The Department of World Languages and Cultures Georgia State University Master's Portfolio – index and guidelines

---

Nota bene: These guidelines may be subject to change. Students should pay attention to any notices sent by the Director of Graduate Studies regarding the preparation, presentation and review of the portfolio.

Portfolio Index

Students may create a print version of their portfolio with all materials included in a 3-ring binder. However, students are strongly encouraged to create an online or pdf portfolio which allows for including multi-media links, websites, and other non-print materials. An online or pdf portfolio also improves accessibility.

I.   **Student C.V. or résumé**
        Include a C.V. or a résumé depending on plans after graduation

II.   **Personal statement**
        A personal statement that may serve academic and alt-academic professional purposes as needed

III.   **Self-assessment survey and skills inventory**
        A reflection on courses taken, completed papers and projects to identify key areas of interest. Also, students reflect on the "transferable skills" they have developed in the program through various activities.

IV.   **Sample works**
        Include three sample works (i.e., papers, projects) completed during their program that exemplify interests and skills

V.   **Culminating project**
        Include a culminating project option A ("non-thesis") or option B ("thesis")

VI.   **Reflection on core themes**
        Prepare a materials and topics list that you believe reflect on four core themes in the humanities. Also, include a written reflection in the target language (Spanish, French) on how the core themes are manifested in the selected materials and topics.

VII.   **Oral presentation and exit interview**
        Students meet with their Review Committee to present their culminating project and discuss the portfolio

Appendix A. common transferable skills
Appendix B. suggested approaches to core themes
Appendix C. thesis and non-thesis portfolio signature form
Appendix D. review form for Faculty
Appendix E. policy on resubmission
Appendix F. formation of Review committee

I. C.V. or résumé

Please include a C.V. or résumé. Numerous resources exist online to help prepare either document. Students may also seek assistance from the Career Services center at GSU. Below is a model. The C.V. or résumé may be in the language or languages that is or are most beneficial professionally to the student based on his/her professional goals.

<div align="center">

Name
Address
Contact information

</div>

Education:

Employment history (or, Work Experience):

Awards:

Languages:
Students can indicate here the languages they know and the degree of their fluency. If students have completed any examinations (i.e., OPI), they can indicate their official level of competency.

Competencies:
Students can indicate here any special skills they have developed, such as computer languages, programs and other abilities.

Interests:
A list of a few personal, professional interests

II. Personal statement

Include a personal statement that can be used for professional purposes after finishing the M.A. degree. The statement should be approximately 1.5 to 3 pages in length. Numerous print and online resources exist to help guide the preparation of a personal statement. Students are encouraged to follow the guidelines with which they are most comfortable and to be authentic in how they present themselves. A few suggestions are included below. Students are advised to seek assistance from the Career Services office at GSU if needed. This statement can take the shape of a personal teaching philosophy statement if the student intends to continue in secondary or post-secondary education.

Writing the Personal Statement: Top 10 Rules
1. *Strive for depth rather than breadth. Narrow focus to one or two key themes, ideas or experiences*
2. *Try to tell the reader something that no other applicant will be able to say*
3. *Provide the reader with insight into what drives you*
4. *Be yourself, not the 'ideal' applicant*
5. *Get creative and imaginative in the opening remarks, but make sure it's something that no one else could write*
6. *Address the organization's unique features that interest you*
7. *Focus on the affirmative in the personal statement; consider an addendum to explain deficiencies or blemishes*
8. *Evaluate experiences, rather than describe them*
9. *Proofread carefully for grammar, syntax, punctuation, word usage, and style 10. Use readable fonts, typeface, and conventional spacing and margins*

Writing the Personal Statement: Top 10 Pitfalls
1. *Do not submit an expository resume; avoid repeating information found elsewhere on the application*
2. *Do not complain or whine about the "system" or circumstances in your life*
3. *Do not preach to your reader. You can express opinions, but do not come across as fanatical or extreme*
4. *Do not talk about money as a motivator*
5. *Do not discuss your minority status or disadvantaged background unless you have a compelling and unique story that relates to it*
6. *Do not remind the organization or school of its rankings or tell them how good they are*
7. *Do not use boring clichéd intros or conclusions* ○   *"Allow me to introduce myself. My name is..."* ○ *"This question asks me to discuss..."*
   - ○   *"I would like to thank the committee for considering my application."*
   - ○   *"It is my sincere hope that you will grant me the opportunity to attend your fine school / join your team at organization X."*
   - ○   *"In sum, there are three reasons why you should admit / hire me..."*
8. *Do not use unconventional and gimmicky formats and packages*

9. *Do not submit supplemental materials unless they are requested 10. Do not get the name of the school or organization wrong*

11. *Do not incorporate technical language or very uncommon words*

Stewart, Mark Alan. *Perfect Personal Statements*. New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan, 1996.

III. Self-assessment survey and skills inventory

Part A. self-assessment statement and rubric

In this section, students complete a self-assessment rubric (see below) and draft a self-assessment statement *in the target language* of approximately 3 to 4 pages in length (double-spaced, size 12 font, etc.). Please reflect on your overall development, taking into consideration the experiences you have had, courses taken and your sample works (included in section IV). Whereas a personal statement is for an external audience, a self-assessment statement is intended to be an expression of the individual and her or his intellectual interests. Ideally, a self-assessment statement leads to clarity regarding personal, professional and intellectual interests. For part A of section III, students may simply copy and paste the rubric and chart included in the guidelines. Although the rubric is in English to be accessible to the French and Spanish sections, the self-assessment statement should be in the *target language* of the student's degree program. The key issues to address in the statement are suggested in the guidelines below.

1. *Self-assessment rubric*
   Please complete the self-assessment rubric below. After each category, indicate your assessment using the scale below:

   - 4 = I feel like my work shows distinction in this category.
   - 3 = I feel like my work shows competence in this category.
   - 2 = I feel like my work shows that I still have some work to do to be competent in this category.
   - 1 = No basis to make a decision

#	Category	Further explanation	Score
1	Ability to summarize scholarly work in an abstract	If you have had to write a summary, how do you feel about your ability to summarize your argument concisely?	
2	Ability to synthesize ideas within a course	Putting together a big picture based on particular evidence. For example, how did a seminar paper you wrote for a Literature, Civilization or Culture class or a project in an Applied Linguistics class help you synthesize ideas from that course?	
3	Ability to synthesize ideas from one course to another course	Reviewing the core themes in section VI, how do you see the materials and topics speaking to each other in terms of concepts? To what degree do you feel you identify points of intersection?	
4	Ability to write a complex thesis	Do you see your papers and projects as presenting your independent insights, or do you feel that they are based more on published research or class discussion?	

5	Depth of analysis (of literature, film, linguistics, etc.)	For this category, concentrate on the amount of detail in the analyses you offer (selection of evidence chosen, depth of discussion of the evidence, etc.)	
6	Quality and sophistication of argument	For this category, consider the overall impact of your thesis in a paper or central goal in a project, how you develop your discussion of the evidence, etc. For example, are ideas mechanically linked or do they organically arise from each other? To what extent does the argument address or anticipate opposing points of view?	
7	Ability to conduct significant research	What do your sample works (and culminating project) show about the development of your research process? Did you use a wide variety of high-quality sources?	
8	Ability to incorporate significant research	How did you use the research you found to establish a critical conversation? Did you employ a clear research frame in your papers, projects?	
9	Ability to incorporate different theoretical approaches	How does your work participate in a theoretical conversation? Are there multiple theoretical approaches presented, or do you find that you focus on one primary approach?	
10	Overall professional growth over time	Do you feel like you are ready for conferences, journal submissions, other professional presentations of your work? Or, do you feel like you still have some work to do in this area?	

2. *Self-assessment statement*

Please reflect on yourself and your overall performance in the courses you have taken, the sample works you have submitted and the range of experiences and opportunities you have had during your Master's program. Then, respond *in the target language* to the four questions below in a statement that is approximately 1.5 to 3 pages in length. Please note that the focus should be on *yourself*.

a). Reflect on any leadership roles you have taken on during the program. How have you benefitted from these experiences?

b). Reflect on problem-solving skills you have developed during your time in the program. How have your problem-solving skills developed or improved? (Consider a range of activities, including opportunities as a GRA, courses taken, teaching experiences, community-based activities, and so forth).

c). Identify two or three courses you completed that you believe have been particularly influential. How so? Why?

d). Please reflect on any professional experiences during your program, including internships, community-based activities, conferences at which you have presented or attended, oral presentations, etc.

Part B. skills inventory

Gaining knowledge and critical thinking skills are of primary importance during a Master's program. Developing the skills to effectively communicate your knowledge to a wide audience is also important. Please reflect on the workshops you have attended, the roles you have taken on as a GRA, projects you have assisted with as part of your Research Hours (8895) and other skills you have developed during your studies in the Master's program. In addition to any computer or language skills, what "transferrable" skills have you developed? Then, prepare an annotated list of five to seven transferrable skills. (See the sample below). You may refer to your sample works (in the next section).

See **Appendix A** of a list of common transferrable skills gained in a typical graduate education. Students are also encouraged to consult sample skills lists available online for basic computing programs such as Office, Adobe among others.

Example of an annotated list of skills:

- *Adobe Creative Cloud suite* (Photoshop, InDesign, etc.)
  I   have learned how to create layers and adjust pixel rates for jpegs as well as how to create fillable pdf forms. This skill is very useful for creating learning modules, presentations, etc., etc., etc. Please see my sample work "XYZ" included in section IV.
- *Final Cut Pro and Aftereffects*
  I   have achieved an intermediate level mastery of Final Cut Pro to edit digital video. I have also achieved an intermediate level mastery of Aftereffects for digital video postproduction. These skills are particularly beneficial for creating presentations and online teaching modules to be posted online. Please see my sample work "QRT" in Section IV.
- *Microsoft Office* (Excel, Word, Power Point)
  I   have attended workshops offered by CETL to create voiceover narrated Power Point lessons to post online as resources for my students. Please click "here" to view sample work "JKL" listed in Section IV.
- Wordpress
  I   have attended workshops offered by CETL as well as sought additional training to learn to use Wordpress to create a website for share research and collaborations. Please click "here" to view my website "WWW" hosted on gsu.sites.edu / GoDaddy and listed in Section IV.

IV. Sample works

Please include in this section three exemplary samples of work you have completed during the Master's program. The selected works may include seminar papers, creative projects, teaching units, white papers, websites, learning modules, photo or video essay, reports or other projects you believe illustrate your knowledge and abilities. In case of concerns regarding the overall nature or quality of the work included in this section, students are encouraged to consult with the faculty member with whom the work was originally completed or the Director of Graduate Studies. Students are encouraged to include a *variety of projects or papers* that they have completed during their program. The nature of the sample works included in this section will depend on a student's interests, experiences, courses taken, among other factors.

Before each sample work, students should include a brief statement (of 3 to 4 lines) in which s/he explains why the work is included in the portfolio and why the student believes the sample work to be exemplary.

Additional points to consider when selecting the sample works to include in the portfolio:

- If a student wishes to include only seminar papers, please note that these are papers a student has *already written*. Students are encouraged to edit their papers for basic format, grammar or language as needed.
- Consider these works to be a *showcase* of skills and knowledge that you have gained during your program.
- In the case of teaching modules, online projects or other creative works, students should include a 1- to 2-page text in which the student offers a brief critical discussion of the project.
- In the case of those students who prefer to include written work and wrote shorter writing assignments as opposed to a seminar paper for a course, students should compile a selection of these shorter writing assignments to form one document that is approximately 12-15 pages in length. (For example, compile four 3-page writing assignments together to form one sample work).
- The sample work must involve or demonstrate some *authorship* or *independence*. For example, a student should not include a table of data collected as a GRA. But, a student can include that same table of data if s/he then authored a report, paper or completed some other project based on this research.

V. Culminating project

Students include in this section the most updated _draft_ of either the thesis or the non-thesis paper or project as a requirement for graduation. Students are expected to submit the final version of their thesis or non-thesis paper/project by the deadlines established by the College of Arts and Sciences. The total length of your non-thesis must be 25 pages, which includes a bibliography. Your thesis must have a minimum of 50 pages, which includes a bibliography.

Option A: "non-thesis"

If a student chooses the "non-thesis" option, include the "non-thesis" paper or project in this section.

Option B: "thesis"

If a student chooses the "thesis" option, include the thesis in this section.

VI. Reflection on core themes

Students review their courses and their own intellectual interests to prepare a materials and topics list for an oral exit interview. Then, students prepare a reflection on how the selected materials and topics manifest one (1) of the four core themes in a written response of 3 to 4 pages in length (double-spaced, 1" margins, size 12 font). Both the list and the written reflection are to be completed _in the target language_ and must be included in the portfolio.

The goal of this section is to show mastery of concepts as well as intellectual independence. The task to create a corpus of texts and topics demands critical thinking skills – both analytic and synthetic.

Part I. Materials and topics list

Students create a list of 10 materials and topics (related to language, (im)material culture and thought) from their courses taken as well as from independent inquiry that reflect on four core themes (i.e., enduring questions in the humanities) listed below. The list of materials and topics should be compiled in consultation with members of the graduate faculty. Students are encouraged (but not required) to include a variety of topics and materials. Please see **Appendix B** for a suggested – but not required – approach to the reflection on core themes.

> _Four core themes_:
> * Power and difference
> * Local/global engagements
> * Encounters between cultures
> * Politics of knowledge

For students focusing on pedagogy. The core theme Encounters between cultures can be framed on "Understanding other cultures" with the following outcomes:

1. Awareness of the cognitive process leading to understanding spoken or printed products (movies, novels, etc.) from the L2 culture and possible difficulty L2 students can experience when assigning meaning to those L2 products.

2. The role of second language culture, traditions, and life style when teaching and interpreting a text (spoken or written).

3. Understanding the linguistic, cultural, and conceptual complexity in a piece of literature when used in the second language setting and becoming aware of what can be done to promote understanding.

Please note that these four core themes (above) relate directly to the defined learning outcomes for the Master's degrees in Spanish and French.

- Understanding of history, politics, economics as manifested in language, (im)material culture, and thought
- Understanding of the formation of identities as manifested in language, (im)material culture, and thought
- Understanding of global issues from perspectives that emerge from the Spanish- and French-speaking world and as manifested in language, (im)material culture, and thought

Whereas papers and course work demand students develop analytic, critical thinking skills, the proposed materials and topics list for the final oral interview requires students synthesize and integrate what they have learned during their studies in the Master's program. Below are two sample lists.

Sample list A: *Encounters between cultures*
□ Case study - Bilingualism
□ Case study - Ethnification through language
□ Novel - *Don Quijote* (Cervantes)   □ Novel - *Cartas marruecas* (José Cadalso)   □ Novel - *Luz silenciosa* (dir. Carlos Reygadas)   □ Theory / debate - Stuart Hall's concept of coding and decoding   □ Theory / debate - Soft power as a strategy of international diplomacy and global citizenship   □ Film - *Flores de otro mundo* (dir. Icíar Bollaín)   □ Novel - *La Araucana* (Alonso de Ercilla)   □ Novel in translation - *De como las muchachas García perdieron el acento* (Julia Álvarez)

> *Sample list B: Politics of knowledge*
> - □ Case study - How vernacular languages (Galician, Castilian, Catalan, etc.) became "appropriate" means for intellectual endeavors
> - □ Case Study - New literacies, multi-literacies, and the impact of technology on the way we read
> - □ The novel - *El Conde Lucanor* (don Juan Manuel)
> - □ The novel (in Català) - *La plaça del diamant* (Mercè Rodoreda)
> - □ Document - *Cartas el descubrimiento* (Cristóbal Colón)
> - □ Novel - *Los de abajo* (Mariano Azuela)
> - □ Testimonial novel - *Soy Rigoberta Menchú y así nació la conciencia*
> - □ Film - *También la lluvia* (dir. Icíar Bollaín)
> - □ Film- *No* (dir. Pablo Larraín)
> - □ One or more examples of "memory work" from Argentina

In sum, students will prepare <u>one</u> (1) list *in the target language* composed of <u>ten</u> (10) materials and topics for <u>one</u> (1) of the four core themes.

Part II. The written reflection
Then, students will write approximately 3 – 4 pages *in the target language* on the one selected core theme reflecting on how selected materials and topics engage with the core theme.

The written reflection should include full sentences, paragraphs, transitions between ideas, etc. but it is a *reflection* and not an argumentative essay. Students may follow the suggested format below if desired:

> Core theme #1 (2, 3, or 4). Briefly define how this theme is understood.
> Discussion: In a reflection (of approximately 3 – 4 pages), explain how the materials and topics engage with the core theme. Students should refer to the materials and topics as evidence in their discussion.

Please see **Appendix B** for suggested approaches to the reflection on core themes.

VII. Oral presentation and interview
Students will participate in an oral presentation and interview with members of their Review Committee (composed by the Director of Graduate Studies). The oral interview consists of two parts and the meeting will last approximately 60 minutes.

First, the student will make a brief presentation (15 to 20 minutes, maximum) of the culminating project (a thesis, non-thesis paper or project). Faculty may ask questions on the culminating project after the presentation.

Second, members of the Review Committee will ask questions and provide feedback on the portfolio the student has prepared and submitted two weeks prior to the oral interview. Note that for Fall or Spring there will be an email sent out by the Graduate Director for the specific deadlines when the portfolio are due and when the exit interviews will take place.

The Review Committee will consider the following learning outcomes in their holistic assessment of the Master's Portfolio submitted by the student as well as the oral exit interview and presentation:

Ratings on a scale of 1 to 4:
1= fails to meet standard; 2 = meets standard; 3 = exceeds standard; 4 = far exceeds standard

Learning outcome	Score
Demonstrates ability to synthesize ideas	
Demonstrates ability to apply ideas from one field to another	
Demonstrates appropriate linguistic, historical, cultural knowledge	
Demonstrates communicative competence in oral and written language	
Demonstrates ability to effectively critique primary materials	
Faculty comments	
Faculty members of the Review Committee are encouraged to include comments in a separate document regarding the sections the student has included in his/her Portfolio.	

See **Appendix D** for the review form.

Appendix A:

The following includes a list of "transferrable" skills as well as sample lists of basic, intermediate and advanced skills using various programs, including Word, Excel, etc. Students are encouraged to develop selected skills for future academic and non-academic careers.

Transferable skills gained during a typical graduate school education:

Analysis & Problem-Solving

- Define a problem and identify possible causes
- Comprehend large amounts of information
- Design an experiment, plan, or model that defines a problem
- Form and defend independent conclusions, tests potential resolutions and implements a solution

Interpersonal & Leadership Skills

- Facilitate group discussions or conduct meetings
- Motivate others to complete projects (group or individual)
- Respond appropriately to positive or negative feedback
- Effectively mentor subordinates and/or peers
- Collaborate on projects
- Teach skills or concepts to others
- Navigate complex bureaucratic environments

Project Management & Organization

- Manage a project or projects from beginning to end
- Identify goals and/or tasks to be accomplished and a realistic timeline for completion
- Prioritize tasks while anticipating potential problems
- Maintain flexibility in the face of changing circumstances

Research & Information Management

- Identify sources of information applicable to a given problem
- Understand and synthesize large quantities of data
- Design and analyze surveys
- Develop organizing principles to effectively sort and evaluate data

Self-Management & Work Habits

- Work effectively under pressure and to meet deadlines
- Comprehend new material and subject matter quickly
- Work effectively with limited supervision

Written & Oral Communication

- Prepare concise and logically-written materials
- Organize and communicate ideas effectively in oral presentations to small and large groups
- Write at all levels — brief abstract to book-length manuscript
- Debate issues in a collegial manner and participate in group discussions
- Use logical argument to persuade others
- Explain complex or difficult concepts in basic terms and language • Write effective grant proposals

Appendix B:
Students are encouraged to develop their own working definition or understanding of the four themes. Students are allowed and encouraged to be independent and creative in their thinking. Below are some subthemes and questions that may be helpful:

Power and difference. In the works and topics that you have studied, you might consider – *among other possible approaches to this theme*: hierarchies (of all sorts); systems of privilege; acts of resistance; ways control or influence is exerted – that is, how individuals interact (or not) with systems of privilege; what is privileged and why? What factors go into defining or shaping cultural identities? How do those factors operate?

Local/global engagements. In the works and topics that you have studied, you might consider – *among other possible approaches to this theme*: how are ideas, languages, or cultural practices from one location or group linked to a broader sphere or group; broadly speaking, how are issues of belonging (or, citizenship) addressed?

Encounters between cultures. In the works and topics that you have studied, you might consider – *among other possible approaches to this theme*: representations of immigration and migration as well as characters who experience or encounter difference or diversity; languages in contact; pedagogical issues concerning the teaching of cultural diversity in the classroom; broadly speaking, how are issues of cultural diversity addressed?

Politics of knowledge. In the works and topics that you have studied, you might consider – *among other possible approaches to this theme*: who gets to know, learn, discuss, portray what and when, where, why and how? What is communicated or given voice? What is silenced? What way(s) of communication are appropriate or rejected?

After developing a working understanding of the core themes, students should then review their courses, revisit the works and topics that they have studied and consider how the works or topics address the core themes from the humanities. Hopefully, this will help prepare the lists of materials and topics.

Appendix C.

Please include a copy of this signature form (below) completed and signed by the director of the Master's thesis or the director of the non-thesis paper/project.

= =

To: Master's Portfolio Review Committee

Re: Culminating project (Thesis or non-thesis paper/project)

I certify that I have reviewed the draft of the Thesis or non-thesis paper/project included by

_____ (name of Graduate Student) as part of Section V (Culminating

project) for the Master's Portfolio.

_____

(signature of Graduate Faculty member)

_____

(date)

Appendix D. Review form

> Graduate Faculty members of the Review Committee will consider the following learning outcomes in their holistic assessment of the Master's Portfolio submitted by the student as well as the oral exit interview and presentation:
>
> *Ratings on a scale of 1 to 4:*
> *1= fails to meet standard; 2 = meets standard; 3 = exceeds standard; 4 = far exceeds standard*
>
> | Learning outcome | Score |
> |---|---|
> | *Demonstrates ability to synthesize ideas* | |
> | *Demonstrates ability to apply ideas from one field to another* | |
> | *Demonstrates appropriate linguistic, historical, cultural knowledge* | |

Demonstrates communicative competence in oral and written language	
Demonstrates ability to effectively critique primary materials	

Faculty comments
Section I. C.V. or résumé
Section II. Personal statement
Section III. Self-assessment survey and skills inventory
Section IV. Sample works
Section V. Culminating project
Section VI. Reflection on core themes
Section VII. Oral presentation and interview

Signature of Faculty member	Date

Appendix E. Policy on resubmission.

In the event the faculty review committee determines that the student has not submitted an acceptable portfolio (i.e., the student fails the review), then the student has **one** (1) additional opportunity to revise and resubmit the portfolio to complete the requirements to earn the Master's degree.

Appendix F. Formation of Review Committee

At the beginning of the Fall and Spring terms, the Director of Graduate Studies will request from those students who have indicated they plan to graduate to submit the names of four possible graduate faculty members to serve on the student's portfolio and exit interview review committee. The Director of Graduate Studies will form the review committee for each student based in part on the list submitted by the student.