

Policies

English 4300



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Office Hours:	10 am to 2 pm, MTWT or by appointment
Course Text:	<i>A Writer's Reference</i>. Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers (latest edition)

Portfolio Capstone Seminar Spring 2026

Objectives:

The objectives of the English senior portfolio capstone course are to prepare graduating seniors for their educational/professional pursuits beyond graduation and to synthesize and analyze their educational experience. The course will encourage more intense development of language and critical-thinking skills as befitting graduates of a program in English studies. Finally, the course hopes to build further appreciation of multiple perspectives that reflect intellectual and cultural diversity within and beyond college.

Course Description:

Portfolio Capstone is designed to help students develop strategies and skills necessary for successful beyond their college careers. Topics include professionalization, further academic goals, career paths, networking, and self-assessments. Students will learn about vast array of opportunities post-graduation while compiling and assessing their growth as academics during their college career at Sul Ross. Throughout the course, students will use critical thinking skills to make informed choices, to understand their responsibilities for academic and professional success, and to further become independent, motivated learners and professionals. Students will learn to evidence their assessments and growth via documents such as a professional resume or curriculum vitae and a course portfolio.

Program Learning Objectives:

1. Involve students in applying personal and academic success strategies and evidentiary documents that advance intellectual and professional intellectual development.
2. Engage students in critical analysis and creative thinking.

Marketable Skills

1. Students will communicate effectively in writing and speaking.
2. Students will use different research strategies to address problems and develop ideas that engage a variety of perspectives.
3. Students will recognize how social and cultural contexts shape meaning and language.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1 – Students will be able to construct documents that demonstrate unity, organization, coherence, and development, and are grammatically correct.

SLO 2 – Students will be able to analyze and interpret literary works by applying principles of critical thinking, literary criticism, or theoretical engagement.

SLO 3 – Students will be able to produce researched documents that demonstrate the ability to locate a variety of credible sources, employ them effectively through quotations and paraphrases, integrate them smoothly into the writer's own prose, and document them correctly using the style appropriate to the document.

Student Learning Objectives:

1. Implement personal academic assessment.
2. Understand available post-graduate professional and academic opportunities.

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3. Discuss the academic experience, personal aspirations, and professional goals in comprehensive expository writings.
4. Exhibit critical analyses via the presentations of professional documents.
5. Exhibit financial literacy in relation to college and beyond.
6. Discuss the importance of and English degree from SRSU in the larger community.

Attendance & Class Participation

Your attendance and participation in this course are reflected in your grade. Please be proactive in informing the professor of any expected absences in advance in order to meet class requirements. If work is turned in late, ten points will be deducted from the grade, regardless of how late the work is, unless the absence is excused as defined in the student handbook. I do not take late work of any kind beyond the Wednesday of final examinations at twelve noon. If you fail attend course meetings without prior consent of me, the instructor, I reserve the right to fail you.

Assignments

The course will consist of three major assignment areas, which are described briefly below. More detailed assignments will be made available to you (i.e. the portfolio and the introductory essay). The due dates and times are listed at the calendar view in Blackboard.

Discussion Boards: Discussion boards allow us to “talk” to one another. Think of them as our class discussion if this were a face-to-face class. In addition, the announcements section is where I will present lecture materials and answer question. Beware that your discussion boards are a graded form of writing. This necessitates mindfulness to correctness and adhering to the assignment. Discussion Boards are due each Tuesday by 11:55 p.m. Replies are due Thursdays at 11:55 p.m.

Journal Elements: The journal elements will be brief essays (500-700 words) on topics associated with the course progression and are listed in the syllabus. They will work toward your professionalization and self-analysis of academic development and professional aspirations. They will also help develop your expository writing skills. It will be turned in at the assignments link in Blackboard.

Introductory Essay: See the full assignment attached. It will be turned in twice, once as its own document at the assignments link in Blackboard and then again with the portfolio.

Portfolio: See the full assignment attached here. It will be turned in to the Blackboard Portfolio link in our course Blackboard at the end of term.

Academic Honesty

“The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of their classroom. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials.” --Excerpt from the Student Handbook

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Accommodations

If you are uncomfortable with an online and/or distance academic environment, please make an appointment with me. I am happy to “walk” you through the course.

Disabilities and Counseling Services

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student’s responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: 432-837-8203.

SRSU Library Services

The Sul Ross Library offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library’s website, library.sulross.edu. Offcampus access requires your LobID and password. Check out materials using your photo ID. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

Video Classroom Statement

In order to ensure the successful completion of this course, as well as to allow attendance to be monitored, students must enable their video cameras during class times if we choose to conduct video meetings, unless otherwise approved by the instructor. In addition, the video classroom or office hours will be treated as a formal academic environment: Students must attend prepared and appropriately attired.

Late Work

Late work is accepted with a ten-point deduction for being late unless arrangements have made prior to the due-date and documentation is provided for excused absences. These include illness for which a doctor prohibits class attendance, a death of an immediate member of your family, and a school-sanctioned event, such as debate, student government conference, athletics, etc.

Grade Breakdown:

Discussion Boards	20%
Journal Essays	20%
Portfolio Introduction Essay	20%
Final Portfolio	40%

Grading Scale:

90-100 =A

80-89 =B

70-79 =C

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60-69 =D

Below 60=F

Syllabus



[Weekly Schedule](#)

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Week 1

Journal Element 1: Write a personal essay of introduction.

Discussion Board 1: See discussion board link for prompt

Week 2

A Writer's Reference: Read “Academic Reading, Writing, and Speaking” and “Composing and Revising”

Journal Element 2: Interview a faculty member or a professional regarding their careers and their academic background, experience (especially if it involves graduate studies). Write an essay in which you discuss what you learned, profiling the subject of the interview.

Discussion Board 2: See discussion board link for prompt

Week 3

A Writer's Reference: Read “Sentence Style”

Journal Element 3: Research potential graduate programs or professions you are interested in and write a narrative regarding the school(s) or field(s). Write an essay in which you profile what you have learned.

Discussion Board 3: See discussion board link for prompt

Week 4

A Writer's Reference: Read “Word Choice”

Journal Element 4: Find examples of cv's or resumes of professionals in the field you are interested in pursuing. Provide copies here. Write an essay outlining what is successful in the

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example and what you would do differently. You may compare and contrast more than one for the discussion.

Discussion Board 4: See discussion board link for prompt

Week 5

A Writer's Reference: Read “Grammatical Sentences”

Journal Element 5: Write a resume or curriculum vitae (an educational resume) of your own.

Discussion Board 5: See discussion board link for prompt

Week 6

A Writer's Reference: Read “Multilingual Writers and ESL Challenges”

Journal Element 6: Research schools you wish to apply to or other businesses you at which you aspire to work. Write a profile of the concerns. Write a cover letter for a job or for a graduate application, either fictitious or real. Then, write a thank you for an interview for the same position or school.

Discussion Board 6: See discussion board link for prompt

Week 7

A Writer's Reference: Read “Punctuation and Mechanics”

Journal Element 7: Read the assignment for the portfolio and begin planning the compiling of the writing examples. Discuss which documents you plan to use for the portfolio and why each is the most appropriate choice. Write an assessment of the paper choices, clearly indicating the instructor of record for the work and the scope of the course for which each was written. Outline the ideas for the portfolio—this includes which works you may plan to use for each of the items in the rubric.

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Discussion Board 7: See discussion board link for prompt

Week 8

A Writer's Reference: Read “Basic Grammar”

Journal Element 8: Outline and discovery draft the introduction for the portfolio.

Discussion Board 8: See discussion board link for prompt

Week 9

A Writer's Reference: Read “Researching”

Journal Element 9: Write a plan for completing the portfolio—make a schedule for meeting with each professor in order to establish your copies. Draft the introduction to the portfolio.

Discussion Board 9: See discussion board link for prompt

Week 10

A Writer's Reference: Read “MLA”

Journal Element 10: Write an essay in which you discuss the process of revision and how and why revision and multiple drafting is important as a writing process. Discuss your own writing and revision processes as they have developed in your academic experience. Draft the table of contents for your portfolio.

Discussion Board 10: See discussion board link for prompt

Week 11

A Writer's Reference: Read “APA/CMS”

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Journal Element 11: Read through the portfolio documents and write an essay in which you discuss what you now see as worthy of revision. (i.e. If you could rewrite the document, what would you like to see accomplished?).

Discussion Board 11: See discussion board link for prompt

Week 12

A Writer's Reference: Read "Index" (i.e. get a notion of how one cross references—note also the other areas of content referencing in the text).

Journal Element 12: After compiling the portfolio, write an essay in which you discuss your feelings regarding the progression of your work, as well as the process of compiling, revising, and presenting a portfolio.

Discussion Board 12: See discussion board link for prompt

Week 13

*Introduction Due for grading

Journal Element 13: Pull the course together into a comprehensive discussion of the experience. What did you learn/accomplish in the course? What do you wish we had covered?

Discussion Board 13: See discussion board link for prompt

Week 14

*Journal Due for grading

Discussion Board 14: See discussion board link for prompt

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Week 15

*Portfolio Due for Grading



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Assessment of English Major

Rationale: The Coordinating Board of the Texas State University System requires that all departments provide some form of assessment of their majors. In the fall of 1994 the Department of Languages and Literature implemented a portfolio system of evaluation for English majors.

Portfolio's Contents: Each portfolio should contain a wide variety of assignments. We are requesting that you submit four papers written for different English professors and that you include three essay exams from specified literature classes (seven papers, total):

- ❖ **One Expository Writing Sample** (e.g. a personal essay on a nonliterary topic): This paper should have no sources and may take the form of a memoir/narrative essay or an essay in one of the rhetorical modes—comparison/contrast or argument, for example. You might choose a paper you have written in Eng. 1301, 1302, or 3312.
- ❖ **One Critical/Analytical Writing Sample** (e.g. a critical analysis of a literary work—short story, poem, or play): This paper should have no sources other than the literary work. You might choose a paper you have written for any literature class.
- ❖ **One Research Paper** (e.g. a paper using quotes and paraphrases from critical sources, with MLA citations and documentation): You might choose a paper from a literature class or from Eng. 1302 or 3312.
- ❖ **One Creative Work** (completed in an English class): This may include poetry, fiction, a media project, photo essay, or any other strongly original project.
- ❖ **One Essay Exam** (this may come from any of your English courses): This essay exam must have been written in a timed, classroom setting.
- ❖ **One Daily Project/Assignment** (this may come from any of your English courses): This may include from journal entries, discussion boards, analytic answers to prompts, creative invention exercises, etc.).

Portfolio's Form: The document should present as if you were placing the documents in a binder and creating a title page and a table of contents (however, we will be presenting it in electronically via

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Blackboard. On the title page, give your name and the date. The table of contents should identify the type of assignment, the title of the paper or exam, the course, and the instructor. Please be sure that you **include papers that have been marked and graded by the professor**; we are interested in seeing how you have been evaluated as well as seeing the work, itself. If you have printed assignment instructions for any of your papers, include those, as well.

Portfolio Self-Assessment Essay: Immediately after your Table of Contents, include an introductory essay that pulls together your academic experience and also introduces the works presented in the portfolio. This will be approximately 2 pages. You may address the following: 1) Of the six papers in your portfolio, which three do you feel were your most successful? What made them successful? 2) Overall, how well do you feel that you have mastered the goals of your academic career? Broad goals might include, for example, ability to craft well-written and well-documented papers, conduct research, and think creatively or analytically.

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Assignment:

Portfolio Introduction

Immediately after your Table of Contents, include a self-assessment essay of one to three pages in length. This essay will serve to introduce the portfolio, and, more importantly, prove to be a personal narrative of you as a graduating English major.

In the essay, you will address the following: 1) Of the six papers in your portfolio, which three do you feel were your most successful? What made them successful? And, conversely, where do you feel your writing and scholarship could have improved? 2) Overall, how well do you feel that you have mastered the goals of assessment laid out in the rubric for portfolio assessment? (Broad goals might include, for example, ability to craft well-written and well-documented papers, conduct research, and think creatively or analytically.)

In addition, you may wish to review your time at Sul Ross and your aspirations as you move forward. The challenge of the essay is to think critically and to analyze your academic experiential progression, while also exuding your own life.

The introduction should certainly be a personal narrative. As such, it might take various directions to reflect your journey and you as a writer and scholar.

The essay should be written in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, double spaced. It will be assessed for its rhetorical effectiveness (to include the correctness of writing).

The following rubric is used by the faculty after you have completed the course in order to examine your academic journey and work. Its intention is for our programmatic and pedagogical improvement. It is presented here for you to consult as you consider your work to inform you as to the types of rhetorical development in which we hope you achieve expertise.

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Student's Name _____

Rubric for Senior English Majors' Portfolio Assessment

Evaluate the specific features under each mode, using (4) for excellent, (3) for good, (2) for satisfactory, (1) for poor, and (0) if the feature is not present in the paper. Add and put the total in the blank beside the number. If there is no paper in the mode, indicate that with a (0).

____ 1. Introduction essay

- ____ a. Focus
- ____ b. Effective organization
- ____ c. Thorough development
- ____ d. Correct grammar and mechanics.

____ 2. Expository writing sample: Personal essay (non-literary topic, no sources)

- ____ a. Focus
- ____ b. Effective organization
- ____ c. Thorough development
- ____ d. Correct grammar and mechanics.

____ 3. Critical/analytical sample: Analysis of literary work (no sources)

- ____ a. Demonstration of critical thinking skills
- ____ b. Effective organization
- ____ c. Thoroughness and depth of analysis

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_____ d. Use of appropriate terminology of literary analysis

_____ 4. Research paper: Documented paper (with sources), literary or non-literary topic

- _____ a. Clearly stated thesis or focus
- _____ b. Ability to incorporate sources into the writer's own text
- _____ c. Use of a variety of sources
- _____ d. Correct MLA documentation form

_____ 5. Creative work done in an English class: poetry, fiction, multimedia project, photo essay, graphic novel, or any other strongly original project

- _____ a. Originality
- _____ b. Effective formatting of media and design
- _____ c. Audience appeal
- _____ d. Successful development of content

_____ 6. Essay exam in literature (written in-class in an English course)

- _____ a. Use of well-selected general statements/claims to formulate answer
- _____ b. Use of specific examples to support generalities
- _____ c. Use of essay conventions (thesis, topic sentences, paragraphing, etc.)
- _____ d. Thoroughness of answer

_____ 7. Example of daily course assignments from an English course (e.g. journal entries, discussion board posts, analytic question prompts, creative invention exercises, etc.)

- _____ a. Clear focus, conformity to assignment

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- b. Creative, analytic, and/or critical approach
- c. Thorough, effective, detailed development
- d. Effective rhetorical design, correctness of writing