

English 314 Unit #4: Electronic Portfolio (Worth 20% of your grade; due May 5)

Introduction

Your final task in this course is to design an electronic portfolio that showcases your best work from English 314 and your other courses. This assignment will require you to develop a basic understanding of web design, to reflect upon the full range of your academic and creative work at ISU (both inside and outside the classroom), and to present your best work on your personal website. Your eportfolio will include, at minimum, these basic elements:

- An introductory page to your portfolio that welcomes visitors and explains the purpose, organization, design, etc., of your site
- A résumé page
- At least five samples of your best work at Iowa State (at least one should come from your work in English 314)
- Reflection and commentary on these samples

You may have created an electronic portfolio for another course at Iowa State; if so, you can use the materials from that portfolio as a *starting point* for this assignment. However, this assignment has unique goals and requirements that call for a fresh approach to the content, design, and organization of your portfolio.

Completing the Assignment

Learning HTML and CSS: In class, we will create and edit files using TextWrangler. You should work in that program (or a similar plaintext editor, such as Notepad++), unless you are comfortable working in another HTML-editing program (such as Dreamweaver, KompoZer, etc.). While we will spend some time in class covering the basics of HTML and CSS, you will need to work through the tutorials on Lynda.com and seek out additional online resources on your own.

Selecting a template: Given the short time frame for this assignment, I don't expect you to hand-code a complete website from scratch. Rather, you should select a template from Open Web Design or a similar site (check the course website for links to these sites) and generate pages for your portfolio using that template. Depending on which template you choose, you may need to modify the color scheme, images, layout, etc., to meet your needs. However, since you will need to focus on the *content* of your portfolio, you should choose a template whose *design* doesn't require extensive customization.

Creating the site: Once you have selected and modified a template, you will begin creating individual pages for each of your artifacts. In order to include your best academic work on your site, you may need to make PDF versions of your essays, take screenshots of your online work, photograph and/or scan artwork, digitize video, etc. Your site should feature clear navigational elements, legible typography, informative explanations about each artifact, and visual elements that support your text. In short, the website should be something you would be proud to show to a potential employer who is interested in your technological skills.

Memo of transmittal: When your website is complete, you will write a 1-2 page memo (single spaced, using memo format) explaining and justifying the choices you made in selecting artifacts, choosing colors and typography, laying out and designing the site, etc. You should also address any problems you encountered during this project and discuss what you might do differently if you had more time, different software, greater expertise, etc.

Important Dates

- *April 15*: Submit a link to your current electronic portfolio, if you have one.
- *April 20*: Select a template you plan to use as the foundation for your website design. Submit the URL for the design to the class website.
- *April 22*: Submit a link to the rough draft of your main page.
- *April 29*: Submit a link to the complete draft of your full eportfolio. (All pages drafted.)
- *May 5, 9:45 a.m.*: Submit the URL for the final draft of your eportfolio and upload your memo of transmittal to the class website.

Evaluation Criteria

Your eportfolio grade will be determined by how effectively the site presents your best academic and creative work in an online format. Specifically, your eportfolio will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- **Completeness:** Does the eportfolio contain a welcome page, a résumé, and samples from a variety of courses and/or extracurricular activities?
- **Audience:** How well does the portfolio address the needs of your audiences (i.e., potential employers)?
- **Reflection:** Does the reflection component of the eportfolio display a mature analysis of the included artifacts? Does the reflection component help “situate” the artifacts within a larger context (i.e., your academic career)?
- **Visual Design:** How well does the eportfolio incorporate visual elements? Does the eportfolio follow the visual principles we have studied throughout the semester?
- **HTML/CSS Coding:** Does the eportfolio follow the web design principles we studied and practiced in class? (i.e., Does the site function in multiple browsers? Do the links work?)
- **Information Architecture:** Are the pages on the website organized in a logical fashion? Are the relationships between pages clear?
- **Usability:** Is the website easy to navigate? How quickly would first-time visitors be able to find the information they are looking for?
- **Memo of Transmittal:** How well does your memo explain and justify the decisions you made in completing this assignment? Is the memo structured logically? Does the memo adhere to the conventions of standard written English?