Digital Portfolio
Curriculum Sample

Course Overview

In this course, students will learn how to plan and build a Wix portfolio website to showcase their skills, work, and experiences. Students will employ communication, branding, and web design skills to create an effective website that demonstrates their accomplishments and promotes their personal brand. The course culminates in students launching a portfolio website that they may continue to shape after the course is completed, ideally throughout their careers.

Who This Is For:

The lesson plans, assignments, and learning activities contained in this curriculum are designed for the following audiences:

- Students participating in a career development course or program
- Upper-division students preparing to attend career fairs or apply to internships/entry-level positions
- Students enrolled in a FIrst Year Experience program
- Faculty designing courses with a project-based or integrative learning focus who want to use portfolios as an alternative form of assessment
- Faculty who want to integrate digital skills and career preparation in courses
- Career services professionals creating career development programming
- Career services professionals interested in resources to help students develop core career competencies.

Course Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of the course, students will have gained the following skills:

- **Innovation and Project Management**: Students will initiate a flexible, long-term project to plan, organize, design, and build a portfolio website. Students will acquire the necessary skills for communicating their accomplishments and experiences with a professional online presence.

- **Research and Collaboration**: Students will define goals and uses of an online portfolio, compare and assess model portfolios, solicit and provide feedback.

- **Critical Thinking and Personal Assessment**: Students will identify communicative elements, apply insights to personal work, and make

decisions about conveying their personal brand through their site content and design.

- **Technical Design**: Students will understand and utilize Wix Editor and accompanying apps, investigate and incorporate layout and design elements consistently, design consistent pages, design for a specific audience and purpose.
- **Career Development**: Students will practice strategies for career planning and professional development in college and beyond.

Course Preview
Unit 1: Plan Your Digital Portfolio
Week 1: Introduction to Digital Portfolios
>Session 1: The Digital Portfolio and Your Career Journey
>Session 2: Define Your Portfolio Goals

Week 2: Plan Your Site
>Session 1: Define Your Site Visitors
>Session 2: Organize Site Content

Week 3: Personal Branding
>Session 1: Find Your Style
>Session 2: Develop Your Personal Brand

Week 4: Finalize Your Site Plans
>Session 1: Tell Your Story through the Homepage
>Session 2: Unit 1 Conclusion and Peer Reviews

Sample Lesson Plan: The "About Me" Statement
Learning Objectives

- Students will identify characteristics of successful 'About Me" statements.
- Students will plan an effective "About Me" statement that summarizes their skills and represents their personal brand.

Notes on the Curriculum

- Each class session is divided into a lecture, small or whole class discussion, and an in-class activity. Often, the in-class activity will need to be completed

for homework. Adaptations or alternative versions of discussions or activities will be provided in the activity instructions.
- Lecture Notes are helpful suggestions for what you might say at that point in the class, and provide an overall structure for the flow of the lesson.
- If something is labeled "*Instructor→*" in italics, that indicates a moment when the instructor needs to take action and should engage the class in a brief Q&A, put students into discussion groups, demonstrate website features etc. Each *Instructor→* tag provides detailed directions for what to do at that point in the lesson.

Lecture: How to Write Professional Statements About Yourself

Challenging as it may be to talk about yourself and your work, your life as a professional will demand that you be able to do this well. People are going to ask you to introduce yourself, talk about your projects, your experience, and your way of working.

We are going to practice how to write about ourselves and our work by starting small, with the "About Me" statement. An "About Me" statement is a short paragraph in which you introduce yourself. Typically, people place their "About Me" statement on the "About" page of their professional website, as well as on their social media pages and other networking platforms. Your "About Me" statement could also take the form of a short personal introduction on your homepage.

Depending on your audience and goals, your "About Me" statement can highlight your personal interests, your professional achievements, or a mix of both. Here are some elements an about me statement might include:
- Job title or workplace
- University degree and other qualifications
- Hometown or city of residence
- Personal or professional goals
- Mission statement and values
- Skills and expertise
- Interests and hobbies

The goal of writing your "About Me" statement is to provide people with a snapshot of who you are. And the most effective ones are both professional and concise. Here's how to write an "About Me" statement that suits your portfolio site:

Introduce yourself: State your first name and last name (sounds obvious, but you'd be surprised). Choose whether you want to introduce yourself in the first or third person, i.e. "My name is Samantha Green" vs. "Samantha Green is…"

- There isn't an exact rule about whether first or third person is better; since the "About Me" statement is a piece of personal writing, first person is acceptable. Sometimes, depending on the field you are studying or working in, third person can sound more professional or formal. You will also see people with long work histories use third person. But it really all comes down to the tone of voice you want to use and how you want to reflect your personal brand through your writing.

State your company/brand name/who you work for/where you go to school: Think about whether you want your bio to represent yourself on a personal level, or whether you'd like it to come across as more professional. If you have a personal brand or business - for example, a blog, freelance business or eCommerce site - be sure to mention your brand name at the beginning of your bio. Don't be afraid if the name sounds simple or redundant. It's perfectly fine, for instance, to say *Mary Smith is the founder and CEO of Smith Digital.*

- Likewise, feel free to mention the name of another company or brand that you work for if you'd like to associate it with your professional accomplishments - e.g., *Mary Smith is a consultant at Google and the founder and CEO of Smith Digital.*

- If you are still in school, mention what school you attend, your area of study and what year you are at in your study, ie *"Mary Smith is a junior at Westphalia University, where she is pursuing a degree in astrophysics with a minor in Russian literature."*

Discuss your passions and values: This is one of the most important elements to focus on as you write your "About Me" statement because it is the place where you bring everything together to highlight your personal brand.

- Remember your personal branding worksheet? Use it to think about the values and passions underlying your work, as well as your professional

philosophy. What gets you up in the morning? What's the driving force behind what you do?

- You can also think of this part of your "About Me" as a kind of mission statement. Perhaps your mission is to serve others, contribute to society, grow your expertise or learn new skills. Whatever your reasons, expanding upon these ideas can help your audience get a better understanding of what truly matters to you.

Explain your current professional role OR the professional role you want to pursue after graduation: Briefly explain your current position, if you have one. This is relevant whether you're a beginner in your field or a high-level specialist, and it can be similar to the description you have on your resume. Alternatively, you can explain what role or position you want to pursue in your field of study, which helps paint a picture of who you are and what you have to offer.

> *Ex. As an astrophysicist, Mary values analyzing data of satellites and telescopes, and use theoretical models to compare this data and align images"*

> *Ex. Hello! I'm Mary Smith, an astrophysics major at Westphalia University and an aspiring aeronautics engineer.*

Include professional achievements: Highlight milestones that make you stand out. Even if you haven't won an award or gained external recognition, you can discuss ways in which you've contributed new ideas or approaches to emphasize what you bring to the table. You can refer to your "Brainstorming Site Content" worksheets for help with this.

Mention Your Personal Interests: The most effective short bios will not only focus on your professional experience, but will also touch on what you like to do in your spare time. Consider mentioning:
- Your family
- Your hometown
- Your hobbies
- Side projects you're working on

Transitioning to a more casual discussion of who you are outside of work is a great way to conclude your bio. This will present you as a more well-rounded person while making you relatable for your audience.

Here are some more writing tips to keep in mind when writing your "About Me" statement:

- **Keep it concise:** Your bio should be sufficiently explanatory, but it should also be short and to the point. A good rule of thumb is to keep each element of your bio - from your job description to your mission statement and hobbies - to about 1-2 sentences. That way, you'll end up with a brief paragraph that holds your readers' attention without rambling on.

- **Consider your audience:** The voice and tone you choose for your "About Me" statement largely depends on your audience and personal goals. If you're looking for a job and are writing primarily for recruiters, you'll want to use a serious, professional tone. On the other hand, if you're creating an Instagram bio, consider using more casual, conversational language that reflects your personality. Try to avoid using extremely professional jargon that other people outside your circle won't understand. Same goes for buzzwords—just like trends, you shouldn't use them if they don't work for you personally.

- **Link to your website:** When writing a bio for a platform other than your own website - a social media page, another company page, or a guest blog or publication - remember to include a link to your website. This will help you promote your website while highlighting your professionalism and authority.

- **Adapt for different platforms:** You'll most likely need to adapt the length and writing style of your biography to suit different platforms. For example, you may place a longer bio on your website's About page and a shorter one on your LinkedIn page. In these cases, use the same main principles for writing a bio while scaling down the most important elements.

Coming up with a personal description might seem tough. But there are times when it's essential, and by following these tips, you can create a powerful "About Me" statement that helps you stand out in your field and allows your audience to get to know you better.

Activity: What's the Story? (15-20 mins, with 5 for sharing findings)

Note for Instructors: In an online, asynchronous class, you can simply provide these websites as examples of "About Me" statements by real students, and ask students to view the sites and analyze their About Me statements on their own. You could also turn this into a writing assignment for the class discussion board.

Instructions: Let's analyze an About Me statement from a Wix site. Navigate to each of the student portfolio websites below. Then, use the questions below to assess whether their homepage and About Me statements tell a successful story about the site creator. Then, put together a diagnosis that explains in a few sentences how the site's "About Me" statement excels and/or what it could do better. Be prepared to share your diagnosis with the class.
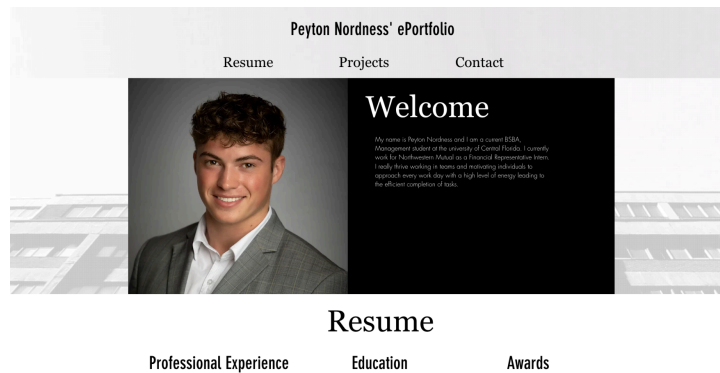
[Peyton Nordness](), Management, University of Central Florida
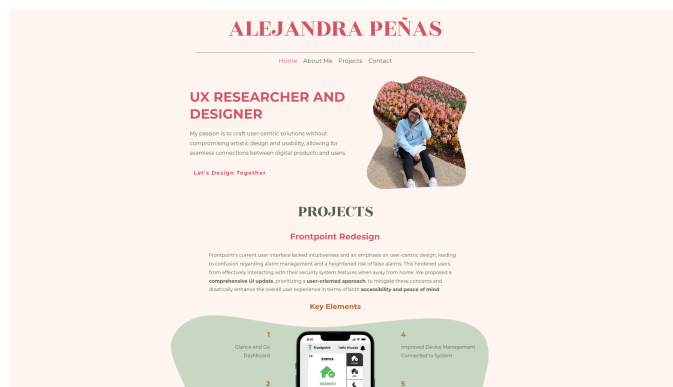
[Alejandra Penas,]() Mathematics, Florida International University

- *Who is the site creator? Do they clearly answer the question "Who are you"? Why or why not?*

- *Can you identify what the site creator does/why their website exists?*
- *Is it clear how to move through the site based on the homepage? Is there a CTA and what is it telling you to do next?*
- *Does the homepage reflect the site creator's personal brand? How would you describe their brand in 3 words?*

Homework: "About Me" Statement Template

Fill out the template below to begin drafting your "About Me" statement. Refer back to the lecture points and website examples to use as models for your own short sentences. You may also adapt material from your "Personal Branding" worksheet. Once you've filled in this template, put it all together into a single paragraph to create an initial framework for your "About Me" statement.

Sentence 1: [Name] is a [job title] who [job description].
E.g., Lisa Green is an English teacher who teaches beginning to advanced literature courses for 10th and 11th grade students at Bloomfield High School.

E.g. My name is Shannon Scott, and I am a senior at the University of Chicago, where I study biology and chemistry.

Sentence 2: [Name] believes that [why you do the work you do].
E.g., Lisa believes that written and analytical skills are not only a fundamental part of academic excellence, but are also the building blocks of critical thinking in high school and beyond.

Sentence 3: [Name/pronoun] has [mention your achievements].
E.g., In addition to managing the English curriculum for the school, she runs an after school program where she works one-on-one with students.

Sentence 4: [Name/pronoun] is a [mention any relevant awards, training or honors].
E.g., She has also been nominated Teacher of the Year for two consecutive years.

Sentence 5: [Name/pronoun] holds a [insert degree] in [field of study] from [university].
E.g., Lisa holds a BA in Creative Writing and a Master's Degree in Teaching from the University of Michigan.