

HUTCHINS SCHOOL OF LIBERAL STUDIES

LOWER DIVISION PORTFOLIO

INTRODUCTION TO THE HUTCHINS SCHOOL

The Hutchins School of Liberal Studies is a broad-based interdisciplinary program, which ranges widely across the many areas of inquiry that make up the Liberal Studies. More than just a collection of courses, the Hutchins program tries to provide the kind of educational experiences that will help students become confident of their ability to participate effectively in society. In this age of too-easy answers, well-educated citizens need to be able to think independently, but the skill is rare. For that reason, the program holds the fostering of intellectual development as one of its highest aims. So that they may develop that independence of mind, students here are given a good deal of latitude in determining the directions their education will take. Discovering how to use that latitude to shape a meaningful education is part of the challenge of Hutchins. The Hutchins School of Liberal Studies provides many kinds of learning experiences through which you can earn the 48 units needed for the Lower Division. Note that the Hutchins School does not meet the GE requirement in mathematics. Please refer to our website for further information: <http://www.sonoma.edu/hutchins/pages/academic/forms/lower.htm>

THE PORTFOLIO

The Hutchins Lower Division Portfolio is a purposeful collection of your work that exhibits efforts, progress, and achievements that you have made in the areas of our curriculum. Building a portfolio allows you to be an active participant in your learning process and its assessment by providing a venue for collaborative reflection, including ways for you to reflect about your own thinking processes and metacognitive introspection as you monitor your own comprehension, reflect upon your approaches to problem-solving and decision-making, and observe your emerging understanding of subjects and skills. Unlike tests, which are the usual means of evaluating students, the completed Portfolio furnishes a portrait of the independent learner and captures a sense of the shaping process through which he or she developed intellectually.

Your Portfolio will begin in LIBS 101: *The Human Enigma* and evolve each semester as you complete your coursework; it will culminate in your final semester in LIBS 202: *Challenge and Response in the Modern World*. Each Portfolio is different. Yours will reflect the pathway you followed in your interdisciplinary study. The Portfolio is not something to "get done" as soon as you start your work in Hutchins; it should "grow," as you do, semester-by-semester. Part of your work in LIBS 202 will be based on the content of your Portfolio. You will write an intellectual autobiography tracing the development of your thinking in the Lower Division, therefore, it is essential that you save all your work.

PORTFOLIO CONTENTS

Your Portfolio sections should be clearly titled with dividers according to the enclosed table of contents. The packet is available on the Hutchins website at the following address: <http://www.sonoma.edu/hutchins/pages/academic/forms/lower.htm> (Click on “Lower Division Portfolio”). There are two parts to the portfolio, which you will collect in three-ring binders (one for each course) throughout your four semesters in the Hutchins Lower Division:

I. COURSEWORK SECTION

The coursework part of your binder should hold all of the work that you have completed for the course, including sections for each of the following:

- COURSE SYLLABI AND COURSE HANDOUTS
- CLASS AND TEXTUAL NOTES, QUESTIONS
- RESPONSE OR CONNECTION PAPERS
- ESSAYS (INCLUDING DRAFTS AND PEER CRITIQUES OF WRITING)
- OTHER REPORTS, LAB REPORTS, ARTWORK

II. REFLECTION /ASSESSMENT SECTION

At midterm and at the end of each course you will be asked to reflect on and analyze your learning process by rereading your notes and questions, your response or connection papers, your essay drafts and peer writing critiques, and any other work that you have done to prepare for and contribute to our seminar.

You will then be asked to respond (in brief, typed paragraphs) to a series of prompts (1-7 below); and perhaps to fill out some questionnaire-type assessments (Appendices A-G).

1. **PREPARATION FOR SEMINAR.** What do you do to prepare for each seminar? What strategies do you use to understand difficult texts? What do you do when you cannot seem to make connections with a certain text? Are there certain types of texts that you seem to have the most ease with? Are there certain types of texts that you seem to have trouble with?

2. **QUESTIONS.** Review the questions that have come up for you while preparing for or participating in this semester's seminar. Then make a list of the ones that seem most relevant, challenging or otherwise important.
- A. What **patterns** do you detect among your questions?
 - B. Comment on the **types of questions** you seem to ask and how that represents your thinking. (For example, are most factual? Open-ended? (Essay type) General? Specific? Based on the text? Hypothetical? Based on loose association? Comparative? Deductive? Inductive?)
 - C. What seem to be the predominant **academic, intellectual issues, themes and problems** addressed by your questions? Do they seem to correspond to or be inspired by particular academic disciplines (for example, History, Psychology, Philosophy, Physics, the Arts)?
3. **SEMINAR SKILLS.** Think about yourself as a seminar participant. Now look over the **Self Assessment Matrix** (Appendix A, below) and other materials that you have received in class as guidelines for seminarng.
- A. Describe how the material has been useful (or not)
 - B. Assess your seminar skills, including your strengths and those things that you need to work on most (you may want to use the **Student Assessment of Self**, Appendix B, below as a springboard for writing this paragraph)
4. **COLLABORATIVE LEARNING.** Think about your seminar's group dynamics. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with a group?
- A. Describe the strengths of your seminar group as a whole.
 - B. What, specifically, does the group need to work on in order to have more interesting/challenging/exciting seminars?
5. **WRITING.** Look over your response/connection papers and your essays. Read each one carefully, including any comments made on it by your instructor or your peers. Think carefully about what you read: the topics addressed, the questions asked, the depth of your discussion, the clarity of your presentation, etc. Now, consider your writing more generally.
- A. What are your greatest strengths when it comes to writing? Did you ask questions that still seem important? Did you answer them? Would you write some of these papers differently now? What would you like to work on most, when it comes to your writing?
 - B. In what way did your **peers'** feedback help you with your writing? How could it have been more helpful? In what way did your **instructor's** feedback help you with your writing? How could it have been more helpful?
6. **CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE.** What has been your greatest challenge in this course? How

have you responded to it so far? What have been the challenges that you have faced in college so far *aside from this course*? Have you enjoyed your experience in college? What kinds of things have you learned? What would you like to change about your experience so far?

7. **EVALUATION OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS.** Assess your instructor/seminar facilitator including her/his strengths and those things s/he could do to better facilitate the seminar or your learning. (You may want to use the **Student Evaluation of Teaching Effectiveness**, Appendix F, below as a springboard for writing this paragraph)

APPENDIX A: SELF ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Your portfolio demonstrates that in your written and other work in Hutchins you have attained the following levels of competency in the areas listed below:

Assessment Areas	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
1. Interdisciplinary	usually views issues through a single discipline	sometimes uses more than one discipline to work on an issue	often combines disciplines; thinks beyond disciplinary boundaries
2. Depth of understanding & use of materials: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • level & diversity of sources • interpretation of sources 	level too simple; too few inadequate and/or inaccurate	level adequate; number sufficient adequate and/or accurate	level sophisticated; number substantial insightful and/or precise
3. Multiple perspectives in overall Portfolio work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pluralism, multi-culturalism, etc. 	consistently employs mono-cultural or ethnocentric perspective	occasionally sees from "other" point of view	consistently aware of other perspectives
4. Creativity & Higher-level synthesis	"plays it safe"; depends on authorities; keeps ideas separate from one another; wants answers	sometimes tries "new" approaches; somewhat independent in ideas; tolerates ambiguity	finds imaginative ways; takes risks; pulls ideas together; sees relationships; enjoys ambiguity
5. Communication ability (written & oral) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarity of expression • cogency • diversity of media 	confusing needs work one type of presentation	straightforward satisfactory more than one type of presentation	elegant good several types of presentation (3 or more)
6. Seminar skills	incoherent or else fails to participate	adequate	"barn builder"; sophisticated insight into material and creative application of ideas

APPENDIX B: STUDENT EVALUATION OF SELF

Below you will find categories from the Department Evaluation Form that I will use to assess your performance in this course at the end of the semester. Please take a few minutes to fill this out.

A. Circle the number the best describes your performance:
(1 = needs improvement; 5 = excellent performance)

I. QUALITY AND CONSISTENCY OF PREPARATION

Raises questions about assigned materials

1 2 3 4 5

Expresses ideas clearly

1 2 3 4 5

Demonstrates critical/ independent/creative thinking

1 2 3 4 5

Listens and builds on remarks of others

1 2 3 4 5

Respects other points of view

1 2 3 4 5

Participates at the appropriate level

1 2 3 4 5

Displays appropriate (collegiate) behavior in seminar

1 2 3 4 5

Attendance and punctuality

1 2 3 4 5

Displays competence in course topics

1 2 3 4 5

Gives appropriate peer feedback

1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX B: STUDENT EVALUATION OF SELF (CONT.)

II. WRITING

Creativity And Originality

1 2 3 4 5

Depth of analysis and development

1 2 3 4 5

Organization

1 2 3 4 5

Clarity of focus/thesis

1 2 3 4 5

Mechanics (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling)

1 2 3 4 5

Cites course materials and other references

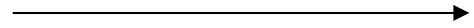
1 2 3 4 5

III. SEMINARING

For each of the following, answer using a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being **Never**, and 10 being **Always**).

Never Always

How often do you...



- | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Ask questions during class? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Support your opinions or ideas with evidence? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Explain your ideas? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Build upon what others have said? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Want to hear other students' opinions? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Try to improve the discussion? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Think about your thinking? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Challenge your own assumptions? | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

APPENDIX B: STUDENT EVALUATION OF SELF (CONT.)

For each of the following, answer using a scale of 1 to 10 with **1** being **Not** at all and **10** being **Very**.

Not willing Very willing

How willing are you to...



Change your opinion?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Work with others?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Explore opinions other than your own?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Introduce new ideas into the discussion?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Ask your classmates questions?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Deal with difficult problems or questions?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Practice Intellectual Humility?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Generally speaking, would you say you participate in the discussions...

Not at all Very little About average More than average Too much

Of the skills listed below, circle the one you think you need to work on.

Speaking: state your ideas more clearly and explain how you came to them.

Active Listening: sometimes our own ideas affect how we listen to others, actively listening means trying to hear what they are really saying.

Working with others: learning how to work with others that you might not otherwise work with.

Accepting various opinions: Learn to talk about other people’s points of view, even when they conflict with your own.

Problem solving: Improve your ability to think about complex problems. See the variety of issues involved in a problem and explore different options for a solution.

APPENDIX C: INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN DESIGN

We believe that you should shape your education to meet your needs, hopes, and aspirations. While we will require certain kinds of work of you, you have the chance to determine a great deal about the shape and content of your lower-division work. To formulate some of your ideas, please read through the following questions, and then write briefly on each of them. You can, of course, change your mind whenever you want.

- Why are you in college?

- What do you hope to be doing five years from now?

- What do you hope to be doing ten years from now?

- What do you hope to be doing twenty years from now?

- Why are you in the Hutchins program instead of some other place?

- What are you most eager to learn about? Why?

- What are you least interested in studying? Why?

- What do you think are your greatest, intellectual, artistic, creative and social skills?

- What skills do you still need to develop?

APPENDIX D: DEVELOPING SKILLS

The Hutchins program intends to build upon students' previous education and experience in some specific ways. Meeting academic requirements does not necessarily insure that you will acquire the skills we think you should have by the time you graduate from Sonoma State University. With this in mind, read through the following descriptions of goals for our students. When you meet with your advisors during your progression through the program you will assess yourself. Then as you plan your studies you can take into account the areas in which your skills need strengthening.

Our primary concern in the Hutchins program is for students to remain/ become lifelong learners. In order to do this well, we think that students need to be able to enter into discussion effectively, analyze written material, think critically, write clearly, and make formal presentations. We also hope that students will be able to go beyond the purely discursive and communicate about and through the arts. The seminar is one good place to practice and develop effective discussion skills (written/oral language). Your *willingness to discuss issues* is a key factor here. But it is also important to *show respect for other points of view, to listen carefully, to keep comments relevant to the subject at hand, and to have a sense of the quantity of your contributions* relative to those of your partners in discussion. Combining these skills with the ability to express yourself clearly will give you a valuable asset for any future.

A strong point of the Hutchins program is our focus on analyzing written material critically as well as personally. We ask you to respond to a large amount of writing during your studies here. It is crucial that you develop your ability *to recognize important points* in the readings. You need to be able to *examine arguments carefully* (both explicit and implicit). It is important to *know how to raise questions* about arguments and things in the material which interest or puzzle you.

Knowing how to look at the writing of others can also help you with your own writing. It is our goal that every graduate of the Hutchins program be able to communicate effectively through writing. While the main focus here is on *formal papers*, *creative writing* is important as well. We expect you to become skillful enough with the *basic components of writing* (organization, grammar, spelling, and so forth) to get your point across clearly whether you are writing a petition, a letter to a friend, a novel, or a technical report. Words may be the most abundant form of communication these days, but they aren't the only form. Although the next goal is sometimes difficult to achieve, and is not commonly an integral part of American liberal education, we want our students to be able to communicate through the arts. At a minimum, we want you to *recognize some of the forms employed in the arts* and be able to discourse about them. Ideally, we want you to *be able to express yourself through the arts* themselves.

Review the skills described above and rate yourself on the following page. Are you sure or unsure that you have adequately developed each skill? At the end of each lower division course, your instructor will also offer evaluative remarks. We expect you to develop the areas you are unsure about now, at the beginning of your studies. Part of your evaluations are based on your proficiency in these skills each semester. But it is our hope that you will take these skills away with you. They are not intended simply as part of a rating system but are helpful in participating in the world after graduation.

APPENDIX D: DEVELOPING SKILLS (CONT.)

SCORE YOURSELF ACCORDING TO LEVELS 1-5 WITH 1 BEING THE LOWEST ABILITY

Ability to enter discussion effectively:

- ___ respect for other points of view
- ___ willingness to discuss / debate issues
- ___ relevance of comments
- ___ appropriate quantity of talk

Ability to analyze written material:

- ___ ability to recognize important points
- ___ examine arguments carefully
- ___ ability to raise questions

Ability to communicate through writing:

- ___ formal papers
- ___ creative writing
- ___ component skills (spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.)

Ability to communicate through the arts:

- ___ recognition of art forms
- ___ ability to express through the arts

APPENDIX E: INTELLECTUAL INTENTIONS AND PERSONAL MUSINGS

The preceding pages have asked you to review the reasons that brought you to Hutchins and your concerns as you begin the lower-division program. You have looked at ideas about your own learning style, have reviewed already completed courses, and have thought about the skills you will need as a lifelong learner. You are probably aware of a whole host of things you hope to learn and do in the coming terms, ranging from intellectual areas of interest to abilities you hope to develop and master. Given that present awareness, write a brief synopsis on this sheet of your own most important learning goals and the ideas about learning you take with you as you go. What do you want things to be like here, and why? (This synopsis – call it your philosophy of education if you like – should not talk about the specific required courses but about the self-development you think should occur to enable you to graduate from Hutchins as an assured, autonomous learner.)

APPENDIX F: STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

At the end of the semester I am expected to evaluate your performance as a student, and you are expected to evaluate my teaching effectiveness. I believe that the end of the semester is too late if we want to correct or improve our respective performances.

It is important that you are clear on the requirements of the course and how you are being evaluated. The syllabus describes criteria for acceptable class performance, and I have tried to give constructive feedback on papers, in class participation etc. If you have any questions as to how you are performing, please stop by my office hours or set up an appointment with me as soon as possible.

I also want to perform my best, and to constantly improve my teaching. Below you will find categories from the Department and University-wide evaluation forms that you will be asked to fill out at the end of the semester. Please take a few minutes to fill this out.

A. Circle the number the best describes my performance: (1 = needs improvement; 5 = excellent performance)

DISPLAYS ENTHUSIASM

1 2 3 4 5

ACTIVELY HELPFUL WHEN STUDENTS HAVE PROBLEMS

1 2 3 4 5

CLEARLY PRESENTS COURSE INFORMATION

1 2 3 4 5

SEEMS WELL-PREPARED FOR CLASS

1 2 3 4 5

CLEARLY EXPLAINS THE GOALS OF THE COURSE

1 2 3 4 5

RESPECTS DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW

1 2 3 4 5

ENABLES STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN LEARNING

1 2 3 4 5

ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO DO FURTHER INDEPENDENT STUDY

1 2 3 4 5

PROVIDES OPPORTUNITIES TO QUESTION IDEAS PRESENTED IN CLASS

1 2 3 4 5

CLEARLY STATES GOALS OF THE COURSE

1 2 3 4 5

DISPLAYS COMPETENCE IN COURSE TOPICS

1 2 3 4 5

GIVES APPROPRIATE FEEDBACK

1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX F: STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS (CONT.)

PLEASE PROVIDE FEEDBACK.

1. Are the course objectives that the Instructor has provided being met?
2. What could the Instructor do to improve her/his teaching?
3. Do you feel that you are learning from this course? How could the course itself be made better?

APPENDIX G: HUTCHINS SCHOOL OF LIBERAL STUDIES MIDTERM EVALUATION

COURSE: _____ **SEMESTER:** _____
STUDENT: _____ **INSTRUCTOR:** _____ **STATUS:** _____

Evaluation scale:
 10 (Excellent), 8 - 9 (Very Good), 6 - 7 (Good), 4 - 5 (Needs Improvement), 0 - 3 (Inadequate)

I. SEMINAR PARTICIPATION

	Student	Faculty
A. Academic Performance:		
1. Quality and consistency of preparation	_____	_____
2. Raises questions about assigned materials	_____	_____
3. Expresses ideas clearly	_____	_____
4. Demonstrates critical thinking	_____	_____
5. Demonstrates independent/creative thinking	_____	_____
B. Facilitation of seminar process:		
1. Listens and builds on remarks of others	_____	_____
2. Respects other points of view	_____	_____
3. Appropriate level of participation	_____	_____
4. Appropriate (collegiate) behavior in seminar	_____	_____
C. Attendance and punctuality	_____	_____

II. COURSE TOPICS/ASSIGNMENTS

1. READING	_____	_____
2. Generating Questions	_____	_____
3. Connection Papers	_____	_____
4. Essay Drafts	_____	_____
5. Essay Revisions	_____	_____

III. PORTFOLIO

IV. WRITING:

1. Creativity and originality	_____	_____
2. Depth of analysis and development	_____	_____
3. Organization	_____	_____
4. Clarity of focus/thesis	_____	_____
5. Mechanics (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling)	_____	_____
6. Cites course materials and other references	_____	_____