Learning Portfolio

For our purposes, a learning portfolio is a structured collection of selected class work that showcases your achievements. In each of our four class modules, you have produced multiple learning artifacts. Though, for this portfolio, you will select only your four best artifacts.

The process of reviewing your class work and selecting artifacts provides you with the opportunity to reflect upon what you have learned. This reflection will also become part of your learning portfolio.

A good learning portfolio should address a number of questions including;
1. What did you learn in this class?
2. What learning techniques worked best for you?
3. Why are these knowledges and skills important?
4. How do these knowledges and skills relate to your future, academic or career, goals?

In addition to presenting what you have learned, your portfolio is also expected to explain what learning techniques worked best for you. For example, did the Codecademy Tutorials work optimally for you? Or did the W3Schoools tutorials provide your best learning experience? Or did the 'hands on' sessions that we had during class provide the best experience? Or was something else best?

Better portfolios will provide a narrative of what, and how, you learned in this class. That is, better portfolios will present a narrative voice that guides the reader though your class learning experiences. Utilizing a narrative format means that the four modules should present a single experience rather than four separate experiences.

To facilitate the flow between artifacts and modules, your portfolio should provide enough context to enable a reader to understand how individual artifacts relate to each other as well as to class goals. For example, you might explain how learning PHP and MySQL in Module Three enabled you to connect a data base to the interface that you constructed in Module Two thus completing an N-tier Internet Application.

Constructing this context provides you with the opportunity to demonstrate that you understand the relevance and importance of your learning.

Required Components
Each learning portfolio is required to have an appropriate a home page and menu system. Each of the four modules is required to have its own overview and to present its own artifact within a meaningful context. In addition, each learning portfolio is required to have a reflection section.

Home Page
Your home page should do three things. It should:
1. Identify you to the reader.
2. State your portfolio's purpose.
3. Guide the reader to your learning artifacts by referring the reader to your menu system.

Module Overview
On each module overview, you should briefly explain what you learned. Your explanation should include which assignment worked best for you as well as how your learning related to our class goals.

Within the overview, you should refer the reader to your selected artifact. Within your overview should identify the learning techniques employed in creating your artifact.

Learning Artifact Selection
Select only your best assignment from each module. Think of your Learning Portfolio as a "showcase" for your work. While you may choose more than one, most students will choose only one assignment per module. Our goal here is quality, not quantity. That is, the Learning Portfolio isn't intended to present all of your work rather only your best work.

Learning Artifact Format
For each of your learning artifacts (assignments), you should use an open format. In terms of speed and flexibility, it is optimum to use html. Though, it is also okay to use pdf, or a similar, open format. Note that since speed and flexibility are positive qualities, artifacts that utilize html, or php, formats will grade higher than artifacts that utilize PDF format.

Learning Narrative
In addition to providing tangible evidence of your learning, your portfolio should present a reader with a coherent narrative concerning your class experiences. Specifically, better portfolios will reflect an understanding of your learning and the learning processes that worked well for you in this class. It is your narrative that provides the glue that connects these diverse components into a smooth flowing story.

Site Host
If your instructor has already provided you with a Hostgator account, you are expected to use that. Unless otherwise communicated to the instructor, the home page of your portfolio will be assumed to accessible from the home page of your hostgator domain. That is, it is acceptable to have a prominent link from your home page to your learning portfolio.

Menu System
Since the menu system is how a reader navigates your portfolio, it is a critical portfolio component. An appropriate menu system will be simple, complete, and intuitive. It will have no dead links. And from every page, it should offer the opportunity to return to the home page.

Reflections Section
Here you are asked to think about significant learning events during class. If you are not sure where to begin your reflections, you may find one, or more, of the following questions useful.
- What did you learn? Why is it important?
- What learning techniques worked best for you?
- If more time was available, what class topic would you like to continue learning?
- If you had more time, how would you make your portfolio better?

Your reflection section may address one, or more, of these questions. Though, you may also chose to focus on other questions.

Review
Be sure that your learning portfolio contains all the required components including:
- Home page
- Appropriate menu system
- Module overview pages
- Selected artifacts
- Narrative voice
- Reflection section

Remember that the purpose of your Learning Portfolio is to "showcase" what you learned in class. It also provides you with the opportunity to showcase your communication skills by creating a narrative concerning your learning experiences.

Your portfolio provides a foundation that you can build on as you take more courses. It also provides evidence of your learning that you can share with others.

There are many relevant online references regarding portfolios. The following 'Selected Links' section lists several.

Selected Links

How to Create a Personal Learning Portfolio
http://onlinelearninginsights.wordpress.com/2013/01/30/why-students-need-personal-learning-portfolios-more-than-we-do/

Learning Portfolio
https://www.columbiasc.edu/academics/resources/faculty-development/learning-portfolio
Understanding Assignments
http://writingcenter.unc.edu/resources/handouts-demos/writing-the-paper/understanding-assignments