

RHET 4305/5305 Document Design

Final Project: Design Portfolio

Why create a portfolio at the end of this course?

Up to this point, all of your assignments have been graded on a credit/no-credit basis. That means that as long as you've done the work and turned it in on time, you have received full credit for all of your assignments.

I set up the grading this way because in a 5-week course, we are working under enormous time pressure—and for many of you, this is the first design course you've ever taken. It would be completely unfair to expect you to produce professional-quality work while you are still just experimenting and trying to digest new concepts. This week, however, you have no new readings to complete and no discussion assignments. Your only assignment is to do the design work, revision work, and reflective writing needed to complete your final design portfolio.

The documents you create for this portfolio will be graded on the quality of your designs. You will also be graded on your design experimentation process and your ability to explain your design strategies.

This portfolio experience is valuable for several reasons:

1. **You can apply skills you learned in recent weeks** to earlier projects. Even over this short span of time, it's amazing to see how your design skills have improved! You also will have more time to spend on your designs, and extra time almost always results in higher quality.
2. **Revision is a vital part of the design process.** If you never allow yourself to change parts of your design and try different elements (colors, typefaces, images, layouts) just for the sake of trying them, you shortchange your long-term effectiveness. You are required to have multiple versions of each project for your portfolio because generating those different versions makes you a stronger, more creative designer.
3. **Being able to explain your designs in rational terms** (not just because "I like that font" or "those colors are pretty") is one of the most important skills any writer or designer can develop. The memos you will write for this project are great practice for helping a future client or supervisor to understand the value of your work.
4. **Portfolios give you a competitive edge** over other job candidates. Anyone can put a bulleted list of skills on their resume—but that doesn't prove anything about that person's ability. If you have a strong portfolio (particularly an online portfolio), employers don't have to take your word for it: they can see your skills for themselves.

Portfolio Requirements

You must submit 4 design projects in your final portfolio. **At least 1 document must be a multi-page document** with a minimum of 4 pages/panels (newsletter, brochure, formal report or manuscript, website mockup) or a PowerPoint presentation of at least 12 screens.

If you wish, you may choose 4 of your weekend design projects to revise and submit for your portfolio. Or, if you prefer, you may substitute documents that you want to design for your current workplace (or classroom, if you are a teacher). You may also design documents for other university classes you are taking or for any local organizations to which you belong. Any combination of 4 documents is acceptable as long as one of them meets the multi-page requirement.

For each project, you must submit the following:

1 final draft of the project	50 points
2 alternate or early drafts of the project	25 points
1 design memo	50 points

There are four projects, and as you can see above, each is worth 125 total points. 500 total points are possible for the portfolio—and that's almost half your grade for the course!

Your completed portfolio is due by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, July 2, which is the last day of class. Please see the submission instructions later in this handout for details on how to share your work with me.

Grading Criteria

Final draft criteria:

- Does this document effectively represent the person or organization that produced it?
- Does this document meet the needs of the people who are reading it?
- Is the design effective for the circumstances under which the readers will see it?
- Does the document use legible typefaces?
- Are the typefaces appropriate for the tone and circumstances?
- Does the document appear to be well-organized? Does it use contrast, repetition, alignment, and proximity effectively?
- Is the use of color effective and appropriate?
- Are the images effective and appropriate? Is there evidence that the designer has used images in an ethical way?

Alternate or early draft criteria:

I am requiring you to show me at least two other versions of your design that are different from your final version. The two other versions might be early versions of the final design, or they might be versions that you created later just for experimental purposes. Either way, you must have some alternate versions to show that you considered different ways to approach each project. As long as you have at least two alternate versions, you will receive full credit for this part of the project.

Design memo criteria:

See the design memo handout posted in our Blackboard shell.

Optional design conferences in person, by phone, or via Google Hangouts

If you would like to show me one or more of your design projects and/or design memos for the portfolio and get some feedback from me before you turn in the final version, you may do so by signing up for an appointment during this week. These conferences are purely optional; you are welcome to sign up for one, but not required.

I will hold conferences between 1 p.m. and 10 p.m. between Tuesday and Sunday this week. If you would like to make an appointment and none of these times work for you, please email me at kmkuralt@ualr.edu with a few times that you are available, and I will do my best to work around your schedule.

To set up a conference appointment, please follow these steps:

1. **At least 24 hours before your desired appointment time** (and sooner would be welcome), visit my Google appointment calendar. The gray boxes show you open appointment times. Click on any one of them to reserve your time. **Be sure to type your name into one of the appointment fields on the form** — otherwise I won't know who has requested the meeting! Please also indicate whether you want to meet in person on campus, by phone, or by video chat.

I will send you a reply email to confirm your conference date, time, and contact method. If you have chosen a video conference using Google Hangouts, I will send you a calendar invitation that will include a Hangout link for you to click at our scheduled time.

2. **At least 3 hours before your scheduled conference time**, send me any of the work that you would like to discuss with me when we meet. You may email parts of your projects to me, you may share them via Google Drive, or you may post them to a

personal website and send me a link. I need some time to see and think about your work before we meet to discuss it.

How to submit your final portfolio

When you are ready to turn in your final portfolio projects, **you may use any of the following methods:**

- 1. Email them to me at kmkuralt@ualr.edu.** Please send a separate email for each project (4 total emails). Attach your final design first, then the design memo, and then the two alternate drafts.
- 2. Share them with me as folders on Google Drive.** For those of you who know how to use Google Drive (which is free to all UALR students and accessible through your UALR email account), you are welcome to create folders for your projects and then share them with me. If you are interested in this option but not sure how to use Google Drive, be sure to discuss this with me during your design conference (if you sign up for one).
- 3. Post them online and send me the link.** If you know how to create a webpage using Google sites, Weebly.com, Wordpress, Wix, or any other form of web creation software, I invite you to build an online portfolio and then share the link with me. (In our Blackboard shell, I have included an example of an online portfolio that a former student created using Wix.) This method is more challenging and time-consuming—so if you are not comfortable experimenting with web software, you might be better off using email or Google Drive. But if you are already comfortable and/or learn quickly, building an online portfolio is a worthwhile experience that can pay major job dividends for you later.

Please remember: All final portfolios are due by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, July 2.