

Senior Portfolio Instructions & Requirements

The purpose of the portfolio is to demonstrate to industry professionals/faculty what you have learned during your time here, and whether or not you are ready to graduate. Portfolios also have another valuable and practical purpose for you: when you graduate, you cannot expect to be hired as a professional communicator *if you can't prove that you can do the work*.

The Portfolio

All portfolios will be online in the form of a website. If you have the skills, feel free to build your website from scratch. Otherwise there are a number of website builders available online. Also, keep in mind that you'll likely be using the site as part of your job application process, and it would be beneficial to get in the habit of keeping your website updated so the next time you look for a job, your latest work is online. Most students use Wix but use whatever you want.

Here are two links to read up on some popular website builders:

<https://websitesetup.org/website-builders/>

<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2484510,00.asp>

Organization

While there isn't a set template for how to design your website, it should be **well organized and easy to use**. Depending on your Mass Comm track and the work you're presenting, you'll need to decide how to best present your work. However, your **RESUME** should be featured on its own page (have its own tab) and should be one of the first things seen.

Look on the department website (<http://www.siue.edu/MASSCOMM/internships.html>) for a handout explaining in detail how to write resumes and cover letters.

After the Resume, you should divide your work in a sensible fashion. For example, pages for ads, scripts, press releases, etc. If you produced work at your internship, you can include an Internship page.

To make it easier for the judges, set up the website so that documents open when clicked on, rather than automatically downloading. You want to make it as easy as possible for the judges to grade your portfolio. Be sure to keep things consistent throughout (how things open, types of files, etc.). Also, be sure when files open, they're large enough to be easily read.

I would suggest you keep a close eye on your portfolio website from when you turn it in until you've been notified that grading is finished – to make sure nothing crashes/disappears/etc. Also, if you use it for job applications, get in the habit of making sure your website is working properly. You don't want to miss out on a job because your website went offline, and someone wasn't able to see your work.

When finished with your portfolio, email the URL, along with your name, concentration area and any required password to cobyers@siue.edu. And finally, remember: Something worth doing is worth doing well.

Portfolio Tips

In discussing minimum numbers of examples of your work in the paragraphs below, consider the minimum number of examples just that: the minimum. To avoid the minimum grade, provide more than the minimum number of pieces. However, don't include EVERYTHING you've produced. There is no magic number, but if you notice you have more than 25 pieces, you may want to ask yourself if all of those are really necessary (they're not). A smaller collection of great material is better than a larger collection of mediocre (or bad) material.

Your portfolio work can come from anywhere – classes, internships, jobs, previous schools, and things you created on your own. If using internship/job work, be sure to have permission to use it, and be sure it's something you had considerable creative control over. If you can't get something in a digital format, you can scan the work.

You are **required to include a brief narrative** for each piece of work. Basically, telling the viewer what it is and what it was made for. If your work was actually used (as part of a job or internship) you can mention that in the narrative and provide a link to it (if applicable).

The narrative is especially important with regards to group projects. Be sure to specify which parts of the work you were responsible for. **Never take credit for someone else's work.**

If relevant, you may also want to include the software/hardware used to create it.

For example: "This ad was partner project for MC 326: Copywriting & Design. The assignment was to research a target audience that I am not a part of and create an ad targeted towards that audience. I was the Art Director for this project, and my partner was the Copywriter. I designed the ad using Photoshop and InDesign."

Proofread EVERYTHING, and then have a friend/relative/anyone proofread everything again.

Make your portfolio as easy as to read/judge/understand as possible. The judge shouldn't have any questions after looking at your portfolio. Part of your grade is on the organization of the website.

Never include anything with an instructor's grades, comments, etc.

Be **EXTREMELY** careful when putting projects written by a group in your portfolio. These have a tendency to include a lot of spelling and grammar errors. Even though you may not have specifically written a section, any errors in it will be attributed to you since it's in your portfolio.

If you're including anything from two or three years ago, you may want to edit/re-write it. You're probably better now than you were then, so something that started off as an ok idea in 204 may be able to be freshened up into something better.

Depending on who you had for certain courses, you may have learned different formats for things, like scripts. For your portfolio, it always looks nicer if things are in the same format. So, you may need to re-format some things to give everything a consistent look. Again, presentation of your work is as important as the work itself. You can find specific Mass Comm format examples on the Mass Comm Internship website: <http://www.siu.edu/MASSCOMM/internships.html>

Guidelines and requirements for each professional option:

Please note that what follows are not inclusive lists: just examples.

Journalism portfolios must include at least ten news stories that carry your byline online or in print and/or that you shot, wrote, and produced yourself. Group your news stories by type (e.g., hard news, feature, investigative). Original reporting done for SIUE Mass Comm. courses must be presented in department broadcast style. Use the templates provided in class. **Do not include in-class writing assignments for your Journalism portfolio if you did not do the original reporting. This goes for text-based, audio, or video reports. If you didn't report the story or rewrite it as part of your duties for a professional newsroom, don't include it in your portfolio site.**

If you have produced layouts or design mockups for the Alestle, for internships, etc., those should be included in your "Design" section. If you have a project that you designed *and* wrote, you only need to include it once, but make it very clear that you did both.

Only include video news scripts if they are based on original reporting or if you rewrote them for an internship as a production assistant or in some similar capacity. For example, if you've had a broadcast news internship where you've done some re-writing of scripts based on wire copy, feel free to include those coupled with a "producer's demo" reel. Include the related scripts as PDFs, screen captures, or scanned copies. Put each professional script in its own file. Order the files so that they correspond exactly with your producer's reel.

Show that you have great reporting skills, writing skills, production skills, and design skills. Explain in your narratives a bit about how you developed these skills and how you will continue to learn as electronic news technologies continue to change.

Advertising and Strategic Media portfolios must include at least ten different "pieces" (basically any form of promotional material – see below for examples). Any group project in your portfolio should be preceded in your narrative by a description of the project and a clear statement of what you personally contributed to the project.

Examples include:

- Campaigns
- Media Plans
- Brochures
- Speeches/Presentations
- Radio/TV Commercial/PSA Scripts
- Any media products produced at your internship
- Video/Audio examples, either in a reel or individually
- Individual Ads
- TV Storyboards
- Feature/News Stories
- Multimedia Projects
- Proposals
- Newsletters
- Press Releases
- Layout/Design

Media Production portfolios must include at least ten separate scripts and a demo reel. Script examples include broadcast news, commercials or PSAs, documentaries, and other scripts. (Examples of short radio copy such as radio liners, short news stories, promos, etc., must fill up *one complete page* to equal *one* of your required minimum number of scripts.) Each script must be **your original work**, not rewrites of wire service, newspaper, web or anyone else's copy. Among all of these examples, you must submit **at least one commercial or a PSA script.**

All Media Production students must include either a video or a radio demo reel. See below for instructions. You **may** turn in both audio and video reels, but you **must** submit one.

Information for Demo Reels

Demo Reels should never be longer than 5 minutes. Do NOT include *entire* productions, other than really good commercials/PSAs. The best demo reels display the finest **portions** of your productions, edited together in an attractive, entertaining, skillful way. You should “tease” viewers; just giving them a taste of the various kinds of video products you are capable of producing. However, this doesn’t mean that you should cut together a simple montage of otherwise disconnected images set to music. This doesn’t tell a potential employer anything about whether or not you can **tell a story**; whether it’s news, feature documentary, corporate or a commercial. So, for example, if you’re editing a news or feature package, give the audience a minute or less, and then fade out and fade into the next piece. This is what we mean by “just a taste.” If you can come up with a cool After Effects transition between pieces, consider using it throughout your demo reel. Don’t use a bunch of different ones: that can be a turn-off. But if you use at least one transition that has to come from a program like After Effects, it shows a sharp production manager – without having to say a word – that you have advanced chops in editing.

Audio levels should be consistent throughout the reel.

The only time randomly edited video montages set to music would be appropriate would be if you are applying for a job *just* as a videographer, and the job description is clear that directing (read storytelling) skills are not required. However, on better-balanced reels as described above, a very short (less than a minute) montage at the end after showing “tastes” of completed works is acceptable, if it’s cleverly and creatively edited.

Finally, be sure you say what you did by keying each piece (what it is, what your role was). For example, if you directed a commercial but someone else shot it, be sure to mention that. If another student puts the shot you claimed on his/her reel, the judge will assume someone is lying about it, and you will be called on to explain yourself. **Again, never take credit for someone else’s work.**

Demo Reels for radio news should feature you reading copy **you have written** in a short, local newscast (two minutes or less), plus selected clips from a few radio documentaries you produced and clips from one or more interviews you’ve conducted. Be sure to liberally pepper your news stories with very short actualities (sound bites). Usually these demo reels are five minutes in length or less.

Major problem areas for video reels include: uneven audio levels and flash (black) framers, poor choices regarding where to cut, and a lack of creativity. Audio reel problems include poor levels, unedited air checks, poor announcing skills and a lack of skillful, creative editing. Remember that faculty and potential employers are interested in both the content and the quality and creativity that went into putting your reel together. Just remember the weak points your professors noted in your production course assignments and fix them.