**The HIST 499 Portfolio:** In HIST 301, you were introduced to four core skill areas in the history major: The Nature of Historical Inquiry, Managing Research, Historical Thinking Skills, and Presenting Knowledge and Ideas. In your coursework since that time, you have completed a variety of assignments that engaged with one or more of these skill sets – even if you didn’t know it at the time! The 499 portfolio is where you bring it all together, demonstrating how far you’ve come in mastering each of these skills.

Your portfolio is divided into two major sections: **Development** and **Mastery.**

**A. Development (40% of portfolio total):**

**1. A reflective essay** (5-8 pages):this essay explains, reflects and illustrates your development as a historian, framed around the four core skill areas. ⇒ ⇒ *See the link to the video below for tips on how to construct a good reflective essay.*

**2. The reflective essays written for History 301 & 302**

**3. Examples of work that illustrate your progress as a history major:** 3-5 examples, presumably from early in the major, that provide a sense of where you started out, including any early weaknesses in some of the core skill areas. *NOTE: You may submit lower-division work in this category*.

**B. Mastery (60% of portfolio total).** This section of the portfolio will demonstrate your level of mastery in each of the four skill areas, so select your very best demonstrations of each skill. Each of the four sections should begin with a brief cover sheet explaining what is there and how, specifically, each of those items demonstrates mastery of a particular component of that skill area.

**1. The Nature of Historical Inquiry**: 2-4 items (20%) that demonstrate your knowledge of major intellectual schools, trends, and debates within the profession; your understanding of various theoretical frameworks that historians have used over time; and your ability to recognize what historiographic or theoretical approaches a historian is using and how those approaches and/or the historian’s own context affects her or his interpretation of the evidence

* Suggestions: a historiographic essay, a book review essay with a strong historiographic component, a literature review, or a paper that pertains to the use of theory in history.

**2. Managing Research:** 2-4 items (10%) that demonstrate your ability to use library resources, including library holdings, research databases, and interlibrary loan systems (CSU+, Link+, BeachReach) to locate and retrieve primary and secondary sources; gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; and to take notes and categorize information as well as credit sources and cite them correctly.

* Suggestions: a research proposal, note cards or organized note system (including the equivalent from a reference management system such as Zotero or EndNote), annotated bibliography, writing outline.

**3. Historical Thinking Skills:** 2-4 items (20%) that demonstrate your ability to recognize, analyze, and evaluate the dynamics of historical continuity and change; to contextualize events; and to analyze the causes and consequences of events.

* Suggestions: Research papers, primary source analysis essays; exam essays (with prompt!) that require use of these concepts.

**4. Presenting Knowledge and Ideas:** 2-4 items (10%) that demonstrate your ability to present your findings clearly in both written and non-written form, using both primary and secondary sources to make a well-organized historically defensible argument; to use discipline-appropriate writing, making strategic use of both textual and non-textual media (e.g. graphic, audio, visual, or interactive elements) where appropriate to enhance an audience’s understanding of your findings, reasoning, and evidence.

* Suggestions: 499 final paper (for written presentation); an outline or notecards for oral presentation, presentation slides, oral history project, teaching unit, website or other digital humanities project (for non-written presentation)

*A few handy tips:*

* If you haven’t already done so, watch this four-minute video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1mUcVYX9YtE>), which contains suggestions on organizing your portfolio, and a by-the-numbers guide on writing the reflective essay.
* Remember that the examples above for each section are suggestions: if you have some project (A historical internship? A film analysis? A document annotation?) that you think is a good demonstration of one of these skill areas, run it by your professor – chances are, there’s probably a place for it.
* If possible, include graded work with instructor comments – especially for the “mastery” section. This helps your 499 professor evaluate the work.
* Don’t forget: it’s okay to include less-than-perfect work in your “examples of early work” section. In fact, it could work to your advantage: you point to a weakness in a particular skill early on (and this “early on” is *key* here), then to a notable improvement in that same skill in the mastery section.
* Organization counts! Most professors will make organization a part of the overall grade on the portfolio, so have things like section dividers and a table of contents (but not those little plastic envelope thingies, except for bluebook exams or other things that can’t be easily hole-punched), and the portfolio itself clearly displaying at the very least your name and class/semester on the outside of the portfolio.