

# Final Project

## Overview

For the final project in this class, you have four options:

1. You can create a professional online portfolio for your own professional development.
2. You can create a professional writing portfolio, where you create 2 or 3 professional documents on a central topic or for a central purpose
3. You can use the research from your annotated bibliography and turn that into a literature review

You should create a document that will be most useful to you moving forward in your professional or academic career.

Instructions for each of these options are outlined in this assignment.

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## Option 1: Professional Online Portfolio

For this assignment, you will produce a professional online portfolio and a reflective memo about your development process. This should be a portfolio designed for professional audiences in professional communication.

You may choose to publish your site online through a variety of means, such as:

- A blog that allows you to publish multiple pages
- A Wordpress site/blog
- A free website through Weebly or similar system
- Your own hosted webpage that you create using HTML and web design software
- A webpage you host through your Mason Space

Many of these options are available for free, so you do not need to incur any cost to complete this project. You may use an online editor, a friend, or your own skills to develop the web pages and functionality. All of the writing and web content **must** be your own.

### Requirements

The Website must include:

1. A home page.
2. An updated resume (do not include personal information like your home address or phone number on this version of the resume).
3. A summary or “about you” page that summarizes your skills, goals, and shapes your audience.
4. A minimum of 3 to 5 revised writing samples (2 of which must be from this class), each of which must include contextualizing information for your reader (where/when the text was produced, what it was for, and what you feel it demonstrates about your capabilities). You may include these samples as PDF attachments, or they may be included on your own page.
5. Links to any updated, professional social media presence you maintain

The Reflective Memo must:

1. Be 1000-1200 words, ~2 pages single-spaced
2. Describe your understanding of the genre, your audience, and the goals for your professional website. This is a kind of modified genre analysis—what are the expectations of a professional website? What kinds of audiences can it speak to? What kinds of relationships does it foster? What are its chief document characteristics? What audiences do you want to find your website?

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3. Describes the choices you made regarding the content and design of your website, as informed by your own goals, genre analysis, and intended audience.
4. Reflects on the process of developing the website and your revised pieces and describes anything you know you need to include/add in the future.
5. If you already had a professional website or portfolio prior to this class, describe the *specific* changes you made for this assignment and how you used the course content and resources to improve on it.

### Due:

- **Monday, December 18, 2017, by 11:59 p.m.** Email your link and memo (as an attachment) to Professor Lawrence.

### Evaluation

1. Demonstrate a thoughtful assembly of relevant professional writing samples. The writing samples should be well written, polished, and appropriate for your intended audiences. The contextualizing information must concisely yet comprehensively provide the background information necessary to understand the purpose of the sample.
2. Demonstrate a thoughtful analysis of the expectations of a professional website and a meaningful attempt to fulfill those requirements within reasonable technical limits. The website may not be technically advanced at this juncture, but all of the basics should be there and should work (links should work, documents should be uploaded, etc.). At this stage, it's better to get something available and working with a solid plan for future development rather than incorporate inoperable features.
3. Writing (including web materials and the resume) should be effective, proofread, and appropriate to audience and situation.
4. Reflective memo should fully answer the prompted questions, including the genre analysis; be organized according to the requirements; and be proofread and mechanically sound.

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## Option 2: Professional Writing Portfolio

For this assignment, you will choose a central issue, concept, or purpose, and write a series of 2 or 3 professional documents, in different genres for that issue, concept, or purpose.

This assignment consists of four parts—first, determining a purpose or topic and identifying and analyzing appropriate audiences for that purpose or topic; second, conducting genre analyses for the documents you would like to create; third, writing and researching documents that are appropriate for your intended audiences; and finally, writing a reflective memo that outlines your research process, audience, and genre analyses.

For example, you could choose to write some new pieces of communication for the Professional Writing and Rhetoric program at George Mason University. Let's say you want to re-write our web materials, create a new brochure, and write a short white paper on professional and the benefits of rhetorical training in the workplace. Then, you would analyze the various audiences of these documents, analyze samples of the genres (using Henze's heuristic), and develop general guidelines for the documents you'd create. Then, you would create those documents and reflect on the process in a memo.

### Requirements

To complete this option, you must:

1. Write a project proposal to me with your issue, concept, or purpose and proposed documents. This must be emailed to me no later than **7:20 p.m. on Monday, December 4**. Your project is not approved until you receive a positive response from me and may require some additional negotiation.
2. Research both your topic area as well as related audiences and genres.
3. Complete 2 to 3 documents that are of substantial length or complexity. You may re-use minimal amounts of text across the genres. You may not, for instance, write one piece of text and then repurpose it for different media (one set of answers for an FAQ page, then pasted that exact text a brochure, etc.). But you may take pieces of similar information and use it in multiple places, if you describe in the memo how you have tailored or refined that text for the different audiences and purposes of the different genres.

The Reflective Memo must:

1. Be 1000-1200 words, ~2 pages single-spaced
2. Describe your understanding of the genre, your audience, and the goals for your portfolio. This is a kind of modified genre analysis—what are the expectations of the documents you have created? What kinds of audiences can they speak to? What kinds of relationships do the documents foster? What are the chief document characteristics? What audiences do you want to find your website?
3. Describes the choices you made regarding the content and design of your website, as informed by your own goals, genre analysis, and intended audience.

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4. Reflects on the process of developing the website and your revised pieces and describes anything you know you need to include/add in the future.
5. If you already had a professional website or portfolio prior to this class, describe the *specific* changes you made for this assignment and how you used the course content and resources to improve on it.

### Due:

- **Monday, December 18, 2017, by 11:59 p.m.** Email your documents (PDF preferred) and memo (as an attachment) to Professor Lawrence.

### Evaluation

1. Demonstrate a thoughtful assembly of relevant professional writing. The documents should be well written, polished, and appropriate for your intended audiences.
2. Demonstrate a thoughtful analysis of the expectations of the genres you chose and a meaningful attempt to fulfill those requirements within reasonable technical limits. Use Henze's heuristic for analyzing genres explicitly in your accompanying memo or some other course-based theory or heuristic for understanding your genre and audience and articulating how you're responding to it.
3. Writing (including web materials and the resume) should be effective, proofread, and appropriate to audience and situation.

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## Option 3: Literature Review

For the literature review, you will be providing an overview of your research topic, what knowledge has already been gained about it, and possible gaps for future research to explore. You will take the research you conducted in your Annotated Bibliography and the conclusions you gathered in the Reflective Memo and create a more formal set of findings, analyses, and future project projections based on this data.

The literature review should also address four elements that are critical to successful research:

- First: What do we know? Provide basic background research on the history of the topic and what has been done before.
  
- Second: How do we know it? Discuss the topics, research questions, and methods that have been analyzed in the past to address your research question (or, if you can't find any direct connections to the project you want to do, then you should be figuring out what the best research methods options are and covering that in this section of the literature review).
  
- Third: What do we need to know? Your assessment of the gaps that exist in this research area and the data necessary to help fill a particular gap or gaps.
  
- Fourth: How might we know it? Posit a possible project/research direction you could follow that would help to fill this gap(s). Discuss the theoretical framework that you think could make sense of the data needed to fill the gap(s). Consider the theoretical works we have covered in class or look at the frameworks that have been applied by scholars who do work on your topic or area of interest. Your theoretical framework will have implications for your research methods.

Remember: you are **not** conducting this research. You are positing directions for future research. See Literature Reviews in many of the articles we have read this semester for some good examples

The Literature Review should:

- Be 8-10 double-spaced pages
- Consistently and correctly use MLA in-text and bibliographic citation
- Should use the Annotated Bibliography research as a starting point but may consider other research outside of that work as necessary

### Criteria for Evaluation

This assignment will be evaluated on:

1. Engagement with the research. This is a formal evaluation of the research you have conducted, so you should be able to analyze the material you find and synthesize it into coherent points.
2. Viability of your future project or research direction, as posited.
3. Clarity of the writing, proofreading, and general mechanical competence.

**Due:**

- **Monday, December 18, 2017, by 11:59 p.m.** Email your paper to Professor Lawrence.