COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT
SENIOR PORTFOLIO INSTRUCTIONS

A portfolio is a professional binder full of the best work you have done while enrolled at UTM. Its immediate purpose is to demonstrate to a jury of department faculty in your sequence what you have learned to do (and do well) during your time here.

But portfolios have a very valuable and practical purpose: When you graduate, you cannot expect to be hired as a professional communicator (especially in this combination depressed/competitive job market) if you can’t prove that you can do the work and do it better than all those other hundreds of communications graduates out there.

As this department’s faculty have stressed throughout your time here, the contents of a Communications Department graduate’s published stories, PR portfolio or resume/audition tape, plus various samples of outstanding writing can be that extra bit of evidence that will get you your first job as a professional communicator.

If for one reason or another you may not now possess all the items you need, I strongly suggest that you sign up for additional practicum (or simply volunteer to join the staff) at The Pacer, WUTM, WLJT, student television shows, etc., this semester, do a lot and SAVE EVERYTHING.

To help you understand better, here are some examples of typical portfolio materials:

• Your current resume should be the first document in your portfolio, followed by the table of contents (which will NOT list the resume). There is no need to include a cover letter.
• Radio production air checks and radio news air checks (well-edited with perfect levels: dubbed to CD with great care and carefully cued to first sound minus two seconds.
• TV resume DVDs you produced as projects in TV News and ENG/EFP.
• Individual discs/tapes or excerpts from discs/tapes of radio or TV programs or program elements you produced.
• Broadcast copy (news, continuity, commercials, documentaries, entertainment scripts — Comm. 315 is a great source for these.)
• Professionally oriented class projects (sales presentations, professional-looking projects, such as an ad campaign or TV programming simulation, a research class survey, etc.)
• Clips of your published newspaper or yearbook stories or photos.
• Newspaper or PR publication page layouts you have designed.
• News stories and research papers written for class assignments (clearly labeled as “class assignments” versus published news, research pieces).
• PR news releases written for various course assignments.
• PR or other class project presentations, pamphlets, folders, research, etc.
• Almost all of your Desktop Publishing class assignments (newsletter, brochure, flier).
• Any work similar to the above produced while working in the professional media and/or during an internship.

NOTE: Failing to remove instructor comments, grades, notes, errors noted, etc., on any of these portfolio elements is not acceptable. Any copy, paper, project or assignment worthy of inclusion in your portfolio should be re-edited, sharpened, fixed, reprinted, etc., prior to inclusion in your portfolio. Never show off your mistakes to potential employers; always put your best foot forward.

ALSO, when you get around to presenting some kinds of class projects in your portfolio, they may require some amount of introductory explanation. This is usually handled in executive summaries on or following the title pages that precede these projects. If the item(s) need any explanation at all as to what they are or whether you did some or all of the work, they DO require an executive summary. That summary may appear on the section title page just before the item in question or on the same page as the item, depending on whether you have enough space to do that. One summary may suffice for a whole section, or you may need to have additional explanations within a section.
REMEMBER UTM's rules of academic honesty: All the work you display in your portfolio must be your own. You may submit something you did in a group project, providing you clearly indicate your involvement in an executive summary.

HELPFUL HINTS FOR PORTFOLIO PREPARATION

1. Present your work in a very classy-looking binder or folder. You can purchase a vinyl (or leather) binder at Wal-Mart or major discount office supply store. You must also purchase plastic, see-through pages in which to insert your work. Use NEW plastic pages; old, re-used ones don't represent you well.

2. Present no bare pages. Insert each individual page into plastic, see-through pages. Most students insert pages on both sides of plastic sheets. Be consistent. Either have copy in fronts and backs or just fronts.

3. Labeling and organization are everything. At the very least, include a table of contents that refers to well-organized sections. Each section must have a title page, attractively designed and consistent from one section to the next. You may use tabs (not required), but make sure that they protrude such that they can be seen and used.

4. In each section, explain the KIND of work the prospective employer will be looking for. For example, a PR student might place in a separate section news releases written on an internship from those written for PR classes; stories published in The Pacer versus other media; desktop publishing, ad layouts and PR research projects.

5. Executive summaries are required to make project sections more user friendly. If you exclude these, you will have to resubmit. Include these for any section or part of section/item that requires any kind of explanation as to what it is and your role in preparing it.

6. If your portfolio includes compact discs or DVD, the formats should be compact disc (CD) for radio and DVD for television. These disc cases may fit inside the back cover of your portfolio (Velcro is sometimes used to attach the disc cases, but make sure that you don’t Velcro the side on which the case (s) opens.)

7. Place both radio and TV discs in cases and label them neatly and professionally, including your name, address and phone number on both the disc and the disc box. DO NOT HAND WRITE your labels. Use typewritten or laser printed labels.

8. Make sure there is a rundown of items found on your disc on/inside the case. Use either a padded sleeve or the more substantial “jewel case” for your discs. Do not use the more flimsy or unpadded types. This is to offer a better presentation and also to protect the disc(s).

9. All copy should be incredibly neat and tidy and free from errors. Any copy not originally laser printed should be reprinted using a laser-quality printer.

FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE ALL OF THIS IS NIT PICKY, realize that your portfolio represents you. Professional employers look for evidence of quality in every aspect of the work you show them. Going the extra mile and taking extra pains will pay off. It indicates the level of excellence you are capable of delivering on the job. The reverse is also true: If your work is sloppy, this also tells them something about you and your work quality potential.

IF YOU CAN’T DO PROFESSIONAL WORK when your very job is on the line, what level of quality can they expect from you every day?
MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS BY SEQUENCE

(NOTE: the minimum output on your part earns the minimum grade from your faculty jury of evaluators.)

NEWS EDITORIAL

• Must present no less than 20 news stories, editorials or feature stories.

• 17 of these 20 stories must be hard news, features or sports reporting. No more than 3 may be editorials, columns or reviews.

• You must ALSO include samples of publications you’ve edited (for example, Pacer or Spirit pages you designed, desktop publishing class newsletter project, etc.).

• Assuming the minimums are met here, one of the key challenges is to produce perfect photocopies of print clips. You will be downgraded and may have to resubmit, even with the minimum articles, if they are poor quality photocopies (smudgy, crooked, etc.). Also, if you are pulling stories from Pacer archives, make sure you include the photos. And on all clips, make sure the print outlet and date of publication are included on the clip. Also, if you try to recreate a print story by reassembling it in InDesign from Pacer archives, make sure it has the same nameplate, column widths, the same headline size, length and typography as the original, etc. It HAS to look real or your prospective employer will doubt that it is.

NOTE: Because The Pacer now posts/publishes stories in its online edition, you may print and include in your portfolio “clips” from online publication, AS LONG AS you print them in their original typeface/style as the online story and include the nameplate, etc. The intent is to make it obvious that your stories were truly published. When any version of your published story is downloaded from archives or pulled from the Web site in such a way that it does not look authentic, that is unacceptable. Also, you may NOT double dip. You may not count the same story for both online and hard-copy clips.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

• Must present at least 10 different news releases (only 2 of which may be media advisories) AND at least 10 additional news stories published in The Pacer or other commercial newspaper or magazine (not a club or student group publication). No more than 3 of the 10 may be editorials, columns or reviews.

On rare occasions we accept clips from newsletters or similar other publications, but they must be approved by Drs. Nanney and Hoyer. The criteria for acceptance are audience, circulation, mission and quality. Do NOT assume newsletters or similar other publications will be acceptable, so get this cleared ASAP. Regardless, such other publications may not count for more than 5 of your 10 clips.

• You may not double dip. That is, you may not count the same story twice: as a news release and later as a published clip.

• ALSO to show potential employers your versatility, include samples of other professional PR materials you’ve produced.
EXAMPLES ARE:

- Newsletters
- Op-Ed pieces
- Letters to the editor
- Print ads
- Position papers
- Radio or TV commercials, PSAs or VNRs (presented on compact disc for radio, VHS tape or DVD for television, professionally labeled and slated inside and out).
- Written proposals for VNRs
- Brochures
- Annual reports
- Media kits
- PowerPoint projects — Note: if you include the slides, print them in color for the portfolio.

- GROUP REPORTS should be placed in a separate section toward the back of the portfolio. Each should be preceded by executive summaries. In these summaries you should also briefly explain your role in the project and identify the names of other team members and their roles.

- Each news release must be double spaced and formatted consistently, according to what you learned in class. Also, each news release must be on a letterhead (actual or created by you) indicating the client for whom it was written. Also, use the same typeface for each release.

NOTE: Because The Pacer now posts/publishes stories in its online edition, you may print and include in your portfolio “clips” from online publication, AS LONG AS you print them in their original column widths, headline size/length/typeface/style as the online story and include the nameplate, etc. The intent is to make it obvious that your stories were truly published. When any version of your published story is downloaded from archives or pulled from the Web site in such a way that it does not look authentic, that is unacceptable. Also, you may NOT double dip. You may not count the same story for both online and hard-copy clips.

MEDIA DESIGN

- Must present at least 10 photographs published in The Pacer, The Spirit or other widely circulated commercial newspaper or magazine (not a club or student group publication). No more than one photo will count in a grouping (collage, for example), or on one page if the photos are related. Up to four high-quality photo illustrations or infographics may count toward this requirement, but they MUST be submitted to Freed, Nanney or Rutledge for pre-approval. Candid photos will NOT be accepted. All news photos must meet the tests of newsworthiness.

- Photographs may be color or black and white.

- All photographs must be neatly mounted on black matting and in page protectors.

- On the back of each page, a perfect photocopy of the print clip from the publication is required.

- To show your versatility in the visual media, one interactive or multimedia presentation on CD or DVD must be included. Examples: Website you produced, corporate marketing DVD, corporate video presentation, interactive PDF and Flash projects. NOTE: You must label your CDs/DVDs professionally. Hand-written labels will not be accepted.
• Must present at least 5 different examples (at least one FULL written page in length each) of original copy to support your media design materials. These may be a story and/or cutlines (full page of cutlines for one-page of credit) written to accompany photographs, text to accompany a Web site, stories written in connection with print projects, such as newsletters, magazines or other significant visual works that include copy. This requirement is to prove to prospective employers that you can write.

• Must present at least one hard-copy print of a major Desktop Publishing piece, such as a four-page color newsletter with quality images or the prototype of a magazine, including a professionally prepared cover and sample pages.

• You should also include at least six additional samples of other professional media design materials that you have produced. Examples: Photo illustrations, logos, vector artwork, website composite artwork, identity packages, brochures, magazine spreads, advertisements, posters, fliers.

• NEW: Must set up an online portfolio that includes a resume and at least four samples of your media design work. See Dr. Rutledge for acceptable options or more information.

BROADCASTING

• Must present no less than 10 separate examples of broadcast news, commercial or PSA copy and/or other continuity, written in perfect professional broadcast style, as you learned in Comm. 315 (see format guides as a template). NOTE: The plural of PSA is PSAs, NOT PSA’s.

• Regardless of whether your career goal involves radio or TV, your portfolio must include a mix of items from both broadcast areas. You must have a mix of news, commercials and PSAs. Employers want to see your versatility.

• REALIZE THAT this must involve the equivalent of 10 full pages of copy, — one commercial, PSA or news story = one page; liners do not count — containing at least one commercial, one broadcast news story and one PSA. Minimum length is 30 seconds. Also, all of this copy must be your original work, not rewrites of AP or someone else’s copy.

• No single piece of copy can count more than one page toward the 10-page minimum. So, inserting multi-page items will not help reach the minimum (beyond one page).

• IN ADDITION to the 10 full pages of copy, you must submit 3-6 sample pages from at least one long-form TV show script AND include your full treatment. Do NOT include the total script. In an executive summary at the beginning, indicate that the 3-6 pages are a portion of the script with the full script available on request.

• All broadcasting students must submit either a TV or radio resume CD or DVD. Specific requirements are found below. You may submit both radio and TV resume CD/DVD, but you must indicate the one you wish graded for the portfolio.

• All broadcast copy must be formatted consistently (at the top and otherwise) according to what you’ve learned in class.

• Do not vary the typeface among pieces of broadcast copy.

• If you choose to submit examples of short radio copy, such as liners, you must fill a complete page with them to equal one of the required 10 pages.
STANDARDS FOR RESUME CDs/DVDs

TELEVISION RESUME DVDs

All television resume DVDs must be neatly labeled with your name, address, phone number and email address on the DVD label and case. A rundown of all the material must accompany the DVD. The rundown must indicate the title of the piece and the length. Your CD/DVD labels and case inserts must be neatly printed. Several companies have online tools to assist you (ex: www.avery.com).

DVDs must have a slate with your name, address, phone number and email recorded at the beginning and the end of your material. Make sure the address is some place an employer can reach you.

Include only your best material. The resume DVD should be at least five minutes and length and no more than eight to ten minutes long. Your best material should come first.

Television production resume DVDs should contain an example of your production and editing abilities. Among other clips, production resume DVDs must contain at least one commercial and one PSA.

Television news resume DVDs should contain a variety of packages, stand-ups and anchor work that you have completed here at UTM or during an internship.

If you have any questions about script or DVD formatting please see Mr. Freed. This work, especially creating your DVD, will require significant time so it is important to start early on this project!

RADIO RESUME COMPACT DISCS

All radio resume compact discs must be neatly labeled with your name, address, email and phone number. On the inside of the case, a rundown of all the materials on the disc (in order) should be neatly attached.

Resume discs for radio news should feature you reading copy in a short newscast (2 min. or less), plus short clips from a few radio documentaries you produced and clips from one or more interviews you have conducted. News stories should be well edited and contain actualities (sound bites). Compact discs should be no more than five minutes in length, with your very best pieces placed first.

Resume compact discs for radio production should consist of three parts:

Part I: Four to five breaks
Should be a mix of weather, artist information, etc.
At least one should show some of your personality
Use best one first, then next best, and so on
There should only be a few seconds of music before and after your voice
The edits should be clean

Part II: One or two PSAs or commercials
Must be something you wrote, voice and produced
Dry spots are unacceptable
Must be well produced and edited with appropriate production music
Should show your creativity

Part III: A short newscast
Two minutes maximum length
The format for your news should be local, state and then national news
You must rewrite any AP copy

Note: Radio production compact discs should be no longer than 5 minutes, with your best work placed at the beginning.

**BE SURE TO CHECK** out your resume disc in advance with Dr. Robinson. Doing so will ensure that you know where you stand well in advance so that there are no surprises when you make your final submission.