



**Portfolio Capstone Project
Literatures and Cultural Studies Concentration
(Non-Thesis Option) for UTRGV MA English Degree
(Approved May 15, 2016)**

The capstone requirement for the non-thesis option of the Literatures and Cultural Studies concentration for the Master of Arts in English includes both a written portfolio and an oral defense of the portfolio. Students are eligible to complete the capstone requirement after at least 24 hours (of the 36-hour degree plan) have been completed, inclusive of current coursework. In order to have materials for the portfolio requirement, graduate students retain copies of work submitted throughout their graduate coursework.

The portfolio consists of an introductory reflective essay (10-15 pages) and two seminar-length papers (approximately 20-25 pages) that have been significantly revised and extended after the graduate course for which the work was originally produced. Additional research must be incorporated into the seminar papers. Papers may be selected from any ENGL graduate course taken for the degree. A student may also choose to include up to two additional items in the portfolio (such as an abstract, book review, academic blog entry, case study, curriculum guide, teaching tool, or other materials produced in graduate coursework), and such items would be in addition to the two papers.

The introductory reflective essay should accomplish the following goals: 1) provide an overview of the materials in the portfolio, with a rationale for the materials selected; 2) explain the additional research and revision work done for each of the seminar-length essays; 3) evaluate how the writing and revision work contributes to the writer's understanding of the genre of the academic essay; 4) discuss how the revised portfolio materials advance a particular field or area of study by way of critical, theoretical or historical application, or primary research; 5) synthesize how the revised portfolio materials contribute to the professional development of the writer.

When 24 credit hours been completed or are underway, the graduate student will identify which papers could form the basis for the portfolio and will work with faculty members to select a portfolio examination committee consisting of three faculty members who teach English graduate courses. The Literatures and Cultural Studies concentration of the MA English degree program recommends but does not require that two of the three committee members should be faculty members for whom the work was originally written.

A one-hour oral defense provides an opportunity for: 1) the student to discuss intellectual and scholarly growth and proficiency as a researcher and academic writer, as evidenced by the contents of the portfolio; 2) the three faculty members on the portfolio examination committee to dialogue about the revision work done for the portfolio and to discuss the portfolio contents with the graduate student. The final draft of the portfolio will be submitted

in digital format to all three faculty members on the committee at least 21 days before the **scheduled date for the oral defense of the portfolio. The portfolio is also retained by the department for program assessment purposes.**