Portfolios for the Department of History

All history majors are required to submit a portfolio as part of their curriculum during the senior year. Portfolios are professional folders that showcase the learning achieved over the course of time in the department. They are reflective and allow students to think about the curriculum and how it fits into a larger skill set. The accumulation of materials for the portfolio should be an on-going process that might begin as early as when the major is declared. In addition to the important self-evaluation that students conduct, the portfolio provides faculty in the department an opportunity to assess student learning and ensure that it achieves the department’s learning goals. Finally, the portfolio may be used as a sample of professional work when applying for a job or graduate school.

Learning Goals for History Majors

The Department of History seeks to ensure that History Majors are able to:
1. demonstrate knowledge about the past
2. examine, contextualize, and explicate primary sources
3. understand how historians interpret the past
4. use the skills of historical research to write papers relying on primary and secondary sources

Portfolio Contents

To link the portfolio to the four learning goals listed above, your portfolio should include:

1. A **cover letter or self-analysis essay** of at least two pages reflecting on the learning goals and how each of the four areas are demonstrated

   This self-analysis should include: when you declared your major, some of the skills learned as a history major, your progression as a student in terms of mastery of subject and skills, and evidence of how the submitted evidence fits with the learning outcomes of the department. If possible, reflect on history as a subject of study, your pathway from first year student to senior and growth, what studying history means to you, and how the major has helped achieved these goals.

2. A **professional resume** [will be developed in HIST 494]

3. **Written Work** that fits into each of the learning goals completed in your history classes [at least 8 items; no more than 12]

   **Knowledge of the past**—this should include some tests or other ways of demonstrating knowledge [a midterm from Hitler and Stalin class; a final exam for Modern China].

   **Primary sources**—this might be a short single source document analysis or a longer analysis paper of one or more primary sources [a medieval will, a slave narrative, *Candide*, *The Song of Roland*, *A Passage to India*, Civil war accounts].
How Historians interpret the past—this might be a book review that summarizes and critiques a historian, a historiographical paper, or a section in a research paper that you are submitting for the category below [if so, state this in your self-analysis].

Skills of Historical Research relying on primary and secondary sources—this must include 3 items: your Engaging the Past paper of 8-10 pages; a 300 level research paper; and your senior seminar paper of 16-18 pages. All should use Chicago Manual of Style.

Materials selected for the Portfolio should reflect a diversity of classes and subject areas in the department. Do not rely on work from a single class for most of your materials.

The originals of graded work are preferred; should this not be possible, it is acceptable to use the original non-graded work. However, having the feedback is important to demonstrate your mastery and for assessment purposes. Note that from the Department’s perspective, your grade on written work is less important than the level of learning undertaken.

Evaluation of Portfolios

How well the portfolio links to the four learning outcomes is important. In order to evaluate student learning, faculty in the department will review the portfolios. Portfolios do not receive a letter grade. However, they must be completed as part of HIST 494: Senior Capstone and turned in during exam week in order to receive a grade for that class.

The portfolios will be assessed by using the following criteria: excellent, good, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory.

Submission

Portfolios may be submitted in hard copy [binder with name] or electronically [www.foliotek.com is one storage system] during exam week when enrolled in HIST 494.

Binders [.5 inch with clear cover] are available from the Department of History, or you may select your own. Submit your written work stapled, 3 hole punched [there is one in our history office; ask Joni], and placed in the binder in approximate order of the learning objectives. All written work should have the date and class name on them. Your original work likely has the date and class already on it, and that is enough. Please do not include each paper in a separate individual plastic sleeve.

A Note from Your Professors

Thank you for helping us in this endeavor. We hope your experience is a positive one; please talk with your professors or your adviser should you have any questions. We look forward to working with you on the process and charting your growth in the Department of History.