

FILA 450 2020-2021

Defining the Task of Creating a Portfolio:

Many people at BC have come to think of FILA 450 as largely a matter of writing a very long paper. We invite you to reconsider your preconceptions. A *portfolio* is a collection of artifacts that present some aspect of experience (a writing portfolio, an artist's portfolio, etc.). Think of your portfolio as a collection of things that present your growth through your college career, that demonstrate your achievements. The resume and cover letter, additionally, present you as a person ready to make a transition into the world after college. Your essay should reflect on these elements of your portfolio as well as tell the reader more about your development as a person throughout your college career. **Developing this skill (i.e. integrating your experiences into an argument for your qualifications) is essential for getting a job and advancing in a career.**

Due Dates:

December Grads: November 9, 2020, 8:00 am.

May Grads: January 25, 2021 at 8:00 a.m.

Elements of the Portfolio:

Reflective Essay

- Integration, Experiential Learning and Personalized Educational Program
- Engage Diverse Perspectives
- Public Discourse: Citizenship and Community Responsibility
- Global Citizenship & Intercultural Competencies
- Ethical Reasoning

Portfolio Artifacts (7-9)

- Six (6) Essay Supporting Items: one for each section but 2 for PEP.
- Oral Communication: presentation video or PowerPoint/other software
- Information Technology: minimum webpage presentation of portfolio
- Data analysis: Excel, SPSS, Mathematica, Google Sheets, etc.

Resume & Cover Letter

The Reflective Essay:

The essay covers five (5) distinct dimensions or areas of your BC education. Students are encouraged to organize their essays into five sections with these subheadings as it ensures that you cover each area sufficiently. Please clearly highlight each section with a subtitle heading. If you do not organize your essay into these five sections, make sure you refer to each dimension by name to make it clear where you are addressing each one; if your grader is unable to distinguish clearly between sections then there may be a resulting loss of points.

*Your essay should have an introduction and a conclusion.

*All artifacts should be clearly labeled within the essay and on the portfolio webpage and they should be hyperlinked from the essay to the accompanying artifact.

*If you are a transfer or a non-traditional student, you may discuss your educational experience from before Bridgewater College.

Integration, Experiential Learning and Personalized Educational Program

Explain your intellectual development in terms of how you *integrated* your major, general education courses, minors and concentrations (if you have them) and co-curricular involvement (any non-course Bridgewater program like clubs, convocations, etc.) to create a personalized educational program that will achieve your professional goals. This may be the longest section of your essay. (Minimum of one artifact that is specifically discussed and included in the portfolio)

This section should also reflect on what you learned in an experiential learning, service learning, internship or practicum course and how that connected with your coursework. You might also discuss your volunteer work. These reflections might be integrated with one of the other sections.

A strong section will do more than just list experiences, but instead will link them together and present them as a parts of a synthesized whole. (Minimum of one artifact that is specifically discussed and included in the portfolio)

Engage Diverse Perspectives

Another aspect of intellectual growth is integrating the diverse perspectives you have encountered at BC, especially in your fine arts, literature, philosophy, religion or history courses. The emphasis here should be on integrating experiences that were important to you but somewhat peripheral to your intended career. (Minimum of one artifact that is specifically discussed and included in the portfolio)

Public Discourse: Citizenship & Community Responsibility

We encourage you to engage with one or more of the annual Big Questions from your time at Bridgewater, if relevant, and indicate how you have taken part in public discourse, as a citizen of an academic community as well as the larger communities that you live in. This might mean explaining what you learned about specific problems facing our communities, various perspectives on those issues, exploring the ethical basis for your own positions, using public reasoning to understand the impact of your choices on local or national communities, and drawing conclusions about what you can do as a citizen to exercise community responsibility. Your courses in history, social science, natural science, ethics or philosophy/religion might be especially important in this section. Students also might discuss what they learned in the curriculum, co-curriculum or activities course about their responsibility to promote healthy living and sportsmanship in their own lives and in their communities. (Minimum of one artifact that is specifically discussed and included in the portfolio).

Global Citizenship & Intercultural Competencies

This section should address what you learned about issues that affect people outside the United States. It might include what you learned about problems facing global communities, the political and economic institutions that affect our ability to address these issues, the cultural knowledge that helped you understand the diverse interests and perspectives involved and steps you can take address these issues as a global citizen. Your language, travel and global dynamics classes might be especially important here. (Minimum of one artifact that is specifically discussed and included in the portfolio)

Ethical Reasoning

Your essay should reflect on what you learned about ethical reasoning: the systematic thinking about ethical issues, virtues, and principles. Engaged, responsible citizens of any community are able to provide publicly accessible reasons for their intentions and actions and to understand the logical and ethical consequences of those actions. Draw from your coursework as you reflect on your processes for ethical reasoning. (Minimum of one artifact that is specifically discussed and included in the portfolio)

Tips for Creating an Integrated Portfolio

As you create your FILA 450 portfolio, keep in mind the integration of the various parts into a unified whole. Your webpage portfolio should employ a format, language, and artifacts that enhance meaning, making clear the interdependence of language and meaning, thought, and expression.

Suggestions for this section:

- Clearly label the parts of your essay with headers or clear transition phrases
- Develop a coherent, unified narrative in your essay that reads as a complete whole
- Create a user-friendly and easily navigable webpage portfolio
- Clearly label and organize artifacts
- Hyperlink to the artifacts from within the essay

What is Reflection?

Academic Citizenship/ Critical Reflection:

Student engagement with each of the above five themes will be assessed in terms of the quality and depth of student reflections. You may have encountered two different models of reflection during your time at BC that are compatible. Academic Citizenship includes active listening, perspective taking, public reasoning and self-authorship. Critical Reflection includes explanation, exploration, analysis and synthesis. You can use either model, but quality reflection will include all four steps or components throughout the essay.

- **Active Listening:** Explain the texts, experiences or course content that were important to your learning. This requires that you adopt a posture of actively trying to understand and show respect for the ideas or people you encountered.

- **Perspective taking:** Perspective-taking involves articulating multiple viewpoints, gathering evidence, and clarifying perspectives. Such exploration doesn't require that you give up your own preconceptions, but it does require visiting the opinions of others and imagining what the world looks like from the perspective of their interests, values, and situation.
- **Public Reasoning:** Public reasoning involves using public dialogue to gather and interrogate evidence, identify unstated assumptions, look for illogical or fallacious reasoning, and draw logical inferences. We call this public reasoning, because it involves standards of logic and the scientific method that we can use to adjudicate disputes. While private reasoning is based on just pursuing our own private or subjective interests and beliefs, public reasoning deploys public or objective criteria. Such criteria may not always produce one clear answer, but it should at least accurately clarify uncertainty, the ambiguity of evidence, or difficult tradeoffs.
- **Self-Authorship:** Self-authorship synthesizes the implications of your reflections. This means doing more than just restating the key points you have already made. Instead, you should engage in a new exploration of the consequences of that analysis. Synthesis involves a new examination (a re-examination) of the topic. Ideally, this re-examination from a new (informed and analyzed) perspective casts new light on your former, current, and future knowledge, actions or goals. Since you make or "write" this synthesis on your own terms, which involves projecting the sort of self you are or want to be, we call it self-authorship.

Portfolio Artifacts:

Your portfolio should include a minimum of 7-9 artifacts documenting the knowledge and skills you developed at Bridgewater College. If your Essay-Supporting Items include evidence of oral presentation and data analysis skills, then you may have only seven (7) artifacts (six Essay-Supporting Items plus the webpage electronic portfolio). If your Essay-Supporting Items do not contain evidence of oral presentation skills or data analysis, then you would have to include additional artifacts that demonstrate those skills. If an artifact is used as both an Essay-Supporting Item and a data analysis or presentation artifact, it should be stored twice in the portfolio.

*If you were a transfer student to Bridgewater College, you may use artifacts from previous institutions, but you are encouraged to make the majority of your artifacts those produced while at BC.

Essay-Supporting Items

Your portfolio must specifically discuss at least one artifact in each of the required sections or themes of the essay and a second additional artifact in the "Integration, Experiential Learning, and Personalized Education Program" section. The **six (6)** artifacts should be assignments, papers, or projects done at BC. Additional artifacts, such as photos or programs or certificates, may be included if you wish, but they do not count towards the six required supporting items. The emphasis is on assembling "texts" (broadly defined) and reflecting on what they show about your growth. These artifacts must be specifically discussed and cited in the reflective essay and included in the electronic portfolio. When you discuss an artifact in the essay, you should "cite" it with a parenthetical citation that refers to the artifact type and title. For example, (Supporting item #4: "Sociology 101 Term Paper"). If an artifact covers multiple

artifact categories that should be indicated in the title (e.g. Supporting Item #3 and Data Analysis: “Hispanic Voting Patterns in the 2012 U.S. Presidential Election”)

Oral Presentation

You should include **at least one** artifact that demonstrates your oral presentation skills. Ideally, this would be a video of a presentation. However, if you do not have a video a PowerPoint presentation (or other presentation software like Prezi) is acceptable.

Information Technology

At a minimum, your portfolio should be submitted in the form of a well-designed **webpage**. You may also include an artifact that demonstrates knowledge of any other type of information technology that you learned at BC that is not covered by the other artifact categories (oral presentation, data analysis)

Data Analysis

At a minimum, your portfolio should include **one** artifact that demonstrates your ability to analyze and/or present data with some sort of data analysis software (Excel, Mathematica, QuickBooks, Google Sheets, etc). This artifact might be the data analysis file itself (e.g. Excel workbook) or a chart, figure or graph produced with data analysis software and included in a paper or presentation.

What if I don't have an artifact?

If you are missing artifacts, you may simply create a document that explains a paper or assignment that you no longer possess, or write a paragraph explaining how you have mastered a competency.

Resume and Cover Letter:

Design a quality resume and write a cover letter that introduces you and your unique interests and qualifications to a future employer or graduate admissions counselor. You may use a graduate school Sample CLA+: http://cae.org/images/uploads/pdf/CLA_Practice_Assessment.pdf personal statement as your cover letter.

Tips for a Successful Portfolio:

- How long should the FILA 450 essay be? Long enough to fully reflect on all of the growth experiences you have chosen. Essays of 12 pages have earned high scores; essays of 25 pages have earned high scores. Essays of 12 pages have earned low scores; essays of 25 pages have earned low scores. The quality of your analysis and synthesis is far more important than the length.
- Make sure that you discuss each of the five dimensions described above. Use the terminology of the dimensions (integration, experiential learning, and personal education program; engage diverse perspectives; public discourse: citizenship and community responsibility; global citizenship and intercultural competency; ethical reasoning) to make it clear to your reader what aspect of your development you are writing about. The easiest and clearest way to do this is to separate your essay into subheadings around these five dimensions, but this is not required. If you choose not to use subheadings, make sure to use clear transition phrases between sections.

- Throughout your essay, you should **integrate** experiences. That means drawing connections between different ideas, experiences or courses. For instance, your personalized educational program should not just be a list of the classes you took but reflections on how you chose specific classes and projects within those classes to develop the skills and knowledge needed for a specific career goal. Similarly, do not jump from one unrelated topic to the next. Instead, figure out the connection between, say, the writing you did in ENG110 and the writing you did for a course in your major.
- The most obvious way to approach the essay is to emphasize different parts of your BC experience in different sections.
 - Integration, Experiential Learning, and Personal Educational Program
 - Courses in your major
 - Goals for your career
 - Experiential Learning or courses with a significant off-campus component.
 - Courses with an “X” designation, Interterm/May Term trips or study abroad
 - Engage Diverse Perspectives;
 - Fine arts, literature, history, philosophy, religion courses.
 - Global Citizenship & Intercultural competency;
 - Global Dynamics classes
 - Language courses
 - Public Discourse: Citizenship & Community Responsibility;
 - Courses that dealt with public policies, social, economic or political problems (social science, science, etc.)
 - Reflect on ethical issues.
 - Goals for future civic engagement in politics, civic organizations, interest groups or professional organizations.
 - Ethical Reasoning;
 - Courses with an “E” designation
 - Courses in Philosophy or Religion
- Whenever you write about something, follow the steps of reflection or academic citizenship. That is, don’t be vague: “My wellness class turned out to be harder and more important for my physical development than I thought it would be.” Instead, go in-depth:
 - *The most important thing I learned in my wellness class was the relationship between physical activity and cardio-vascular health. My final project for the class (Supporting item #1: Cardio-Vascular Wellness and Physical Activity”) cited studies that estimate as many as 250,000 US deaths are attributable to lack of exercise. (Active Listening).*
 - *I also reviewed various theories or approaches to promoting cardio-vascular health through exercise. Some experts favor regular periods of vigorous exercise in which the heart rates is elevated above 140beats/ min for at least 30 minutes. Others argue that such vigorous exercise deters many people from starting a basic exercise program. They argue that simply regular walking of around 10,000 steps a day provides similar benefits as more active sports, and regular walking is associated with greater compliance and lower incidence of injuries. I found the second approach to be especially interesting since it challenged my assumption that the only way to get health benefits was jogging at least a mile a day. (Perspective Taking).*
 - *In my paper, I evaluated these approaches in two ways. First, I reviewed studies in support of both theories. I found that there was solid experimental evidence for both, but there a many*

fewer studies of the “walking” theory. Clearly more research is needed. Second, I tried to follow each approach to physical activity for 2 weeks. I found that the “walking” approach was much easier for me to follow, and I was able to log twice as many minutes of elevated heartrate in the “walking” period compared with the “vigorous exercise” period (Supporting Item #3 and Data Analysis Artifact: “Cardio-Vascular Wellness and Physical Activity,” p. 7). (Public Reasoning).

- *What I took away from this experience, is that I need to make a habit of getting outside and walking. To that effect, I bought and used a step tracker, and I started joining hikes organized by the Outdoors Program. I also became interested in wellness programs that can be encouraged and incentivized by human resources departments in businesses. I plan to make this a specialty as I move into a human resources management MA program next year. (Self-Authorship).*
- Make explicit references to and cite your artifacts as you discuss your growth. Your essay should clearly point out to the reader why you chose each artifact included. Your artifacts should be easy to locate.
- If some of your personal experiences seem more significant to your growth than college-related experiences, it is fine to discuss them, but be sure to relate those experiences to your education. An essay that focuses entirely on the personal or high school and ignores curricular and co-curricular BC experiences will not receive a high score. If your experience was negative, be sure to show how you learned and matured from having that experience (but if you are still processing that experience, it is okay to say so). This essay is not supposed to be a five-star review of Bridgewater College and your educational experience; its purpose is to help you create a synthesized narrative of your educational experience to help you as you share your skills and professional goals with potential graduate programs and employers.
- As you discuss life goals within your essay, be sure to indicate that these are goals or plans for your future development as a person and connect them to your current development. Setting such goals is an important form of synthesis or self-authorship.
- Do not copy and paste large portions of your final FILA 150/350 reflections. The FILA 450 essay should be about your growth over the course of your college education, not about your first semester at Bridgewater. If you want to include limited quotation from FILA 150 reflections to document how much you have changed, that's fine. However, if you include long portions of an earlier essay, those portions will not be considered for your score.