

Guidelines for the Urban and Regional Studies MPortfolio

Why an Online Portfolio?

- Provide majors with a way to keep electronic examples of coursework, to share with potential employers, graduate schools, or other future endeavors;
- Help you recognize and synthesize your own learning from the major and reflect on intellectual growth and evolution;
- Encourage a sense of ownership over your intellectual growth and to help you make choices about your future;
- Help faculty review and assess the URST program goals and strengthen the program for future students.

Getting Started

Begin by looking over our URST MPortfolio example, which also contains most of the steps below:

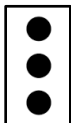
<https://sites.google.com/umich.edu/urst-portfolio-template/urst-portfolio-overview>

Create a [Google Drive](#) folder (for example titled My URST Portfolio Documents) if you haven't already, and place any presentations, images, papers, etc. in this folder so it is easier for you to add links to them. [Later, when you are ready to add chosen items to your site:

1. Go to that file and copy the URL, then go back to your Google Site page
2. Put your cursor where you would like the link to the file
3. Type in the text that you would like to display
4. Select that text, then click the link icon in the toolbar
5. Paste the URL of the file from your Google Drive folder.]

Creating Your Version of the Urban & Regional Studies Portfolio

- Make sure you are logged into your umich email account
- Go to this page: <https://sites.google.com/umich.edu/umd-ursportfolio-yourcopy?usp=sharing>



Click on the three dots icon and choose "Make a Copy"; rename your copy including your name, for example *Jane Addams URST Portfolio*

Adding Content

- Use the Google Sites help for instructions on adding text and images, and changing the layout
- We suggest that you put all of your images in a single folder to make it easier to find items
- Use Themes (in the right pane) to stay consistent in your fonts and font size across all of the pages in your site
- Access the UM-Dearborn logos [here](#)

Add New Page

- Click on **Pages** in the right side tab and then click on the **Plus** icon at the bottom to add a new page
- Give it a title under the *Name* box

- Add text and images as outlined in this template using the instructions in the previous section
- You can add a subpage by clicking on the 3 little dots of that page when hovering your cursor over it under the Pages tab
- Keep adding new pages and the appropriate content as needed

Publish Your Site

- When you are ready to share your site with your faculty member, you must publish your site
- You can set the link to whatever you want - be professional, such as *um-dearborn-j-doe-ur-st-portfolio*
- Change **Who can view my site** to your faculty member, the University, or Public, depending on what you want

Finally, share your site with the URST Director as soon as you have created your site. You can share your site with the Director before you have finished archiving your work and writing reflections. But make sure to return to the site and complete all the sections by 5pm on the last day of classes.

Requirements and Process

Your archives may include papers, projects, presentation slides, digital projects, maps, work from internships, etc. You can also use examples of group work to explain collaboration in a team or community-based work. Portfolios cannot include exam answers or book reviews. Images are optional.

The portfolio reflections will not be graded but must be satisfactory to the URST Director – that is, your portfolio must meet all the stated requirements and be written clearly and be proofread for grammar and typographical errors. It must be completed **no later than 5pm on the last day of classes** for which you intend to graduate.

MPortfolios Must Include:

Archives

Archives must include at least 5 examples of previous coursework, including but not limited to:

- Your reflection assignment from URST 300
- At least one assignment from URST 450 or other capstone seminar
- At least one assignment or example of work from community-based learning, such as a Community-Engaged or Academic Service-Learning (ASL) course, an internship, or independent study
- Additional examples of coursework from URST electives

Written Reflections

The Portfolio must also include four written reflections on archived assignments of your choice, as well as a fifth overview reflection of your experience in the major. Each length will vary but are recommended at minimum 200 words each. Specific question prompts are provided to guide your reflection writing in each section of the portfolio. First write the four individual reflections and then write the overview of the entire portfolio, which is a reflection on your overall path of coursework. The specific prompts are also posted at the end of this document.

Reflection Prompts

You do not need to answer every question in the prompt, but rather use the questions to summarize your learning.

1. Demonstrate your knowledge of major processes of urbanization and features of urban life

How does the coursework you've chosen demonstrate your knowledge of major processes of urbanization and features of urban life? How are the selected papers evidence of your ability to compare features of cities and urban life? For example, do these papers use patterns relevant for understanding cities, urbanization, or the challenges facing residents across different contexts?

Describe what you learned about how and why cities and regions change. For example, highlight how your coursework shows a relationship between the natural and built environment and urban development, or patterns of social interaction within cities.

2. Demonstrate your ability to critically analyze relationships between urban problems, policies, and governance.

How has your coursework in URS informed your understanding of the importance of identity and inequality in urban and regional politics and policy, historically and in the contemporary context? Use your paper or project to show your learning on issues of racial and income inequality, dynamics of gender identity and space, issues of immigration and migration, and/or legal or informal geographic boundaries. What did you learn from the assignment about structures of governance at local, state, and national levels in shaping urban policy and human outcomes (social, environmental, etc.)? In what ways have local communities attempted to influence urban and regional change through programs, policies, or social behavior?

3. Provide evidence of your interdisciplinary research experience, such as use of sources, writing skills, and/or mapping skills if applicable.

Describe how the examples of coursework came from different disciplinary approaches (economic, historical, political, sociological, etc.) and engage different theoretical and empirical methods. How did your research questions develop in the process of working on these assignments? What research skills did you build in the process of writing this paper or completing this project? How has use of these approaches informed your understanding of urban issues?

4. **Provide evidence of your experience in academic service-learning, internships or other community-based research experiences**

Specifically drawing from the coursework you have provided, explain why you think community-based research collaboration is central to the study of urban issues and problems. What has your engagement with community groups taught you about urban communities, the research process, social dynamics, or knowledge production? How did you learn through the process of collaboration with other students and/or community organizations in the development of this work? Consider using a specific example of interaction or learning in the field to illustrate your personal or intellectual growth.

5. **Overview.** Use the following questions to reflect on the path of coursework through the major that brought you to the present moment. You do not need to answer every question but rather use the questions to help craft a summary of your path and learning. *Try to limit your content to one screen in length.*

- What track did you pursue in your URST major and why?
- What interests and learning in courses or outside of courses led to that decision?
- What topics and approaches to urban studies within that track did you find most compelling?
- Look back at your initial reflection paper for URS 300 for inspiration on your growth.
- In the process of following coursework for your track, what changed in your thinking and what skills did you develop along the way (writing, presenting, forms of analysis, mapping, community collaboration, etc.?)
- What interests and concerns arose for you related to urban studies? How has the meaning of “urban” changed during your coursework?
- What do you now see as the future for cities and their residents and what professional role do you envision for yourself in that future?
- How does your work in URS reflect who you are as a person and as a professional?