Writing at Westmont, Writing Beyond Westmont: INVITATION TO SUBMIT YOUR WRITING

Create a writing portfolio that you can show to future employers and other interested audiences beyond Westmont. As you transition to life after Westmont, account for your writing—and make your writing count.

You are warmly invited to participate in Westmont’s first Senior Writing Portfolio (SWP) contest. Only seniors graduating in 2012 (May or December) are eligible to participate, and participation is voluntary. The SWP contest is part of the Writing at Westmont Research Project. Additional information is available on the SWP Eureka site. [https://eureka.westmont.edu/course/view.php?id=51484](https://eureka.westmont.edu/course/view.php?id=51484)

Cash prizes will be awarded for excellence in writing as well as for general participation. Whether you love to write, have doubts about writing, or fall somewhere in-between, YOU are a valuable participant and can be rewarded for your writing. Other than cash prizes, the best part of this invitation is that we’re interested in writing you have already completed while at Westmont.

*Prizes for EXCELLENCE (winners will be chosen by a team of faculty judges):

$100 each for the three best portfolios!
- $100 for the best portfolio from a major in the Humanities
- $100 for the best portfolio from a major in the Natural and Behavioral Sciences
- $100 for the best portfolio from a major in the Social Sciences

*Prizes for PARTICIPATION (winners will be chosen at random):

- Six $20 participation awards for any participants!

Participation guidelines are available on Eureka and will also be available in hard copy at the Westmont writing center (Voskuyl Library 215). Per these guidelines, you should upload your writing samples directly to the SWP Eureka site. In brief, you should upload 2-4 writing samples from your Westmont education along with a short self-reflection essay that comments on the samples you've chosen. A sample essay is available for your reference.

The deadline for submitting your Senior Writing Portfolio is Tuesday, May 15. If you have questions after reviewing the SWP Guidelines, please contact me (Sarah Skripsky) at sskripsky@westmont.edu. Make sure to put "SWP" in your subject line.

Thanks in advance for submitting a Senior Writing Portfolio. We look forward to reading your writing!

Blessings,
Prof. Skripsky

P.S. If you choose, you can do more than use Eureka for your portfolio’s creation. You can create your own e-portfolio using the user-friendly Weebly.com. (Imagine being able to include your e-portfolio link on a graduate school application letter, or showing your site to a potential employer, etc.) If you create a Weebly e-portfolio, you should follow the guidelines on this sample Westmont Writing Portfolio site. Just don't forget to submit your own website’s URL/hyperlink (http://... ) to the SWP Eureka site for consideration. Otherwise, we won’t be able to find your portfolio, and you won’t be eligible for prizes. Please note: using Weebly or similar e-portfolio builders are entirely optional for the SWP project. Contest participants who choose not to use Weebly will not be penalized.
Senior Writing Portfolios: Spring 2012 Contest Guidelines

Why is Westmont interested in Senior Writing Portfolios? The portfolio contest is part of an ongoing research project on student writing; the results will help Westmont improve writing instruction and support services. Participation is voluntary. In May-June 2012, Westmont faculty will read the portfolios. This research project is supported by Westmont’s General Education and Program Review Committees; the lead researcher is Sarah Skrisky, Assistant Professor of English and Director of the Writing Center.

Why should you submit a Senior Writing Portfolio? Submitting a portfolio offers multiple incentives. SWP participants are eligible to receive one of three $100 prizes for excellence¹ as well as one of six $20 prizes for participation. Beyond the short-term benefits of such prizes, however, seniors can enjoy long-term benefits from creating writing portfolios. Based on the research of Edward M. White, California State University Emeritus Professor of English, student portfolios serve as valuable resources for job interviews and more. Despite considerable benefits, portfolio creation requires very little work for students; with the exception of a brief reflective essay, such portfolios are an assembly of what students have already accomplished (White 591, 594).

What should you include in your portfolio?

- Choose samples of your very best writing, including samples demonstrating your range (i.e., avoid choosing samples with very similar purposes and audiences).²
- Please select only 2-4 writing samples for your portfolio. At least one sample should be from a Westmont course within your major, at least one sample from a Westmont course outside your major.³ (For example, a Religious Studies major might include a paper written for his/her senior seminar as well as one written for a course in psychology.) OPTIONAL: To give evidence of your writing range, you may submit additional samples from courses and/or extra-curricular activities.
- When combined, your portfolio samples should total approx. 10-40 typed, double-spaced pages, not including bibliographies (if any). When using sources, make sure to follow an academic citation style (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.). Your citation style may vary between samples.
- Within your portfolios, a variety of writing samples are welcome: academic literature reviews, explications, lab reports, thesis-driven arguments, news articles, proofs, multimedia compositions, business cases, ethnography projects, scripts, faith-learning essays, and more. We invite a range of writing projects produced during your Westmont career. (Note: For this contest, you should submit writing samples written by you alone. While we value projects with group authorship, they should not be part of your portfolio.)

Should you write anything new? (Just one thing.) After selecting samples, create a short self-reflection essay of 250-500 words (see model) before submitting your portfolio to the Senior Writing Portfolio site on Eureka. Within this essay, comment on the audience and purpose of each writing sample; you should also address how effectively you wrote for those audiences and purposes. Overall, the self-reflection essay’s purpose is to make a case for how your portfolio demonstrates your ability to write for a variety of audiences and purposes across the curriculum.” The essay’s immediate audience is Westmont faculty members; however, its future audience will be potential employers and anyone else with whom you choose to share your work (e.g., a graduate school admissions committee, etc.).

Thanks in advance for creating a Senior Writing Portfolio. Despite how easy it is, your portfolio will be a valuable resource for you and your future audiences. We look forward to reading your writing!

Works Cited


¹ A prize for excellence makes a valuable addition to a résumé, not just a bank account.
² A few Westmont departments already require portfolios with writing from their majors; these portfolios may be adapted for this contest. Please include a writing sample from outside the major and a self-reflective essay.
³ If you are a double major, you should include at least one writing sample from each of your two majors.
**Senior Writing Portfolios: Sample Self-Reflection Essay**

*NOTE: You should adapt the content of this sample essay for originality and accuracy. You need not use any of the same sentence structures and are encouraged to add to and subtract from the model. Length will vary, but 250-500 words are suggested for your self-reflection.*

**HEADER:**
Writer's Full Name  
Writer’s Contact Information for Summer 2012 (If you win a prize, how may we reach you?)  
Date  
Senior Writing Portfolio: Self-Reflection Essay

I will graduate from Westmont College in _____ 2012 with a major in _____ [and a minor in ____]. This portfolio showcases my growth and success as a writer during my college career and includes writing samples from inside and outside my major. **OPTIONAL:** I have also included several samples of my extra-curricular writing [for the Horizon and/or from my recent _____ internship; etc.]. As a writer, I have learned to adapt to a variety of audiences and purposes. In this self-reflection, I make a case for the value of my portfolio, showcasing the best of my writing [as a college student and as an emerging professional in the field of _____]. As part of my liberal arts education, I completed a variety of writing projects. These writing samples demonstrate my intellectual and creative abilities as well as my skill in using writing for different situations. As a whole, this portfolio _____.

My first writing sample is an excellent example of writing within my major. I wrote this essay, "_____," for my senior seminar, _____ . This course serves as a capstone for _____ majors and asks challenging questions of advanced students. In this particular assignment, I was responding to the prompt _____; my purpose was _____ . My audience consisted of [a professor in ____; experts in ____; fellow Christians; medical professionals; etc.]. I selected this sample because I am proud of A, B, [a few possibilities below].

- [I wrote and revised this project over the course of approximately six weeks, and it shows my ability as a skilled researcher and writer within my discipline; etc.]
- [I wrote this project after considerable reading on controversies related to faith and _____; it shows my ability to integrate Christian faith with _________.]

My second writing sample, "_____," was written for a General Education course, ____. In this assignment, I was responding to the prompt _____; my purpose was _____ . My audience consisted of [a professor in ____; experts in ____; future teachers; Republican voters, etc.]. I selected this sample because I am proud of D, E, F, [a few possibilities below].

- [Initially, I was unsure about the purpose of this assignment, but ultimately, creating this project allowed me to challenge stereotypes about _________.]
- [In my opening paragraph, I argue _____; later paragraphs demonstrate _____ . Finally, I _____ .]
- [I demonstrate mastery of ___APA citation style and format___; not only do I understand these conventions, but also I _____ .]

**OPTIONAL REFLECTION ON A NON-ACADEMIC SAMPLE** I created my final writing sample at the end of a four-month internship with ________. This business specializes in _____ . My responsibilities as an intern included _____. As a writer, I contributed _____ to the company, as demonstrated by this writing sample directed at an audience of [teenage consumers; Hispanic fathers; Bay Area professionals; etc.]. I selected this sample because I am proud of ___G, H___ [a few possibilities below].

- [I wrote this project after researching _____ in the Bay Area; it shows my ability to _____ .]
- [I reworked the _____ of this project with input from my boss; ultimately, I succeeded in _____ .]

Together, these samples demonstrate _____ . As you read the portfolio, please take note of features such as _____ and _____ as I show sensitivity to a variety of audiences and purposes for writing. Thank you for your interest in my writing.
INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT for the Writing at Westmont Research Project

In 2011 and 2012, Westmont College is gathering samples of student essays for use in institutional research. If you’re reading this message [and have been contacted about Senior Writing Portfolios], you have been selected to be part of a research project that Westmont is conducting about general education and writing across the curriculum (WAC) at our institution. The purpose of this research project is to learn more about faculty and student experiences of Writing/Speech-Intensive General Education courses as well as to evaluate the performance of student writers and better support their learning and growth. Participation in this study is voluntary, and all student essays collected for this study will remain confidential. If your essay is cited for research purposes by Westmont College or by Sarah Skripsky (the lead researcher), your name will be kept anonymous. Your participation will also be confidential; research participants will be referred to by pseudonym. If you have questions about this project or would like to opt out, please contact Sarah Skripsky at sskripsky@westmont.edu or 805-565-6122.