

Clarkson University
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Guidelines for Compiling the Minor Portfolio

A student completing a minor in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences (H&SS) will complete a portfolio that represents his or her learning experience in the minor. The course number is specified specifically for each professor in the department (e.g. POL 499-04 for Bird).

The portfolio will include the following:

1. **Material from each course in the minor.** Material from each course in the minor that demonstrates the development of critical thinking and expression.

For example, students in all H&SS minors write critical essays in each minor. Thus, students would include **a representative essay from each course in the portfolio (5 in total)**. This would indicate the extent to which a student has progressed over time in his or her ability to formulate a mature and sophisticated thesis. It would show their ability to marshal a detailed and fully developed body of evidence in support of the thesis and to capture this thesis and evidence in clear and cogent expository manner.

2. **Discussion of thematic and theoretical material.** Material from each course in the minor that demonstrates the development during the minor mastery subject matter.

For example, a student in the “Science, Technology and Society” thematic minor might encounter a particular ethical theory, say Utilitarianism, in several courses in the minor, and including a representative work from each in the portfolio would indicate the extent to which had developed an increased understanding and mastery of this theory over time. Utilitarianism might be described on a test from an early course, applied to a complex social issue in a subsequent course, and critically evaluated *re* its strengths and weakness as an approach to ethical decisions in yet another course. A similar increase in subject-matter mastery would occur in all H&SS minors, and the work chosen for the portfolio would show this.

Part 2 should derive thematic and theoretical material from the 5 essays (and more broadly from the five courses) that links the courses, or that you saw in several courses. It should probably run about **650-900 words** or so.

3. A **self-reflective essay** that synthesizes the student’s learning experiences in the individual courses in the minor and also articulates the meaning of these experiences to the student. This essay, written under the direction of the minor adviser, provides the opportunity for the students to develop a coherent and comprehensive understanding of their educational experience in the minor. Part 3 (the self-reflective essay) should be about **1600-2000 words** and more broadly synthesizes key aspects of your (political science) minor and how they applied to your education, and your life.

The reflective essay will be written as a part of the course requirements for a zero-credit hour “Minor Portfolio” (numbered 499, with an appropriate disciplinary or interdisciplinary designator* depending on the particular minor). The other part of the course requirement for the “Minor Portfolio” course will be completion of the portfolio. The instructor for each student’s individual “Minor Portfolio” course will be the student’s minor adviser in H&SS. Grading on the course will be on a P-NG basis, and a P will certify (a) completion and approval of the reflective essay and (b) completion and acceptance of the minor portfolio.

Although the portfolio will be completed within the framework of the “Minor Portfolio” course, students should begin compiling their portfolio early in the minor, and ***they are encouraged to work closely on this task with their H&SS minor advisor.*** (Note that students who are developing a student designed major should also work with their H&SS faculty adviser while preparing their Proposal). The portfolio should be compiled into a single document that encompasses all three parts (you can put the five papers together at the end), with page breaks between each essay, and each of the 5 papers. This is submitted by the advisor to the HSS office.

Version 2009-2010 (clarifications and amendments added 2016)