

FIRST-STAGE WRITING PROFICIENCY PORTFOLIO

DUE DATE: March 1st before 5:00 p.m. PST

Late Portfolios will NOT be accepted under any circumstances. The submission portal will open on February 1st. You may turn in your portfolio on or before March 1st, 2025. You will be notified if you have completed your First-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement or if CWP 201 is required by spring advising week. To retrieve your assessment decision, go to the Academics page of MyOxy and look for “Writing Placement Results” in your Grades & Academic Record.

PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW: FIRST-STAGE WRITING REQUIREMENT

All students at Oxy must complete a Two-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement for graduation. You will complete the Second-Stage requirement in your academic major(s), usually in your junior year. Please consult the college catalog for departmental Second-Stage Writing requirements. More information about the Two-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement can be found here: <https://www.oxy.edu/academics/writing-program-requirements>.

Completion of the First-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement will be determined through an assessment of your writing from your First Year Seminar (FYS) courses and by completing and passing both semesters of FYS. As explained in this document, you will present a portfolio of your written work to the faculty Portfolio Assessment Committee (PAC), co-chaired by the College’s Director of the Core Program and the Writing Program Director.

PORTFOLIO PURPOSE

The portfolio serves to demonstrate your writing knowledge and abilities as developed by early spring semester of your first year; the portfolio is a “snapshot” of where you are as a writer at this particular moment. This portfolio assessment will thus inform your next steps in your writing development.

The main purposes of the portfolio are:

- To provide you with the opportunity to select and present work that demonstrates your writing proficiency.
- To provide readers with evidence of your writing development and ability to write in response to varied tasks and situations.
- To allow readers to evaluate how you have applied and reflected on writing processes, strategies, and knowledge gained through FYS.

PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT: FYS WRITING LEARNING GOALS AND OUTCOMES

Your writing portfolio will be assessed according to the FYS Writing Learning Goals and Outcomes below, which all FYS faculty include in their syllabi and consider in the design of their assignments. These goals and outcomes form the basis for the Portfolio Assessment Rubric used by the Portfolio Assessment Committee to evaluate your writing (see last page of this document).

If you receive an assessment of “Completed” on your portfolio (and pass both semesters of your FYS) you will have completed your First-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement. If you receive an assessment of “Not Yet Completed” (or “201 Required”) on your portfolio, you will be required to take one semester of CWP 201: The Art of Essay Writing in your sophomore year (which you must pass with a final course grade of “C” to complete your First-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement).

***Note: You must complete and pass both semesters of FYS and receive a “Completed” portfolio assessment to complete your First-Stage Writing Proficiency requirement or you will be required to take CWP 201.** You will receive your portfolio assessment before the end of spring semester FYS; if, after grades are reported for spring term, you do not pass both semesters of FYS, you will be required to take CWP 201 (even if you previously received a Completed portfolio assessment).

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FYS Writing Learning Goals and Outcomes

Goal 1: **Effective College-Level Writing.** Students will demonstrate proficiency in expository essay writing as they gain and refine their knowledge of the conventions of academic discourse.

Outcome 1.1: Students will develop writing that responds with insight and originality to the criteria and requirements of the assignment, demonstrating their understanding of the course materials and topics through the use of specific examples and evidence from scholarly sources.

Outcome 1.2: Students will develop writing using features appropriate for college-level expository papers including: thesis or main idea, clarity of focus, organization, and conventions of grammar, style, mechanics, and usage.

REQUIRED PORTFOLIO MATERIALS

The portfolio must include the following materials written for your fall and/or spring FYS courses. **Late portfolios or portfolios missing any of the required documents will not be read or assessed.** If you are unable to upload your portfolio by the required due date for any reason, you will be required to take CWP 201 in your sophomore year. **Plagiarism or other violation of the Student Academic Integrity Commitment in any of the writing samples will void the portfolio (and will be submitted to the college's Judicial Examiner).**

Your portfolio materials should include the following in this order (formatted as one PDF document):

1. Reflective Introduction Essay or RIE (see instructions on the next page).
2. Three essays from your FYS courses (fall or spring).

Submit clean copies of your essays: without names (yours or instructor's), comments or marks, and FYS course title/number. Before you submit your portfolio, be sure your documents meet the criteria below:

- At least one of the three essays submitted from your FYS courses must be thesis-driven, with features of conventional expository essays. The features of expository essays are:
 1. A clear and concise thesis statement that occurs in the first paragraph (the introduction) of the essay;
 2. Body paragraphs that include all of the necessary "parts": topic claim, evidential support for the thesis, and development/analysis of the ideas and evidence used;
 3. Clear and logical organization of paragraphs and ideas; clear and logical transitions between the introduction, body paragraphs, and conclusion;
 4. A conclusion that does not merely restate the thesis, but instead revisits it in light of the evidence provided.
- At least two of the three essays submitted from your FYS courses must demonstrate use and integration of evidence from academically-credible, scholarly sources (e.g., materials assigned in your FYS courses or sources discovered through academic research as part of an assignment in the courses).
- Include the Works Cited or References for all sources used at the end of each essay.
- Total word count for the final Portfolio of documents, which includes the three essays and the Reflective Introduction Essay (see below): 5,000-6,000 words. If your portfolio is more than 500 words below or above this range, please explain why in your RIE (Reflective Introduction Essay).
- Use a conventional 12pt. font and double-space your essays – you may need to reformat your essays for the portfolio to meet this requirement.
- Include the word count at the top of the first page for EACH essay including the RIE.
- Indicate if the essay is an expository essay (thesis-driven) sample at the top of the first page.

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	PORTFOLIO CONTENT CHECKLIST: Total Word count = 5,000-6,000 (word count at the top of each essay) Format essays: double-spaced + 12pt conventional font
	Reflective Introduction Essay: approx. 750 words (be sure to place this essay first)
	Three essays from FYS
	One thesis-driven expository essay from FYS (at least one of the three essays) with the thesis in bold font
	At least two of the three FYS essays demonstrate use and integration of evidence from academically-credible, scholarly sources

PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION PROCESS

On February 1st, you will be given access to an electronic submission site: “First-Stage Writing Portfolio.” The submission site will include instructions for uploading your **one PDF file** (which contains all required Portfolio essays). You will receive an email from the Core Program office or the Writing Program Director when the site is open for you to submit your file.

REFLECTIVE INTRODUCTION ESSAY (RIE): PURPOSE

The reflective essay is an opportunity for you to articulate your knowledge about writing and yourself as a writer. It is the first piece of writing that will be read by your portfolio readers, and its purpose is to give your readers insight into your development as a writer and what you have gained from your writing experiences thus far (in the FYS). The reflective essay is your opportunity to draw your readers’ attention to what you believe are the strengths and most important qualities of your writing. The RIE also provides you with an opportunity to reflect on your writing, its strengths and weaknesses, and your writing process. Please include the below content and criteria in writing your reflective essay. **Please keep in mind that this is a formal essay and the only document written exclusively for the portfolio: it may be advisable to avoid a tone or approach that is too casual or dismissive.**

REFLECTIVE INTRODUCTION ESSAY: INSTRUCTIONS + CONTENT

Be sure your Reflective Introduction Essay meets the following criteria:

- Is approximately 750 words in length (essays longer than 750 words are acceptable; include word count on the first page of the RIE).
- Discusses your knowledge gained about writing and considers how you can continue to improve your writing knowledge and practices.
- Reflects on your ability to participate effectively as a writer in upper-level writing-focused courses at the College (e.g., Second-Stage Writing Proficiency requirements in majors; 300-level and higher writing-intensive courses; senior comprehensives projects).
- Points to specific examples in your essay submissions that illustrate your claims about your writing knowledge and yourself as a writer.

You must include one paragraph in the RIE for each of the three essays with the following information (in this order):

- The title of each essay.
- A brief summary of the assignment (1-2 sentences).
- Reflection on **what you learned about writing** more broadly and your writing and **writing process** more specifically by working on this essay.

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PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

The rubric below will be used to guide the assessment of your writing by the readers of your portfolio. Each portfolio will be read at least twice. Faculty assessors will consider all of the writing submitted, and will reach a binary assessment decision of “Completed” or “201 Required.” The rubric criteria are not a checklist of the bulleted points, and not every bullet needs to be satisfied in order to achieve a proficiency assessment of “Completed.” Assessors will reach a holistic decision based on whether the writing in total meets proficiency or demonstrates the need for additional structured writing instruction through CWP 201.

Portfolio Assessment Rubric	THE DOCUMENTS IN THE PORTFOLIO DEMONSTRATE A PROFICIENT LEVEL OF ACADEMIC WRITING SUITABLE FOR UPPER-DIVISION WRITING COURSES AT OXY	THE DOCUMENTS IN THE PORTFOLIO DEMONSTRATE THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL STRUCTURED WRITING INSTRUCTION IN AN UPPER-DIVISION WRITING COURSE: CWP 201
<p>Writing Knowledge:</p> <p>Self-Reflection and Process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As demonstrated in the RIE, the writer demonstrates self-reflective knowledge about writing and their writing process, and identifies specific strengths in their writing and areas for further growth and improvement. The RIE is a critical reflection that questions assumptions about writing knowledge and process, considers alternatives, and identifies what the writer learned (about writing) through the process of completing the assignments. The RIE does more than simply describe the assignments and the writing tasks; it provides insight into the writer’s process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As demonstrated in the RIE, the writer demonstrates minimal self-reflective knowledge about writing and their writing process. The RIE may not expand on ideas with concrete examples from the Portfolio essays, and may not reflect critically on what the writer learned (about writing) through the process of completing the assignments. The RIE is mainly descriptive and not analytical as it details the selected writing assignments and the steps the writer took to complete the writing included in the portfolio.
<p>Focus:</p> <p>Responsiveness to Assignment Thesis-Argument</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essays consistently reflect a clear understanding of the assignment and insight and originality in response to the assignment task. Essays consistently demonstrate a clear focus on a main idea or argument. For thesis-driven essays: the thesis is clear, appropriately placed, and may go beyond a simplistic or routine argument in response to the assignment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essays may show little or confused understanding of the assignment and responses to the assignment topics or tasks may lack depth and insight. Essays do not consistently establish or maintain a clear focus on a main idea or argument. For thesis-driven essays: the thesis may be difficult to identify, is not appropriately placed, is descriptive more than analytic, and simplistic or routine in response to the assignment.
<p>Organization:</p> <p>Cohesion of Ideas Paragraph Structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essays consistently demonstrate effective and clear unity, organization, and cohesion of ideas across and within paragraphs. Paragraphs are consistently well-structured and well-developed, with all the necessary parts and clear transitions between paragraphs to connect the main ideas of the essay. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essays may lack unity, organization, or coherence (across and within paragraphs), or be inconsistent in these areas. Paragraphs may lack cohesion and completeness; essays may exhibit difficulties in clearly and logically connecting ideas across paragraphs and/or developing ideas in those paragraphs.
<p>Evidence and Development:</p> <p>Use of Sources Development of Ideas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essays consistently show well-integrated evidence, with specific, logical, and appropriate or germane details and examples to inform and support the argument. Essays consistently show well-developed analysis of the evidence cited, with logical, concrete, and often substantial development of ideas; interpretations, explanations, and conclusions are convincing in most cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essays frequently use insufficient evidence (e.g., not adequate, appropriate, germane, or logical) to inform and support the argument. Essays often do not develop ideas in enough depth or specificity or they offer unconvincing reasoning; details or evidence may not be analyzed or interpreted well, and/or explanations or conclusions may rely on faulty support.
<p>Writing Features & Presentation:</p> <p>Grammar Mechanics Citation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essays are mainly polished in presentation, including accurate citation use and documentation of sources. Essays do not have errors in citation, usage, mechanics, or sentence structure that significantly distract the reader or impede understanding. Essays include correctly formatted Works Cited or References. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essays may be weak in sentence structure, syntax, or mechanics, and may use style and diction not appropriate for the specified task. Essays may show a pattern or accumulation of errors in citation, usage, mechanics, or sentence structure, which too often distract the reader and impede understanding. Essays may be missing correctly formatted Works Cited or References.