Doctor of Philosophy in Theology

Villanova University | Department of Theology and Religious Studies

Portfolio Manual

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Contents

1 The Portfolio

2. The portfolio is an academic archive, a comprehensive, organized, and cumulative electronic record of the breadth and depth of a student's accomplishments over time in coursework, research, teaching, and other academic and professional experiences in the program. The student's continuation in the doctoral program is based on three reviews of the materials included in the portfolio. The essays written for the reviews are focal points of the included materials. These essays invite personal reflection and evidence the student's integration of their educational experiences in service of their post-graduation vocation as informed by Villanova's Augustinian character. In these reviews, doctoral faculty assess the student's accomplishments and goals and discuss with the student possible modifications or additional work needed to facilitate continued progress in the program. The review meeting is not a comprehensive examination or a summative assessment activity but a formative assessment activity. Thus, the ethos of the conversation intends reflection, synthesis, and further learning that enriches the student's understanding of their chief theological and pastoral concerns.

2 Learning Goals

2.1 First (Integration) Portfolio

3. The first portfolio demonstrates the student's ability to

Goal 1:   Analyze faith/culture relationship(s).
Objective A: Identify faith/culture relationship(s), with attention to the experiences of diversity/inclusion, power, privilege, and marginalization.
Objective B: Use scholarly methods for the interpretation of diverse religious/theological texts and related media.

Goal 2:   Evaluate the Christian theological tradition.
Objective A: Appraise the vocabulary, sources, beliefs, historical developments, and diversity within the Christian tradition, with attention to experiences of power, privilege, and marginalization.
Objective B: Assess the reciprocal interaction of practices and beliefs arising from the Catholic and Augustinian traditions with diverse cultural, ecumenical/interfaith, and/or local/global contexts.

Goal 3:   Apply knowledge.
Objective   Communicate effectively the relevance of theological/religious practices, concepts, and beliefs for personal, communal, societal, and global living, in service of transformative action.

2.2   Second (Synthesis) Portfolio

4. Focusing on the areas of specialization, the second portfolio demonstrates the student's ability to

Goal 1:	Evaluate faith/culture relationship(s)
Objective A:	Evaluate faith/culture relationship(s), with attention to the experiences of diversity/inclusion, power, privilege, and marginalization.
Objective B:	Use scholarly methods for the interpretation of diverse religious/theological texts and related media.

Goal 2:	Demonstrate research aptitude
Objective A:	Explain the major trends, issues, and inquiry standards in one's research specialization(s).
Objective B:	Integrate one's position in relation to one's research specialization(s) into a coherent framework of understanding.

Goal 3:	Synthesize knowledge
Objective A:	Communicate effectively the relevance of theological/religious practices, concepts, and beliefs for personal, communal, societal, and global living.
Objective B:	Articulate a vision for inquiry in the Catholic Augustinian tradition as a basis for transformative action in the world.

2.3   Third (Evaluation) Portfolio

5. The third portfolio demonstrates the student's ability to

Goal:	Evaluate knowledge
Objective A:	Critically evaluate one's professional growth and development in one's research specialization(s).
Objective B:	Clarify one's intended contributions to theological inquiry in the Catholic Augustinian tradition as a basis for transformative action in the world.
Objective C:	Formulate a cogent account of one's vision of oneself as a member of the professional community/ies of one's research specialization(s).

3   First (Integration) Portfolio

6. The first portfolio review serves as integrative examination for all students completing the first phase of the doctoral program. The materials in the portfolio document the student's general, broad knowledge based on their course work thus far. In their essays, students should attend to the prompts using the breadth of their learning in the program, appealing to what they have done in the "common curriculum" and their other course work. At the time of taking the first portfolio review, students must be in the process of completing a minimum of 48 credit hours

of course work (including transfer credits). In addition, students who register for the review must be in good academic standing.

7. <u>For students who transfer 21-30 credit hours</u> of previous course work, the first portfolio review will be waived.

3.1   Review Board

8. In the semester preceding the review, the student establishes a board consisting of three faculty members.

9. TRS Graduate Studies faculty may limit their service on portfolio review boards to a maximum of three during any given semester (including service in both the Master's and the PhD programs).

3.2   Registration and Scheduling

10. The review is administered during the week following the spring semester recess. Any variation in this schedule must be approved by the adviser. Students submit their portfolio electronically on the penultimate Friday preceding the official spring semester recess.

11. Full-time students register formally for the review no later than December 1 of their third semester in residence. Part-time students register no later than the reading day prior to the semester in which they are completing 48 credit hours of course work. Along with the registration form students submit the names of their review board members and the date and time of the review meeting. It is the students' responsibility to contact board members to identify a date and time for the review. Once the registration form has been submitted, the program coordinator will secure a location. If students do not comply with this schedule, they may be excluded from the portfolio review.

3.3   Review Meeting

12. A review meeting serves as the platform for students to explicate the material included in their portfolios. The student uses the stated learning goals of the review as the guide for preparing for the meeting. Students meet with their review boards for no longer than 70 minutes. The review begins with a portfolio presentation by the student (15 minutes in length). The presentation focuses on the student's integrative essay. It provides context and explicates the choices a student has made in writing the essay, briefly summarizes the main points, illustrates its implication(s) and concludes with the questions the student has for their review board members.

13. The following constructive conversation probes the extent to which students meet the learning goals of the review and serves as an occasion for the further development of the thoughts a student has formulated in their analytical and integrative essays. The conversation is structured in the following way: It begins with board members formulating positive feedback

by stating what they found meaningful and thought-provoking in a student's materials (10 minutes); then students ask their questions (15 minutes). During the final portion (30 minutes), board members ask the students questions that help them to further develop their ideas and provide constructive critique.

14. One of the board members serves as facilitator who initiates each step of the review meeting following the Critical Response Process Guidelines, keeps the process on track, and facilitates the dialogue between student and board members.

15. At the end of the portfolio review meeting, the board evaluates the student's performance during the portfolio review process. The evaluation is based on the two essays submitted for the portfolio review and the student's performance during the portfolio review meeting (presentation and conversation). Each student is then assigned one of three grades: pass with distinction; pass; or fail. For graduation from the program, a passing grade is required. The facilitator submits the evaluation to the adviser who sends the result of the review to the Office of Graduate Studies, which officially notifies the student.

3.4   Failure of the Review

16. In the event of a failing grade, the student may request from the adviser to retake the review. In such a case, the Personnel and Finance Committee appoints a new review board. The final decision will be based upon the verdict of the newly constituted board. The following conditions apply:

17. Students may not retake the review a second time if they fail to submit their portfolios by the deadline without prior notification of a serious situation that prevents them from submitting the portfolio; or submit incomplete portfolios.

18. A student who is permitted to re-take the review meeting must do so during the same semester by arrangement with the board members. The re-take will be scheduled no earlier than one week after receiving the grade and no later than during the penultimate week of regular classes. Paragraph 19 also applies.

19. A second failure to pass the portfolio review results in the termination from the doctoral degree program (see the relevant Office of Graduate Studies Policy). The Personnel and Finance Committee will recommend whether a terminal M.A. or M.T.S. degree may be awarded.

20. Students who violate the University's code of Academic Integrity in any part of their portfolio fail the whole portfolio review and will be handled according to the University's disciplinary procedures.

3.5   Portfolio Materials

3.5.1   Section 1: Student Information

- Current curriculum vita.
- Current unofficial Villanova transcript.

3.5.2   Section 3: Essays

- A copy of the original application essay from the admissions file.
- Analytical essay, 1000 words in length. A critical examination of the student's role and place in their coursework and profession, taking into consideration their original responses to the application essay prompts formulated at the time of applying for admission to the program.
- Integrative essay, 4000 words in length. Each student writes a thesis-driven essay on "faith engaging culture," especially in relation to Christian theological traditions. The goal of this essay is integrative and interdisciplinary: in the essay, the student makes an argument about the relationship between "faith" and "culture" by drawing on theories and methods they have encountered so far in their program (including courses, readings, papers, colloquia, and other learning experiences) and applying them to historical or contemporary examples.

3.5.4   Section 5: Course Documentation

- One artifact (textual form or another medium) from all courses taken so far, including the cultural theories/methods course.

3.5.3   Section 7: Research Documentation (Optional)

- One of the following items:

  a) Scholarly manuscript (author or co-author) of a journal article or book chapter (peer reviewed) published or accepted for publication.
  b) Comprehensive and critical literature review essay published or accepted.
  c) Paper proposed for, or presented at, a professional conference.
  d) Alternative artifact (replacing one of a-c, cf. Handbook 6.4).

4   Second (Synthesis) Portfolio

21. The second portfolio review serves as qualifying examination for all students completing the second phase of the doctoral program. The materials reviewed are reflective of the students' overall broad and deep knowledge of their areas of specialization acquired from reading, course work, research, and other academic experiences in the program. At the time of taking the review, students must have completed a minimum of 69 credit hours of course work. Full-time students normally meet this requirement in the seventh semester of residence. In addition, all students must be in good academic standing.

22. Students have the choice between two alternatives, Option A and Option B. For Option A, their competency in each area of specialization and research preparation are assessed via an area-knowledge evidence essay and a review meeting with faculty members from this area. For Option B, competency in both areas of specialization and research preparation are assessed through the preparation of a journal article draft and one review meeting with dissertation co-directors and one additional board member.

23. In the following, if policies differ based on the option chosen, it will be highlighted.

4.1   Review Board

Option A	Option B
In the semester preceding the review, the student establishes two review boards, each consisting of two faculty members of the faculty of their chosen area of specialization. The board members accompany the student in the process of reflecting on their formation in their areas of specialization and drafting their area-knowledge evidence essay.	In the semester preceding the review, the student establishes a single review board, consisting of their dissertation co-directors and one additional faculty member from any area of specialization. The three board members accompany the student in the process of choosing a research topic, and during the phase of researching and preparing a journal article with feedback and suggestions.

One of the board members serves as facilitator of the review meeting, following the steps of the Critical Response Process. TRS Graduate Studies faculty may limit their service on portfolio review boards to a maximum of three during any given semester.

4.2   Registration and Scheduling

24. The review is administered during the first two weeks of classes in the fall semester. Any variation in this schedule must be approved by the adviser. Students submit their portfolios electronically on August 10.

25. Students register for the review no later than April 15 of the semester preceding the review. Along with the registration form students submit the names of their board members and the date(s) and time(s) of the review meeting(s). It is the students' responsibility to contact all board members to identify a date and time for the review meeting(s). Once dates and times have been identified, students contact the program coordinator to secure a location. If students do not comply with this schedule, they may be excluded from the portfolio review.

4.3   Review Meeting

Option A

Option B

Two review meetings, one in each of the student's areas of specialization, serve as platforms for students to explicate the material included in their portfolio. The student uses the stated learning goals of the review as the guide in preparation for the review meeting.

Students meet with each review board for no longer than 90 minutes. The review begins with a portfolio presentation by the student (15 minutes in length). The presentation focuses on the student's area-knowledge evidence essay. It provides context and explicates the choices a student has made in writing the essay, briefly summarizes the main points, illustrates its implication(s) and concludes with the questions the student has for their review board members.

The following constructive conversation probes the extent to which students meet the learning goals of the review and serves as an occasion for the further development of the thoughts a student has formulated in their area-knowledge evidence essay. The conversation is structured in the following way: It begins with board members formulating positive feedback by stating what they found meaningful and thought-provoking in a student's materials (10 minutes); then students ask their questions (20 minutes). During the final portion (45 minutes), board members ask the students questions that help them to further develop their ideas and provide constructive critique.

At the end of the portfolio review meeting, the board evaluates the student's

One review meeting serves as a platform for students to explicate the material included in their portfolio. The student uses the stated learning goals of the review as the guide in preparation for the review meeting.

Students meet with their board for not longer than 120 minutes. The review begins with a presentation by the student (20 minutes in length). In the first part of the presentation, the student reflects on how their learning experiences in the program so far, especially in their two areas of specialization, have enabled them to undertake the research for their article and how the article fits with their dissertation research interests; the second part of the presentation focuses on the student's journal article, provides context and explicates the choices a student has made in writing the article, briefly summarizes the main points, and illustrates its implications. The presentation concludes with the questions the student has for their review board members.

The following constructive conversation probes the extent to which students meet the learning goals of the review and serves as an occasion for the further conversation about the student's reflections during the presentation and their journal article. The conversation is structured in the following way: It begins with board members formulating positive feedback by stating what they found meaningful and thought-provoking in a student's article and presentation (10 minutes); then students ask their questions (30 minutes). During the final

performance during the portfolio review process. The evaluation is based on the area-knowledge evidence essay submitted for the portfolio review and the student's performance during the portfolio review meeting (presentation and conversation). Each student is assigned one of three grades: pass with distinction; pass; or fail. If board members do not arrive at consensus within 24 hours, they will appeal to the department chair for resolution. For graduation from the program, a passing grade is required. The facilitator submits the evaluation to the adviser who sends the result of the review to the Office of Graduate Studies, which officially notifies the student.

For continuation in the Ph.D. program, the student must pass both review meetings.

portion (60 minutes), board members ask the students questions that help them to further develop their ideas and provide constructive critique.

At the end of the portfolio review meeting, the board evaluates the student's performance during the portfolio review Process. The evaluation is based on the journal article submitted for the portfolio review and the student's performance during the portfolio review meeting (presentation and conversation). Each student is assigned one of three grades: pass with distinction; pass; or fail. For graduation from the program, a passing grade is required. The facilitator submits the evaluation to the adviser who sends the result of the review to the Office of Graduate Studies, which officially notifies the student.

For continuation in the Ph.D. program, the student must pass the review meeting.

4.4   Failure of the Review

26. In the event of a failing grade, the student may request from the adviser to retake the review. In such a case, the Personnel and Finance Committee appoints new review board members. The final decision will be based upon the verdict of this second review board. The following conditions apply:

27. Students may not retake the review a second time if they fail to submit their portfolios by the deadline without prior notification of a serious situation that prevents them from submitting the portfolio; or submit incomplete portfolios. In these cases, the student will be dismissed from the program (see the relevant Office of Graduate Studies Policy).

28. A student who is permitted to re-take the review must do so during the same semester by arrangement with the board members. All re-takes will be scheduled during the official week of final examination. A second failure to pass the portfolio review results in the termination from the doctoral degree program (see the relevant Office of Graduate Studies Policy). Paragraph 19 also applies.

4.5   Portfolio Materials

- All elements included for the first portfolio review.

4.5.1   Additions to Section 1: Student Information

- Updated curriculum vita.
- Current unofficial Villanova transcript.

4.5.2   Additions to Section 3: Essays

Option A	Option B
Two area-knowledge evidence essays, one for each area of specialization, each 4000 words in length. Each scholarly essay demonstrates breadth of familiarity with, and depth of understanding of, the literature in the area (texts read for courses and selected from the area's official reading list); examines the students' position in relation to the area and to research trends and methods in the area; integrates their perspectives into a coherent framework of understanding; analyzes the relationship between faith and culture from the perspective of the area; and advances a vision for inquiry in the Augustinian tradition as both speculative and practical.	The student prepares, accompanied by their board members, a draft for a scholarly journal article not submitted previously that is ready for submission to a reputable scholarly journal at the end of the portfolio review process. The topic should be of interest to both areas of specialization and is determined in conversation with review board members; the student is encouraged to choose a topic within their field of interest for dissertation research. The article should be of sufficient length as required by the journal to which it will be submitted. The student indicates to which journal the article will be submitted. The journal article allows evaluation of a student's preparation in their areas of specialization as well as their capacity to engage in independent research, thus assessing their readiness to move on to the next step in the program, dissertation research and writing.

4.5.3   Section 4: Works Consulted Lists

Option A	Option B
Two lists of 10-20 works consulted in preparation of the two area-knowledge essays, one for each area. The texts listed here are in addition to the works cited in the essays	One list of 10-20 works consulted in preparation of the journal article. The texts listed here are in addition to the works cited in the journal article itself and provide an indication of the breadth and depth of a

themselves and provide an indication of the breadth and depth of a student's preparation for the review in each area. They might be the subject of conversation during the review meeting to clarify a student's understanding of the area of specialization, their own position in it, and the role of these texts in their research trajectory, without subjecting individual texts to an exam.	student's preparation during the research phase for the article. They might be the subject of conversation during the review meeting to clarify a student's understanding of their areas of specialization, their own position in them, and the role of these texts in their research trajectory, without subjecting individual texts to an exam.

4.5.4   Section 6: Course Documentation (Areas of Specialization)

- One artifact (textual form or another medium) from each course taken since the first portfolio review (including electives and courses on Augustine and History of the Church).

4.5.5   Additions to Section 7: Research Documentation

- Two (cumulative!) of the following items:

  a) Scholarly manuscript (author or co-author) of a journal article or book chapter (peer reviewed) published or accepted for publication.
  b) Comprehensive and critical literature review essay published or accepted.
  c) Paper proposed for, or presented at, a professional conference.
  d) Alternative artifact (replacing one of a-c, cf. Handbook 6.4).

5   Third (Evaluation) Portfolio

29. The third portfolio review serves as the final check-in point of the students' program requirements before submitting their dissertations and graduation. Students who submit their portfolios for the review must be in enrolled in the last part of the Heart of Teaching Program or have already completed the Program. Full-time students normally meet this requirement after completing the tenth semester of residence. In addition, all students must be in good academic standing.

5.1   Review Board, Scheduling, and Review of Student Learning

30. The review is administered during the first two weeks of classes in the fall semester. Any variation in this schedule must be approved by the adviser. Students submit their portfolios electronically by August 10.

31. One of the Program Co-directors evaluates the portfolio (and thus the program requirements) for completeness. If the portfolio is complete, the student receives a passing grade. An incomplete portfolio will result in a failing grade.

32. For continuation in the Ph.D. program, the student must pass the review. The adviser sends the result of the portfolio review to the Office of Graduate Studies, which officially notifies the student.

5.2   Failure of the Review

33. In the event of a failing grade, the student may request from the Department Chair to retake the review. In such a case, the Department Chair examines the materials and the final decision will be based upon the verdict of the Chair. If that decision is negative, the student may not retake the portfolio review a second time and the student will be dismissed from the program (see the relevant Office of Graduate Studies Policy). The following conditions apply:

34. Students may not retake the portfolio review a second time if they fail to submit their portfolios by the deadline without prior notification of a serious situation that prevents them from submitting the portfolio; or submit incomplete portfolios. In these cases, the student will be dismissed from the program (see the relevant Office of Graduate Studies Policy). Paragraph 19 also applies.

5.3   Portfolio Materials

- All elements included for the first and second portfolio review.

5.3.1   Additions to Section 1: Student Information

- Updated curriculum vita.
- Current unofficial Villanova transcript.

5.3.2   Additions to Section 6: Course Documentation (Areas of Specialization)

- One artifact (textual form or another medium) from each course taken since the last portfolio review.

5.3.3   Additions to Section 7: Research Documentation

- Four (cumulative!) of the following items:

  a) Scholarly manuscript (author or co-author) of a journal article or book chapter (peer reviewed) published or accepted for publication, which may include a book chapter.
  b) Comprehensive and critical literature review essay published or accepted.
  c) Paper proposed for, or presented at, a professional conference.
  d) Alternative artifact (replacing one of a-c, cf. Handbook 6.4).

5.3.4   Section 8: Dissertation Documentation

- Original dissertation proposal.

- Revised dissertation proposal (if applicable).

5.3.5   Section 9: Education Documentation

- Statement of Teaching Philosophy (as prepared for the Heart of Teaching Program or applications, if applicable).
- One undergraduate course syllabus.