FIRST-YEAR WRITING PORTFOLIO: Class of 2019

“We learn to understand ourselves through explaining ourselves to others”
Kathleen Yancey, Reflection in the Writing Classroom

Writing Progress Requirement and First-Year Portfolios. Reflecting on one’s learning during the process of that learning is central to growth as a writer and critical thinker. In your First-Year Writing Portfolio, we ask you to offer both course-grounded writing from your first-year classes and a reflective essay which offers evidence of engagement in thinking about your college writing. Earlier iterations of our FY Portfolio have focused on assessment of the quality of your course-based first-year writing. While we remain concerned with the quality of that work, your course-grounded writing has already received evaluation—additional evaluation of course-based writing is, at the least, redundant.

What is not redundant in portfolio reading and response is evaluation of your reflection on writing and learning over the course of first-year. In what writing assessment theorist Edward White has termed “Phase 2” of portfolio scoring, emphasis in the FY Portfolio shifts this year to focus on the quality of your metacognition—your capacity to think about your own thinking, and in this case, your capacity to view your own writing as both process and product, with a critical, analytic eye.

Writing in portfolios will be evaluated on two criteria: 1) evidence of writing from two CC academic courses and 2) coherent, persuasive self-reflection on that writing, grounded in evidence offered by coursework submitted. Based on assessment of your progress as a first-year writer (coursework + self-reflection), an evaluation of complete from two faculty readers fulfills the Writing Progress requirement. Students submitting portfolios evaluated as in-progress will have the option of resubmitting their portfolio after an additional semester of coursework. Students failing to submit a portfolio in a timely manner or students electing not to resubmit an in-progress portfolio will be required to successfully complete one or more designated writing courses in order to fulfill the Writing Progress requirement.

Guidelines for First Year Portfolio submission
Portfolios will include three samples of your writing:
- A paper from your FYE class
- A paper written in a CC course other than your FYE class
- An essay reflecting on the work presented in your portfolio and your development as a writer over the course of your initial year at CC.

Your reflective essay should run from 800 to 1000 words. The two class-based essays in your portfolio, combined, should amount to no fewer than 10 pages and no more than 30 pages of double-spaced text. Page count is based on work composed in 12 point font with conventional margins and formatting. Please include relevant bibliographies, works cited pages, and assignments for class-based essays. At least one of the two course-based samples of writing and your reflective essay must be composed in English. The CC Academic Honor Code applies to all portfolio submissions.

Use your FY Portfolio folder to collect copies of your writing over the course of first-year and to back-up computer files. We will no longer be accepting hard copies of FY portfolios. In order to archive and evaluate submissions, an electronic copy of your portfolio must be submitted at https://apps.ideallogic.com/ccwp. Submission deadline is the fourth Monday of block 8, May 9, 2016.
Evaluation Criteria and Outcomes
As Edward White notes: “Phase 2 scoring does not intend or need to regrade papers that have already been read and commented upon: its concern is the portfolio as a whole. It focuses on the reflective letter and the references in that letter to work in the portfolio as evidence for the argument in the letter.”

This is not to say your reflective essay should be a strident argument in self-advocacy. But it should pose a persuasive reading of your work and progress as a writer, a self-analysis supported by coursework in your portfolio and grounded in the quality of writing and self-awareness evidenced in your reflective essay. Faculty readers will assess your progress as a writer based on:

Evidence of a sufficient amount and variety of writing in your first year: at least ten pages of writing in response to assignments in two first-year courses. One of these texts must come from your FYE blocks.

A reflective essay focusing on the coursework evidenced in your portfolio and your progress as a first-year writer at CC. The specific purposes of your reflective essay are two-fold: 1) to review and consider what you have come to understand of college writing and yourself as a college writer and 2) to articulate that understanding to a careful reader, grounding that understanding in textual evidence drawn from course work offered in your portfolio.

An effective reflective essay should demonstrate the following rhetorical skills:

- a capacity to formulate a premise or argument;
- effective use of evidence;
- functional organization of your prose and ideas;
- a capacity to write clear and effective sentences;
- a sufficient grasp of the grammar and mechanics of standard English;
- a sense of writing to a specific audience.

Portfolio readings will result in one of two outcomes: an evaluation of complete work or an assessment indicating work in-progress.

A portfolio assessed as complete meets the criteria noted above: evidence of sufficient course-grounded first-year writing and a reflective essay which serves as useful self-analysis and an evidenced-grounded appraisal of growth as an early undergraduate writer. An evaluation of complete fulfills the Writing Progress (formerly Writing Proficiency) graduation requirement.

A portfolio assessed as in-progress grants a writer an additional semester to work on his or her early undergraduate college writing and self-assessment. An in-progress evaluation may result from insufficient evidence of writing in first-year courses, or a reflective essay deserving of significant revision or more fully developed and grounded self-appraisal. Deadline for resubmission of in-progress portfolios will be the end of the semester following initial submission.

Students failing to submit a FY portfolio by the final Monday of block 8 or to resubmit an in-progress portfolio by deadline will be required to successfully complete a course or courses emphasizing writing. The Writing Progress requirement can only be completed with coursework after a student’s first-year. Please see the Writing Program and Writing Center websites for further details and listings of current Writing Intensive and Writing in a Discipline courses.

Questions? Please contact Writing Program Director Tracy Santa (tracy.santa@coloradocollege.edu).