

HONOR 490C

Honors Portfolio

Overview

The Honors Senior Portfolio is designed to guide you toward producing a successful senior portfolio in order to be awarded the distinction of University Honors. Producing the portfolio is an opportunity to reflect on — and articulate — your personal and academic growth as a consequence of your participation in the Honors Program. The course, taken over one semester, provides guided exercises, resources, and structure as a means to assist you in successfully completing this endeavor. The portfolio itself is to be constructed from meaningful artifacts that document your achievements and demonstrates your understanding of Honors objectives. “Artifacts” can be papers, tests, reports, projects, lab results, lab notebooks, illustrations, graphics, text from poster presentations, copies of talks given at professional meetings, music compositions, paintings, designs of equipment, reports on service learning projects, materials related to international experiences, and so on.

The Portfolio contains a generous sample of the student’s best academic work selected from many disciplines generated throughout the student’s four years of college—and organized according to the five Honors competencies—as well as an *8-12 page reflective paper* (average length, which can be modified with consent of instructor) that integrates this collection of artifacts with current personal observations of educational growth and development. This course is an A-F course.

Portfolio Requirement Guidelines

What are the Prerequisites? Admission to the Honors Program, senior standing and completion of at least 12 units of Honors Classes.

The Honors Portfolio is a record of a student’s undergraduate experience and is kept individually by all candidates for graduation from the University Honors Program, except for those students who have chosen the option of a thesis/project. The Portfolio contains a generous sample of the student’s best academic work selected from many disciplines (see examples of “artifacts,” above) generated throughout the student’s four or more years of college.

What is the purpose of the Portfolio?

The Portfolio requirement is intended to help students focus on the centrality of writing and related Honors competencies, essential to a meaningful Honors education. In particular, the Portfolio enables the student to assess individual progress in thinking, valuing, perceiving, communicating and acting during the undergraduate sojourn. This process of reflective assessment, in addition to providing a sense of personal achievement, is helpful in mapping one's future.

What should be included in the Portfolio?

Each Portfolio will be unique, of course, but should include 2-3 *artifacts* of a student's work for each of the five Honors competencies, and should represent a variety of semesters, courses and disciplines, beginning with one's first semester in college. A 1-2 page essay should introduce each of the five sections (i.e., each competency represents one section of the portfolio), and a separate section of the portfolio shall consist of a 8-10 *page reflective paper* that integrates this collection of artifacts with current personal observations of educational growth and development. (Again, the artifacts may include written, visual, and taped entries, and a wide range of artifacts is ideal.)

Thus, a Portfolio might include an in-class essay written as a requirement in one's first Honors class, a problem assignment from a chemistry course, a math exam, a research paper written for Biology, an exam essay from an art seminar, excerpts from a journal kept for a religion class, sections of a journal/daybook written during a study abroad experience, original translations of several poems in the student's foreign language, and so forth. Any written work submitted to department, University, or national competitions would certainly be worthy of including, whether or not the writing received recognition, as would material published in University journals or college periodicals. *On the other hand, however, an assignment that fared "poorly" might be essential to the Portfolio as well, because students can then reflect on what was learned from such experiences.* In all cases, and whenever possible, it is preferable to include the original work itself, with instructor notations, grading, etc.; the original document can be scanned, and a printout of the scan included, in cases where students wish to retain their original work.

When submitted for examination, the portfolio should be constructed as follows: Use a black, 1.5" 3-hole binder, with clear plastic pocket for cover insert, and Avery 10-section dividers (#60023). The Avery "Contents" page should be prepared using a 16-18 point, Times New Roman font, bolded. For clarity, students should consult portfolios previously submitted, to see firsthand the structure of the final product.

The final product consists of 10 Sections, as follows:

- 1) Honors Competencies (UHP document, with no additional work required)
- 2) A one-page outline or summary, semester by semester, of the major highlights of the student's undergraduate experience, followed by an unofficial transcript
- 3) The reflective paper, which should be completed as the "final piece" of the portfolio, but which consists of the first substantive section of your presentation. Note that its very title suggests that this essay will contain highly subjective and personal material. In this overview and critical analysis of four years of individual experiences as an Honors student at SDSU, the challenge is to integrate a collection of representative work with a carefully considered evaluation of academic and personal growth. The essay is best done after assembling all of the artifacts for your "competency" sections, as well as the 1-2 page essays that introduce those sections.
- 4) A one-two page "Favorite Text" essay, that is, an essay on a particular work (or works) that had the greatest influence on you during your college sojourn.
- 5) A thoughtful and reflective evaluation of your study abroad/international experience, and integration of that experience with your overall college experience.
- 6) THINK: Essay & artifacts
- 7) VALUE: Essay & artifacts
- 8) PERCEIVE & DISCOVER: Essay & artifacts
- 9) COMMUNICATE: Essay & artifacts
- 10) ACT: Essay & artifacts

As you undertake your Portfolio, please bear in mind that this project is a retrospective effort to *make meaning* of your college experience. For that reason, careful reflection on all of your experiences is essential.