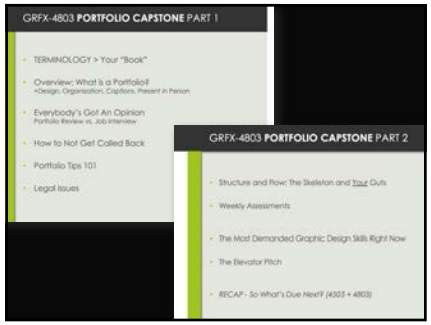
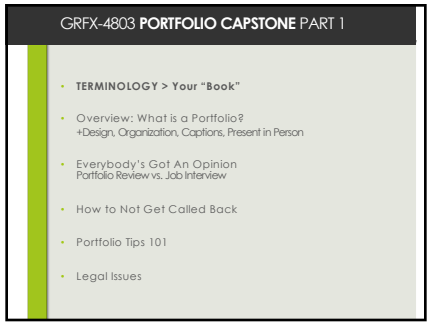

GRFX-4803 PORTFOLIO CAPSTONE PART 1
TERMINOLOGY > Your "Book"
Overview: What is a Portfolio?
+Design, Organization, Captions, Present in Person
Everybody's Got An Opinion
Portfolio Review vs. Job Interview
How to Not Get Called Back
Portfolio Tips 101
Legal Issues
GRFX-4803 PORTFOLIO CAPSTONE PART 2
Structure and Flow: The Skeleton and Your Guts
Weekly Assessments
The Most Demanded Graphic Design Skills Right Now
The Elevator Pitch
RECAP - So What's Due Next? (4303 + 4803)

1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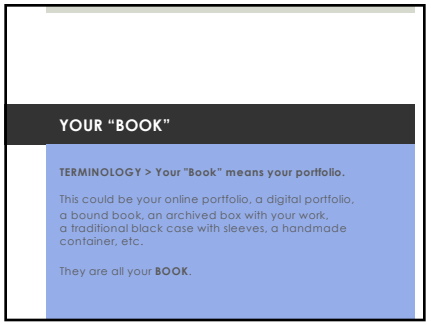
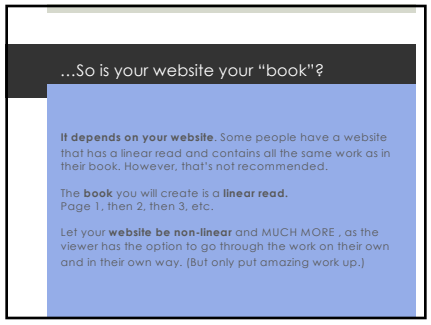
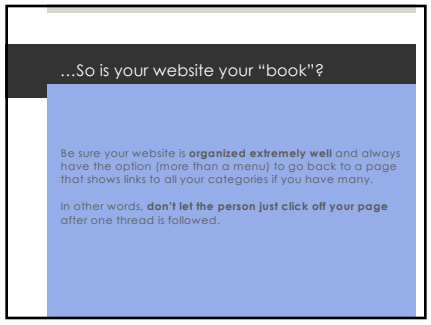

YOUR "BOOK"
TERMINOLOGY > Your "Book" means your portfolio.
This could be your online portfolio, a digital portfolio, a bound book, an archived box with your work, a traditional black case with sleeves, a handmade container, etc.
They are all your BOOK.

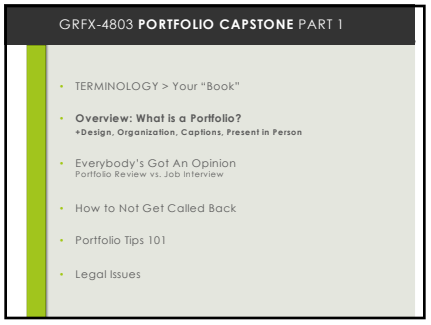
3


...So is your website your "book"?
It depends on your website. Some people have a website that has a linear read and contains all the same work as in their book. However, that's not recommended.
The book you will create is a linear read.
Page 1, then 2, then 3, etc.
Let your website be non-linear and MUCH MORE , as the viewer has the option to go through the work on their own and in their own way. (But only put amazing work up.)

4


...So is your website your "book"?
Be sure your website is organized extremely well and always have the option (more than a menu) to go back to a page that shows links to all your categories if you have many.
In other words, don't let the person just click off your page after one thread is followed.

5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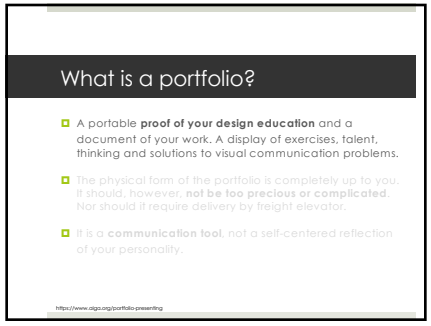
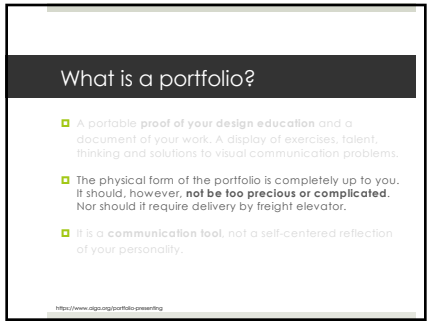

What is a portfolio?
A portable proof of your design education and a document of your work. A display of exercises, talent, thinking and solutions to visual communication problems.
The physical form of the portfolio is completely up to you. It should, however, not be too precious or complicated. Nor should it require delivery by freight elevator.
It is a communication tool, not a self-centered reflection of your personality.
https://www.aiga.org/portfolio-presenting

7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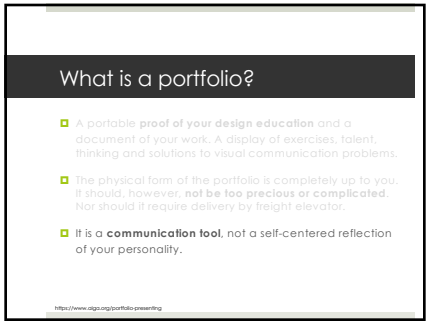
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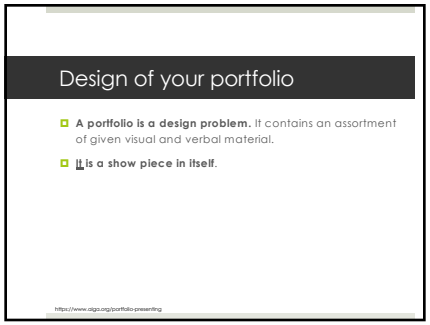

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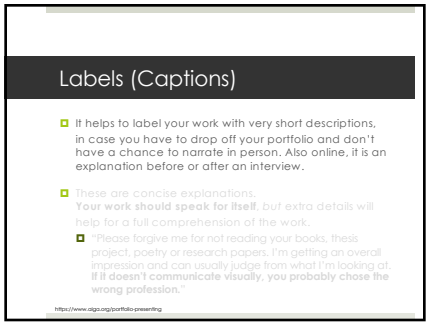

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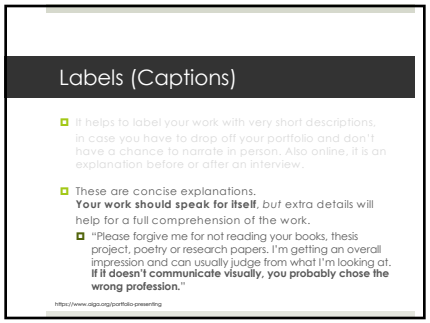

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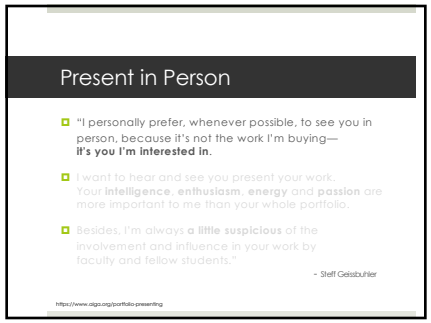

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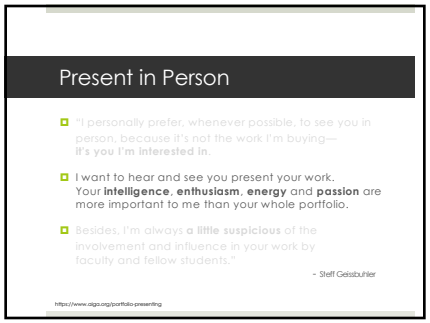

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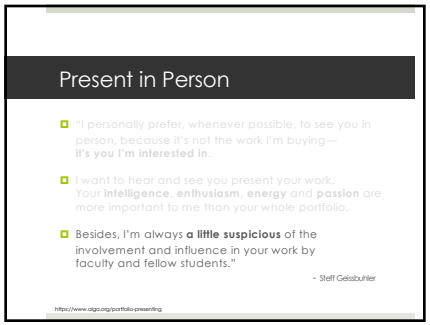

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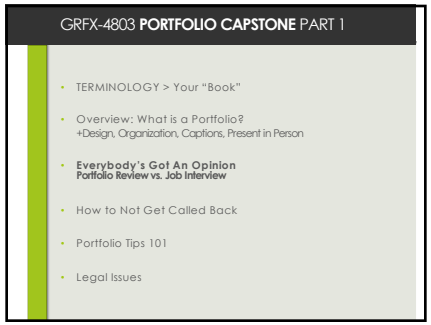

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18

Portfolio Review vs. Job Interview

- Go to as many **Portfolio Reviews** as you can to get opinions from many different professionals.
- The first one you go to may (will) be painful and you will think you are worthless and feel that nobody taught you anything that was worthwhile.
- The next one will be great and you'll realize that maybe it's ok.
- Then by the third one, you will realize these are like critiques and it's all about asking **WHY** people said things so that you can filter the information and improve.

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Portfolio Review vs. **Job Interview**

- It's all about you presenting your work in order to fit into their organization and the position they need to fill/work they need done.
- They will likely not say anything good or bad.
  You will get the job or you won't.

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Portfolio Review vs. Job Interview

- "The portfolio review can be one of the more stressful parts of your career. It can be tough to take criticism and hear things you may not want to about your work.
- A good portfolio review will make you better and it is just as important to understand how to receive a review as it is to give a good one."

"Tips and Advice for a Design Portfolio Review," Design Shack – https://designshack.net/articles/business-articles/tips-and-advice-for-a-design-portfolio-review/

23

Portfolio Review / Job Interview

- The "**informational interview**" is a portfolio review that you hope leads to a job interview.
- It's easier to ask someone for an informational interview ["please look through my portfolio and provide advice"] because job interviews are only available when jobs are there to fill.
- Assuming your work is great, the interviewer will remember your work. This begins a relationship where the person will give your name to others who are looking for a full-time/contract designer now or in the future.
- It is the CORE of networking.

24

Eventually you will have a lot more work…

- This class will help you edit your portfolio to the best it can be **right now**. ☺
- It will also teach you HOW to create your best portfolio because it should grow with you.
- BUT ALWAYS for an interview, **RESEARCH BEFORE YOU GO**. Edit your portfolio to best fit the target job/interviewer.

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Remember…

- **Your book is never a finished project**:
  You will constantly need to update and revamp it to reflect the job market and your skill set.
- While it's true that developing an online portfolio requires significant time and effort, consider it a **long-term career investment**.

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There are many opinions about what **to** do.

But there are some things everyone agrees you just should **not** do.

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ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ARE BAD.

HOW: "Top 10 Portfolio Faux Pas," by The Creative Group : https://www.howdesign.com/design-career/portfolio-faux-pas/

30

HOW to NOT GET CALLED BACK

☹ Not having an online portfolio.

- If you have landed a job interview, it's really more about **how you fit with the team**.
- You wouldn't be asked in if they hadn't seen your work online already.
  - *Exceptions: Your reputation preceded you from some awards show, etc. or somebody recommended you directly to this person.*
- Sometimes people don't even ask to look at your portfolio in an interview (!!!).

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HOW to NOT GET CALLED BACK – DEPENDING ON YOUR SPECIALTY & AFTER THIS PANDEMIC…WHO KNOWS!!!

☹ Only having an online portfolio.

- "Most design firms want **evidence** of your ability to produce excellent work online—in addition to a book you can show them in person.
- **But HOW you present that portfolio is important**.
  - In a survey by our firm, 65% of advertising and marketing executives said they preferred a bound book or **separate container with loose pieces inside**."
- This class will provide you with a digital book.
- **EXTRA CREDIT in 2022:** and a separate container with a fewer than 5 loose tangible pieces inside. PRINTED process books are nice to have in here!

HOW: "Top 10 Portfolio Faux Pas," by The Creative Group : https://www.howdesign.com/design-career/portfolio-faux-pas/

33

HOW to NOT GET CALLED BACK

☹ An online portfolio that takes forever to download.

- **"Don't make me wait for your portfolio to download. I won't."**
- Skip musical introductions (they used to be a thing). It takes too long, it's annoying, and you probably don't have the copyright anyway.
- Animated logos are nice*, but only if they are quick and perfectly crafted. Some designers still love them, but many are over them. *on your home page as it loads.

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HOW to NOT GET CALLED BACK

☹ A sloppy book.

- Whether digital or tangible, it must **flow well**.
- It should match seamlessly with your explanation (captions and spoken).
- All tangible items must have **perfect craft**.

HOW: "Top 10 Portfolio Faux Pas," by The Creative Group : https://www.howdesign.com/design-career/portfolio-faux-pas/

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HOW to NOT GET CALLED BACK

☹ Misspelling.

- (diskuss)

HOW: "Top 10 Portfolio Faux Pas," by The Creative Group : https://www.howdesign.com/design-career/portfolio-faux-pas/

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HOW to NOT GET CALLED BACK

☹ Providing "over the hill" examples.

- Don't include dated items in your portfolio, unless they're from a particularly high-profile project/client.
- No hiring manager wants to see a logo from a college project you created 15 years ago. Instead, include only pieces from within the last three years.

^^^ Most of you don't need to worry about this YET. But you will...

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HOW to NOT GET CALLED BACK

☹ Not customizing your portfolio to the client's needs.

- When preparing your book, make the samples specific to the project type, industry, and client.

(why you RESEARCH before an interview!)

^^^ Most of you don't have enough great work to target well yet, but you must understand how you will do this in the future. And WHY.

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HOW to NOT GET CALLED BACK

☹ Not customizing your portfolio to the client's needs. (cont.)

- ^^^ **For example**, if you are applying to a job as an illustrator who also knows design, then be sure you have illustrations as the main part of your book.

But if you're applying for a design job at an ad agency, your illustrations take less priority. Instead you need more work that shows you think strategically and understand marketing and campaigns within multiple platforms (social media, TV, print, merchandising, etc.)

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HOW to NOT GET CALLED BACK

☹ Not telling a "story."

- The way you arrange your portfolio and present it is just as important as the pieces you include.
- Your samples should **spark conversation** about your **contributions to previous employers**. Ultimately, your book should **tell a story** about the value you provided clients over the years.
- Always be sure to strike a balance between:
  - showing any **challenges you overcame** and
  - **not** coming across as **a prima donna**.

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HOW to NOT GET CALLED BACK

☹ Not telling a "story."

- I will teach you **HOW to tell stories** so that you do not come across as little babies with no experience.
  - For example, you **don't say** "For this class, I had to..." you **say something like**, "In this campaign, the strategy behind the design speaks to..." or "the question I asked in prototyping this answer per the audience" >> No "school", "class", "teacher", "assignment", "had to", etc.

HOW: "Top 10 Portfolio Faux Pas," by The Creative Group : https://www.howdesign.com/design-career/portfolio-faux-pas/

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HOW to NOT GET CALLED BACK

☹ Creating an unsolved mystery.

- Be sure to **clearly identify** each piece in your book and online.
- Be able to **speak about** this.
  - Positive **reactions** by clients (or internship managers) are often great stories to add.
  - Try to give **numbers** (profit margins, growth in sales, etc.) if you can, but only if you can do so with confidence of their truthfulness.

HOW: "Top 10 Portfolio Faux Pas," by The Creative Group : https://www.howdesign.com/design-career/portfolio-faux-pas/

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HOW to NOT GET CALLED BACK

☹ Trying to sound smart. (or not sounding smart enough.)

- Use powerful **words** the interviewee understands.
  - If you use words from their vocabulary, make sure YOU understand them.
    - Objective. Marketing Strategy. Audience. Target Market. Analytics. ROI.
    - Design Thinking. Prototyping. The User Experience or the User Interface. The Design System.
    - Human-Centered Design. Behaviorism. Controlling the Read.
    - Offset vs. Digital Press. CMYK RGB PMS Hexadecimal. Paper Stock. Binding choice. Press Check.
    - Copywriting vs. Copyright. Branding vs. Logo.

HOW: "Top 10 Portfolio Faux Pas," by The Creative Group : https://www.howdesign.com/design-career/portfolio-faux-pas/

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HOW to NOT GET CALLED BACK

☹ Being an annoying person.

- **People hire people**, not portfolios. (But portfolios are the first step, obviously.)
- Annoying:
  - Diva
  - Child
  - Interrupter
  - Lack of intelligence
  - Offensive
  - Can't hold a conversation
  - Can't take direction
  - Has no self-direction

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

THE MOST IMPORTANT TIP:

- Your portfolio is a living thing.
- It must evolve with you and adapt to every interview.*

*And review if you can.

50

PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

- **You'll probably be judged by your weakest work**— so make sure everything you include speaks well to your abilities.

51

PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

"PORTFOLIO MATH"

- **10-12 "pieces"** in a tangible "book"
  - More online.

52

PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

"PORTFOLIO MATH" (cont.)

- For example, ad campaigns (under one Big Idea) created in my Ad Design class:
  - 3 print ads, 5 social media posts, t-shirt, mug, website = 1 (maybe 1 ½)
- You need to have **10-12 "pieces"** per my Portfolio Math approved to pass this class.
  - You should have almost all (80%) fully approved (minus captions) by Spring Break. >>

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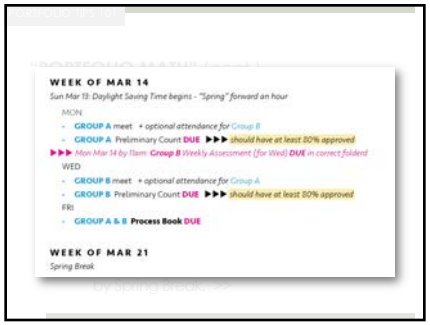

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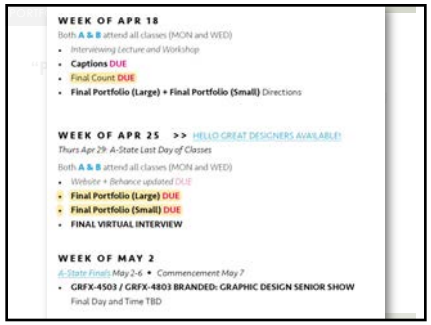

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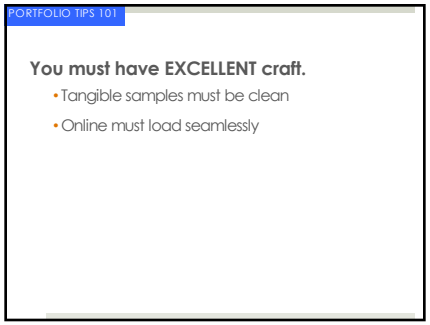

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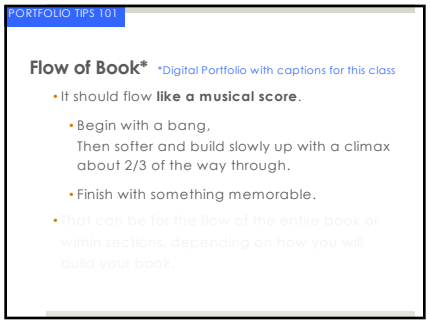

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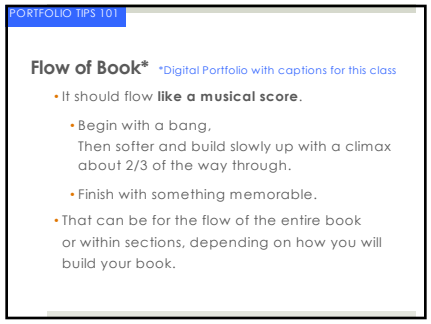

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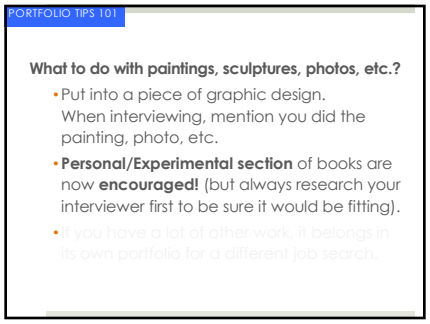

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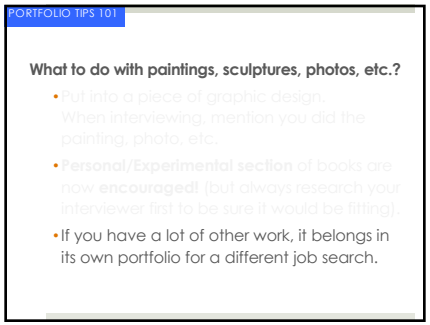

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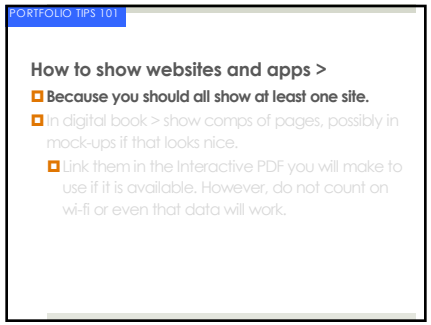

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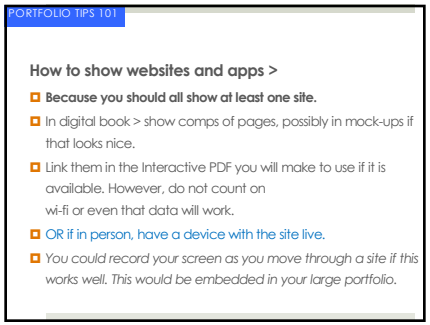

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

How to show websites (cont.)>

- Online must/should link to an actual page, regardless of domain name.
- The majority need to be live in some way.
- Only show so many comps.

- If you claim you write code, then DO NOT use a CMS site.

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

How to show apps >

- Again, show flat versions. Be sure your navigation is obvious, as this is a major part of user experience.
- Try to have the comp link* to something that XD (or Sketch, etc.) provides for sharing.

- OR if in person, have a device with the app ready to be used.
- *You could record your screen as you move through a site if this works well. This would be embedded in your large portfolio.*

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Does my portfolio work need to be real?

- **No.** It's nice, but not necessary.
- **Great work is much more important than produced work.** This will hold true throughout the majority of your career; however, you will hopefully have work that does both the better jobs you get.

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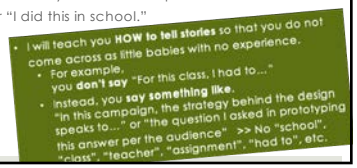
PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Does my portfolio work need to be real? (cont.)

- Think of your own **(made up) clients** or **redesign existing** work.
- Do not say "I made this up" or "I did this in school."



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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Does my portfolio work need to be real? (cont.)

- Work produced at an **internship**, etc. in a book is great to include if the work is great.
- If it's something like a yellow pages ad, just keep it for your records but don't bother to show.

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Should I use work I did from my graphic design classes at A-State?

School work is a nice starting point, but **you must improve it.** Take your **best*** work and try again now that you have developed your talents. No more than half of your work should come from A-State classes this semester.

***best:**

- You received an A, especially in upper-level classes you have taken recently.
- You earned an Addy for anything.
- You worked for a client.

69

PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Should I use work I did from my graphic design classes at A-State?

School work is a nice starting point, but **you must improve it.** Take your **best*** work and try again now that you have developed your talents. **No more than half of your final work should come from A-State classes this semester.**

*best:

- You received an A, especially in upper-level classes you have taken recently.
- You earned an Addy for anything.
- You worked for a client.

70

PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Should I use work I did from my graphic design classes at A-State? (cont.)

You may put forth your best class work in assessments, *but **always suggest how you could improve it.***

Example:

- If it is just a poster (or similar ONE item), **give it "legs"**. Add a ticket. Add a POS (point-of-sale) banner. Add a web page. Etc. Lots of easy-to-add pieces that instantly make the ONE piece not a school project and instead, shows you can think Big Idea.

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Should I include a Process Book*?

YES.

No, really. You are **required** to create at least **1 process book** using Adobe Spark Page.
Highly recommended extra credit to professionally print a version also.

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Should I include a Process Book? (cont.)

- Who the client is
- The problem you were brought in to work on
- Your approach
  - Research (why, how, cite)
  - Ideas (high-quality sketches)
  - Revise (critique/feedback)
  - Final
- The results (in a clear format)
- What this meant for the rest of the project

• More on this later when I introduce this as a class project with a project sheet. ☺

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Should I include a Process Book? (cont.)

*Or for **UI**/UX:*

- Who the client is
- The problem
- Who you worked with
- What tools you used
- Discovery phases (how did you go about solving the problem)
- The process you used to overcome the problem: lo-hi wireframes, prototypes, sketches, personas, user journeys, and research
- The final outcome (both of your work, and what happened after it was handed over, e.g. to a UI designer or developer!)

• More on this later when I introduce this as a class project with a project sheet. ☺

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Is the portfolio I present in an interview and my portfolio online the same thing?

Kinda.

- The flow and the amount of work you can include are different.
- **More for your online than in a book.**
- The digital portfolio is more like the linear flow of a book than your website.

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Is the portfolio I present in an interview and my portfolio online the same thing?

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Things designers tend to look for:

- **Typography**
  - If you are not good at typography, you are not a good designer. End of explanation.
- Details like **spelling**, **alignment**, **color** choice, **craft**
- **Originality**

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Things designers tend to look for (cont.)**:**

- **Logos**
  - They very quickly tell what kind of designer you are.
  - **If you are great at logos**, your designs are most likely pretty strong.
  - **If your logos are weak**, your designs might be strong.

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Things designers tend to look for (cont.)**:**

- **Awards**? From what/whom?
- If they know you are a student, **they will recognize assignments** and know what you were supposed to learn. SO do not use assignments and if you do, make sure they are GREAT.
- Are you **competition**? ☺

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

- **Things advertising creative directors and art directors look for:**
  - Everything designers do, but even more to **concept**, **strategy**, and **Big Idea**.
  - **Copywriting** skills?
  - Awareness of **social media** and its use in strategy.

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

- **Things advertising creative directors and art directors look for** (cont.)**:**
  - Between a logo and a campaign, a **campaign** would interest them more. But logos are still very important.
  - Your **Big Idea(s)**. How does an idea carry over multiple executions?
    - One ad is fine. How does a campaign idea carry over multiple mediums *and* have multiple executions under the campaign strategy.

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

- **Things UI/UX designers tend to look for:**
  - Your **process** and **problem-solving**
  - **Typography**
  - Details like **spelling**, **alignment**, **color** choice, **craft**
  - **Results**
  - **Apps**
    - The more towards web/app/game design, the more with your own **code** (though everyone borrows bits of code).

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Things non-designers tend to look for:

- Are you **professional** in the interview?
- **Spelling**.
- If you can **write**, it is something to which they can relate and will attach to this. So if you wrote a great headline(s), point it out to them!
- **Awards?** Wow.
- For what **clients** have you worked?

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PORTFOLIO TIPS 101

Things non-designers tend to look for (cont.):

- Your skill with **print, web, apps** – what can you produce?
- Awareness of **social media** and its use in strategy. **Can you create content?**
- Can you illustrate? Take photos? Other cool stuff that makes you that much better than everyone else?

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GRFX-4803 **PORTFOLIO CAPSTONE** PART 1

- TERMINOLOGY > Your "Book"
- Overview: What is a Portfolio?
  +Design, Organization, Captions, Present in Person
- Everybody's Got An Opinion
  Portfolio Review vs. Job Interview
- How to Not Get Called Back
- Portfolio Tips 101
- **Legal Issues**

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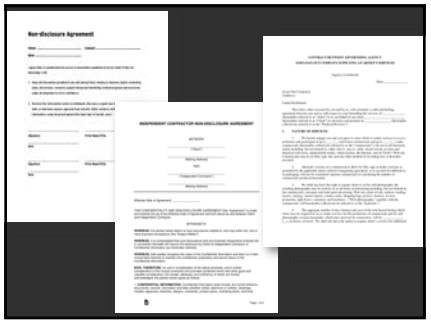
NON-DISCLOSURE Agreement

- "Remember that document you signed before you joined [at your internship or job], called and NDA (Non-Disclosure Agreement)?
- **This contract prohibits you from disclosing any proprietary information**, technical data, trade secrets or know-how, **including** but not limited to, **designs**, technology, research, product plans, products, services, customers, markets, software, marketing or other business information…So pretty much everything."

- https://uxdesign.cc/is-nda-in-the-way-of-your-design-career-5-ways-to-navigate-around-it-215176beca567

86



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Suggestions to get around **NDA**:

- **Ask for permission** to show work. Often ok if it's already out.
- **Remove confidential information**.
  - Blur the client logo.
  - Replace the client logo/name with a fake one.
  - Replace real data with fake data (UI/UX).
  - Protect your portfolio with a password.
  - Do side project or fake work. ☺
- **Just show it**, knowing that you're breaching the NDA.
  - IF you leaked confidential information = RISKY
  - IF the company is suffering damage = RISKY
  - IF there's relationship between the leak and damage = BIG TROUBLE.

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NON-COMPETE Clause/Agreement

- "A non-compete clause is generally put in place to ensure that the employee or the contractor doesn't try to compete with the client. That covers all kinds of 'conflicting activities.'
- But basically, a **non-compete is there to ensure that you won't be working with the enemy**. Companies don't want people that are working for them also helping the competition – there is potential conflict of interest there."

- https://www.freelancermap.com/freelancer-tips/12122-freelancers-sign-noncomplete-clauses

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Non-Compete : the most important details

- **Geographical scope**
  - Local is ok.
  - National is too much (usually, but depends).
- **Who qualifies as a "competitor"?**
  - To not create work for another candle-maker is ok.
  - To not create work for anyone who produces a light source is not.
- **Timeframe**
  - Lightest version would be for the duration of the contract.
  - Up to one year is even common.
  - More than a year and that's not usually ok.

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OTHER Legal Issues

- If you didn't create the **photo** or the **illustration**, you should credit it within the caption or some other way.
  - Don't make a huge deal of it. Many don't do it at all. But you should.
  - Or **YOU** create the photo or illustration.
- **If a major portion of the work IS the style** of the illustration or photo, rethink including in your portfolio UNLESS you are an art director working on a large campaign. (Then it's understood.)

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TAKE A BREAK!

RETURN TO CLASS FOR MORE. ☺

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