Analytical Narrative**
4. **Essays/Projects.** You can order the essays/projects as you see fit (chronologically, or by their importance in your analytical narrative, etc.). However, group them so that the original follows immediately after the revised 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

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

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

Professor [Professor's name], First Reader
Professor Bill Albertini, Second Reader

* Give your portfolio a title if you wish. If you do not wish to give it a title, simply place FINAL MA PORTFOLIO in the place of the portfolio title.

Table of Contents details:

1. 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.
2. 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. If the comments from the original of each project/essay are not available (and you’ve been unable to get them after the due diligence described above), just include the original version without 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 the link on page 3 of this document for sample portfolios that can help you in envisioning your own.

How to submit the portfolio:

You can submit the final portfolio via email attachment to woalber@bgsu.edu. 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 Professor Albertini and explain your questions or what you would like to utilize.