

ART 450 – PORTFOLIO DESIGN

Hardcover Portfolio Book Assignment

OVERVIEW

Create a print-ready, hardcover portfolio book that presents your strongest academic and freelance work as a cohesive, employer-facing narrative. The goal is not to archive everything you've ever made, but to curate a focused selection that clearly demonstrates your skills, taste, and decision-making.

OBJECTIVES

- Curate work strategically for a specific target role (e.g., branding, UI/UX, motion, illustration, advertising).
- Communicate each project with clear hierarchy, captions, and concise case-study storytelling.
- Demonstrate professional layout craft: typography, grid discipline, image handling, and pacing.
- Produce files that meet real print standards (bleeds, color, proofing, export settings).

REQUIREMENTS

- Format: Hardcover book (printed). Choose portrait or landscape and keep it consistent.
- Length: 24–40 pages recommended (excluding cover), depending on project density.
- Content: 6–10 projects total (at least 2 must include a short process/case-study component).
- Include: Cover design + spine/back (as required by your printer), table of contents, and a short About/Contact page.
- Freelance work: Allowed and encouraged, but must be presented ethically (no fake clients/results; clearly label collaboration).

DELIVERABLES

- Hardcover printed book (final).
- Print-ready PDF export (with correct bleeds and crop marks if required).
- Working file (InDesign preferred; Figma/other allowed if it supports print standards).
- 1-page rationale (bullets): target role, project selection logic, and 5 layout decisions you made intentionally.
- Process evidence packet: at minimum, 3 dated exports showing iteration + notes on what changed and why.

PROCESS CHECKPOINTS

- Curation audit: bring your full candidate project list; justify what you cut and why.
- Book map: thumbnail plan of pacing (cover → opener → projects → closer).
- Draft layout review: early grid + type system locked before image polishing.
- Proofing: preflight checklist (bleeds, margins, contrast, hyphenation, image resolution).

AI & TOOL USE

AI tools may be used for brainstorming headlines, tightening grammar, or generating alternative wording for captions. AI may not be used to fabricate project outcomes, invent clients, or replace your layout decisions. You must be able to explain and reproduce your design choices and show iteration evidence.

EVALUATION

Grades emphasize curation judgment, layout craft, print readiness, and visible iteration. A polished book with weak reasoning or missing process evidence will not score highly.

SCORING GRID

| Category | Pts Possible | Student Score |
|---|--------------|---------------|
| Curation & Target Role Fit | 15 | |
| Case Study Storytelling & Clarity | 20 | |
| Layout System & Typography Craft | 20 | |
| Image Handling & Consistency | 10 | |
| Print Production Readiness | 15 | |
| Professionalism & Completeness | 10 | |
| Process Evidence & Iteration (Anti-shortcut) | 10 | |
| TOTAL | 100 | |